

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

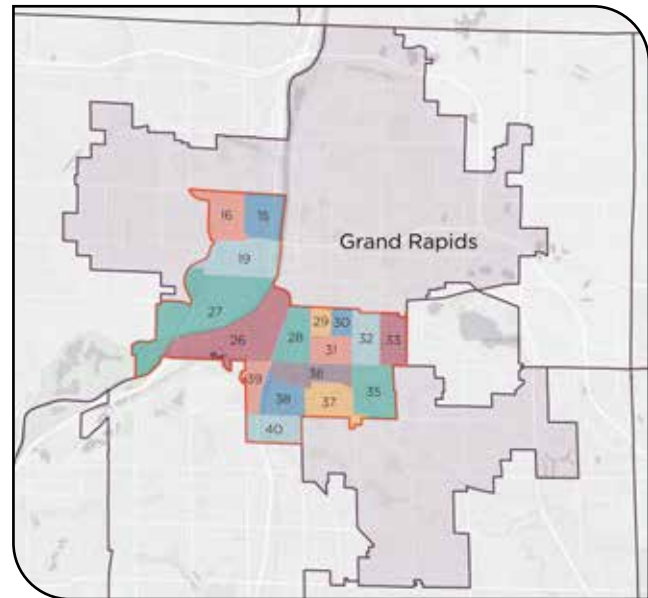
### Introduction

This report presents an updated review of progress toward economic inclusion in the Grand Rapids, Mich. area. It summarizes the changes between data reported by Dr. Mark White of the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University and the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness in *Addressing Economic Inclusion in Grand Rapids* (2016) and the most recently available data obtained from public sources — primarily comparing data from 2014 to 2018. Data are displayed in various geographic groupings and disaggregated by demographic characteristics for comparison. This report, sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), is intended to aid ongoing strategy development for promoting inclusive growth in the Grand Rapids area.

### Key Findings

- Three main demographic shifts occurred from 2014 to 2018 in the WKKF Neighborhoods of Focus, a contiguous group of census tracts near the south and west sides of Grand Rapids:
  - 1) a decrease in the number of residents identifying as Black or African American;
  - 2) an increase in residents identifying as White, not Hispanic or Latino; and Some Other Race; and
  - 3) an increase in degree attainment. However, 26.2% of Neighborhoods of Focus residents still lacked a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 9.7% in Kent County and 13.4% in the city of Grand Rapids.

Figure 1: WKKF Neighborhoods of Focus



**INCREASE**  
in residents identifying as  
“White, not Hispanic or Latino”  
and residents identifying as  
“Some Other Race”



**DECREASE**  
in residents identifying as  
“Black or African American”



**INCREASE**  
in residents attaining  
Associate or  
Bachelor's Degrees

## Key Findings *(continued)*

- Neighborhoods of Focus residents continued to be younger than the city and county as a whole.
- Since 2014, most of the census tracts in the Neighborhoods of Focus have seen a decline in homeownership.
- While the number houses for sale in the Neighborhoods of Focus increased more quickly and while housing prices tend to be lower in the Neighborhoods of Focus than the city and county overall, the median sale price in the Neighborhoods of Focus more than doubled from \$61,000 in 2014 to \$127,700 in 2019 — a higher rate than both the city and the county overall.
- Poverty rates in the Neighborhoods of Focus, city, and county have declined since 2014, though Neighborhoods of Focus residents were more likely to experience poverty than city residents overall. Poverty rates fell especially for Black or African American residents.
- Five census tracts in the Neighborhoods of Focus have enjoyed large increases in median household income since 2014.
- Unemployment rates dropped, in some places drastically, from 2014 to 2018 across all geographies and educational levels, and nearly all racial and ethnic groups. Yet, the unemployment rates across all racial and ethnic groups in the Neighborhoods of Focus remained higher compared to the city and county as a whole.
- Black or African American residents in the Neighborhoods of Focus were more than twice as likely to be unemployed than White residents.
- Since 2014, there has been an increase in the proportion of the workforce with post-secondary degrees. Interestingly, there was also a rise in the proportion of the workforce with less than a high school diploma.
- In nearly all workforce sectors, the proportion of people of color in the workforce rose slightly. This rise mirrored the overall county population, which became slightly more diverse.
- Although the Grand Rapids-Kentwood, Mich. Metropolitan Statistical Area's gross domestic product continued to grow, the region's wellbeing did not grow uniformly.



**INCREASE**  
in median household income



**DECREASE**  
in unemployment rates



**DECREASE**  
in poverty rates