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***RACISM'S TOLL: REPORT ON ILLINOIS POVERTY RELEASED  
REVEALS EXTREME COST OF INEQUITY AND CALLS FOR SWIFT AND BOLD  
ACTION***

**Chicago, IL; February 3, 2016**—Poverty rates are two to three times higher for Illinoisans of color, and people of color fare far worse on nearly every measure of well-being. In the latest of its annual reports on poverty, “Racism’s Toll,” Heartland Alliance’s Social IMPACT Research Center lays bare the moral, human, and economic cost of the deep inequities in the state and calls out public policies that have and are actively creating these racial inequities.

Virtually all research on poverty shows that people of color are at a much greater risk of experiencing poverty across all age groups and across generations than whites. The disparities are remarkably persistent on nearly all quality of life domains:

- Black children in Illinois are nearly 4 times more likely to live below the poverty line than white children.
- The Illinois school districts with the most students of color receive 16% less in funding per student than districts serving the fewest students of color.
- Unemployment rates are far higher for black Illinois workers than whites at every educational level.
- Illinoisans of color are 2 to 3 times more likely to not have health insurance.
- Black Illinoisans on average live 6 years less than whites.
- Poor black (16%) and Latino (22%) Illinoisans are more likely to live within a mile of a hazardous chemical facility than poor whites (13%).
- Nationally, the median net worth for a white household is \$110,500 versus \$6,314 for a black household.

“The consistency and persistence of these severe disparities by race in Illinois underscore how much more work we have to do,” said Amy Terpstra, Director of the Social IMPACT Research Center and a co-author of the report. “These inequities are the product of the public policies, market forces, and institutional practices of both yesterday and today, which systematically place barriers in the path of Illinoisans of color.”

Critically, creating a racially just Illinois hinges on the state passing a responsible budget and ensuring adequate revenue for budgets moving forward. Illinois has gone more than seven months without a budget, and people experiencing poverty and communities of color—often one and the same—are bearing the brunt of the crisis.

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“Make no mistake—to allow these extreme disparities to continue is to callously dismiss the human rights of a large segment of Illinois,” said Evelyn Diaz, President of Heartland Alliance. “We must fix the state budget, dismantle policies that perpetuate inequity, and create new policies that help ensure equity of opportunity and outcomes for all.”

In addition to the moral and human cost of state budget and policy inaction, there is a significant economic toll: if racial differences in employment and income alone were eliminated, Illinois would gain \$104 billion in GDP annually. Illinois must face these issues head on, starting now.

“Racism’s Toll: Report on Illinois Poverty” and related infographics are available for download at [www.ilpovertyreport.org](http://www.ilpovertyreport.org). All data images are to be credited to The Social IMPACT Research Center. For County Data, please visit [www.ilpovertyreport.org](http://www.ilpovertyreport.org). Contact IMPACT for assistance accessing and interpreting local data.

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*The Social IMPACT Research Center is a program of Heartland Alliance, one of the world’s leading anti-poverty organizations. IMPACT does research that helps leaders create change. We collaborate with clients to measure and grow their social impact. Our user-friendly work enables nonprofits, foundations, and governments to advance real-world solutions to poverty. Follow IMPACT on twitter at [twitter.com/impactheartland](https://twitter.com/impactheartland). For more info, visit [socialimpactresearchcenter.org](http://socialimpactresearchcenter.org)*