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# **Upwards Together**

# **Improving Economic Mobility for Black Residents in Atlanta**



# Elizabeth Chung Applied Policy Project

Prepared for Neighborhood Nexus



#### **Disclaimer**

The author conducted this study as part of the program of professional education at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, University of Virginia. This paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of the course requirements for the Master of Public Policy degree. The judgments and conclusions are solely those of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Batten School, by the University of Virginia, or by any other agency.

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#### **Client Profile**

Neighborhood Nexus is a community intelligence system for decision-makers all throughout the Atlanta Metro Region with a specific interest in promoting opportunity for all. Their goal is to provide data, tools, and expertise to the Atlanta metro region "to create more equitable and livable communities for all." They were established in 2009 in partnership with Atlanta Regional Commission, Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta, Metro Atlanta Chamber, and United Way of Greater Atlanta.

On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.



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# **Executive Summary**

Atlanta maintains one of the country's lowest levels of upward economic mobility for its Black residents. Not only does this pose an ethical issue of racial inequity, but it also hinders greater overall economic growth and prosperity for the city, state, and country. Only 4.5% of Black Atlantans born into the lowest income quintile will ever reach the top income quintile in adulthood (Chetty, Hendren, et al., 2014).

Economic mobility is impacted by several policy areas: education, economy, housing, justice, and more. Understanding the wide breadth of this problem, I evaluated the following policy alternatives to address low economic mobility:

- 1. Status Ouo
- 2. Grant Fund for Employer-Led Training Programs
- 3. Salary Bonuses for High-Quality Teachers for High-Priority Classrooms
- 4. Cognitive-Based Mentoring for Young Probationers
- 5. Minority-Owned Business Accelerator

These policy alternatives were evaluated against four major criteria: cost-effectiveness, political feasibility, administrative feasibility, and equity.

I recommend **Alternative 3: provide bonuses to high-quality teachers in high-priority schools**. This alternative has the lowest cost-effectiveness. Alternative 3 also has a high ranking in political and implementation feasibility. It ranks medium in equity.

While the status quo is ranked high in political and implementation feasibility, it still maintains the highest value of cost-effectiveness and lowest equity. The other three alternatives (job training, mentoring, and business accelerator) are large-scale policy alternatives. However, due to the scale of the policies, they become much less cost-effective and face more political barriers. Since they require more funding, and Georgia remains a low investment and low tax state, they are not my current recommendations. However, I encourage keeping them in mind for future actions as Atlanta and Georgia become more fruitful political grounds for increased public investment.

The main agencies involved in Alternative 3 will be Atlanta Public Schools and the Atlanta School Board of Education. They will be responsible for coordinating with data partners (e.g. Neighborhood Nexus) to evaluate the current evaluation information and data. This evaluation will determine which schools will be eligible for gaining funds for teacher bonuses and determine the threshold for eligible teachers.

### Introduction

#### Economic mobility for Black residents in Atlanta is too low.

The "American Dream" makes the United States the "land of opportunity." However, evidence shows the "American Dream" is only a legend. In the United States, a 10 percentile point increase in parental income is associated with a 3.4 percentile increase in a child's income (Chetty et al., 2018). Despite the U.S. touting itself as the "land of opportunity," chances of achieving the "American Dream" are nearly twice as high in Canada. Compared to other OECD countries, the United States ranks 13th in intergenerational income mobility (Hoff, 2020). Not only do different regions of the U.S. face differing levels of economic mobility (Chetty, Hendren, et al., 2014), but Black residents face even worse odds of upward economic mobility (Chetty et al., 2020). Black residents also face higher rates of downward mobility than their White counterparts. Conditional on parental income, Black boys have lower incomes in 99% of the Census tracts than White boys (Chetty et al., 2020). While some neighborhoods have small Black-White gaps, less than 5% of Black children are raised there (Chetty et al., 2020). Atlanta, a city with a prominent Black population, has one of the worst rates of intergenerational mobility. In Atlanta, only 4.5% of residents born in the bottom fifth of the income distribution make it to the top fifth (Chetty, Hendren, et al., 2014). As seen in Figure 1, some of the best economic outcomes for Black men are still worse than some of the worst economic outcomes for White men. This indicates how difficult it is for Black individuals to gain economic success in this country.

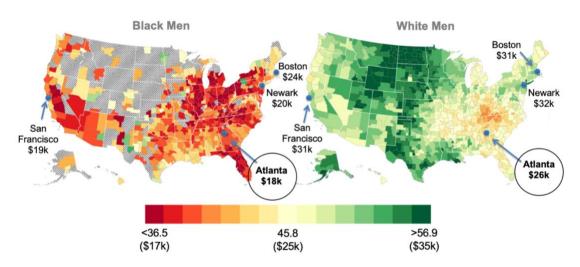


Figure 1. Average Individual Income for Boys with Percent Earning \$25,000 (25th percentile) Source: (Chetty et al., 2020)

This lack of economic opportunity for Black folks contrasts deeply with Atlanta's perceived image as "Black Mecca," an economic haven for Black communities. In 2003, Atlanta had the highest percentage of middle-class African Americans than any other city in the country (Williams, 2003). Since then, economic opportunities for Black Atlantans dwindled. Compared to places like San Jose where the rate of intergenerational mobility is 12.9%, Atlantans do not have high chances for future economic opportunity with a 4.5% intergenerational mobility rate (Chetty, Hendren, et al., 2014). In 2017, the median income for a Black household was \$29,900, but the median income for a White household was \$89,000 (Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms Announces One Atlanta: Economic Mobility, Recovery and Resiliency Plan, 2020). Massive disparities in housing, education, homeownership, and business ownership contribute to the income gaps, and subsequently, the economic mobility gaps.

# **Cost to Society**

Not only is low economic mobility between racial groups an ethical issue, but it also has real quantifiable costs to society. The issues of low economic mobility for Black communities in Atlanta are far too high. The city government should consider intervening with new policies. While there are no real externality costs, there are substantial direct and economic costs.

#### Proxy Cost Metric

The low levels of economic mobility for Black individuals lead to more Black individuals being subject to the impacts of poverty. The societal costs of poverty will be calculated in this section to illustrate the costs of low economic mobility. In 2019, there were 78,059 Black residents in Atlanta living under the federal poverty line (*U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts*, n.d.)

#### **Direct Costs**

#### Crime

Some of the direct costs of crime are police protection, corrections, airport security, alarm systems, and more. Since not every individual in poverty commits a crime and incurs a cost, the direct costs of crime are not calculated on a per-person basis.<sup>1</sup> The total direct crime costs are \$311 million in Atlanta (Appendix D).

#### Health

Health costs include the "sum of direct payments for care provided during the year, including out-of-pocket payments and payments by private insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, and other sources" (*MEPS Summary Tables*, n.d.). Low-income individuals tend to not have health care coverage, so their medical expenses are often paid by Medicaid or as uncompensated care, both of which are funded by tax dollars or by others through health insurance.<sup>2</sup> The health care expenditures (direct and transfer) per person are \$5,517 in 2018. The total health costs for Atlanta are **\$447 million** in 2020 dollars (Appendix E).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The calculations are based on a national estimate from Anderson, which was the basis of the cost of crime calculations used in the Senate Committee on the Judiciary in 2006.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The data agency responsible for measuring these expenditures include Medicaid expenses within their calculation and cannot be disaggregated.

#### Other Safety-Net Payments

The government also provides services for those who are poor through multiple social safety net programs. The main programs are the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In 2019, the state spent \$3.5 million in TANF money and \$182 million in SNAP money in Atlanta (Appendix F & G)<sup>3</sup>.

#### **Opportunity Costs**

#### Reduced Earnings

The first category of opportunity costs is reduced earnings. Poverty decreases wages because those in poverty have less access and more barriers to quality education. Comparing the educational attainment between those in poverty and those not, the difference in average hourly wage is \$4/hour (Carnevale et al., 2011).<sup>4</sup> Given 311,743 Black individuals are living in poverty in Atlanta, the total loss in wages is **\$658 million** in 2020 dollars (Appendix A).

Second, there will also be lost wages due to the increased mortality of those in poverty, which results in fewer years of work. According to a Raj Chetty study in 2016, those in the upper-income quartiles live, on average, 7 years longer than those in the bottom quartiles (Chetty, Stepner, et al., 2016). The total number of hours lost in work is 13,440 hours/person assuming an average of 7 years of lost wages due to increased mortality. The total amount lost in lifetime earnings is \$241 million per year in Atlanta (Appendix B).

Lastly, crime is associated with poverty, where children born into the bottom rungs of the socioeconomic ladder are significantly more likely to commit a crime later in life (Bjerk, 2007). Assuming 20% of crime is attributed to poverty, estimates from 2016 indicate that the prison and jail population in Atlanta was 3,227. A 2016 study estimated that the yearly lost wages while incarcerated were \$36,000 (McLaughlin & Rank, 2018), thus the total cost in lost wages per year for Atlanta was \$6.25 million (Appendix C).

