

# Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County

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Hector H. Sandoval

Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR)  
Department of Economics

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
University of Florida

# Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County

**Racial inequity is a long-standing issue in every community across the United States, compromising the opportunities of minority individuals and families**

- **The purpose of this study is to provide a picture of racial inequity in Alachua County on several dimensions of human well-being**

# Race and Ethnicity are two different concepts

## Race

- A person's self-identification based on social and cultural characteristics as well as ancestry. An individual can report as

White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, or with multiple races.

## Ethnicity

- Ethnicity is defined by a shared cultural heritage and language.

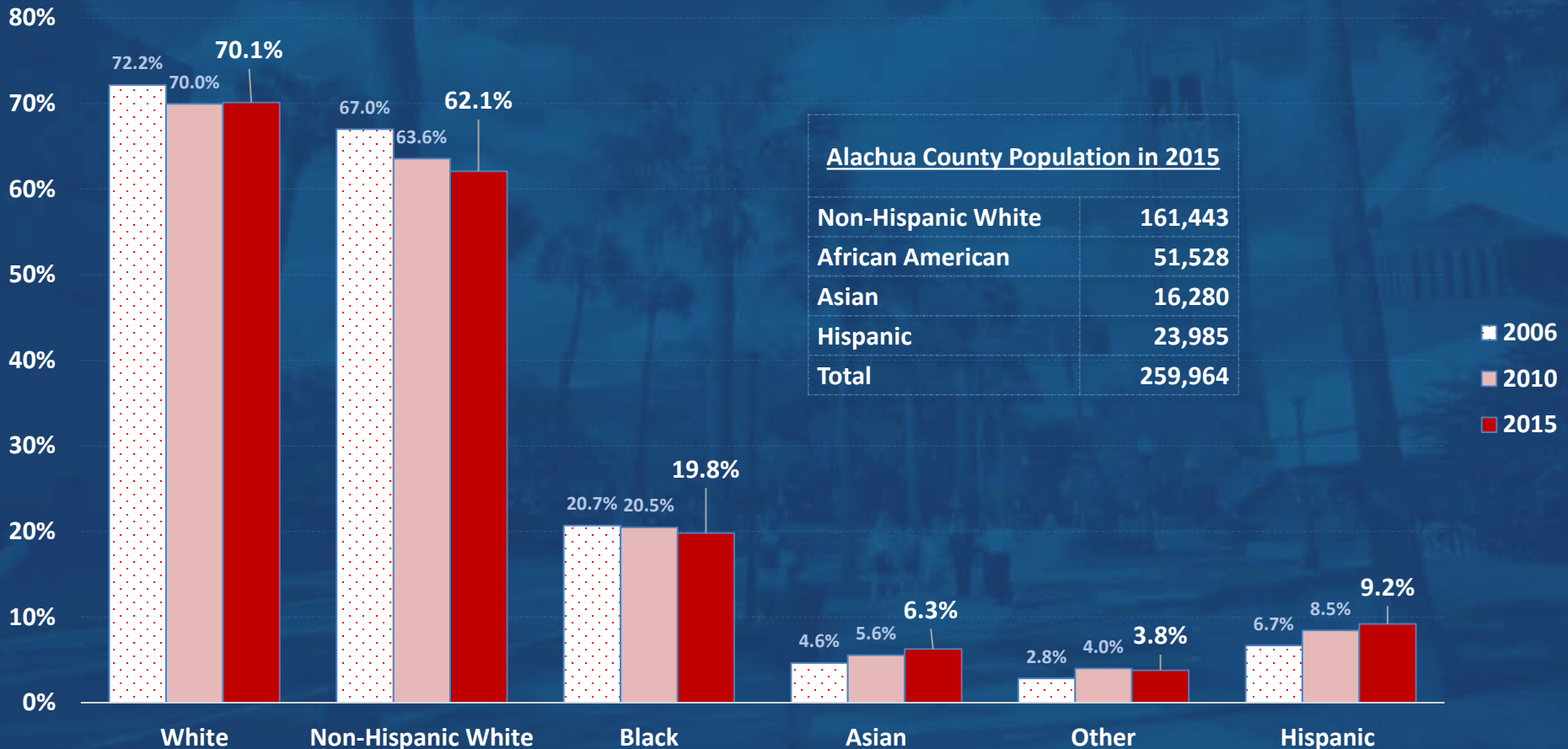
This determines whether a person is or isn't of Hispanic origin:

Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin.

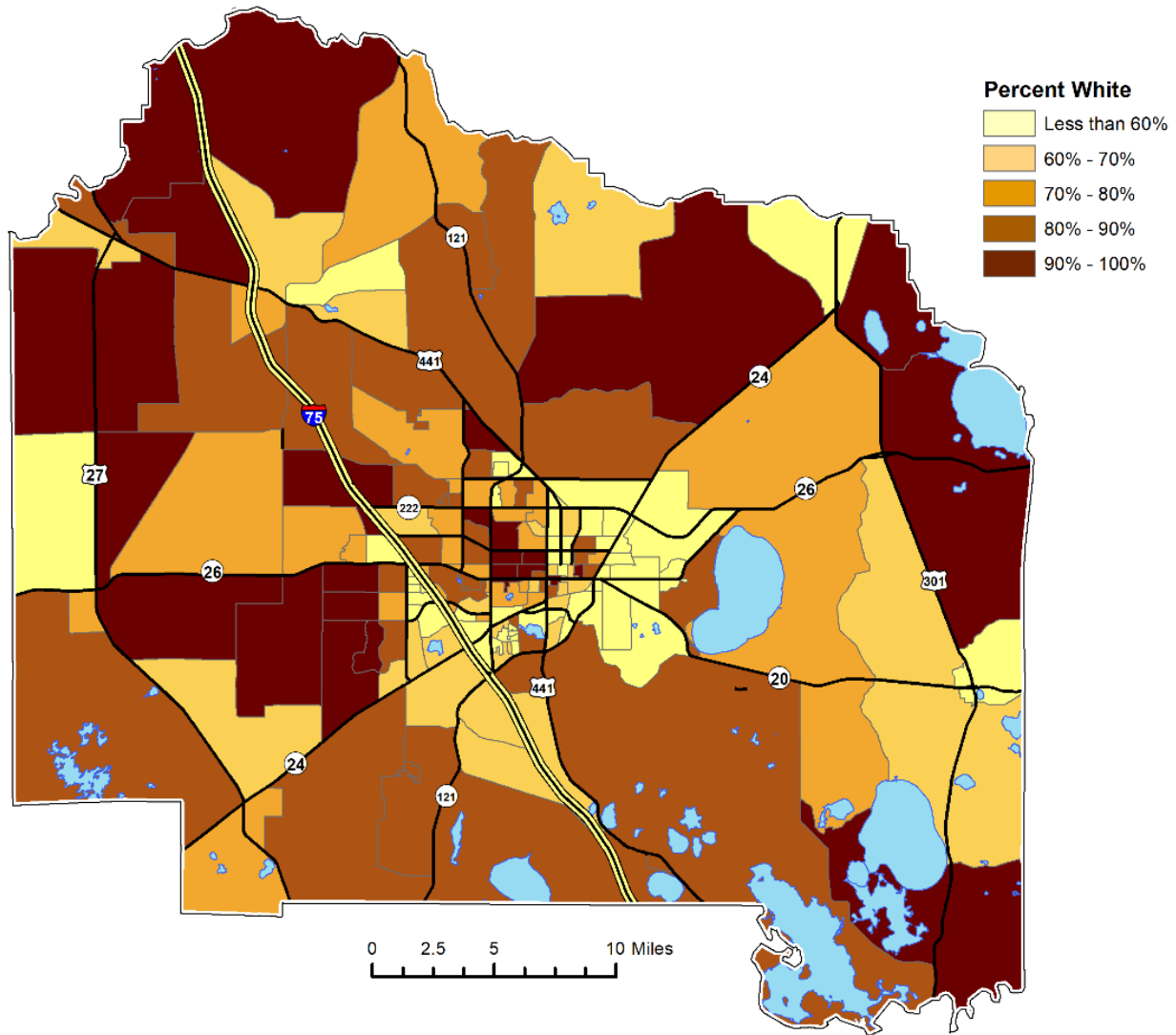
- Hispanics may report as any race, for example, as Hispanic-White.

The population in Alachua County is over a quarter of a million. The largest minority group is African Americans, and the second one is those identified as Hispanics.

