



Divestment and Race in Kenosha

The nation’s recent protests sparked by tragic and inexcusable police shootings of unarmed Black men are consequences of centuries old racism, enforced too often by the violence and oppression of institutions like police forces. This seemingly unrelenting violence against Black and Brown communities is inextricably tied to existing unmitigated economic hardship, long-term unmet needs, and community divestment. Wisconsin is neither immune nor innocent of such circumstances, as recent events in Kenosha, Wisconsin have demonstrated.

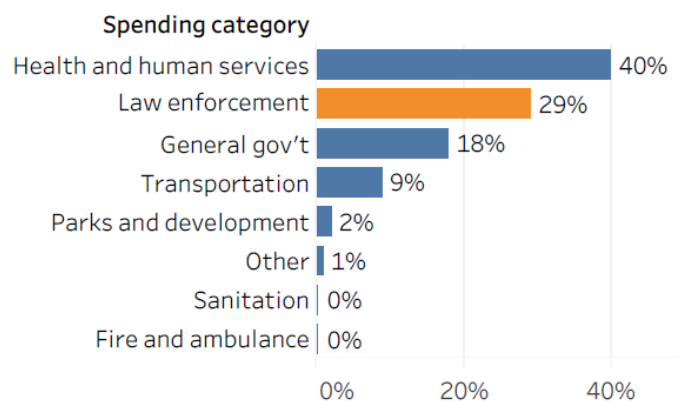
Prior to the shooting of Jacob Blake, many Kenosha County residents were under tremendous stress and faced significant challenges of high rates of child poverty and maltreatment, juvenile arrests, and housing costs, as well as lower access to high quality child care. For Black residents, these family and community well-being measures are even more concerning, and notably, reflect the state of the county prior to the impact of the current crisis brought on by COVID-19.

As the brief analysis below indicates, Kenosha County needs greater investment in children and families. Improving outcomes for the residents of Kenosha County, and all Wisconsinites, is linked to a commitment to invest in education, housing, public health, and economic opportunity.

County Snapshot

Kenosha County spent 29% of its total budget on law enforcement costs in 2018 (\$51,090,325)¹. The City of Kenosha spent \$29,406,671 on law enforcement costs, 24% of its total budget. This leaves less money to spend on other services and programs, such as public health, early childhood programs, job training, and economic development.

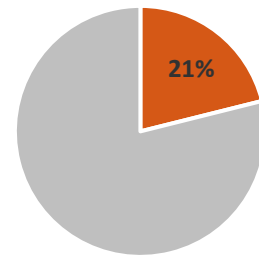
Kenosha County Budget



¹ Data source: Wisconsin Budget Project analysis of Wisconsin Dept. of Revenue's County and Municipal Revenues and Expenditures data

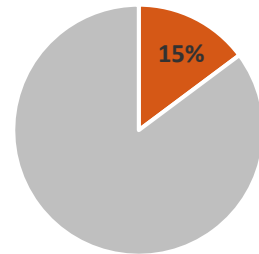
Children in Kenosha County need support. Of the 168,330 Kenosha County residents, 39,717 were children under age 18, and a quarter of these were under age 5 (9,883)². More than 1 out of 5 children in Kenosha County were living in families experiencing poverty. Child poverty rates were higher in Kenosha County (21%) than statewide (16%)³. Rates of severe child poverty (less than 50% of the poverty level), were 9% in Kenosha County and 7% in Wisconsin³.

Child Poverty Rate



Only 29 child care facilities in the Kenosha / Racine region were rated as high quality in 2019 (15%), compared to 21% statewide⁴. High quality child care gives children the foundation to be prepared for school and lifelong learning and development. Low income families in Kenosha County need assistance with child care costs. Over 1400 children in the county received child care subsidies in 2019⁴.

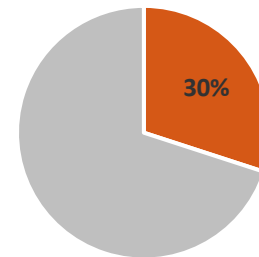
High Quality Child Care



Over 200 children in Kenosha County were victims of substantiated child abuse in 2018. This was a rate of nearly 6 victims per 1000 children in Kenosha County, compared to a rate of nearly 4 statewide⁴.

Over 1200 juvenile arrests occurred in Kenosha County in 2019. Juveniles were arrested at a rate of over 8 arrests per 100 youth in Kenosha County, compared to a rate of nearly 7 arrests statewide⁵.

High Housing Burden



Nearly 1 out of 3 households in Kenosha County spent 30% of their income or more for housing (slightly higher than the statewide rate of 28%)⁶. High housing costs leave less money for other essentials, such as food, childcare, utilities, and health care.