#### Total

The total direct costs are \$757 million. The total opportunity costs are \$905 million. Other transfer payments total \$185 million. Totaling all the categories, the total cost of Black poverty, as a proxy for low economic mobility, is estimated at \$1.85 billion per year for Atlanta (Appendix H).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Using data from the Georgia Department of Human Services, I calculated the proportion of money spent on Black recipients dependent on the racial breakdowns provided in their 2019 Division of Family & Children Services' Descriptive Data Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Assuming a full-time job with two weeks of vacation and 10 national holidays, the total loss in wages per year is \$5760 per year per person in poverty.

# **Drivers of Low Economic Mobility**

There are many competing theories for the drivers of the issue of low economic mobility for Black residents. The four key categories of drivers include *neighborhoods*, *education*, *labor market discrimination*, and *criminal justice*. While the discussion of these drivers is organized as separate categories, each of them works within the same system and thus interacts and overlaps in many ways.

#### Neighborhoods

Due to the lasting effects of segregation and racism, many high-poverty neighborhoods also have a high proportion of Black residents (Sampson et al., 2002). Neighborhoods are important because they provide opportunities to build social networks important for future employment opportunities (Fountain et al., 2016; H. Holzer, 2009). Additionally, there is causal evidence indicating living in a high-poverty neighborhood, which tends to have a high proportion of Black residents, with higher dropout rates (Harding, 2003). Chetty and his research team reveal the Black-White intergenerational gap is significantly smaller for Black boys that live in neighborhoods with certain characteristics. Neighborhoods with low poverty rates, low levels of racial bias among White families, and a high level of father-presence among low-income Black families have smaller Black-White intergenerational gaps (Chetty et al., 2020). Black children are also more likely to experience "adverse childhood experiences" due to poverty (Sacks & Murphey, 2018).

#### **Education**

Segregation of neighborhoods can have also detrimental impacts on economic mobility through education because segregated schools are primarily due to segregated neighborhoods. Since human capital is accumulated through education, studying the differential effects of education can be useful in investigating pathways for increasing economic mobility (Condron et al., 2013). There is a general consensus in the literature that Black-White school segregation is associated with lower rates of high school and college graduation for Black students (Quillian, 2014). As such, closing the Black-White achievement gap in education is critical for helping develop Black individuals for entrance into the labor market, leading to important impacts on earnings.

#### **Discrimination in the Labor Market**

Education may lead to occupational segregation in the labor market between industries. Occupational segregation leads to differences between racial groups of access to higher-paying industries. Evidence shows that wage inequality increased mostly due to differences in wages between occupations rather than within occupations (Alonso-Villar & Río, 2020). According to some estimates, occupational segregation may account for 20% or more of the Black-White wage gap (Grodsky & Pager, 2001). Furthermore, in investigations concerning the spatial differences in occupational segregation, the Southern and Western portions of the United States have higher losses due to occupational segregation than the Northeast.

While occupational segregation remains a factor, there is debate on how much discrimination of Black individuals in the labor market contributes to the wage gap (Fryer et al., 2011). Recent research shows racial discrimination in the labor market exists and is a substantial contributing factor to the Black-White wage gap (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2003; Fryer et al., 2011; Pager et al., 2009).

#### **Criminal Justice**

Crime also impacts economic mobility because high economic mobility is premised on job and income stability. Crime and subsequent incarceration prevent job stability not only while individuals are incarcerated but also afterward (Western, 2002). Black Americans face higher rates of crime, facing nearly 6x the annual rate of homicide victimization and around 7x the annual rate in homicide offending than White Americans (Sampson et al., 2018). Black people also experience higher odds of worse punishment within the criminal justice system (Eberhardt et al., 2006; Stolzenberg et al., 2013). Racial bias is a major mechanism for these differences and occurs at multiple decision points in the criminal justice system from policing to bail decisions (Arnold et al., 2018).

# **Existing Federal Safety-Net**

The federal government has multiple support mechanisms for poverty alleviation including cash assistance and other safety-net programs. The major federal programs are the EITC, TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid.

#### Earned-Income Tax Credit (EITC)

The EITC is a federal tax credit program administered by the Internal Revenue Service, offering low-income families a refundable tax credit. A refundable tax credit provides large benefits to beneficiaries because any amount of the credit beyond tax liability is provided as cash to the household. While state and local governments have little control over a federal tax policy, Georgia does not currently have a state EITC.

#### Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 established TANF. TANF provides short-term cash-assistance and other programming for families to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

Despite TANF and other welfare programs being federal programs, states are responsible for the allocation, thus states have flexibility in how they use the funding. Data suggests a negative correlation between a state's basic expenditures, used as a proxy for cash assistance, and the proportion of Black residents receiving TANF benefits (Hardy et al., 2019). Furthermore, the differences go beyond the actual dollar amount as states with larger proportions of Black Americans on welfare also "had shorter time limits, more severe sanctions, and stricter family caps, all else equal" (Hahn et al., 2017).

#### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP is a federally-funded food assistance program for low-income individuals and families. Each month, SNAP serves about 1.6 million individuals on average (Camardelle, 2018). For able-bodied individuals without children, there is a time-limit work requirement. This is particularly harmful given the persistent inequities in the labor market because since Black individuals face increased hardship in finding employment compared to White individuals, this also puts them at greater risk of losing their SNAP benefits.

#### Medicaid

Medicaid is a state and federally-funded health insurance program. Medicaid covers about 1 in 5 Georgians. In 2014, states were able to raise the income threshold for Medicaid eligibility. Georgia did not raise the income threshold, preventing many childless adults and adults with dependents ineligible. Georgia was 1 of 14 states that did not expand eligibility (Harker, 2020). Georgia has the third-highest uninsured rate in the country at 13.7% (Harker, 2020).

# **State and City Governance**

Policies at multiple levels beyond the federal government impact the economic mobility of Black residents within Atlanta. This section outlines the various governances structures and policies that most impact residents at the state and local level.

#### Georgia

The state of Georgia has a strong executive branch, headed by Governor Brian Kemp (R). The governor and executive branch oversee the budget and implementation of policies. Governor Kemp had struggles with Georgia's municipal governments because he forbade them from implementing mask mandates during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, even if those municipalities wanted one (Redmon et al., 2020). Atlanta was one of those municipalities that pushed for a local mask mandate. Before FY2008 (the Great Recession), Georgia spent \$2,623 per person. Under the FY2021 budget, the state only plans to spend \$2,392 per person (*Budget Primer*, 2020). If spending kept pace from FY2008 given population growth and inflation, the current budget plans to spend about \$2.4 billion less, signaling significant cuts to spending. A little less than 50% of the state budget is funded by the General Fund -- collected through income taxes, sales taxes, and motor fuel tax. Federal funds make up 31% of the state's funding.

Overall, Georgia is considered a *low-tax* and *low-investment* state. For the Georgia General Assembly, the budget is the only piece of legislation that is required to be passed each year. The Georgia Constitution requires a balanced budget.

#### **Key Departments and Policies**

#### Education

Of the federal funds, \$2.3 billion is from the U.S. Department of Education as a direct appropriation for education. Georgia has a comprehensive lottery-funded universal pre-K program open to all Georgia's four year-olds. Since 2011, the state has been allocating fewer dollars per pupil for pre-K education. Taking into account inflation, Georgia spent \$325 more per pupil in FY2011 than FY2020 (*Budget Primer*, 2020).

The FY2021 budget allocates \$2.3 billion to the University System of Georgia, a 10% decline from the previous year (*Budget Primer*, 2020). Tuition fees also support the University System. The state allocated \$334 million to Technical College System, including funding for adult education programs for those without a high school degree.

President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. One key element of ESSA is the availability of data and evaluations of school quality per the education standards set by the Department of Education (*Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) / U.S. Department of Education*, n.d.). Under the ESSA, Georgia incorporates the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) as a public platform to communicate school improvement to all

stakeholders (*College and Career Ready Performance Index*, n.d.). Comparing CCRPI scores across schools is a way to measure school quality and climate.

In high-poverty schools, teachers had a mobility rate (moving to a different school in the Georgia public school system) was 12.6% (*Georgia K-12 Teacher and Leader Workforce Report*, 2019). The teacher retention rate in 2020 was 75% (Pelfrey & Flamini, 2020). The district evaluates teachers using the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) (*Teacher Keys Effectiveness System*, n.d.). TKES includes three components: professional growth (20%), teacher assessment on performance standards (50%), and student growth (30%) (*Georgia's Teacher Keys Effectiveness System: Implementation Handbook*, 2020). Governor Kemp has consistently campaigned on teacher raises (Salzer, 2021). In 2019, he gave teachers a \$3,000 raise. In 2020, he championed for a \$2,000 raise that the Georgia ultimately cut to \$1,000. Due to the pandemic, that raise was also cut from the budget. However, in the updated FY2021 budget, there is a stipulation for a one-time \$1,000 bonus for teachers (Amy, 2021).

#### Department of Corrections

The total state budget for the Department of Corrections is \$1.1 billion.

#### Workforce Development

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the main federal law responsible for education and training services directly related to employment, particularly for those who face the greatest hurdles to employment. The public workforce development system is complex and includes of educational partners and state and local workforce development boards.