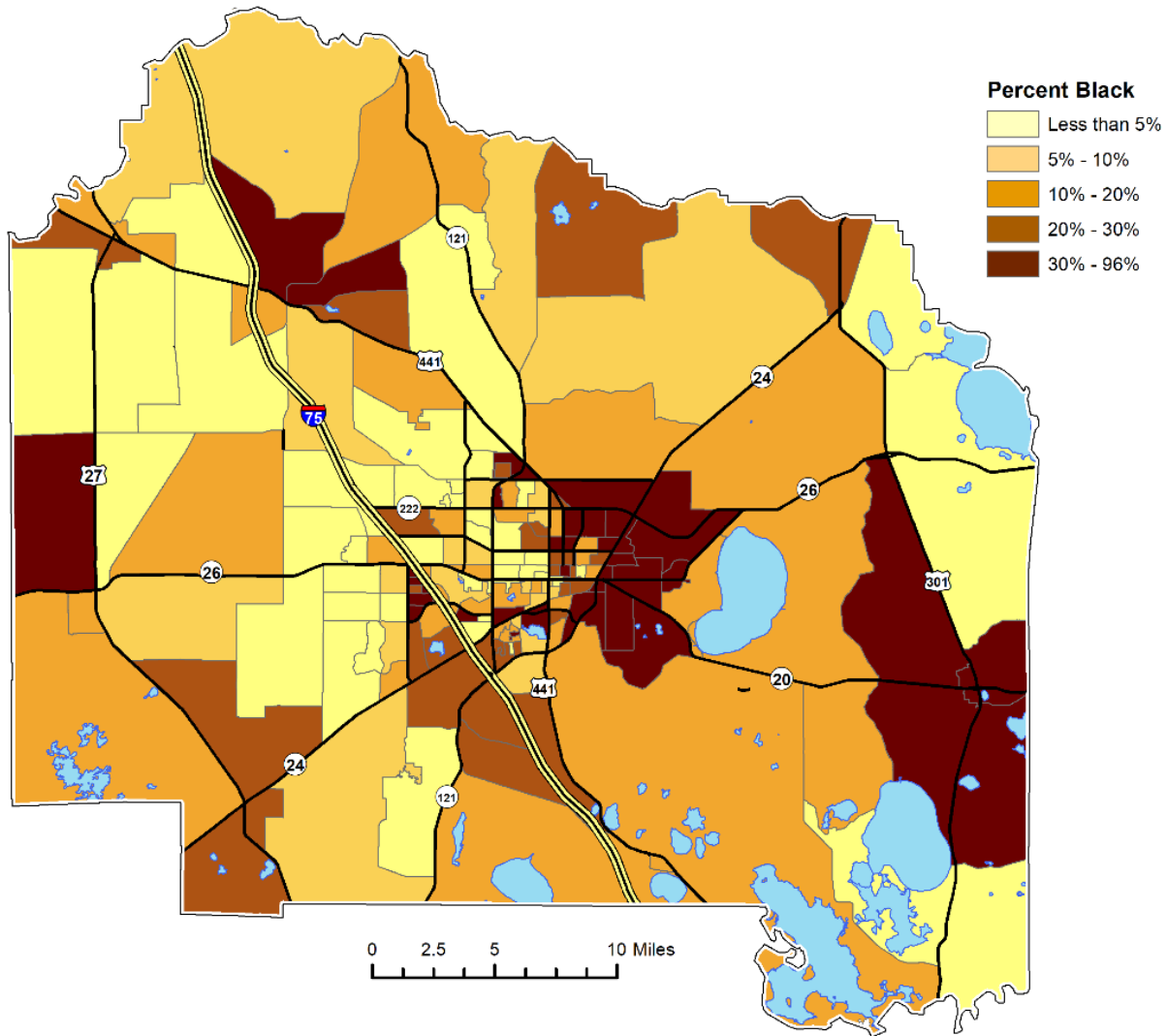
Alachua County Population Distribution



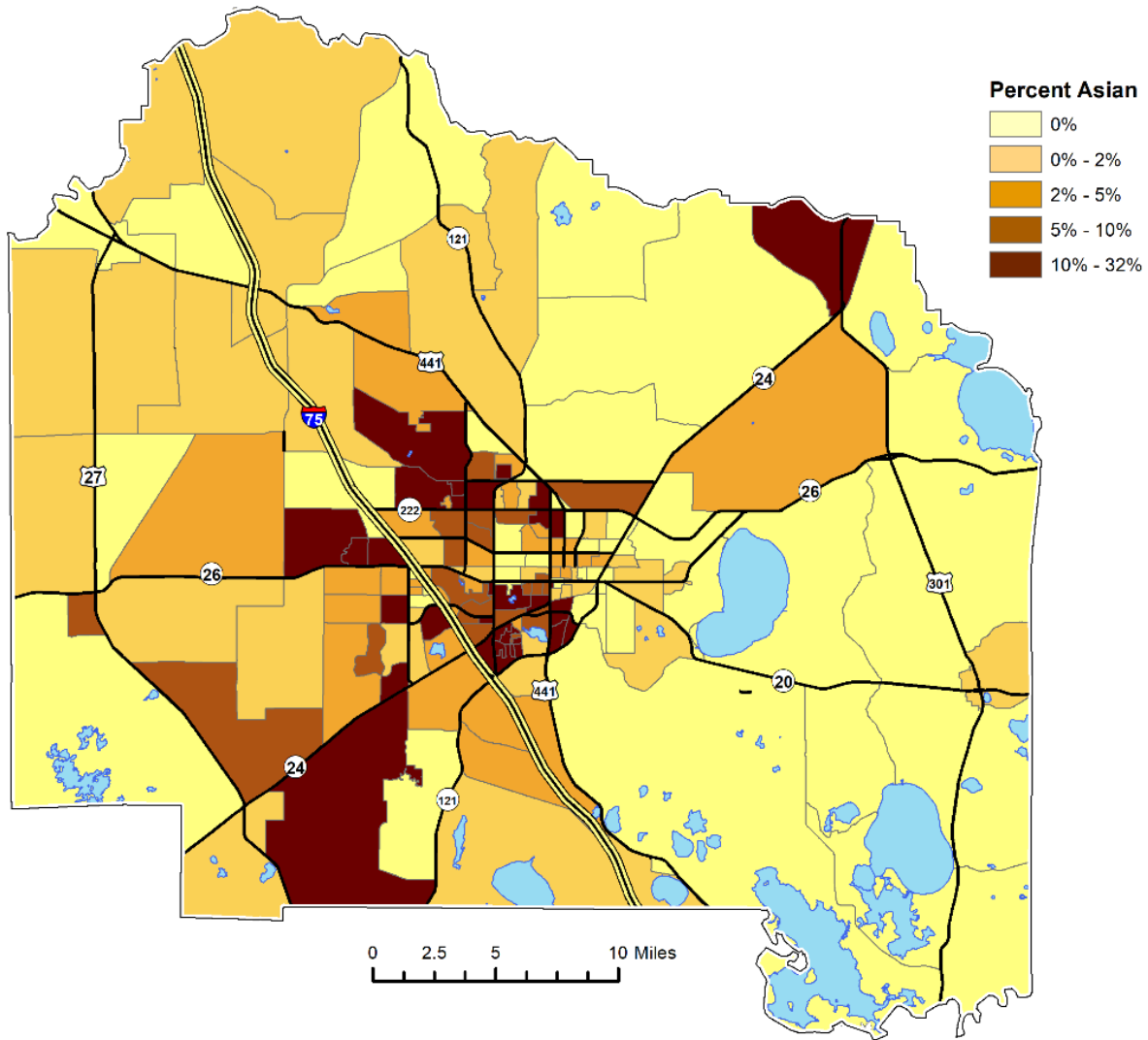
# White Population as a Percent of Total Population



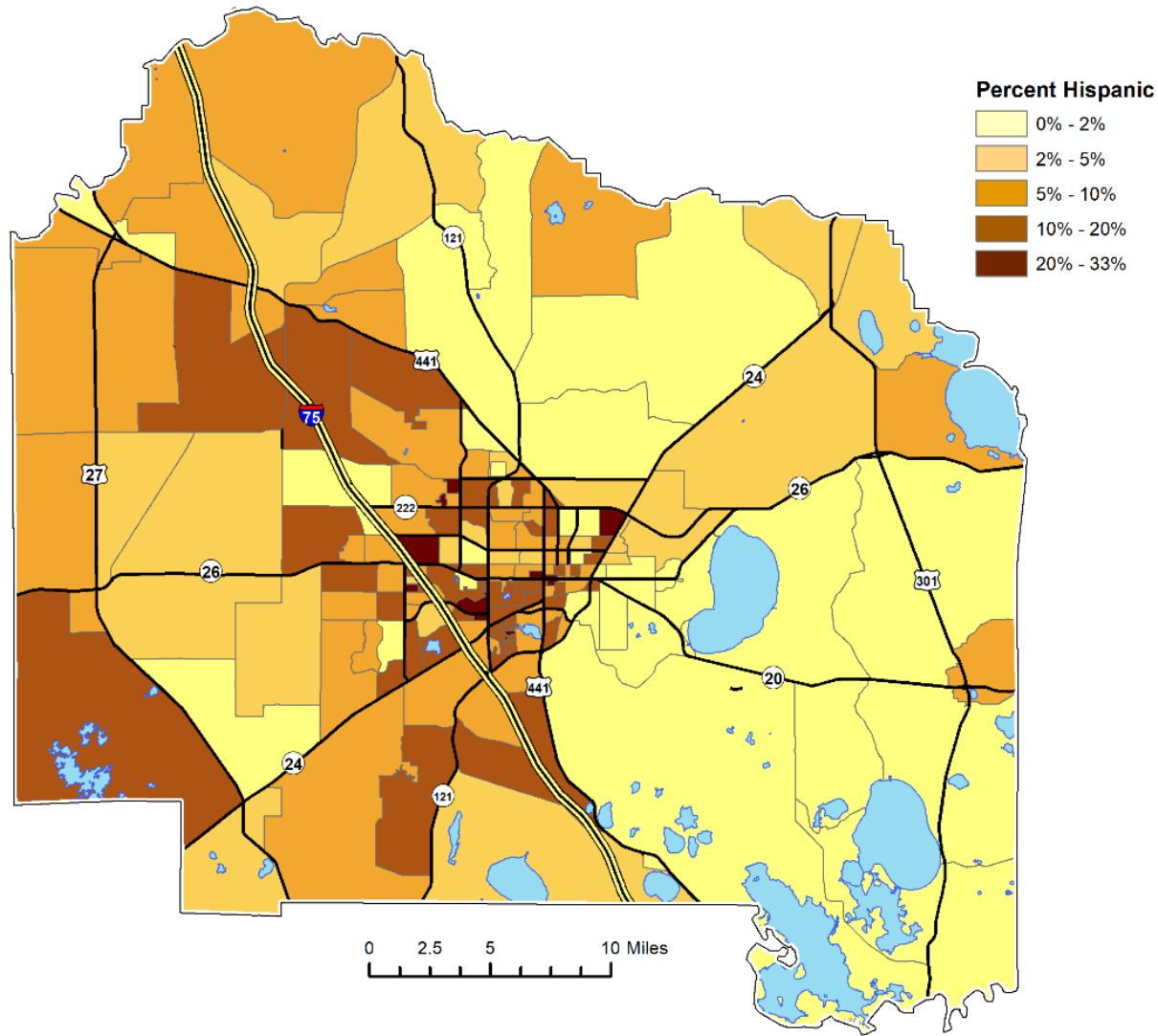
# Black Population as a Percent of Total Population



# Asian Population as a Percent of Total Population



# Hispanic Population as a Percent of Total Population





# Roadmap

1. Methodology
2. Racial Inequity in Alachua County
3. Housing, Transportation, and Neighborhood Supplement  
by UF Program for Resource Efficient Communities (PREC)
4. Factors and Forces Behind Racial Inequity in the County
5. Views and Opinions of Minority Groups
6. General Conclusions

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# Two complementary approaches

## Quantitative component

- Data on 50 different indicators representing several aspects of human well-being to provide a quantitative baseline
  1. Economic well-being
  2. Education
  3. Family structure
  4. Child welfare
  5. Involvement in the Justice System
  6. Health Status
  7. Housing and Transportation

## Qualitative component

- Focus group with African Americans residents of Alachua County
  
- 10 one-on-one interviews
  - 3 with county residents from minority groups other than Blacks
  - 7 with experts on local and national racial disparities.

