*Fiscal Facts by Wisconsin Policy Forum*

**Racial disparities in homeownership extend beyond Milwaukee**

While Milwaukee’s racial disparities are often noted, such disparities in the rates of homeownership are even greater in Wisconsin’s other large cities, as well as statewide.

Racial homeownership gaps also are larger in Wisconsin than they are nationally, and those gaps have deepened over the last decade.

A recent Wisconsin Policy Forum report used U.S. Census data to examine white, Black and Hispanic homeownership rates statewide, and in the state’s five most populous cities: Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Kenosha, and Racine.

These data show Milwaukee has a 29-percentage-point gap in Black-white homeownership, which is lower than the statewide gap (47 percentage points) as well as the gaps in the other four large cities, which range from 37 to 56 points. Milwaukee’s white-Hispanic homeownership gap also is smaller than the state as a whole, or the other four large cities.

While racial gaps in homeownership rates are found throughout the nation, they are particularly large in Wisconsin. In 2019, the Black-white homeownership gap was 30 percentage points nationally and 47 points in Wisconsin. A key difference is that the homeownership rate for Black households was much higher nationally (42%) than in Wisconsin (25%). The Hispanic-white homeownership gap was also somewhat larger in Wisconsin (31 percentage points) than nationally (25 points).

Racial disparities in homeownership also deepened in Wisconsin over the last decade. While Black, Hispanic, and white households all experienced decreased owner-occupancy rates between 2010 and 2019, racial disparities widened between these groups. Owner-occupancy in Wisconsin decreased by more than seven percentage points among Black households, three points among Hispanic households, and one point among white households. These trends likely stemmed in part from the 2007-2010 financial and foreclosure crisis and associated economic recession, which deflated homeownership, homebuilding, and home buying activity for several subsequent years.

Homeownership is widely considered an effective strategy for individuals and families to build wealth and achieve financial stability. While raising household incomes among Black and Hispanic households will be critical to address these disparities over the long term, making progress in the short term likely will require a range of additional strategies.

*This information is provided to Wisconsin Newspaper Association members as a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at wispolicyforum.org.*