- The Regional Economic Business Assistance (REBA) program is a state-funded incentive program to promote business relocation to Georgia run out of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. It is primarily used as an incentive when a firm is between two locations for which to move. The financial incentive offered by REBA can help the firm decide to relocate to Georgia. Firms are given, at most, \$750,000 (Regional Economic Business Assistance (REBA), n.d.).
- Georgia has a relatively successful apprenticeship program called Georgia Youth Apprenticeship. It is a statewide apprenticeship program that combines in-class learning with on-the-job training. This program differs from adult apprenticeship programs because youth-focused programs offer more flexibility and benefits for all stakeholders. Currently, the program serves over 3,000 apprentices across Georgia (Lerman et al., 2019). This initiative has shown a completion rate of over 60% and an employment rate of nearly 50% (Lerman et al., 2019). The state appropriates about \$3 million each year for the program. Through competitive grants, the state distributes the funding to local programs. Employers also benefit from the apprenticeship program because of the increased worker productivity they experience as a result.

#### **Atlanta**

City Council is the main legislative body in Atlanta. There are 15 city council members, where 12 are voted by single districts and 3 are voted for at large. The City Council President presides over the meetings and votes in case of a tie. Once a piece of legislation has a positive recommendation by the standing committee, the legislation goes to vote. A majority vote will approve the legislation and then be sent to the mayor for final approval within seven days. If there is no signature of veto, the piece of legislation automatically becomes law after 7 days. A 2/3rds majority can override a mayoral veto. Since FY2017, City Council has spent \$7.3 million (0.13%) (*Checkbook | City of Atlanta*, n.d.).

The city's current mayor is Keisha Lance Bottoms (D). Mayor Bottoms is committed to racial equity and economic mobility. The mayor's office released the "Economic Mobility, Recovery, and Resiliency Plan" earlier this year, working with Invest Atlanta and WorkSource Atlanta, the city's two main economic development agencies. This plan indicates the political momentum building in Atlanta to make sweeping changes that uplift the city's Black residents.

#### **Key Departments and Policies**

Atlanta Public Schools (APS)

APS runs the public school system in Atlanta. They also function as partners in connecting youth with career planning and other support programs. The State Board of Education creates the educational policies and standards, and the Atlanta Board of Education manages the schools. The local city government does not play a role in education beyond collecting property taxes approved by the school board. For FY2019 in Georgia, over half of the school budgets (53%) are funded by the state while local and federal spending makes up 41% and 6%, respectively (Owens, 2020). Beyond federal funding, Georgia public schools are state-funded based on the Quality Basic Education Act (QBE). The QBE uses the number of students to determine allocations to specific schools and systems. Georgia schools operated under budget cuts until FY2018. Since then, QBE-allotted funds per pupil increased (Owens, 2020).

#### Atlanta Housing (AH)

AH is the local public housing agency (PHA) designated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and receives federal funds for public housing, housing vouchers, and housing subsidies. AH is a key partner for any housing-related policy. Voucher utilization has been a noted priority for AH, increasing voucher utilization from 70% in FY2016 to 82% in FY2020 (*Atlanta Housing: Plans & Reports*, 2020). In February 2020, the Atlanta City Council passed an ordinance banning landlords from refusing vouchers as payment (Peters, 2020). In FY2015, AH spent \$91.5 million for the tenant-based housing choice voucher program (*Atlanta Housing: Plans & Reports*, 2020). In FY2019, that amount increased to \$104.3 million (*Atlanta Housing: Plans & Reports*, 2020).

#### Department of Corrections

This department is responsible for running the operations of the local jails and detention centers. Corrections has spent \$25 million since FY2017 (0.46%) (*Checkbook | City of Atlanta*, n.d.). In 2019, City Council passed a resolution (18-R-3971) to close the Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC). The inmate population has severely dwindled and has never reached capacity. Rather than have a punitive space, the resolution aims to start community-based conversations on how to best repurpose the building (Resolution 18-R-3971, 2019).

#### Workforce Development

- WorkSource Atlanta: WorkSource Atlanta is the workforce system funded by the WIOA. WorkSource coordinates several programs to help individuals gain employment. Programs include GED preparation and funding for job training programs. The goal is to increase labor market participation and increase wages for individuals. However, WorkSource Atlanta was recently under fire because it lost a \$4 million TechHire Partnership Grant given by the U.S. Department of Labor. The agency failed to fully utilize the grant for its intended purposes—only spending \$333,000 since it was awarded in 2016 (Deere, 2020). This indicates dysfunction within the organization and its inability to properly provide job training and workforce development services to Atlanta residents.
- *Invest Atlanta:* Invest Atlanta is the official city development authority that creates programs to foster public-private partnerships that aim for job creation and economic growth. It is run by a nine-member board and chaired by the Mayor of Atlanta. Since 2010, Invest Atlanta has helped facilitate over \$10 billion in capital investment in Atlanta (*What We Do: Invest Atlanta*, n.d.).
- *Economic Opportunity Fund (EOF):* The EOF is a discretionary fund that allows the City of Atlanta to provide grants to specific firms on a case-by-case basis. It requires City Council to pass an ordinance for each use of the funds. Previous grants have ranged from \$100,000 to \$3.2 million (Ordinance 16-O-1623, 2016; Ordinance 15-O-1012, 2015).

#### Office of Contract Compliance

This office within the Mayor's Office deals with all city contracts. As part of a 2015 Disparity Report, City Council amended an ordinance supporting minority-owned and women-owned businesses contracting with the City (Ordinance 15-O-1556, 2015). It creates an official designation within the city as a minority-owned or woman-owned business eligible for city contracts. This allows the city to better evaluate how its public contracts are distributed across various businesses. The 2015 Disparity Report indicated an underutilization of minority-owned businesses in Atlanta's contracting (2015 City of Atlanta Disparity Study Summary Report, 2015).

# **Existing Evidence on Policies**

There are many policies aimed at both increasing mobility and closing racial mobility gaps. This section spans multiple policy areas, illuminating the multisectoral approach needed to address this broad issue.

#### **Universal Pre-K**

The benefits of early education on later life outcomes, specifically income, have been extensively studied. Early education is an attractive policy pathway because disadvantages during youth have numerous ripple effects throughout an individual's life. Early education is important because the years of early education are a particularly crucial time for child development and that interventions during early education make later interventions more effective (Blau, 2021).

The existing evidence on universal pre-K programs shows positive effects for low-income children, but the positive effects are marginal to none for higher-income children. Studies from Europe show an increase in 10 percentage points in enrolling in an academic track in high school (Datta Gupta & Simonsen, 2016). However, the extent to which a study in Europe is generalizable in the United States is questionable given the differences in social policies (child care, paid leave, etc.). Another study examined the impacts of Tulsa's Universal Pre-K program. Program participation led to an increase in test scores by 15.5 percentile points on average (Bartik et al., 2012). Various studies vary slightly in their noted impacts, but a common theme is the heterogeneous impacts across different income groups.

#### **Increase Teacher Quality**

One of the most widely studied early education interventions provides key evidence into different successful elements of early education. Many researchers have studied Project STAR because students and teachers were randomly assigned different classroom sizes. Exploiting this randomization, a 2011 study revealed that an above-average kindergarten teacher can lead to an increase in \$320,000 in total earnings for a classroom of 20 children (Chetty et al., 2011). A single year of an above-average teacher (75<sup>th</sup> percentile) can increase a child's earnings by 3.5% per year (Chetty et al., 2011). While test scores are an intermediary outcome for economic mobility, a 1 percentile point increase in kindergarten test scores can increase an individual's adult yearly earnings by \$130 between 25-27 (Chetty et al., 2011). Some policy considerations include replacing teachers in the bottom percentiles of quality with average teachers (Hanushek 2009). While average-quality teachers will cost more to retain, the benefits still outweigh the costs (Chetty, Friedman, et al., 2014).

However, race also plays a factor in educational interventions. While high-quality teachers and early education programs do positively impact an individual's later outcomes. Black individuals, particularly boys, may not gain the full benefits of these programs because they disproportionately face harsher disciplinary measures in addition to a lack of Black male role models within the education system (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008).

While there is strong evidence on the positive impacts of teacher quality, there are also many barriers to gaining and retaining high-quality teachers. One way to improve teacher quality is to increase the retention of high-quality teachers in the lowest-resourced schools. There is evidence indicating increased retention through financial incentives. Tennessee's teacher bonus program increased students' reading scores by about 0.079 to 0.116 standard deviations through a difference-in-difference study design (Swain et al., 2019). However, the earlier literature on financial incentives failed to come to a conclusive result on the effect of teacher bonuses on retention because bonuses were often part of broader education reforms, making it difficult to singularly analyze the impact of the single policy of teacher bonuses. A regression discontinuity study showed increased retention but researchers were unable to determine if the impact was attributable solely to teacher bonuses or to the broader impacts of increased funding for professional development or classroom quality (Henry et al., 2010). Overall, before the Swain et al. study, there were generally mixed results about the efficacy of bonuses on teacher retention (Balch & Springer, 2015).