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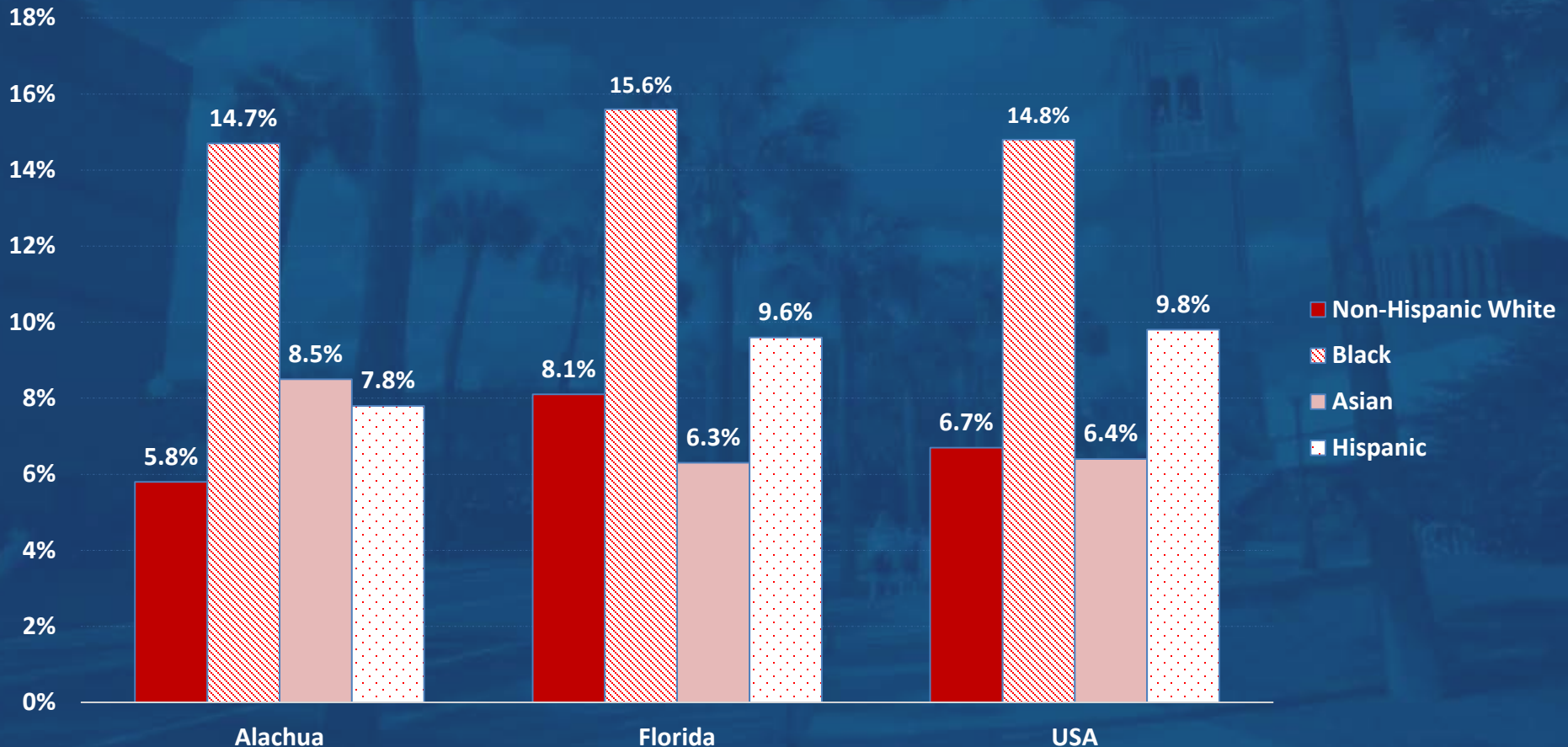
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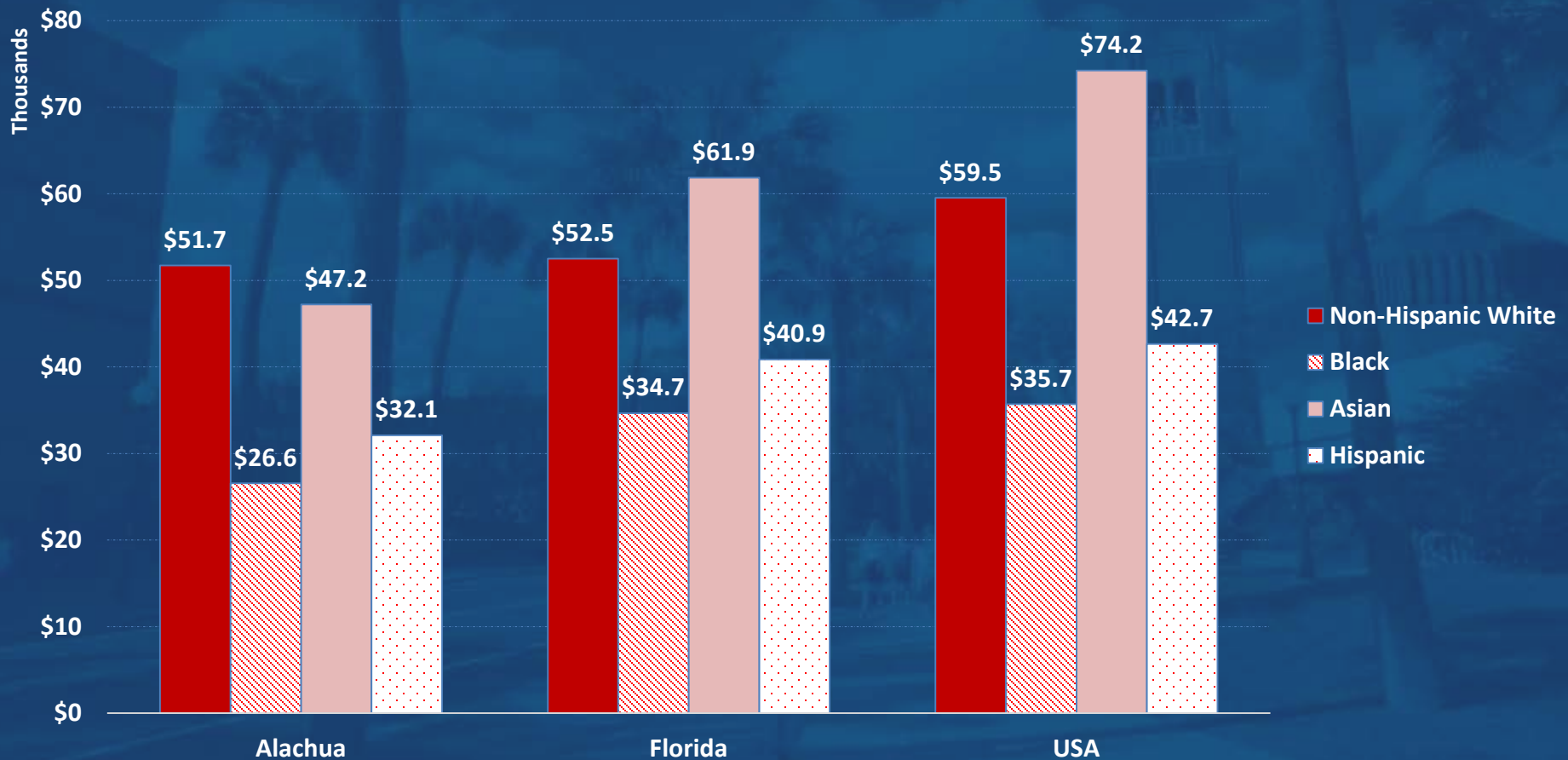
For almost all households, the sale of their labor services constitutes a major source of income. Losing or not being able to find a job can harm a family's economic well-being.

Unemployment Rate in 2015



# Differences in employment opportunities contribute to important income disparities.

## Median Household Income in 2015 (thousands of dollars)



# Racial Inequity in Alachua County

## Unemployment

- Unemployment rate is highest for Blacks/African Americans
- Blacks in the county are 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed compared to non-Hispanic Whites.
- Asians and Hispanics are 1.5 times more likely

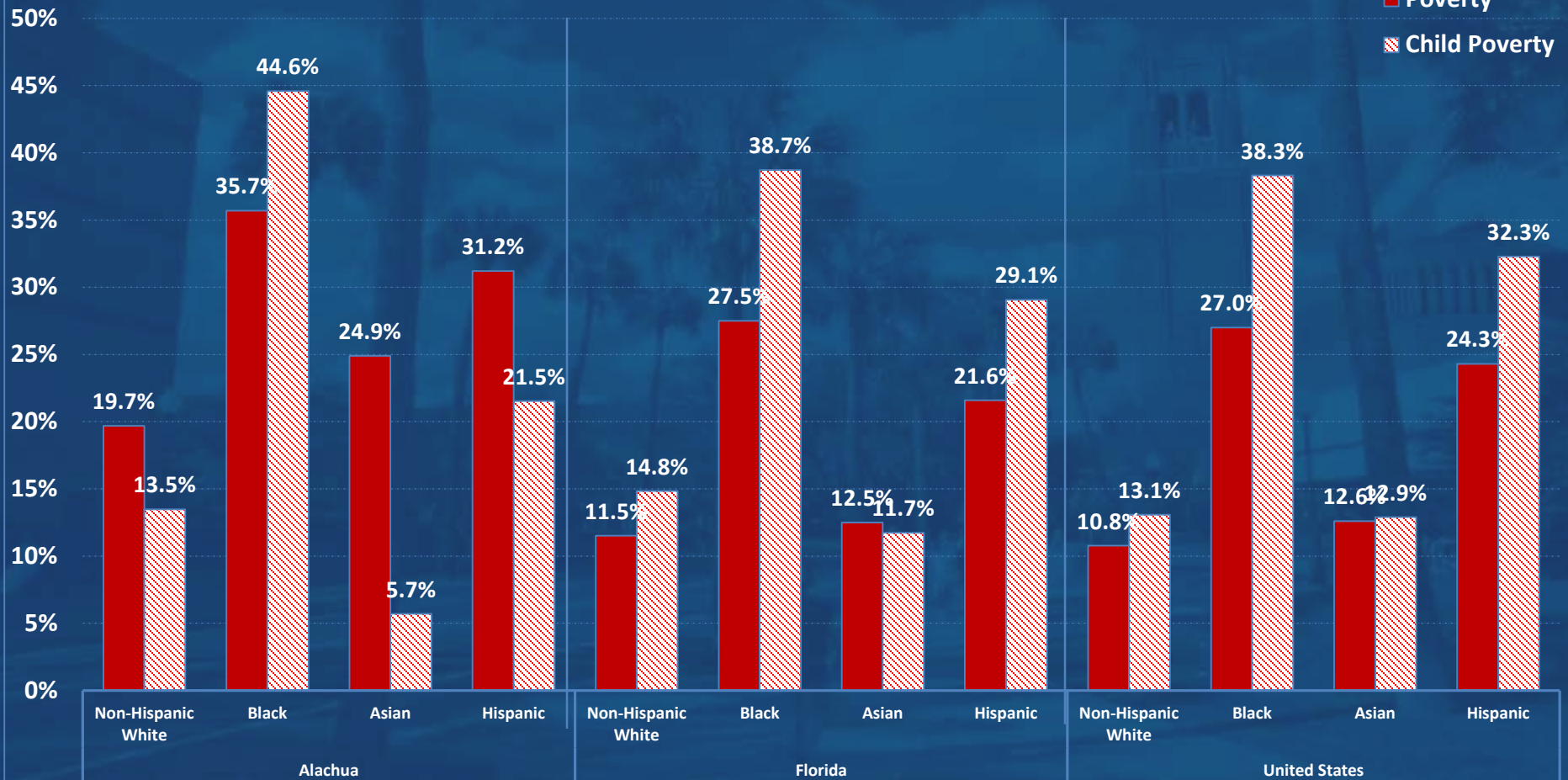
## Income

- Median household income for Blacks is equivalent to 51% of non-Hispanic Whites.
- For Hispanics is equivalent to 62%
- Income greater than \$50,000
  - 25.7% of Black households
  - 34.3% of Hispanic households
  - 47.4% of Asian
  - 51.6 % of Non-Hispanic White

# Income disparities are accompanied by higher poverty rates for Blacks and Hispanics.

## Poverty and Child Poverty in 2015

■ Poverty  
 ▨ Child Poverty





# Racial Inequity in Alachua County

## Poverty

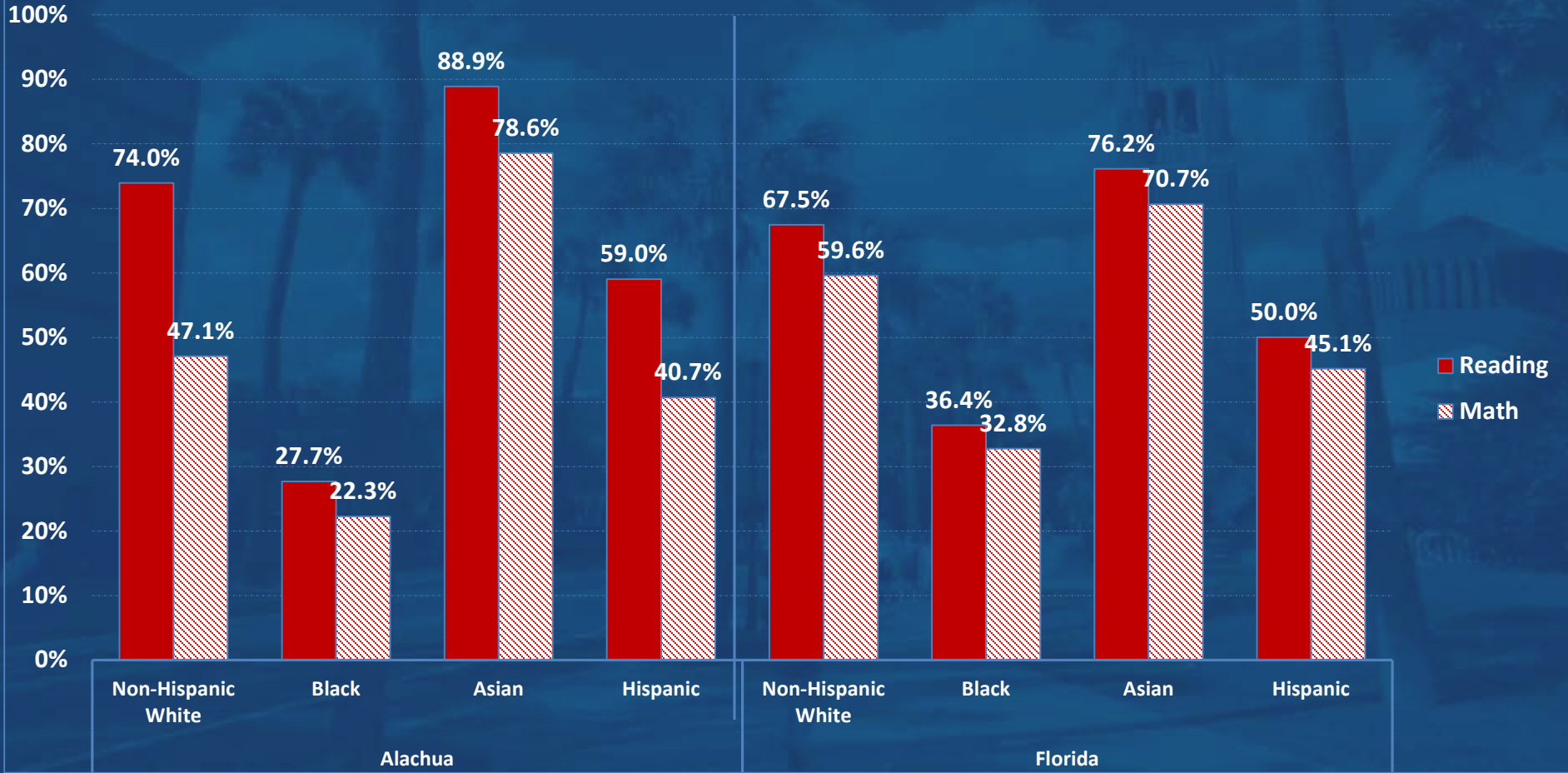
- Alachua County's poverty rate is higher than that in Florida and the U.S.
- In Alachua County,
  - 35.7% of Blacks are considered in poverty
  - 31.2% of Hispanics are considered in poverty
- e.g. for a family of four with two children under age 18, the poverty line was \$24,036 in 2015.