However, statistics for the county as a whole do not necessarily reflect the experiences of residents of color, especially when comparing the 7% of Kenosha County's population who are Black and the 76% who are White². Racial disparities in economic, educational, and criminal justice indicators, starting in childhood, shape the lives of Kenosha County's Black and White residents.

² Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Table DP05, 5-Year Estimates, 2014-18

³ Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Table S1703, 5-Year Estimates, 2014-18

⁴ Data source: Wisconsin Dept. of Children and Families (DCF)

⁵ Data source: Wisconsin Dept. of Justice (DOJ) and Easy Access to Juvenile Populations. Rates per 100 youth ages 10-16.

⁶ Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Table B25106, 5-Year Estimates, 2014-18

For more data on Kenosha County, see the Kids Count Data Center:

<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/customreports/7070/any/compared>

Analysis of census data and data from DCF and DOJ by Silver Lynx Consulting, LLC

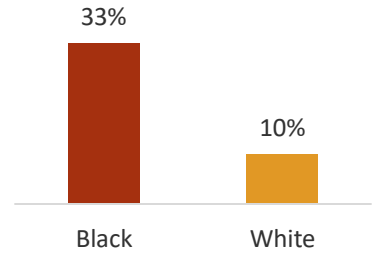
Disaggregated County Snapshot

One out of 3 Black residents of all ages were experiencing poverty in Kenosha County, compared to 1 out of 10 White residents⁷. The poverty rate for Black residents was over three times higher than for White residents. The typical annual income among Black households in Kenosha County was \$34,715, about half the typical annual income among White households (\$64,720)⁸. Black residents in Kenosha County were experiencing over two and a half times higher levels of unemployment than White residents (15% compared to 6%)⁹. Statewide, the unemployment rate was 12% among Black residents and 3% among White residents.

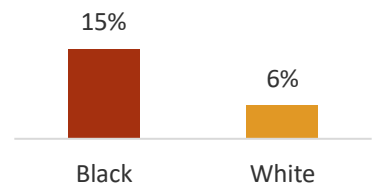
Among White students in the Kenosha Unified School District, 92% graduated on time, compared to 76% of Black students¹⁰. Students who are not in class cannot learn. Though Black students were only 14% of the student population, over half of all out-of-school suspensions were of Black students (56%), which was over 1600 out-of-school suspensions of Black students. This out-of-school suspension rate was over five times higher for Black students than White students¹⁰. Statewide, 41% of out-of-school suspensions were of Black students.

These gaps extend to incarceration, and are strikingly disproportionate. Rates of 2019 prison admissions were 15 times higher for Black residents of Kenosha County than White residents (nearly 9 times higher statewide)¹¹. Kenosha County residents 17 and over were 7% Black, but over half (54%) of prison admissions from Kenosha County were of Black residents¹¹. White residents were 90% of the county's population 17 and over, and 45% of prison admissions. Statewide, 6% of residents 17 and over were Black, and yet over a third of prison admissions (36%) were of Black residents (White residents were 90% of the population 17 and over, and 57% of prison admissions).

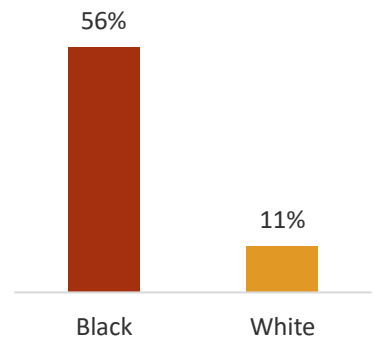
Poverty Rate



Unemployment Rate



School Suspensions



Equitable Investment for the Future

Addressing police conduct and excessive use of force in Kenosha and other municipalities across the state is critical to improving the health and welfare of the community. Equally important and urgent is the need to combat the injustices that have manifested themselves in well-being indicators as outlined above, particularly, those faced by the Black community. Failure to aggressively address root causes through policy and investment will continue to exacerbate these injustices.

⁷ Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Table S1703, 5-Year Estimates, 2014-18

⁸ Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Table S1903, 5-Year Estimates, 2014-18

⁹ Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Table S2301, 5-Year Estimates, 2014-18

¹⁰ Data source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), 2018-19 school year

¹¹ Data source: Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) and Easy Access to Juvenile Populations, 2019. Rates per 1000 people ages 17 and older.

For more data on Kenosha County, see the Kids Count Data Center: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/customreports/7070/any/compared>
 Analysis of census data and data from DPI and DOC by Silver Lynx Consulting, LLC