#### **Sector-Based Job Training**

Sector-based job training programs allow a locality's strongest industries to influence the job training curriculum dependent on their sector's needs. Within a random-assignment study, sector-focused training programs have seen positive effects in multiple cities such as the Jewish Vocational Service in Boston, Per Scholas in the Bronx, and the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership in Milwaukee. On average, these program participants earned 18.3% more than the control groups (Maguire et al., 2009). The treated group was also able to work more hours, increasing the overall income for those individuals. This evidence indicates sector-focused or employer-linked job training programs will find more success than general job training programs.

Demand-driven job training programs with a screening mechanism to enroll individuals most likely to complete the training program are also effective. Demand-driven job training programs are another way to frame sector-based job training. In New Orleans, the Office of Workforce Development created a program called Career Pathways using a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Innovation Fund. They found partnerships between government departments, employers, and trainees were critical for success. Through an RCT study, the program increased quarterly earnings by about \$2,000 three quarters after the end of training (Baird et al., 2019). This is consistent with the positive impacts of the sector-focused training programs that rely on employers to help define and construct the training material. Another study found sector-based training program called Year Up increased average quarterly earnings by 53% in the sixth and seventh quarters after being randomly assigned in the experiment (*Bridging the Opportunity Divide for Low-Income Youth*, n.d.). Year Up is a program for 18-24 year-olds with a high school diploma. They provide stipends to participants to incentivize them to attend a full-time training program with the IT or finance sectors for six months.

EARN Maryland is a successful grant program that incentivizes firms to create job training programs tailored to their business's needs (Bastien, 2017). The program aims to connect highgrowth sectors and firms lacking talent with individuals and provide the resources to train them. This program also addressed the coordination efforts governments and firms face in job training programs. From the start of the program in 2014, EARN Maryland has trained more than 8,500 incumbent employees. Over 5,300 individuals have gained a job through the program (*EARN Maryland - Maryland's New Workforce Training Initiative - Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning*, n.d.). There has been no causal inference study on the impact of this specific grant program. However, the program itself is simply a mechanism for creating sector-based job training programs.

#### **Targeted Cognitive-Behavioral Youth Mentoring**

While many of the job training programs also include some mentoring, mentoring alone can also be an effective intervention for diminishing the impact of crime on economic mobility outcomes for Black individuals. Since Black individuals face a disproportionate amount of contact with the justice system, interventions aimed at rehabilitation within the justice system are critical. Mentoring programs are one type of intervention that can be particularly useful because of how they can easily target individuals.

New York City has successfully implemented mentoring programs aimed at reducing the reconviction rate among its participants. The Arches Transformative Mentoring program reduced one-year felony reconvictions by over two-thirds and two-year felony reconvictions by half (Lynch et al., 2018). Arches is a group mentoring program that uses a journaling curriculum focused on cognitive-behavioral studies delivered by mentors. Mentors typically came from similar backgrounds and also had past involvement criminal history, making them credible mentors. In interviews, young Black men said role models with similar backgrounds were easier to trust. This trust is critical for the success of various programs (Spievack et al., 2020).

New York City also has another mentoring program called the Advocate, Intervene, and Mentor (AIM) program. AIM differs from Arches in that AIM is a court-mandated juvenile alternative-to-placement program. It also serves a slightly different age group, 13-18 year-old individuals. AIM's evaluation showed a decrease in recidivism among participants, whereby only 3% of participants had another felony reconviction within 12 months (Cramer et al., 2018).

Arches and AIM are both parts of New York City's Young Men Initiative (YMI). YMI, launched in 2011, is a private-public effort to address the gaps between Black and Latinx men aged 16 to 24 and their White counterparts. The effort includes initiatives across education, health, justice, and employment (Astone et al., 2016). Arches and AIM are two key programs under the justice wing of the effort. The entirety of YMI is funded by tax levies totaling \$22 million in addition to private philanthropic funds totaling \$60 million from Bloomberg Philanthropies and Open Society Foundation (Astone et al., 2016).

Additional rigorous studies indicate the effectiveness of these types of policies. Three large-scale RCTs were conducted in Chicago to attempt to change the decision-making processes of low-income youth. The first two RCTs studied a youth program called "Becoming a Man" (BAM). The third RCT studied interventions done in collaboration with the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. The interventions showed large behavioral responses through reduced crime arrests and reduced readmission rates to juvie. Participation in BAM reduced total arrests during the program period and increased engagement in school (S. B. Heller et al., 2017). In the study where they acquired follow-up data, the graduation rates increased by 12%-19%. With the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center, the intervention reduced readmission rates by 21%. Other cognitive-behavioral interventions for youth and adults have also seen positive effects (Blattman et al., 2017; S. Heller et al., 2013).

#### **Place-Based Housing Vouchers**

Housing policies are another key component of increasing upward mobility for Black individuals. Atlanta, specifically, has been a heavily segregated area, where the high-poverty areas in the southern and western parts of the city have a high proportion of Black residents. Racially segregated and poverty-concentrated neighborhoods limit the opportunities for Black residents (Young, 2002). Moving to Opportunity reveals the positive impacts of mixed-income neighborhoods. MTO is a housing choice voucher (HCV) program that allows households to move from high-poverty neighborhoods to low-poverty neighborhoods. The largest impacts of the MTO program were on children's long-term outcomes. Moving with a voucher while young (before age 13) led to increased college attendance and earnings in adulthood and a reduction in single parenthood rates (Chetty, Hendren, et al., 2016). An instrumental variables design study using the randomization of vouchers showed that moving young increases earnings as an adult by \$3,000 yearly (Chetty, Hendren, et al., 2016). While these programs have culminated in positive impacts, there are also strong critics of these types of programs because moving to a new neighborhood may weaken social ties and does not directly address racial bias (Geronimus & Thompson, 2004). While there is strong evidence supporting place-based housing vouchers, few voucher users actually move to low-poverty neighborhoods. In 2017, only 20% of HCV users lived in a tract with a poverty level of less than 10% (Galvez & Oppenheimer, 2020).

One of the barriers is the lack of protection for HCV users. As such, discrimination based on the voucher use by landlords is common (Cunningham et al., 2018). Landlords will cite "source of income" as reasoning for rejecting a rental application. Voucher holders have an allotted time to utilize their voucher before it is passed onto another family on the waiting list, thus landlord discrimination can prevent families from using the voucher in general. This discrimination can be more common in low-income neighborhoods (Cunningham et al., 2018). Research also indicates discrimination may prevent families from moving to neighborhoods that provide economic and educational benefits (Tighe et al., 2017). In an attempt to combat this issue of HCV discrimination, many localities have passed voucher protection legislation. A case study of Oregon, which passed its housing voucher protection law in 2013, shows the law increased the number of landlords participating in the voucher program (Galvez et al., 2020). However, there has been no evaluation of the effect of discrimination more broadly.

#### **Supporting Minority-Owned Businesses**

While many of the alternatives discussed thus far have dealt with increasing the income and earnings of Black individuals, policy alternatives increasing the wealth of Black individuals are also critical. Business owners build wealth while also creating jobs for others (R. Fairlie, 2020). Earnings, alone, cannot be the only mechanism for closing the racial economic gap. Wealth provides more structural and systemic benefits that are transmitted generationally. Historically racist policies already have disadvantaged Black individuals, and this is true for business owners as well. Supporting minority-owned businesses is one way to help close the racial wealth gap. Minority-owned businesses allow individuals to diversify their wealth assets and insure themselves against income drops. However, minority-owned businesses are already at a disadvantage because it is more difficult for them to secure loans and other financial assistance from banks (Temkin et al., 2008). Even more, Black business owners tend to apply for loans less than their White counterparts because they fear denial even if they are worthy candidates for the loan (R. W. Fairlie et al., 2020).

However, there is some contention on how minority-owned businesses can spur economic mobility. While business ownership can be a pathway to upward mobility, Black businesses are more likely to experience failure than White businesses, leading to increased downward mobility for Black business owners (Kroeger & Wright, 2021). This can widen the racial wealth gap. Kroeger and Wright show how Black entrepreneurs have lower rates of upward mobility and higher rates of downward mobility compared to White entrepreneurs. This insight implies policy solutions focused on helping existing Black businesses succeed rather than increase the number of Black entrepreneurs would be more beneficial to increasing Black upward mobility (Kroeger & Wright, 2021).

Minority-business accelerators are one policy option to help support minority-owned businesses through some of these challenges outlined. Accelerators work by providing business owners with customized business support and connecting them to sources of capital needed for growth (Redus, 2020). Business accelerators supporting entrepreneurial efforts can increase financing in the local region (Fehder & Hochberg, 2014). Overall, business accelerators directed at minority-owned businesses are opportunities to develop the wealth of Black and other racially- and ethnically marginalized residents.

### Criteria

#### Cost-Effectiveness (15%)

Cost-effectiveness is the discounted cost of reducing the number of Black Atlanta individuals in the lowest income bracket (\$35,000/year) over the next ten years over the number of Black Atlanta individuals that move into a higher income bracket from the lowest income bracket. This criterion evaluates the per-individual costs associated with increasing wages through policy alternatives resulting in upward mobility.