## Child Poverty

- Starker differences for Blacks/African Americans:
  - Overall, 44.6% of Black children are in poverty
  - Black children are 3.3 times more likely to be in poverty than non-Hispanic White children

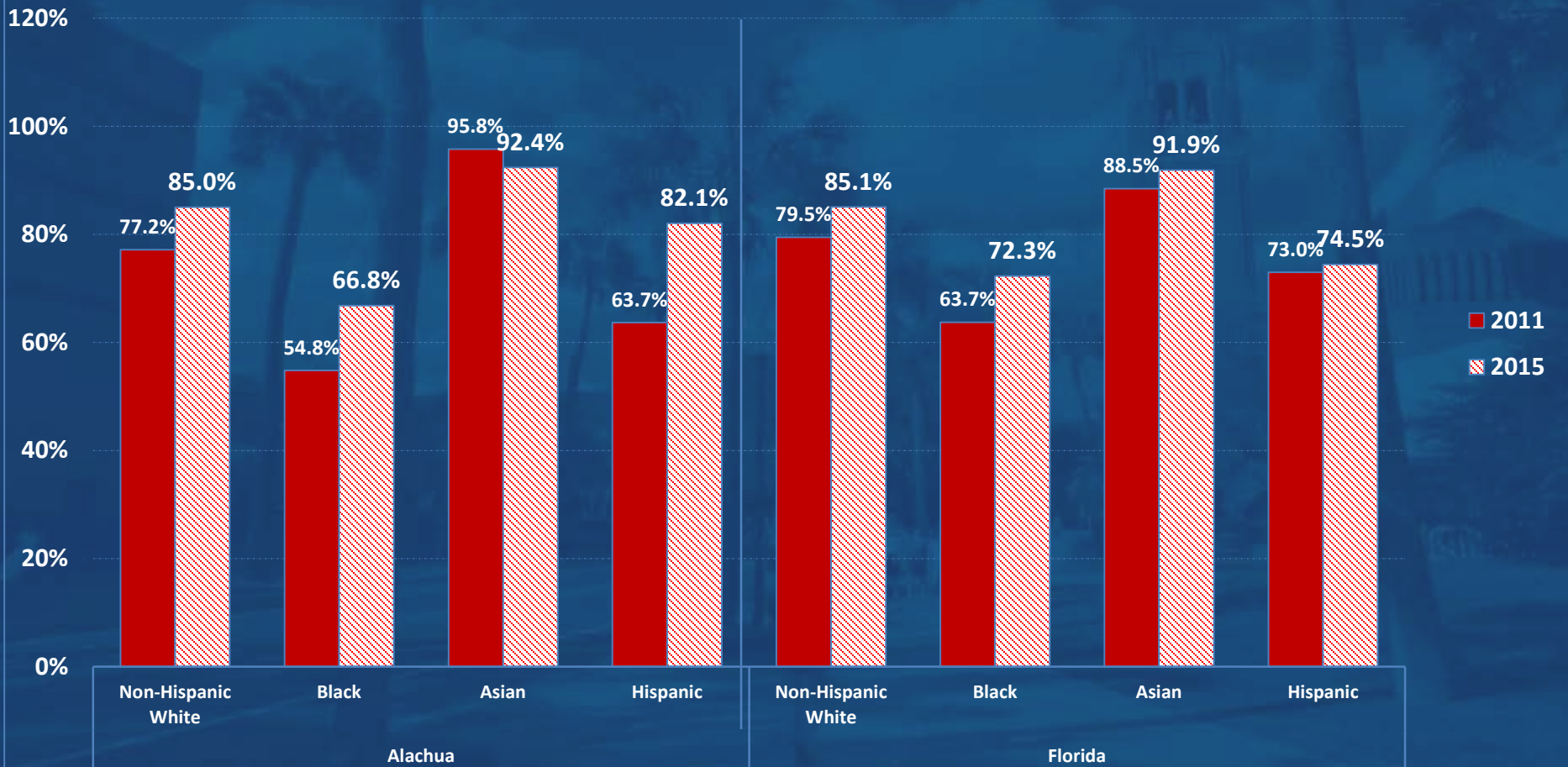
# Income disparities are also related to school performance and attainment.

## 3rd Graders Proficient in Reading and 8th Graders Proficient in Math in 2015



# Disparities in education not only appear in performance, but also in achievement.

## High School Graduation Rate



# Racial Inequity in Alachua County

## Performance

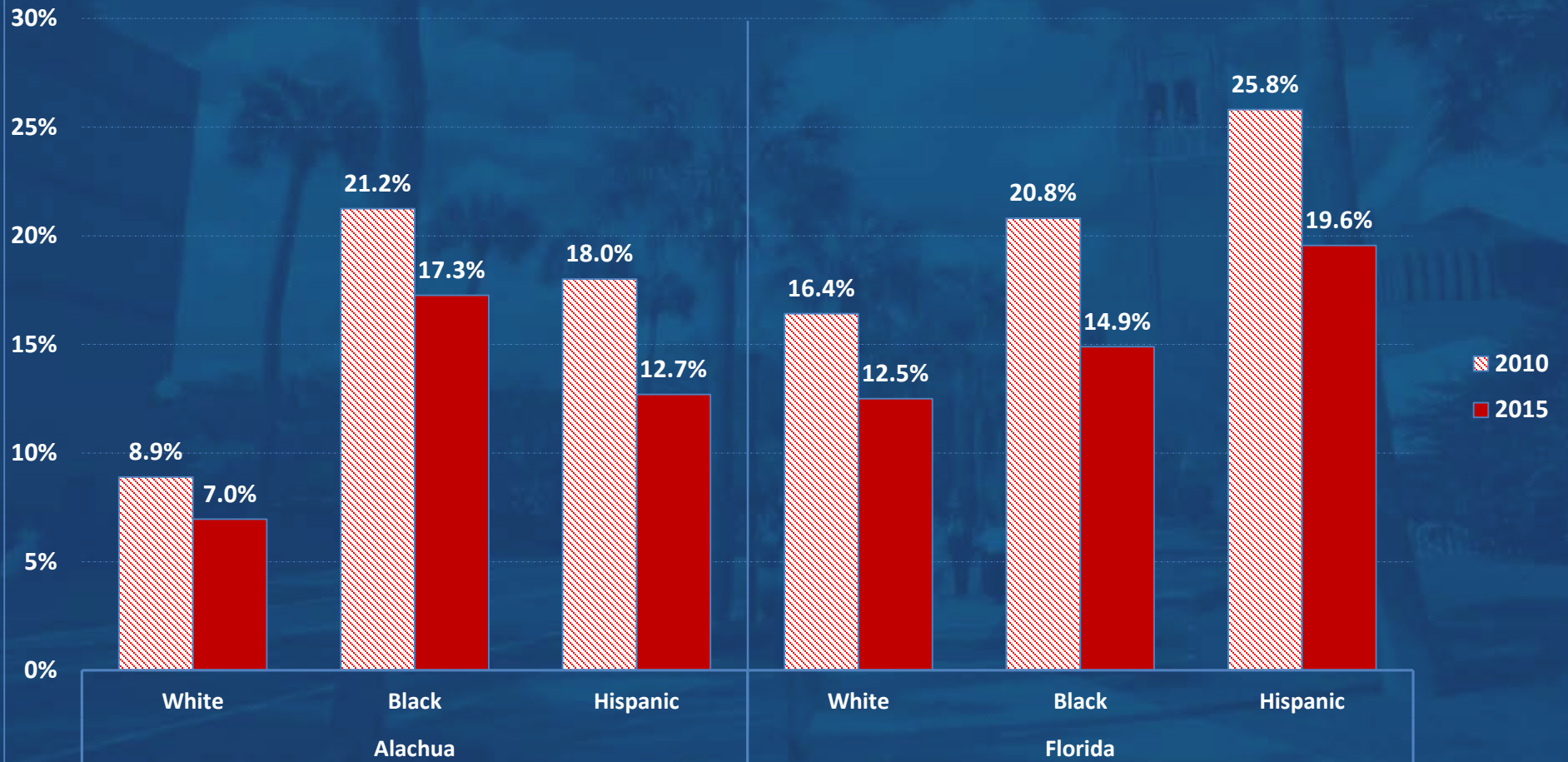
- Black 3<sup>rd</sup> graders have the lowest proficiency in reading in Alachua County, and are lower than their peers in the state.
- Similarly, Black 8<sup>th</sup> graders have the lowest proficiency in math

## Achievement

- Blacks are less likely to complete high school than other racial groups
- More than 50% of those who drop out of high school in Alachua County are Black

