Grand Rapids, Michigan
GR Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llakr9wikI
Demographics

Our City’s racial makeup is:
• 59% Caucasian
• 19% African-American
• 18% Hispanic
• 2% Asian and Pacific Islander
City’s Workforce

The City’s workforce does not represent the racial diversity of our community:

• 89 percent of City employees are Caucasian
• 6.6% African-American
• 2.3% Hispanic
• 1.4% Asian and Pacific Islander

Appointed boards and commissions have similar breakdowns.
Top Management

Deputy City Managers, Managing Directors, Department Directors and Division Managers – does not include any African-American males, Hispanic females, Asian females, American-Indian males and females or Multiracial males and females
Significant Racial Disparities

Grand Rapids ranks among the worst cities in the U.S. economically for African-Americans

• 42% of African-Americans in Grand Rapids live in poverty – almost four times the rate for the Caucasian population

• 25% of African-Americans in our city are unemployed

• The typical African-American household in Grand Rapids earns less than half of what the typical white household does

• 35% of Hispanics and Latinos live in poverty

• 17% are unemployed
Racial Disparities

Hispanics and Latinos are not faring any better in our city
• 35% of Hispanics and Latinos live in poverty
• 17% are unemployed

Countless stories from residents who shared their experiences
Concentrated Poverty

Our city has concentrated poverty in neighborhoods where one-third of our residents live – and where 48 percent of those who are impoverished live

- 56% of Grand Rapids’ impoverished African-Americans live in these neighborhoods and 68% of impoverished Hispanics or Latinos live in these areas
- Residents in these neighborhoods often lack assets, education and training, and access to opportunities
- More than 27% of the population ages 25 and older in these neighborhoods has less than a high school degree – nearly twice as high as Grand Rapids as a whole
Eliminating Racial Disparities

• Top priority as Mayor – focus at State of the City
• Recognizing it’s difficult to know where we’re going if we don’t know where we’ve been, the community has joined me in reading “A City Within a City” by Todd Robinson, which is the Mayor’s Book of the Year
• Committed to becoming a more diverse workforce
• Committed to increasing diversity on boards and commissions
• Yet knowing that was not enough....
Government Alliance on Race and Equity

Racial Equity Here provides valuable support in:

• Understanding deeply racialized systems
• How to use a racial equity framework
• Assess organization and develop clear goals
• Implement racial equity tools
• Create partnerships within the community

Most valuable for me: having support, learning from others, having a sounding board and knowing you are not alone.