To calculate cost-effectiveness, I divide the associated costs of each alternative by its projected outcome. The projected outcome is the number of Black individuals who move upwards from the lowest income bracket. This outcome is measured by how much the wage increase impacts aggregate income and if that new aggregate income moves the individual into a higher income bracket. This criterion measures cost relative to the projected effectiveness of the alternative, ultimately measuring the efficiency of the alternative. Considering the standard budgetary restraints of government policy and the difficulty in measuring cost-effectiveness, this criterion is weighted at 15%.

A policy is defined as "effective" if it increases the number of Black individuals in Atlanta that move to a higher income bracket from the lowest income bracket. The costs are confined to the geographic region of the city of Atlanta.

Costs of the policy includes all direct and indirect social costs of implementing the policy, including material costs, rent, labor costs, and opportunity costs associated with each policy alternative as necessary for the full implementation.

The cost-effectiveness measure is:

Total costs / number of Black residents moving to higher income bracket from the lowest income bracket

Data sources for evaluating this outcome include annual income data by race from the Current Population Survey from the Census Bureau. I utilized the literature from my background section to project the impact of specific policies over the next ten years compared to the baseline.

#### Political Feasibility (25%)

This criterion focuses on the likelihood that the policy alternative would gain enough support from political stakeholders as appropriate for each policy option. Political feasibility measures if the legislative body would accept the policy as well as fund it.

This criterion is measured through research on the specific political or administrative figures needed for the policy alternative to be passed.

This criterion is measured on a scale of high, medium, and low political feasibility. I measured this criterion by considering past policies and voting records.

Political feasibility is critical because, without high political feasibility, any policy alternative will fail to be enacted. It is weighted at 25% to emphasize the importance of political support while also understanding that simply gaining political approval is not enough for a successful policy and outcome.

#### **Implementation Feasibility (30%)**

This criterion evaluates the likelihood a policy alternative is technically able to be implemented by the designated agencies and entities. The success of a policy depends on the likelihood of full implementation by the responsible parties.

For this criterion, I considered the following elements: number of needed agencies, current technology capacity at needed agencies, existing programmatic infrastructure, and complexity of facets of policy alternative. I used information from the literature review on implementation guidance to evaluate this criterion. I attached either a high, medium or low rating for each alternative. It is weighted at 30% because a policy's effectiveness will rely heavily on the ability to implement.

#### **Equity (30%)**

The equity criterion evaluates who specifically will be benefitting from the policy alternatives. This criterion will evaluate how well each policy alternative can address the upward mobility of other marginalized racial and ethnic groups.

I assigned either a high, medium, or low equity value to this criterion.

While Black residents are a focus in Atlanta, the city is becoming increasingly diverse. So it is important to consider how these policy alternatives will impact all different racial groups. Additionally, it aligns with their mission of helping achieve "equitable and livable communities." This criterion is weighted at 30% to emphasize the importance of this element to Neighborhood Nexus's mission.

### **Alternatives**

The following policy alternatives were chosen by considering the main drivers of low economic mobility, best practices in the literature, the current legislation at the city, state, and federal level, and the outcome of interest, the number of upwardly mobile Black individuals. Each policy alternative will be evaluated against a set of criteria: *cost-effectiveness*, *political feasibility*, *implementation feasibility*, and *equity*.

#### **Alternative 1: Status Quo**

This policy option freezes all laws, rules, regulations at the time of December 2020. This includes all current federal, state, and local policies.

**Cost-Effectiveness:** This alternative has a cost-effectiveness of \$224 million. I utilize data from the Census Bureau on the proportion of households within different income levels by race. I assume that the proportions of households within each income level are the same for individuals (Appendix I).

**Political Feasibility:** This alternative is high in political feasibility because it retains the existing state of legislation. Mayor Bottoms's main initiative is the One Atlanta plan, which puts forward a vision for "an affordable, resilient, and equitable Atlanta" (Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms Announces One Atlanta: Economic Mobility, Recovery and Resiliency Plan, 2020).

*Implementation Feasibility:* For implementation feasibility, the status quo functionally has the highest level of implementation feasibility because the programs, laws, and regulations have already been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

*Equity:* Despite the Economic Mobility, Recovery and Resiliency Plan, the majority of the elements in the status quo do not have a targeted approach, so it has a low equity rating. It does not adequately address the needs of multiple racial and ethnically marginalized groups within Atlanta.

# Alternative 2: Establish Grant Fund for Employer-Led Job Training Programs

City Council passes an ordinance establishing a grant program for "strategic industry partnerships" (SIP) to apply for a local municipal grant for employer-led training programs. SIPs are three or more industry and education partners. The partnership between local employers aims to incentivize firms in high-growth sectors to train laborers locally (Bastien, 2017).

The grant application will require SIPs to design a training program. In doing so, they will determine the industry labor market gaps and assess how to develop them locally. The workforce training plan must outline:

- 1. Existing skill shortages,
- 2. how to develop needed skills,
- 3. and a recruitment and placement strategy for the training program's graduates with a priority on locally-sourced talent.

Invest Atlanta will be the fiscal agent for the grant. They will release the grant application and will be responsible for choosing who receives the award. The average size of the grant will be \$500,000. The total amount allocated will be \$5 million.

The award will be granted over two years. It will be paid in six-month increments. SIPs will be required to submit documentation of their progress to continue to receive funding.

After funding, SIPs will work with WorkSource Atlanta for technical assistance in implementing a work training program and outreach.

This alternative will be funded through the EOF, allowing for the full \$5 million to be allocated to this alternative's grant program.

This policy will prioritize high-growth industries that further develop Atlanta's local economy. Invest Atlanta will be responsible for working with businesses, industry associations, career and technical associations, and economic development organizations to determine the high-growth industries. The five target industries are healthcare, information technology, transportation and logistics, advanced manufacturing, and skilled trades (*WorkSource Metro Atlanta Regional Plan 2020-2023*, 2020).

**Cost-Effectiveness:** This alternative has a cost-effectiveness of \$23 million per Black upward mobile individual.

**Political Feasibility:** This alternative has medium political feasibility. The estimated total financial cost of the program is about \$5.5 million. Due to the high cost, this piece of legislation would find resistance from City Council members. The maximum amount of funding from a past EOF ordinance was \$3.2 million (*Ordinance 15-O-1012*, 2015). The cost of this alternative is nearly double the largest-to-date EOF award since the program started in 2014. Mayor Bottoms would be supportive of the initiative because it aligns with her *One Atlanta Economic Mobility Plan*.

Implementation Feasibility: This has a low level of implementation feasibility. The agencies and organizations responsible for this alternative include WorkSource Atlanta and Invest Atlanta. While the number of agencies is relatively low, the logistics are complicated. Both WorkSource Atlanta and Invest Atlanta will need to build strong relationships with the private sector firms for successful implementation. Additionally, the timeline for this project will be lengthy because of the grant application process. Since SIPs are required to develop their own training plan, the alternative's timeline is dependent on the firms interested. Lastly, Erika Smith, the economic development and racial equity lead at the Annie E. Casey Atlanta Civic site, discussed how firms lacked interest in previous grant programs in developing local talent (E. Smith, personal communication, April 2, 2021). While this alternative aims to cater to business needs, local workforce development leaders expressed a cultural barrier in getting firms involved.

*Equity:* This alternative is low in equity. Training programs will be open to everyone, so there is an opportunity for other marginalized groups to benefit from the program. However, there is no direct mechanism for gaining a diverse participant pool. Private firms will also have a high level of say in the final decisions of participants.

# Alternative 3: Salary Retention Bonuses for High-Quality Teachers in High-Priority Classrooms

City Council passes an ordinance funding salary bonuses for highly qualified teachers in middle schools in the most under-resourced districts in Atlanta. The most under-resourced districts are located in the southern portions of Atlanta (Atlanta City Council Districts 1, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12), where the population is primarily Black and African-American. Using the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), APS will designate which schools will qualify for teacher bonuses. The teacher bonus program is based on a differences-in-differences study showing the positive impact of teacher bonuses on student achievement and a quasi-experimental study on value-add teachers (Chetty, Friedman, et al., 2014; Swain et al., 2019).

As part of this policy, Atlanta School Board will increase the tax rate from 20.74 mills to 20.85 mills. This will generate about \$4.5 million more in revenue (McCray, 2020). Atlanta Public Schools and Neighborhood Nexus will be responsible for implementing the initial data evaluation necessary to measure teacher quality. This alternative will first use the existing data from TKES and then conduct additional data analysis based on any gaps in the existing data. The final data evaluation will include a teacher quality score measuring the teacher's value-add, classroom observation score, and teacher's commitment to the school's community (*Teacher Turnover, Teacher Quality, and Student Achievement in DCPS | NBER*, n.d.)(Adnot et al., 2017). With this information, the APS will set a threshold for teachers who are eligible for bonuses.

Once the schools obtain their teachers' quality measurements, they will apply for an annual \$6,000 bonus for their high-quality teachers. To qualify for the bonus, the teacher must stay at a qualifying school for the next school year and maintain their high-quality teaching rating (Swain et al., 2019).