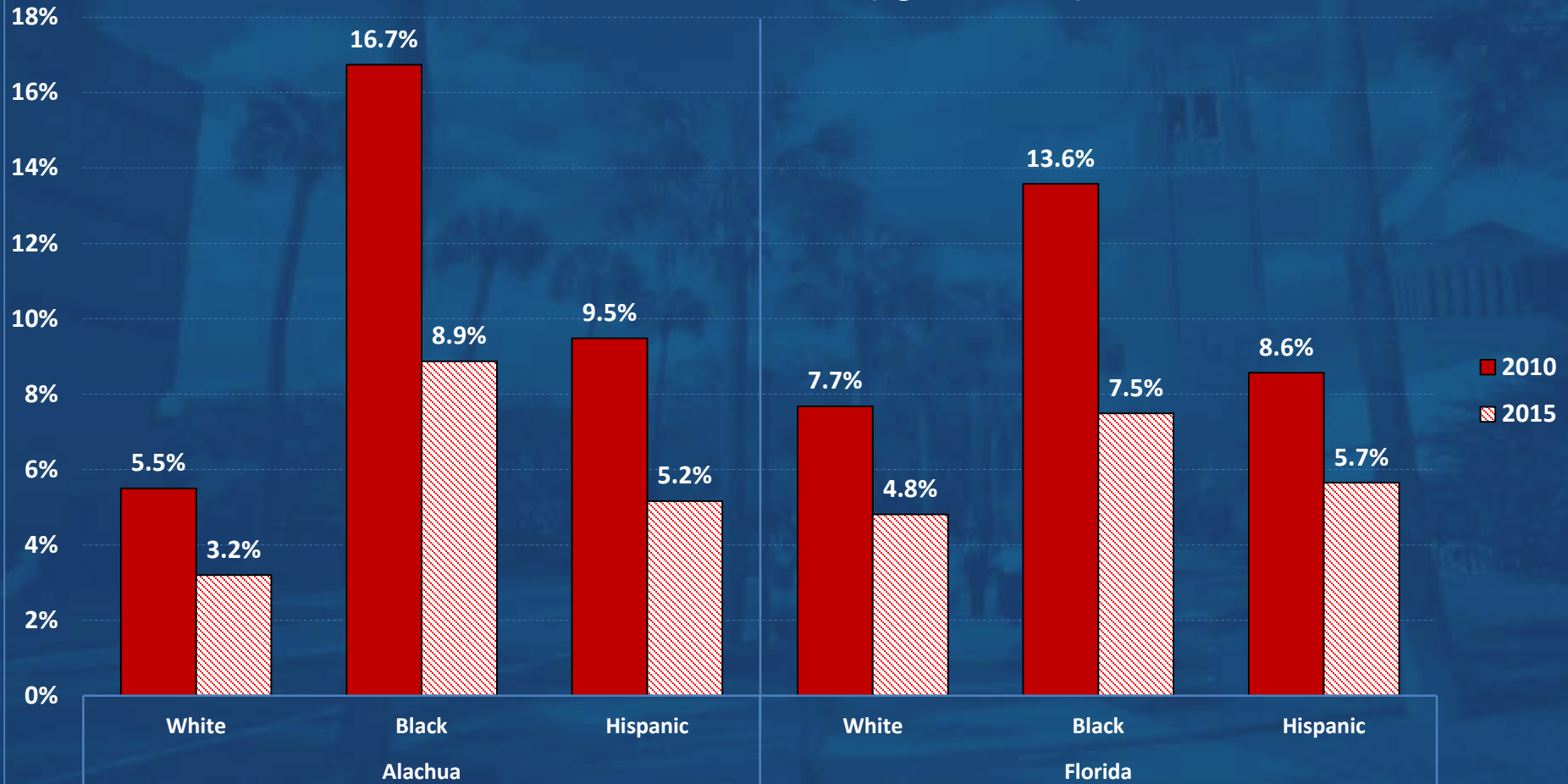
Parents who did not complete their own schooling may have difficulty helping their child with school.

### Births to Mothers Without a High School Degree

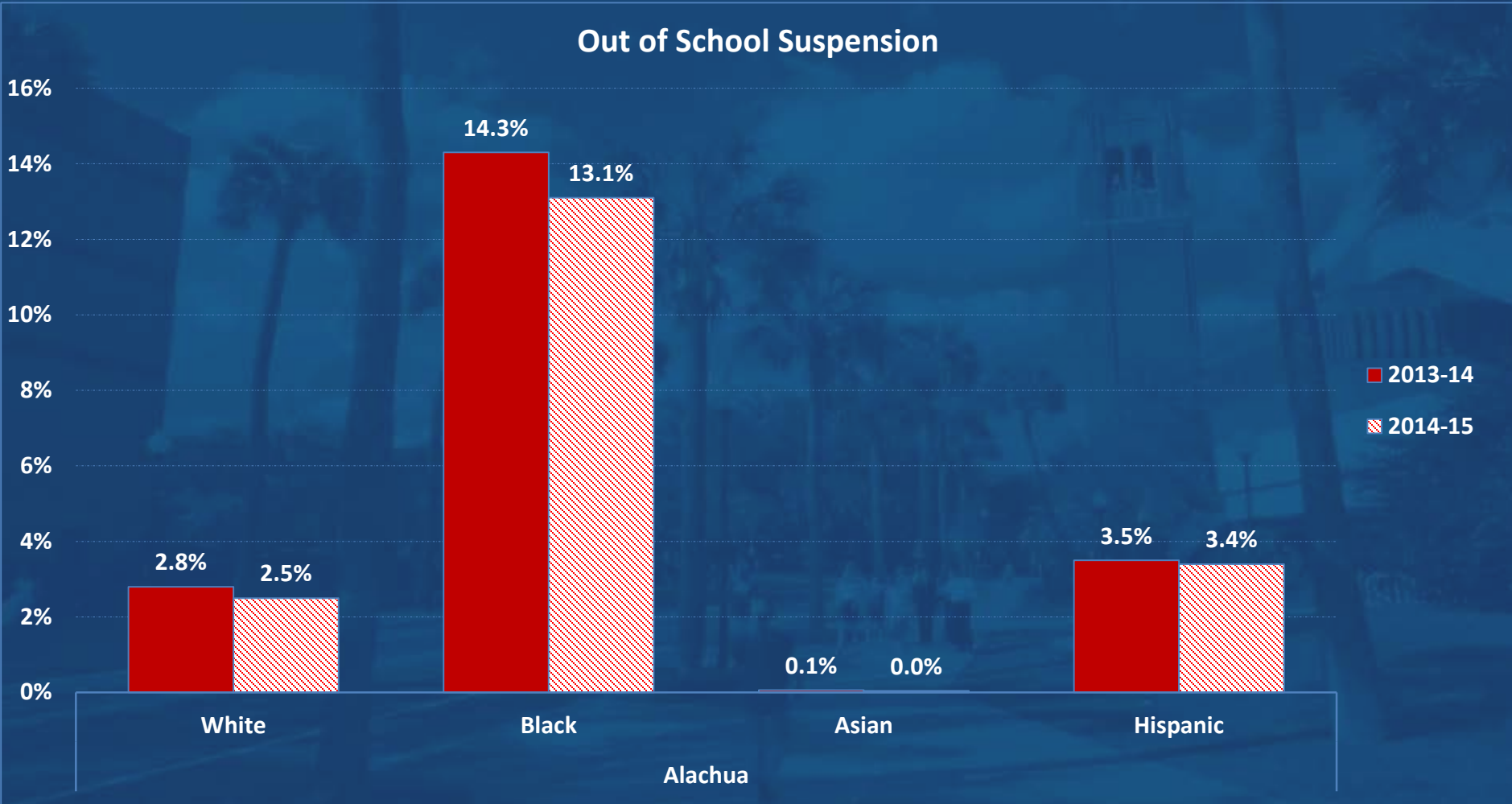


The family structure can play a role in disparities. There's an important disparity in the births to teen mothers.

Births to Teen Mothers (ages 15 to 19)

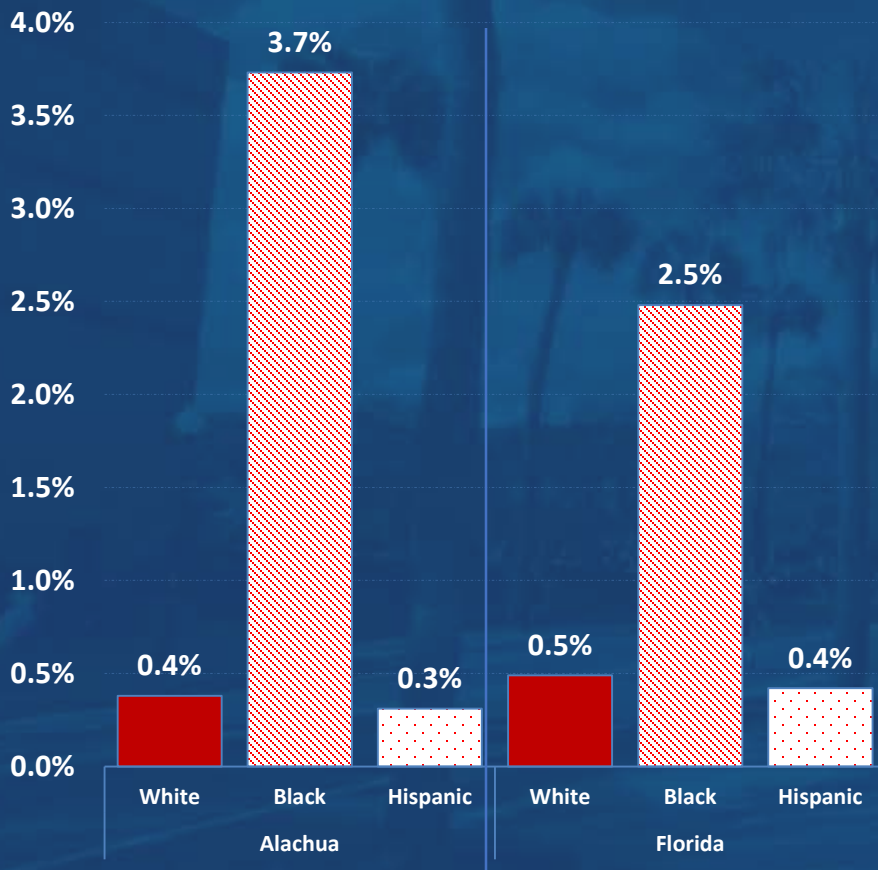


# Another important issue is disparities in out of school suspension.

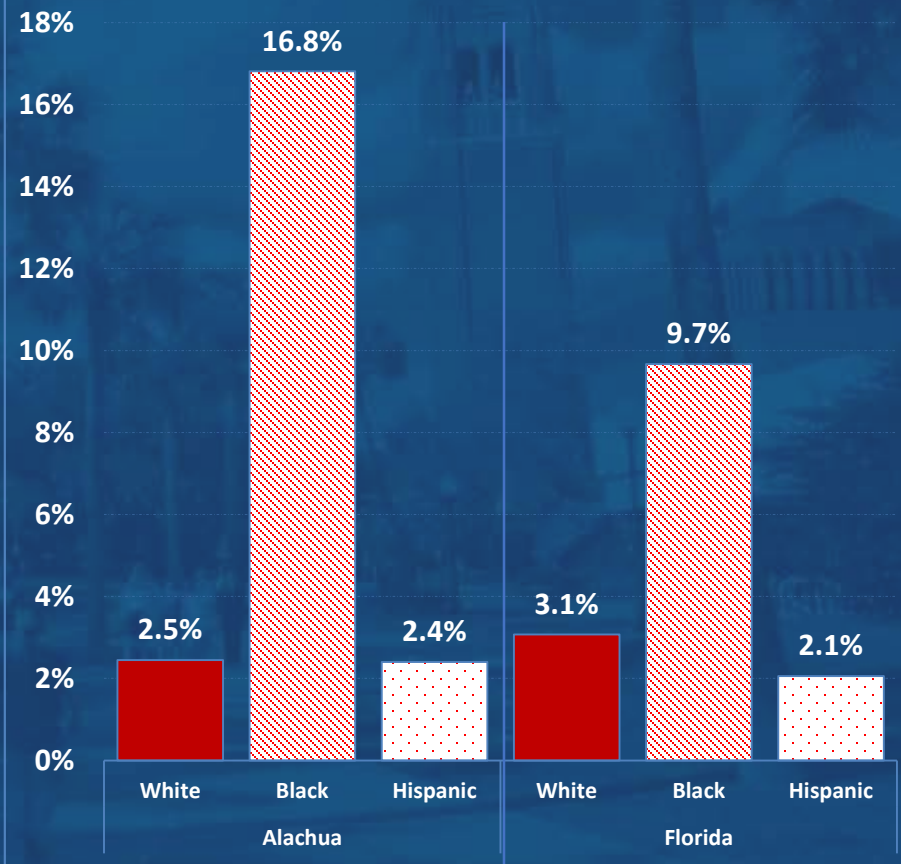


The economic and educational disparities contribute to a pipeline of accumulating factors that results in a starker difference when considering the justice system.

