

From the Tampa Bay Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/tampabay/news/2020/08/21/report-tampa-has-major-disparities-racial-dispari.html>

Report: Tampa Bay has major racial disparities in wages, homeownership

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The Tampa Bay metro area has major disparities between its white and Black population, according to a recent report.

The Tampa Bay Partnership, in collaboration with the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay and United Way Suncoast, released Friday the 2020 Regional Equity Report, which evaluates racial inequality in the area based on 21 key metrics around economic vitality, talent, infrastructure, civic quality, poverty and employment.

The report found Black residents in Tampa Bay are far more likely to be paid less, live in poverty and underperform in school compared to white residents. The report compared Tampa to benchmark cities including San Antonio, Nashville, Jacksonville and Portland in a few key categories including median wages, wages by education level and homeownership.

“The data in this report underscores the systemic challenges that Black residents face, and the fact that they have been left behind when others have benefited from periods of growth and prosperity,” said Rick Homans, president and CEO of the Tampa Bay Partnership. “While the gaps between Black and white residents were already dramatic and unacceptable, we also know that people of color have disproportionately suffered from the impacts of Covid-19 and the gaps have widened further. We hope that this new report will help our community leaders better understand the racial disparities that exist in Tampa Bay, and set goals to diminish and, eventually, eliminate them.”

Median wages

In Tampa Bay, a Black worker has a median wage of \$16.42 compared to white workers with a median wage of \$20.90; that's a 21 percent difference in median pay, the report found. That is the smallest gap among the benchmark cities, but it is still a significant difference.

In comparison, San Antonio had a 22.9 percent wage gap, while Nashville had a 24.1 percent gap and Phoenix a 25.2 percent gap. Across the board, Tampa Bay's median wages are low compared to other cities because of its reliance on the tourism industry, the report said.



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WAGE GAP BETWEEN WHITE AND BLACK WORKERS

Tampa has a 21.4 percent gap in median wages between white and Black workers. That is the smallest gap be

Data from the Tampa Bay Partnership.

Wages by education level

Education level usually plays a role in wages, and while that is true in Tampa Bay, the report found there is still a disparity between white and Black workers in the area. A white worker with a bachelor's degree earns 20.8 percent more than a Black worker with a similar degree. A white worker with a high school diploma still earns 19 percent more than a Black worker with a high school diploma, the report found.

Compared to the benchmark cities, those percentages place Tampa Bay somewhere in the middle for both education levels. It does not reach the high disparity of San Antonio, at 22 percent for high school and South Florida at 27 percent for a college degree, but it is also not among the lowest percentages either.

The report also found about 20 percent of Tampa Bay's Black residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, which places Tampa as the fourth worst among the comparative cities.

Student achievement

On the education front, Black students in Tampa Bay perform below their white peers based on Florida's measures of student achievement, the report found. In fact, there is at least a 30 percent gap in proficiency at multiple levels, including: third grade English at 32.5 percent; third and eighth grade math at 31.9 percent and fifth and eighth grade science at 33.7 percent.

There is a gap between the graduation rates of white and Black students. Only about 79.7 percent of Black students graduate compared to the 89.3 percent of white students who graduate. Black students are also more likely to drop out of school with one in 12 Black youth dropping out of school, the report found.

Homeownership

Homeownership is another key area of disparity. Black residents in Tampa Bay are much less likely to own their own home, compared to white residents, according to the report. In Tampa Bay, white residents have a 73.3 percent homeownership rate, compared to 40.8 percent for Black residents. That disparity, 32.5 percent, is the fourth worst among benchmark states and is worse than the United States' 30 percent disparity.

These disparities can play a major part in workforce recruitment and retention as well as development. Cities that can close these gaps may be able to recruit and retain better talent as well as educate homegrown talent.

The full report can be found [here](#).

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