*Cost-Effectiveness:* This policy option's cost-effectiveness is \$14 million per upward mobile Black resident, which is the lowest cost-effectiveness value out of the alternatives.

Political Feasibility: This policy alternative has high political feasibility. Governor Kemp promised all Georgia teachers a \$5,000 increase in salary in 2020 but has only delivered on \$3,000 of that raise due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Amy, 2021). On April 12, Atlanta School Board is voting on a 2% wage increase for their teachers (McCray, 2021). This indicates an increased political favor to provide increased financial resources to teachers in the state and city. This policy option requires a tax increase to gather enough funds. However, the School Board has invested recently in maintaining its current tax rate when it previously attempted to decrease the tax rate. This indicates a willingness to maintain tax collection to maintain flexibility in their budget. Furthermore, City Council Member, Matt Westmoreland from District 14, is a noted advocate for increased teacher pay and would be a strong supporter of this policy on the local level.

Implementation Feasibility: This has high implementation feasibility. APS, Atlanta School Board, and Neighborhood Nexus will be the primary organizations implementing this alternative. APS has an existing evaluation infrastructure to measure classroom success and teacher quality through CCRPI and TKES. Research and Evaluation at APS is an office working solely with data partners to approve and fulfill data requests and coordinate data partnerships for the school district. Neighborhood Nexus also has the technical expertise to carry out the necessary data evaluations. The bonuses will be allocated through the standard payment system. The timeline of the alternative will depend on the initial evaluation of existing data sources.

*Equity:* This has medium equity. While the targeted districts have high proportions of Black students (79%), they also have high proportions of other racial and ethnic minorities (Woodworth, 2018). High-quality teachers benefit all students in the classroom.

# Alternative 4: Cognitive-Behavioral Mentoring Program for Young Probationers

City Council passes a resolution to creates a cognitive-behavioral mentoring program for probationers aged 16-24. As part of this initiative, this alternative will use part of the recently closed Atlanta City Detention Center as a community-based probation office, offering programs for current individuals on probation.

The group mentoring model is based on cognitive-behavioral therapy methods, specifically the Arches Mentoring program based in New York City as part of the Young Men's Initiative. This policy will prioritize hiring mentors with similar backgrounds and characteristics as the participants in the program (Lynch et al., 2018). The mentors must be relatable to the participants for the program to be successful.

The mentoring program will occur over six months with two one-hour group sessions each week, totaling 48 group sessions. The mentors will guide the group through discussions and an Interactive Journaling curriculum. In addition to the mentoring sessions, the participants must also complete all journaling activities. For staffing, the program will hire one full-time program coordinator and two full-time mentors.

For referral into the program, probation officers will be primarily responsible for connecting youth on probation with the program.

The program will provide \$600 stipends via pre-paid debit card to all program participants, issued periodically. The stipend will be dependent on attendance and continued participation in the program. The ACDC will also provide meals for all group mentoring sessions (*Arches: A Transformative Mentoring Intervention: Request for Applications (RFA)*, 2012).

All mentors will be trained for 28 hours by the local non-profit, Rehabilitation Enables Dreams (RED). RED will also provide technical on-site assistance.

This policy alternative will require City Council to approve a reappropriation of funds from running the ACDC to invest in this youth mentoring program.

*Cost-Effectiveness:* This policy option has a cost-effectiveness of \$1.3 billion per upward mobile Black resident, which is the highest cost-effectiveness.

*Political Feasibility:* This is ranked medium in political feasibility. The Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC) was already successfully closed by City Council in 2018 (Catts, 2021), indicating the city's political momentum in creating policies that maintain a more holistic approach to justice-focused policy. City Council Member, Howard Shook, has commented on City Council's commitment to implement the full transition of the ACDC (Catts, 2021). However, this alternative has a high cost, requiring raising taxes to raise revenue which will be politically difficult. Additionally, since the program's capacity is small (Lynch et al., 2018), City Council members will prioritize the program less.

*Implementation Feasibility:* It is ranked low in implementation feasibility. This alternative will work between the Department of Corrections, the ACDC, and the non-profit, RED. The timeline of this program is nebulous because it depends on the length of the ACDC transition. Due to Covid-19, the task force responsible for redesigning the ACDC was suspended with no clear timeline on return (*Reimagining the ACDC Task Force | Atlanta, GA*, n.d.). Additionally, recruiting the proper mentors will be crucial, adding additional complexity (Spievack et al., 2020).

*Equity:* It will be low in equity because 90% of the inmates at the ACDC are Black Atlantans (*Close the Atlanta City Detention Center and Deliver Long-Term Public Safety | Vera Institute*, n.d.). This alternative will not have a high level of equity since the participants will likely be Black Atlantans and likely not impact other marginalized groups as much. Additionally, the program can only reach a limited number of individuals which also hinders its equity rating.

#### **Alternative 5: Minority-Owned Business Accelerator**

City Council passes an ordinance funding an initiative that provides tailored business support to high-potential minority-owned businesses in the Atlanta area. This program will begin with ten minority-owned small businesses. They will work with Invest Atlanta, WorkSource Atlanta, Russell Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and the Atlanta Wealth Building Initiative. This program is based on the Cincinnati Minority-Owned Business Accelerator Program (Making Cincinnati the National Epicenter for Minority Business Development, 2020).

As part of the accelerator, the businesses will first receive a comprehensive assessment of their current business. Based on the assessment, Invest Atlanta will work with the business to develop a growth plan. After the growth plan is established, local partners (Russell Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the Atlanta Wealth Building Initiative) will help the business execute the growth plan. The accelerator aims to help minority-owned businesses receive technical training to help their business grow, expand their networks, and gain information on available opportunities. For example, the accelerator can help provide technical assistance for businesses that want to take advantage of the Opportunity Zone tax credit.

The accelerator will prioritize businesses in disinvested neighborhoods and that have 100 or fewer employees. Invest Atlanta will be responsible for administering the application process and selecting businesses. This program aims to reach 20 new minority-owned businesses each year. Each of the participating businesses will receive \$3,000 to cover various costs of participating in the program such as transportation and childcare.

This policy alternative will be funded through an extension in the base wage subject to unemployment insurance taxes. Currently, the state of Georgia taxes unemployment insurance on the first \$9,500 for each employee. The City of Atlanta will collect taxes on an additional \$2,000 of base wage on top of the Georgia unemployment insurance tax at the state tax rate. The revenue will go into a trust used for economic development expenditures.

*Cost-Effectiveness:* The minority-owned business accelerator has a cost-effectiveness of \$211 million for upward mobile Black individual.

**Political Feasibility:** This is ranked medium in political feasibility because it aligns well with previous policies the City Council members have supported and the mayor's initiatives. In December 2020, City Council passed an ordinance extending the Equal Business Opportunity Program (20-O-1731). Seven council members that voted unanimously to pass the 2015 EOF ordinance are still currently on City Council. One of the voting members from the 2015 council is the current mayor. In 2020, City Council passed an ordinance (19-O1722) establishing a small business advisory council to help address income inequality in the city (Ordinance 19-O-1722, 2019). This indicates a willingness by the City Council to listen to the interests of small business owners in the city. However, City Council has mostly only passed incremental policies. While the council members indicate a preference for supporting minority-owned businesses, they have been unwilling to utilize funding to create a program-based policy. The high funds required of this alternative also hinder its political feasibility.

Implementation Feasibility: It is ranked medium in implementation feasibility. There are similarly designed business accelerators by local organizations in Atlanta (Center for Civic Innovation Fellowship, n.d.; Community Wealth Building Accelerator, n.d.). While this policy requires the coordination of multiple stakeholders in addition to the participant firms, the specialized knowledge of local partners will improve the implementation feasibility of this alternative. The entities involved in the implementation will be Invest Atlanta, WorkSource Atlanta, Russell Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and the Atlanta Wealth Building Initiative. This initiative includes an application process for the businesses, which lengthens the timeline of the policy option.

*Equity:* This alternative has a high equity rating because the policy targets minority-owned businesses. Additionally, since they are minority-owned businesses, they are more likely to hire more minority employees ("Minority-Owned Businesses," n.d.), strengthening the equity rating.

**Table 1. Outcomes Matrix** 

	Cost- Effectiveness (15%)	Political Feasibility (25%)	Implementation Feasibility (30%)	Equity (30%)
Status Quo	\$224 M	High	High	Low
Establish Grant Fund for Employer- Led Job Training Programs	\$23 M	Medium	Low	Low
Provide Bonuses to High-Quality Teachers in High- Priority Schools	\$14 M	High	High	Medium
Cognitive-Based Youth Mentoring Program for Young Probationers	\$1.3 B	Medium	Low	Low
Minority-Owned Business Accelerator	\$211 M	Medium	Medium	High

## Recommendation

Evaluating each alternative against the weighting of the four criteria, **I recommend Alternative 3: provide bonuses to high-quality teachers in high-priority schools.** This alternative has the lowest cost-effectiveness. Alternative 3 also has a high ranking in political and implementation feasibility. It ranks medium in equity.