Juvenile Detention Rate in 2015  
(incidents per 100 residents)



Juvenile Arrest Rate in 2015  
(incidents per 100 residents)





# Racial Inequity in Alachua County

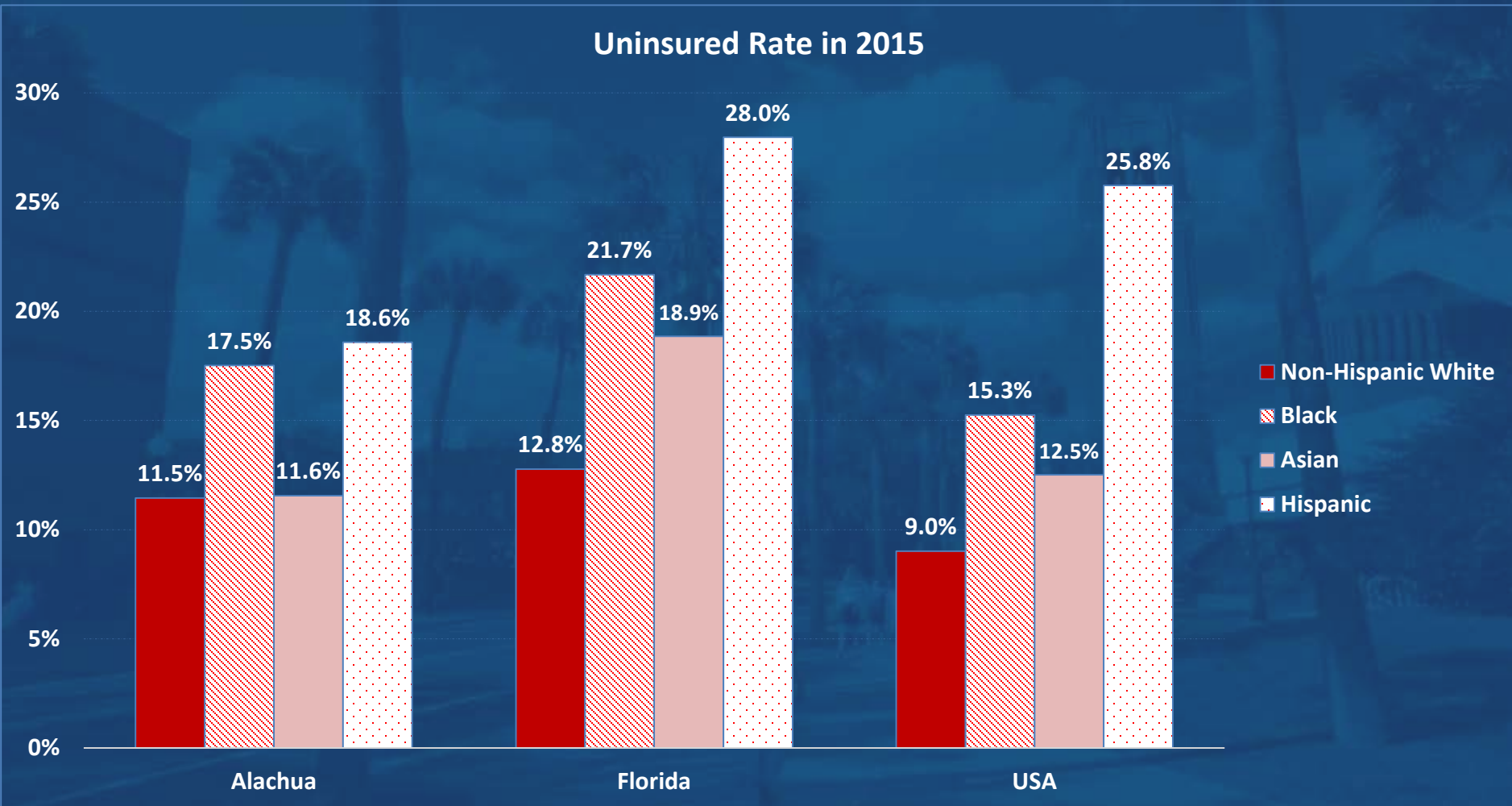
## Juvenile Justice

- Black teens are 9.9 times more likely to be detained
- Black teens are 6.9 times more likely to get arrested
- Blacks are also more likely to be transferred to adult court

## Justice System

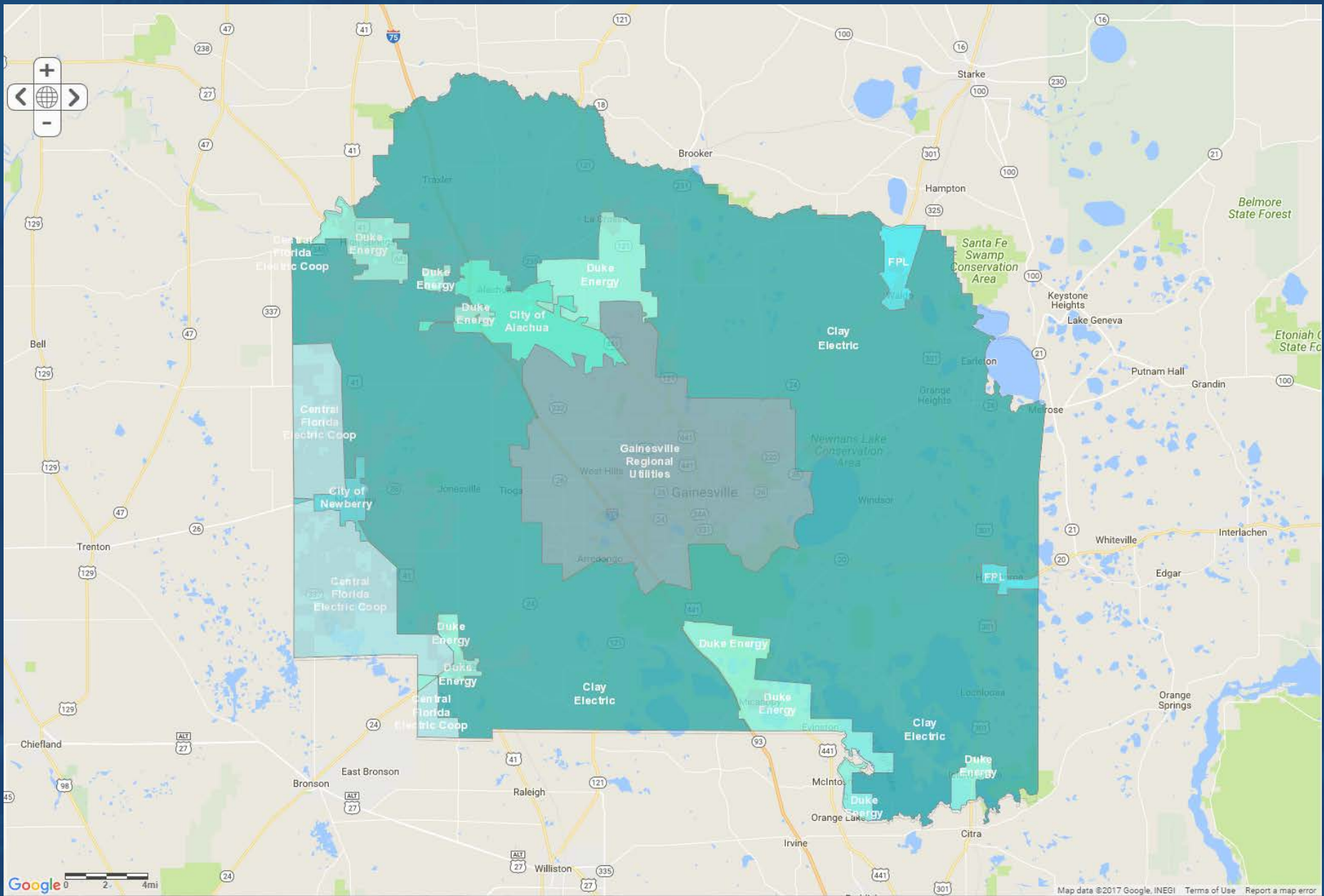
- Overall, Black adults are 3.9 times more likely to be arrested
- A disproportional number of Blacks incarcerated
  - 2.4% of total Blacks have been incarcerated in Alachua County in 2015
  - Around 70.8% of the total inmate population in Alachua County is Black

There are also important disparities related to healthcare and health status.