While the status quo is ranked high in political and implementation feasibility, it still maintains the highest value of cost-effectiveness and lowest equity. The other three alternatives (job training, mentoring, and business accelerator) are large-scale policy alternatives. However, due to the scale of the policies, they become less cost-effective and face more political barriers. Since they require much more funding and Georgia remains a low investment and low tax state, they are not my current recommendations. However, I encourage keeping them in mind for future actions as Atlanta and Georgia become more fruitful political grounds for increased public investment.

# **Implementation**

The main agency involved in Alternative 3 will be Atlanta Public Schools and the Atlanta School Board of Education. They will be responsible for coordinating with data partners (e.g. Neighborhood Nexus) to evaluate the current evaluation information and data. This evaluation will determine which schools will be eligible for gaining funds for teacher bonuses and determine the threshold for eligible teachers.

In the first three months, I recommend the partners and stakeholders within APS, School Board, and Neighborhood Nexus evaluate the current data and information on

- 1. Teacher quality
- 2. Classroom success
- 3. Racial and ethnic makeup of students, teachers, and staff

Following this initial evaluation, Neighborhood Nexus and APS should design the additional data collection and evaluation. IMPACT by D.C. Public Schools is a good model for an evaluation method that meets the goals of measuring and determining a high-quality teacher (Adnot et al., 2017).

The main barriers to successful implementation are clear communication of the bonus as well as ensuring there is a mechanism to know which teachers are planning on staying for the next year. Timing is crucial for this policy. If teachers leave too close to the start of a new school year, APS will struggle to recruit and hire high-quality candidates (Walker, 2019).

Lastly, financial incentives are not the only way of retaining teachers. It will be crucial to continue to collaborate with teachers and other educators. Listen to their concerns and needs within their roles in the highest-priority districts. Classroom materials, professional development, and innovative pay scales are potential avenues for additional support to this incremental financial incentive policy (Owens, 2015).

# **Appendix**

#### Appendix A: Lower hourly wages due to differences in educational attainment

Table A1. Hourly Wages by Educational Attainment (Carnevale et al., 2011)

	Hourly Wage 2009 \$
Less than high school	\$11.70
High school diploma	\$15.67
Some college, associate's degree	\$19.73*
Bachelor's degree or higher	\$27.26**

<sup>\*</sup>Some college and associate's degree have different hourly wages, so I used the average of the two estimates: (\$18.69 + \$20.77)/2 = \$19.73

Using Census Bureau data, I attained data for the Atlanta Metro Region's level of education attainment for those 25 and older. I compared the differences in educational attainment between those living below poverty in past 12 months and those living above the poverty line in the past 12 months.

Table A2. Educational Attainment for Atlanta Metro Region (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019)

	<b>Below Poverty Line</b>	At or above poverty line
Less than high school	22%	8%
High school diploma	33%	20%
Some college, associate's degree	25%	26%
Bachelor's degree or higher	20%	46%

Given the educational breakdowns for those in poverty and those not, I calculated an average hourly wage for each.

Average hourly wage for individual in poverty (2009\$): (0.22)(11.70) + (0.33)(15.67) + (0.25)(19.73) + (0.20)(27.26) = \$18.13

<sup>\*\*</sup> Census Bureau data does not have breakdowns for educational attainment above a BA, but assuming that the majority of those in these category only have a BA, this value will be used in the calculations. This makes the estimate more conservative as an underestimate.

Adjusted for inflation<sup>5</sup>: \$22.00 in 2020 dollars

Average hourly wage for individual not in poverty (2009\$): (0.08)(11.70) + (0.20)(15.67) + (0.26)(19.73) + (0.46)(27.26) = \$21.74

Adjusted for inflation: \$26.39

Difference between hourly wages for poverty and non-poverty: \$26.39 - \$22.00 = \$4.39

Average hours worked in a year full-time with 2 weeks of vacation and 10 national holidays: 1920 hours

Total lost wages per year for Black individuals in poverty in Atlanta (2020): (\$4.39)(1920 hours)(78,059 individuals) = \$657,943,699

#### **Appendix B: Wages lost due to health**

Hours lost due to increased mortality: (1920 hours)(7 years) = 13440 hours

Total amount lost in wages:

Black children in the Atlanta region have a poverty rate of 27% (*Children Living in Poverty | KIDS COUNT Data Center*, n.d.)

Births in Georgia: 126,172 (State and Territorial Data: Births, Birth Rates, Deaths, and Death Rates by State and Territory, 2020)

4.7% of the population of Georgia is from the Atlanta (Census Bureau) and 51% of the population in Atlanta is Black.

I am using birth rates here because I am doing a per year estimate, so I calculate the amount of lifetime earnings lost per year with the number of Black children born into poverty each year.

(13440 hours)(\$22)(126,172 individuals)(0.27)(0.047)(0.51) = \$241,444,177

#### **Appendix C: Wages lost due to incarceration**

Total Black jail population in 2016 = 419 (*Vera Institute of Justice: Incarceration Trends Dataset*, 2018/2020)

Jail population is the average daily count of inmates.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Used https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/ for inflation calculations

Total Black prison population in 2016 = 737 (*Vera Institute of Justice: Incarceration Trends Dataset*, 2018/2020)

Prison population is calculated as the count of inmates on December 31 of that year instead of a daily average. Given that 40% of prisoners have a sentence less than a year, I am subtracting 40% from the prison population. This provides a conservative estimate of the yearly lost wages of prisoners.

Total prison population serving at least 1 year in 2016 = (737 inmates)(0.6) = 442

Adjusted total prison and jail population assuming that 20% of crime is attributed to poverty (H. J. Holzer et al., 2008): (419 + 442)(0.2) = 172.2

Total wages lost due to time spent in prison or jail: \$33,000 (2014 dollars) adjusted for inflation: \$36,296.99 in 2020 dollars

(\$36,296.99)(172.2) = \$6,250,341.68 in 2020 dollars

### **Appendix D: Direct costs of crime**

Total direct crime costs in 1997 for the U.S. per year: \$397 billion (Anderson, 1999; H. J. Holzer et al., 2008)

I used Anderson's national cost calculation for "crime-induced production." More information can be found in Anderson's paper in Table 2. The Costs of Crime-Induced Production.

I calculate a proportion of the national estimate assuming that 20% of crime is attributed to poverty, 1.6% of national crime occurs within the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta MSA, 23% of Atlanta MSA crime is committed in Atlanta, and 66% of crime is committed by Black individuals (from the prison and jail populations calculations). It is important to note that 67% of the prison and jail population within the Atlanta Metro Region is very high and is disproportionate to their high population.

Direct costs of crime for Atlanta MSA per year in 1997 dollars: (0.20)(0.016)(0.23)(0.67)(\$397 billion) = \$192,846,720

Adjusted for inflation: \$310,971,844.33 in 2020 dollars

### **Appendix E: Direct costs of health**

The health care expenditures (direct and transfer) per Black individual for those in poverty = \$5,517 in 2018 (MEPS Summary Tables, n.d.)

Adjusted for inflation: \$5,720.91

Total health expenditures:

(\$5,720.91)(78,059 individuals) = \$446,568,514 in 2020 dollars

## **Appendix F: TANF**

Table A3. TANF Benefit Calculations (*Division of Family and Children Services Descriptive Data Fiscal Year 2019*, 2019)

County	TANF Annual Benefits	Percent Black Recipients	Calculated Benefits for Black residents
Fulton	\$4,432,968	1988/2559 = 78%	\$3,457,715.04

Adjusted for inflation: \$3,500,374.49

## **Appendix G: SNAP**

Table A4. SNAP Benefit Calculations (*Division of Family and Children Services Descriptive Data Fiscal Year 2019*, 2019)

County	Total Benefit Dollars (FY2019)	Percent Black Recipients	Calculated Benefit for Black Residents
Fulton	\$224,812,882	109,152/136,460 = 80%	\$179,850,306

Adjusted for inflation: \$182,069,203.71

**Appendix H: Cost to Society Totals** 

### **Direct Costs**

Crime: \$310,971,844.33 Health: \$446,568,514

#### **Opportunity Costs**

Lost Wages (education): \$657,943,699 Lost Wages (mortality): \$241,444,177 Lost Wages (incarceration): \$6,250,341.68

### **Other Transfer Payments**

TANF: \$3,500,374.49 SNAP: \$182,069,203.71

Total \$1,848,748,154.21

#### **Appendix I: Cost-Effectiveness Methodology**

Table A5. General Assumptions for CEA

Discount Rate	3%
Time Projection	10 years
Indirect Cost Rate	37%
Projected Annual Wage Increase	3.8%
Percent of Black Residents in Atlanta	51%
Average Hourly Wage for Atlanta	\$28
Government Employee	
Average Hourly Wage for Black Resident	\$14.95
Rent per square foot per month	\$15
Square Feet Per Employee	200
Low-Income Threshold	Real Earnings < \$35,000/year

The discount rate used is 3% for net present value calculations. The indirect cost rate was calculated using the indirect cost rates for wages from the Atlanta Regional Council Financial Report (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), 2020). The projected annual wage increase is calculated using the wage increase data from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (Wage Growth Tracker, n.d.). The percentage of Black residents in Atlanta is 51% is from Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, n.d.). The average hourly wage for government employees is from Gov Salaries (City Of Atlanta Salary - Georgia, n.d.). The average hourly wage for Black residents is from the Mayor's Economic Mobility Report (Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms Announces One Atlanta: Economic Mobility, Recovery and Resiliency Plan, 2020). The rent per square foot per month is calculated from an Emory University report (Real Estate Market Analysis, 2020).

#### Costs

#### **Status Quo**

This cost-effectiveness analysis used real income distribution data disaggregated by race from the Census Bureau and population projections by the State of Georgia to calculate the projected number of individuals moving out of the low-income level. In the status quo, there are zero Black individuals who move upwardly mobile, so assume the outcome is something very small, 0.1, to calculate a cost-effectiveness value.

# Table A6. Status Quo Costs

The costs were calculated using the FY2019 total expenditures of the main agencies responsible for a number of policy areas impacting economic mobility. The costs from the existing programs are from the public budgeting reports from the City of Atlanta and the Atlanta Regional Commission .

<b>Existing Programs</b>	2020 Dollars (\$)
Atlanta Housing	\$281,227,349
WorkSource Atlanta	\$3,700,884
Invest Atlanta	\$1,439,463
ARC Workforce Development	\$16,151,531
Atlanta Public Schools	\$817,601,255
Costs to Society	
SNAP	\$535,425,288
TANF	\$8,199,934
Health Expenditures	\$452,078,040
Crime Direct Costs	\$314,808,450
Lost Wages (Education)	\$666,061,060
Lost Wages (Mortality)	\$244,422,987
Lost Wages (Incarceration)	\$6,327,455
Total	\$3,347,443,694

## **Policy Alternative Calculations**

Table A7. Grant Assumptions

<b>Number of SIPs Granted Funds</b>	10
Hours Worked Per PTE	1040
Number of Employees	5
Number of Participants	1150
Hours of Training	720 Hours

The assumptions from Table 6 are based on programmatic elements from the EARN Maryland program, Georgia's existing Youth Apprenticeship Program (720 hours), and the projected labor needed to undergo the implementation of the program (*EARN Maryland Annual Report 2020*, 2021; Lerman et al., 2019). The evidence used for calculating the outcome assumes a treatment effect of a 10% yearly increase in wages (Baird et al., 2019).

Table A8. Grant Costs

Fiscal Costs	2020 Dollars (\$)
Total Grant Amount	\$5,000,000
Total Rent	\$180,000
<b>Total Labor Costs</b>	\$253,076
Social Costs	
Total Participants' Opportunity Costs	\$12,378,600
Total	\$17,811,676

Table A9. Teacher Bonuses Assumptions

<b>Bonus Amount</b>	\$6,000
Teachers Impacted	67.8
<b>Total PTE Employees</b>	10
Additional Hours per Admin	520

The bonus amount is based on the Tennessee bonus program (Swain et al., 2019). The evidence for calculating the outcomes shows wage increases in adulthood when students are taught by a high-quality teacher. The teachers impacted is based on the retention rate of teachers in APS in 2020 (75%) and the effectiveness of the Tennessee bonus program (67.8%) assuming 400 teachers are given bonuses (Pelfrey & Flamini, 2020; Swain et al., 2019). The average income increase for a student with a high-quality teacher is \$2,374 per year assuming a 40 year career (Chetty, Friedman, et al., 2014). The alternative takes place in 8th grade and will require time (assuming nine years) for the student to mature before reaping the benefits of a higher salary through improved education.

Table A10. Teacher Bonuses Costs

<b>Fiscal Costs</b>	<b>2020 Dollars (\$)</b>
Total Program Costs	\$456,800
Total Rent	\$360,000
Total Labor Costs	\$645,135
Total	\$1,461,935

Table A11. Cognitive-Behavioral Mentor Program Assumptions

<b>Program Cost per Student</b>	\$4,100
Stipend per Student	\$600
Number of Students	45
Hours Worked per PTE	1040
<b>Number of PTE</b>	5
<b>Number of FTE</b>	3
Hours in Mentoring Program	48

The program cost is adopted from the Arches Program as part of the Young Men's Initiative in New York City (*Arches: A Transformative Mentoring Intervention: Request for Applications (RFA)*, 2012). The number of PTE is based on the ratio of mentor to students recommended by the Arches program. The number of FTE is based on the administrative necessities of the program. The Brennan Center for Justice completed a matched study design showcasing the potential lost earnings due to felony offenses (Craigie et al., 2020). The counterfactual salary is an average of those individuals that are similar to those that were convicted of a felony along a number of dimensions (Craigie et al., 2020). I assume the counterfactual salary will be the average income of a program participant given the reduced recidivism rates of the program evaluation of Arches (Lynch et al., 2018).

Table A12. Cognitive-Behavioral Mentor Program Costs

Fiscal Costs	2020 Dollars (\$)
Total Program Costs	\$211,500
Total Rent	\$288,000
Total Labor Costs	\$509,499
<b>Social Costs</b>	
Total Participants' Opportunity Costs	\$32,292
Total	\$1,041,291

Table A13. Minority-Owned Business Accelerator Assumptions

Material Costs	\$35,000
Stipend per Business	\$3,000
Hours Worked Per PTE	1560
<b>Number of Businesses</b>	20
<b>Number of PTE</b>	5
<b>Number of FTE</b>	3
Hours for Participants	480

Material and stipend costs are adopted from a similar accelerator program in Atlanta (*Center for Civic Innovation Fellowship*, n.d.). We assume each firm that joins the Accelerator will be able to generate two new jobs per year. The programmatic elements of the assumptions are based on the program design of the Cincinnati Minority Business Accelerator. The outcomes were projected out from the yearly outcome reports from the Cincinnati Minority Business Accelerator (*Making Cincinnati the National Epicenter for Minority Business Development*, 2020).

Table A14. Minority-Owned Business Accelerator Assumptions

Fiscal Costs	2020 Dollars (\$)
Total Program Costs	\$760,000
Total Rent	\$1,008,000
Total Labor Costs	\$618,243
<b>Social Costs</b>	
Total Participants' Opportunity Costs	\$143,520
Total	\$2,529,763

# Outcomes

Table A15. Outcomes

Alternative	Upward Mobile Black Residents	Assumptions/Source	
Status Quo	0.1	There are zero upward mobile Black residents, so I assume the outcome is something very small, 0.1, to calculate a costeffectiveness value (Income and Poverty in the United States, n.d.).	
Grant Program	962	Based on Baird et al., 2019 study	
Teacher Bonus	1515	Based on Chetty, Friedman, et al., 2014	
Cognitive-Behavioral Mentor Program	16	Based on Craigie et al., 2020 study	
Minority-Owned Business Accelerator	106	Based on Cincinnati Minority-Owned Business Accelerator	

# Results

Table A16. Status Quo Cost Projections

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	\$3,347,443,694	\$3,249,945,334	\$3,063,385,177	\$2,803,431,394	\$2,490,812,483
<b>PVC</b>	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
	\$2,148,596,728	\$1,799,415,934	\$1,463,089,821	\$1,154,976,616	\$885,193,404

# Table A17. Status Quo Results

Total PVC	Upward Mobile Black Residents	Cost-Effectiveness
\$22,406,290,586	0.1	\$224,062,905,856

# Table A18. Grant Program Cost Projections

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	\$17,811,676	\$17,292,890	\$16,300,207	\$14,916,999	\$13,253,560
PVC	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
	\$11,432,637	\$9,574,654	\$7,785,070	\$6,145,606	\$4,710,095

# Table A19. Results of Grant Program

Total PVC + Status Quo	Upward Mobile Black Residents	Cost-Effectiveness
\$22,525,513,979	962	\$23,418,703

# Table A20. Teacher Bonus Program Cost Projections

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	\$1,461,935	\$1,419,355	\$1,337,878	\$1,224,348	\$1,087,817
PVC	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
	\$938,361	\$785,862	\$638,978	\$504,415	\$386,592

Table A21. Results of Teacher Bonus Program

Total PVC + Status Quo	Upward Mobile Black Residents	Cost-Effectiveness
\$22,416,076,127	1515	\$14,793,861

Table A22. Cognitive-Behavioral Program Cost Projections

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	\$1,041,291	\$1,010,962	\$952,929	\$872,065	\$774,818
PVC	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
	\$668,365	\$559,745	\$455,124	\$359,279	\$275,357

Table A23. Results of Cognitive-Behavioral Program

Total PVC + Status Quo	Upward Mobile Black Residents	Cost-Effectiveness
\$22,413,260,520	16	\$1,366,453,926

Table A24. Minority-Owned Business Accelerator Cost Projections

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	\$2,529,763	\$2,456,080	\$2,315,091	\$2,118,636	\$1,882,381
PVC	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
	\$1,623,758	\$1,359,872	\$1,105,700	\$872,850	\$668,967

Table A25. Results of Minority-Owned Business Accelerator Program

Total PVC + Status Quo	Upward Mobile Black Residents	Cost-Effectiveness
\$22,423,223,684	106	\$211,380,314

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