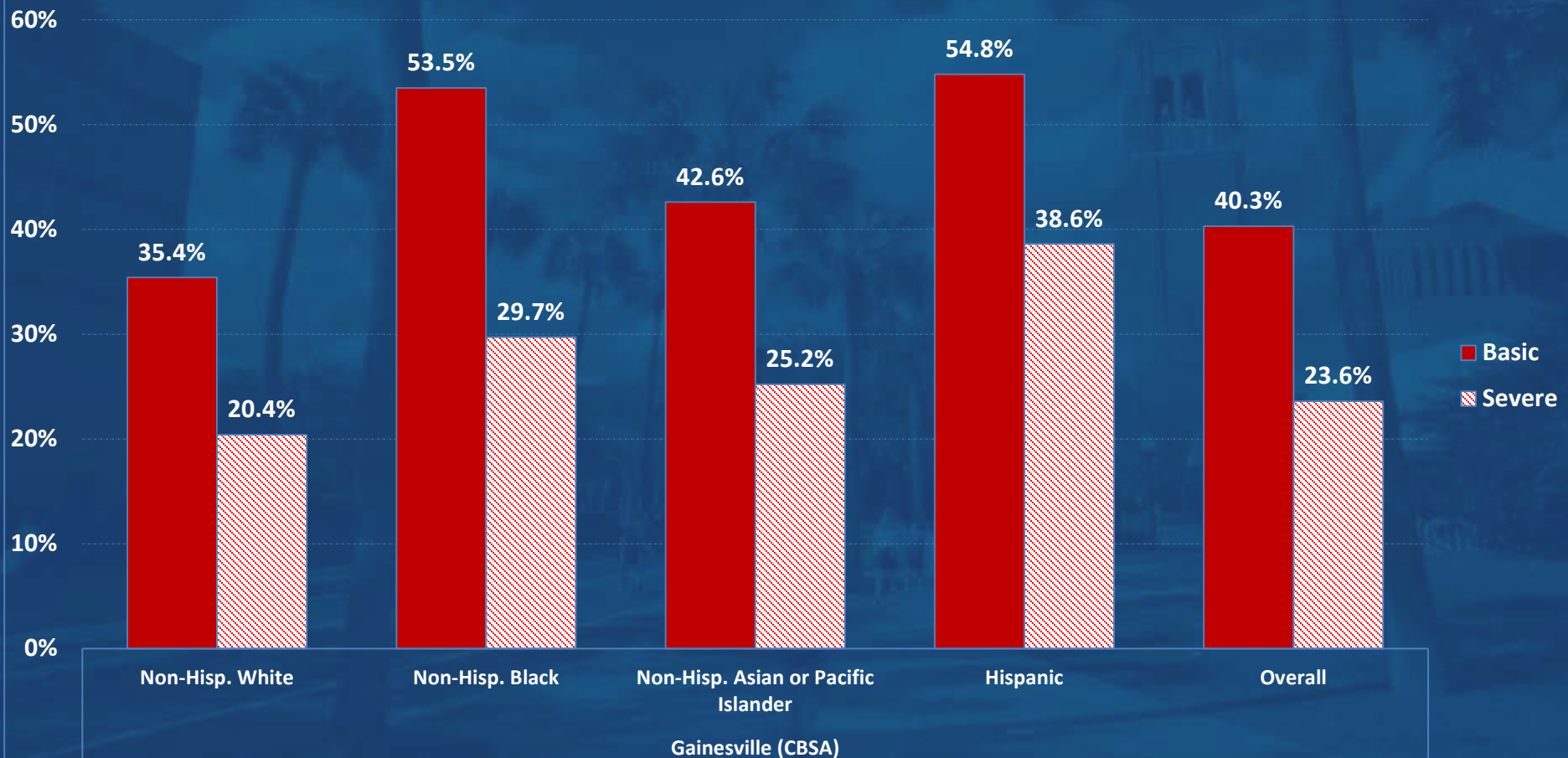
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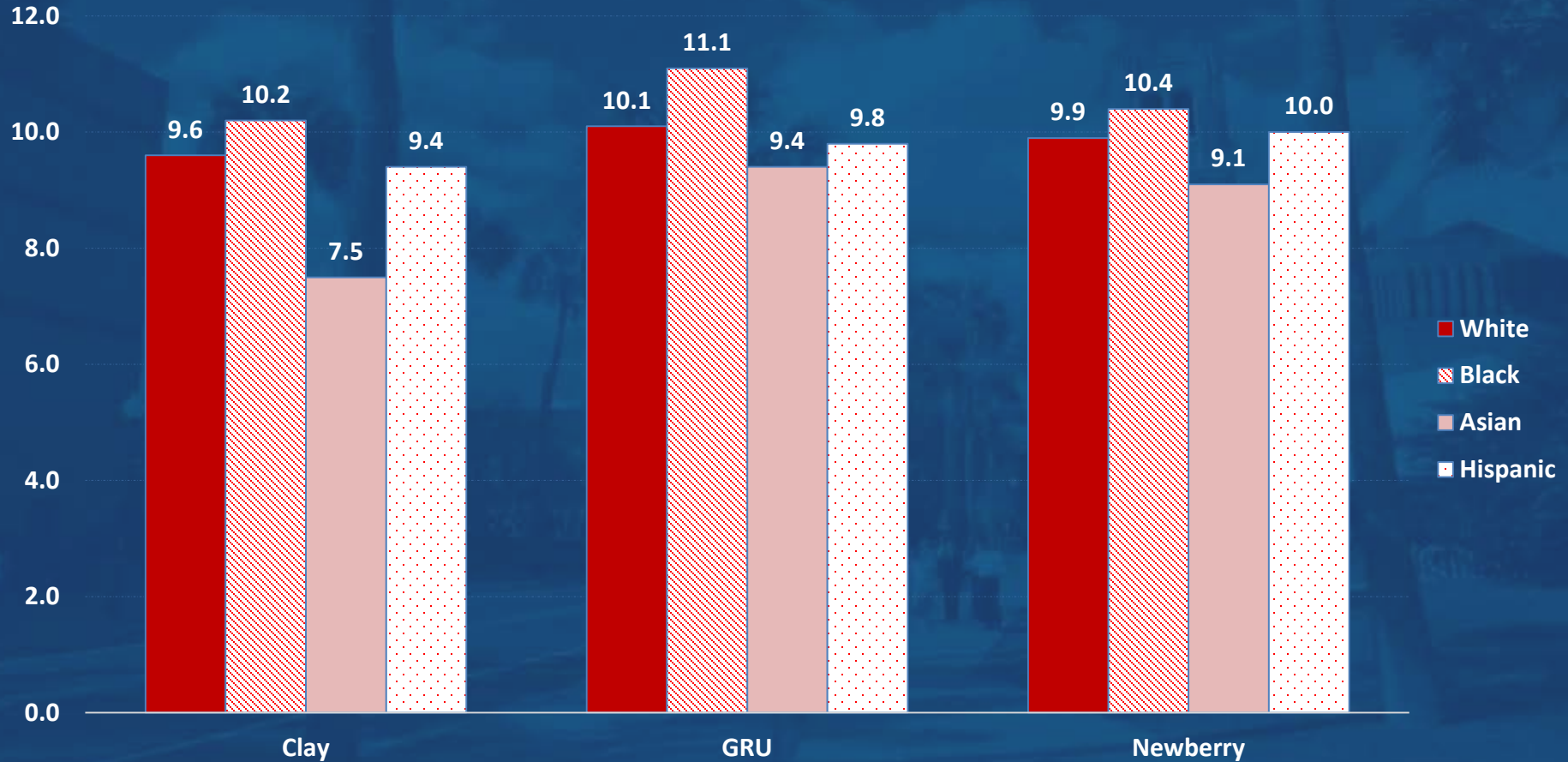
Compared to Non-Hispanic Whites, each minority group has a higher percentage of households with at least one basic or severe problem with the quality and condition of their housing.

Households with at Least One Problem with the Quality and Condition of Housing



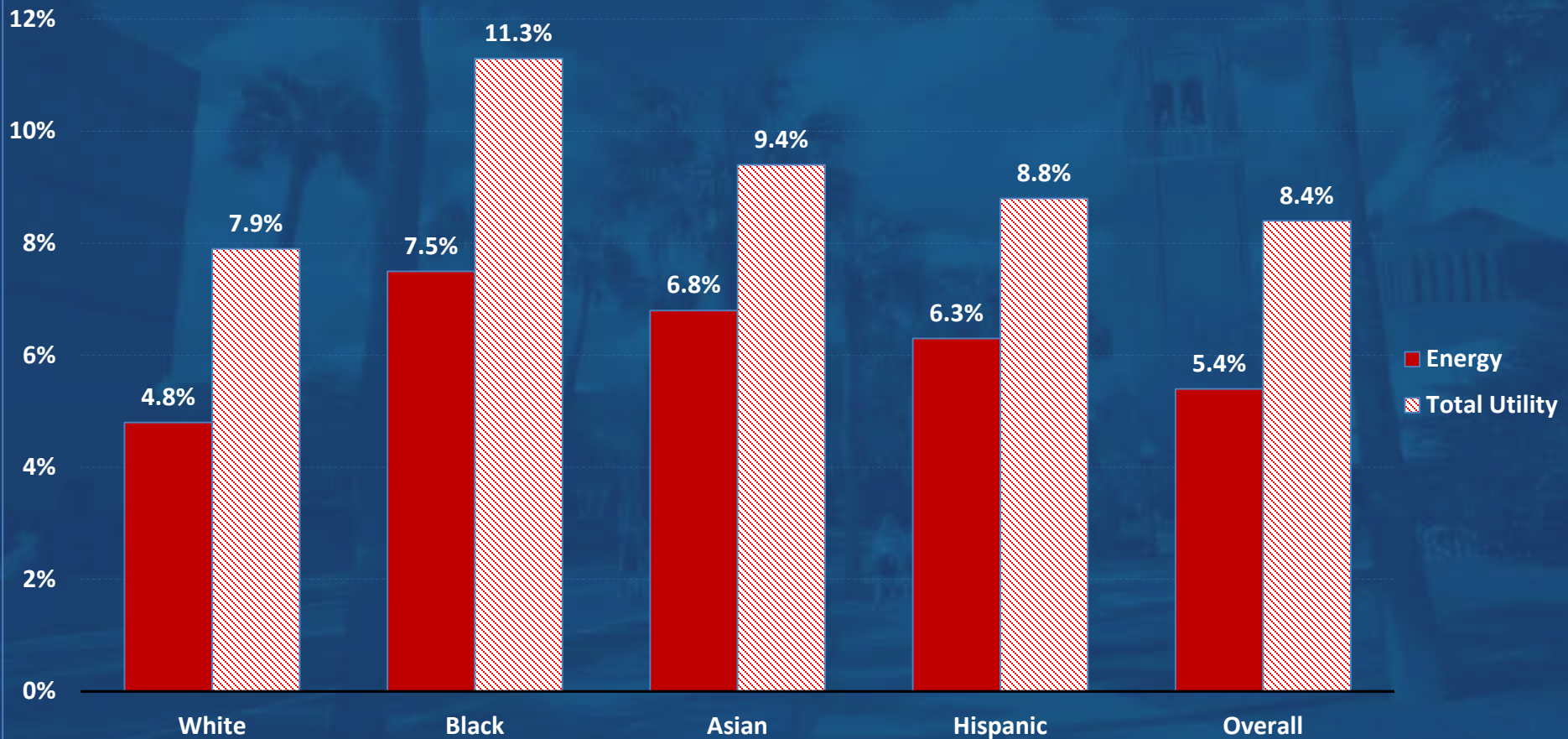
# Energy consumption adjusted for home size shows differences by race.

## Energy Use (ekWh) per square foot of Home Areas in Alachua County



When comparing the neighborhood blocks that contained the highest percentage of each demographic group, the cost burden experienced by households is different

Energy and Total Utility Bill as Percentage of Personal Income in Alachua County



# Racial Inequity in Alachua County

## Energy Consumption

- Black and Hispanic households across the county have relatively lower total energy use, but it costs them a higher proportion of their incomes
- Asian and White residents tend to consume more energy and water, but pay a lower percent of their incomes.

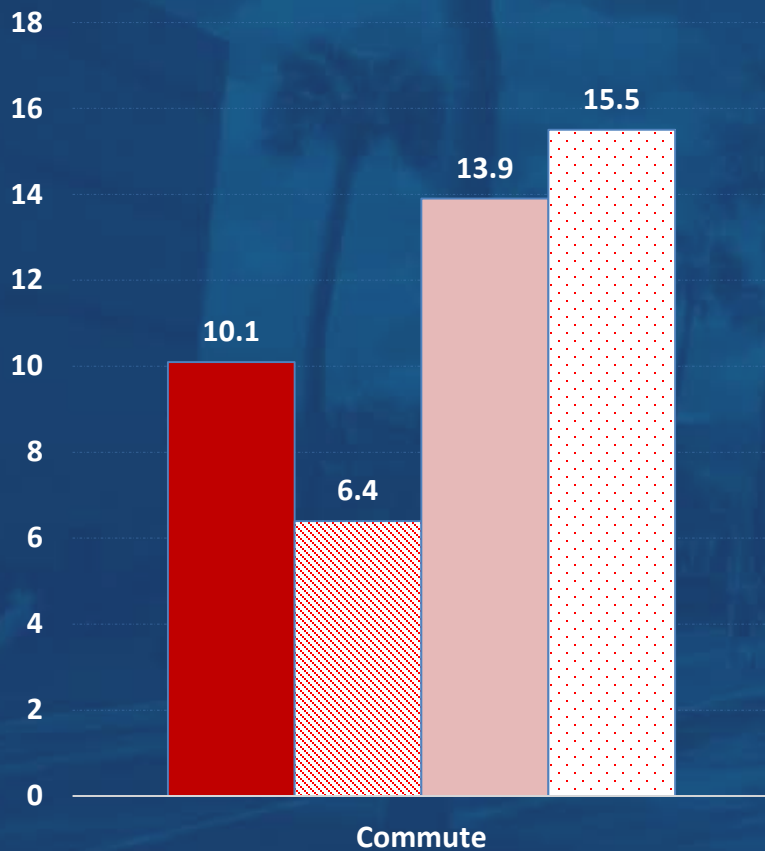
## Energy and Housing Burden

- White households
  - Pay 4.8% of their income for energy
  - 7.9% of their income in utilities
- Black households
  - Pay 7.5% of income for energy
  - Pay 11.3% of their income in utilities
- Higher energy cost burden is due, in part, to differences in household incomes, as well as the size, age, quality and energy performance of major appliances and space conditioning systems

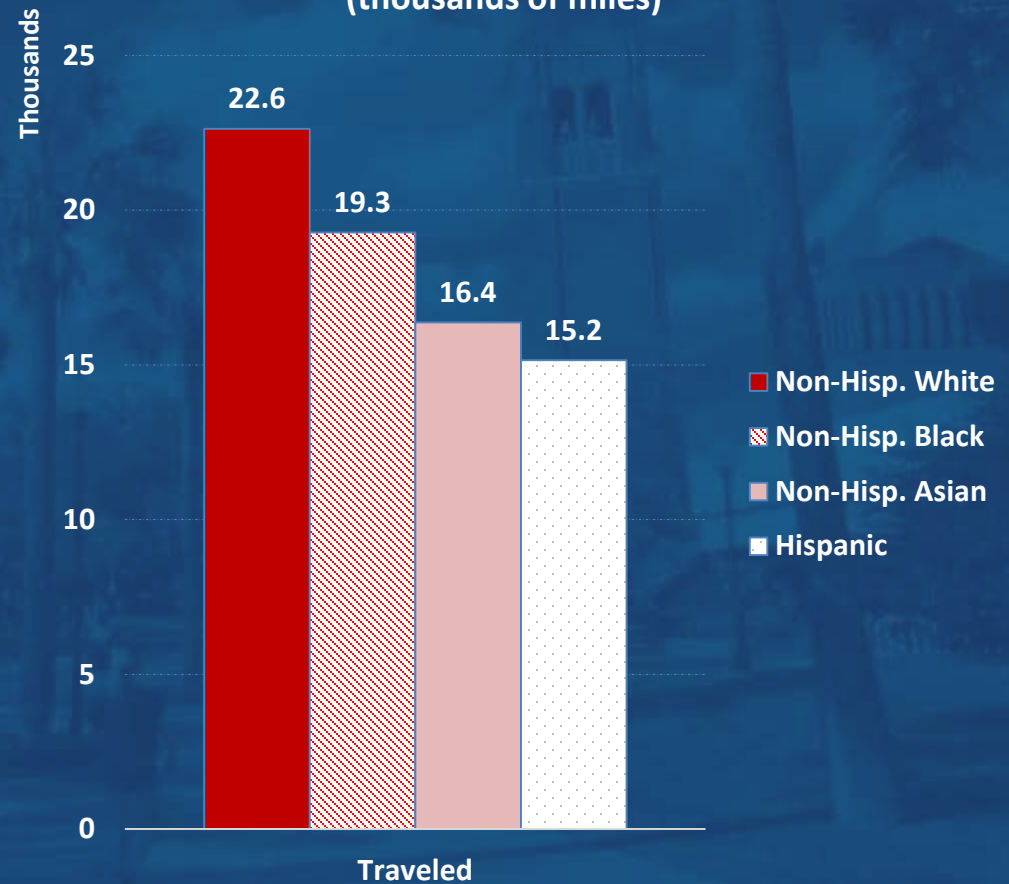


# Daily travel distance and annual miles traveled by households is different and reflect vehicle ownership trends and patterns of proximity to work, commercial centers, and destination of interest

### Average Median Commute Distance to Work (miles)

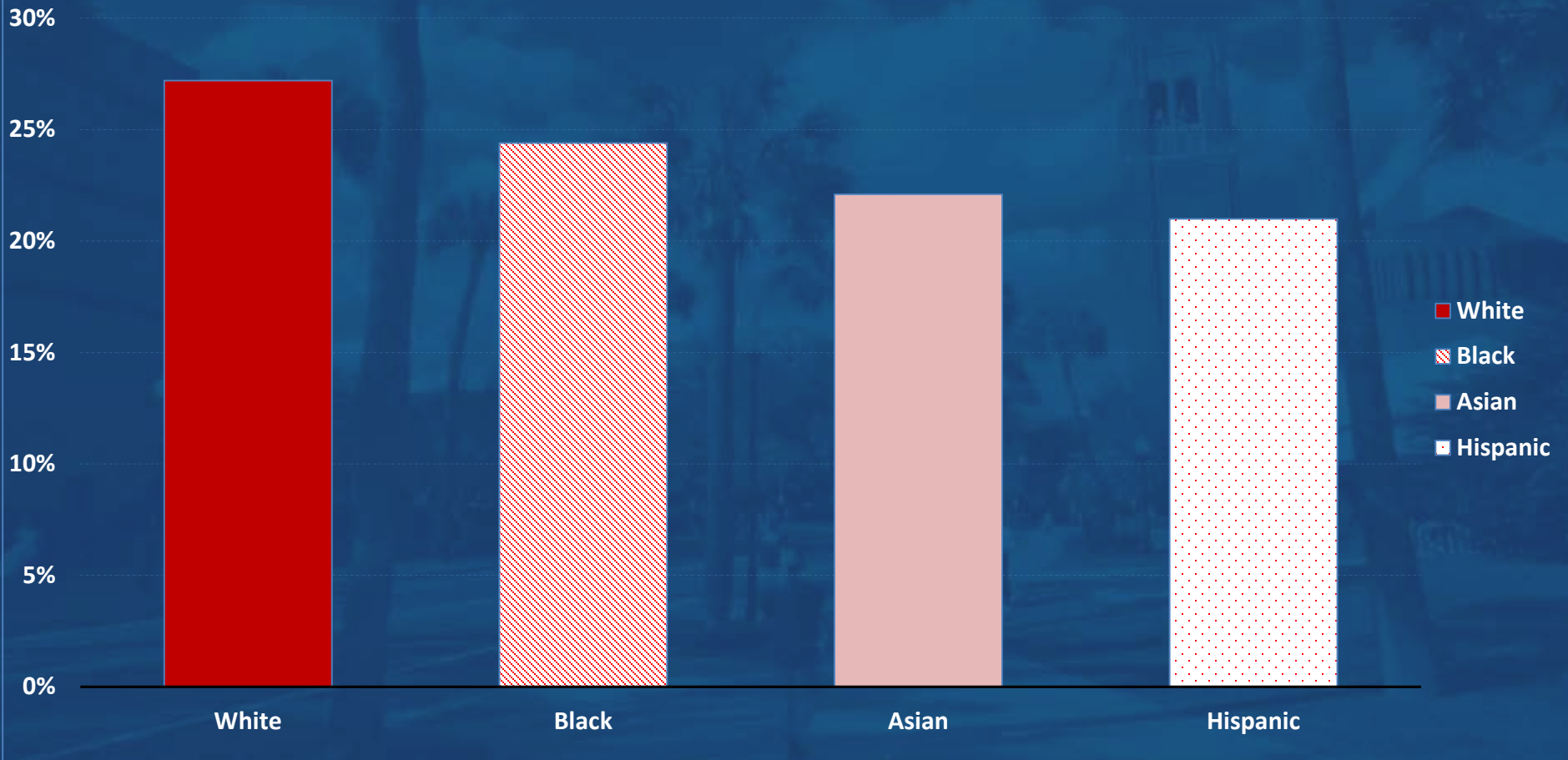


### Annual Household Vehicle Miles Traveled (thousands of miles)

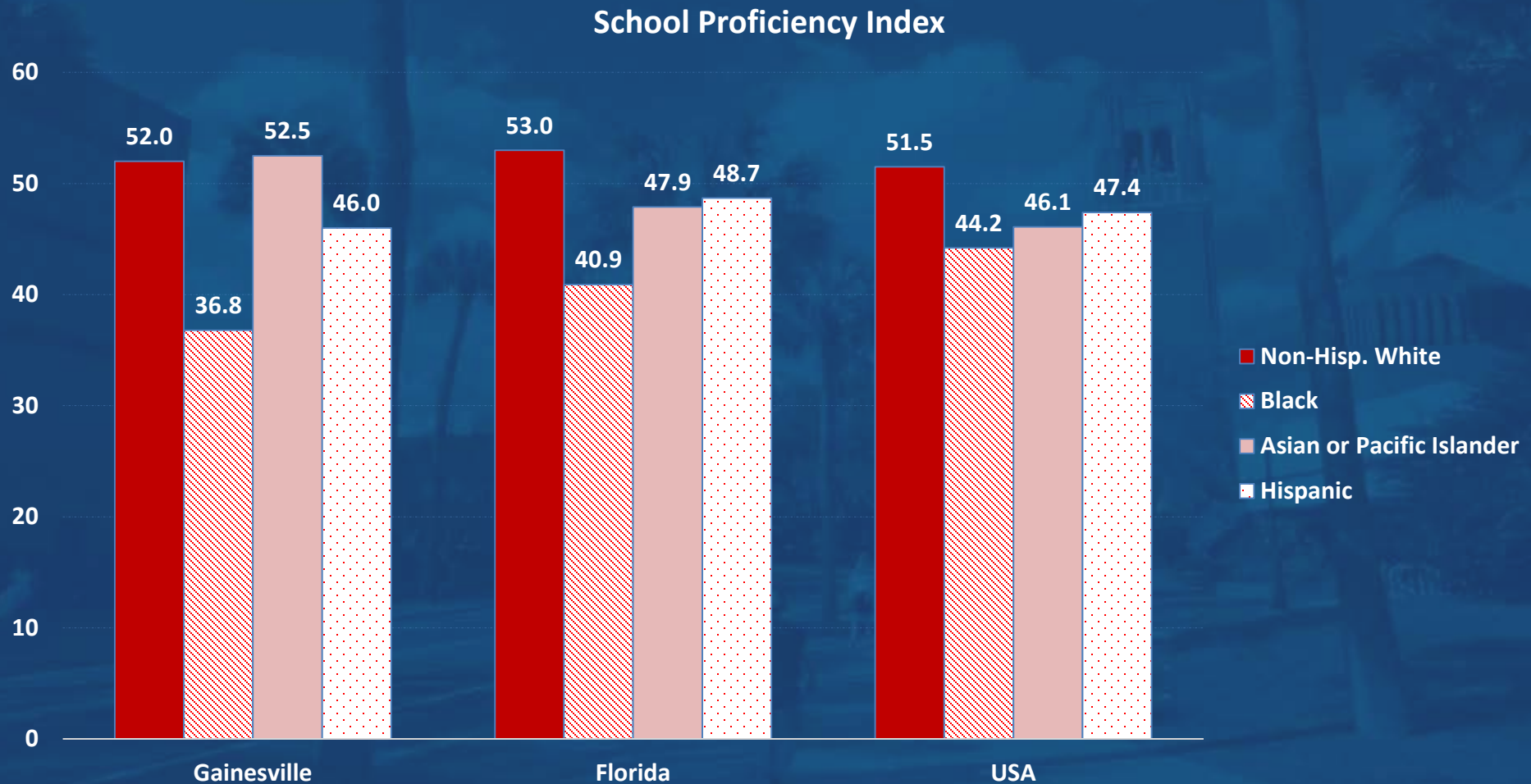


# The cost of transportation by households is also different

## Cost of Transportation as Percentage of Household Income in Alachua County



# Black households live in neighborhoods near schools with the lowest performance of 4th grade students on state exams.



# Racial Inequity in Alachua County

## Transportation

- **White households**
  - Highest rate of vehicle ownership
  - Most annual vehicle miles traveled
  - Highest cost of transportation
- **Black households**
  - Lowest rate of vehicle ownership
  - Second most annual vehicle miles traveled
  - Second highest cost of transportation
- **Hispanic households**
  - Longest average median work commute
  - Fewest annual vehicle miles traveled
  - Lowest cost of transportation

## Housing and Neighborhood Location

- **White residents**
  - Smallest household sizes
  - Highest rates of homeownership
  - Live in neighborhoods with the lowest rates of housing vacancies
- **Black residents**
  - Largest household sizes,
  - Occupy the smallest, oldest, and lowest valued (property appraiser) homes
  - Live in neighborhoods near schools with the lowest performance of 4<sup>th</sup> graders

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# Issues that contribute to racial inequity in Alachua County

1. Geography of Alachua County
2. Limited provision of services (affecting education)
3. Education system
4. Lack of wealth accumulation
5. Issues in the local labor market
6. The justice system vis-à-vis minorities

# 1. Geography of Alachua County

- East side of Gainesville is home to a large percent of minorities. These residents tend to purchase lower-priced homes
- Economic development is focused on the West side
  - 1) *East side tends to have more sensitive wetlands*, making development difficult and more costly
  - 2) *East side does not attract developers* who tend to look for customers with ample disposable income

**The ability of an area to attract development is critical to creating jobs and services, including schools.**

## 2. Limited provision of services

- Florida is a low tax state; counties must bear much of the burden to fund social services
- A large portion of the county is off the tax rolls (University of Florida and other public institutions)
- The county budget is restricted
- Low federal/state education funding
  - Low teacher pay
  - Low investment in pre-kindergarten programs
  - Limited resources for supplemental services

**A limited tax base can result in limited services**



### 3. Education system

In minority neighborhoods, the student body can be largely composed of minorities

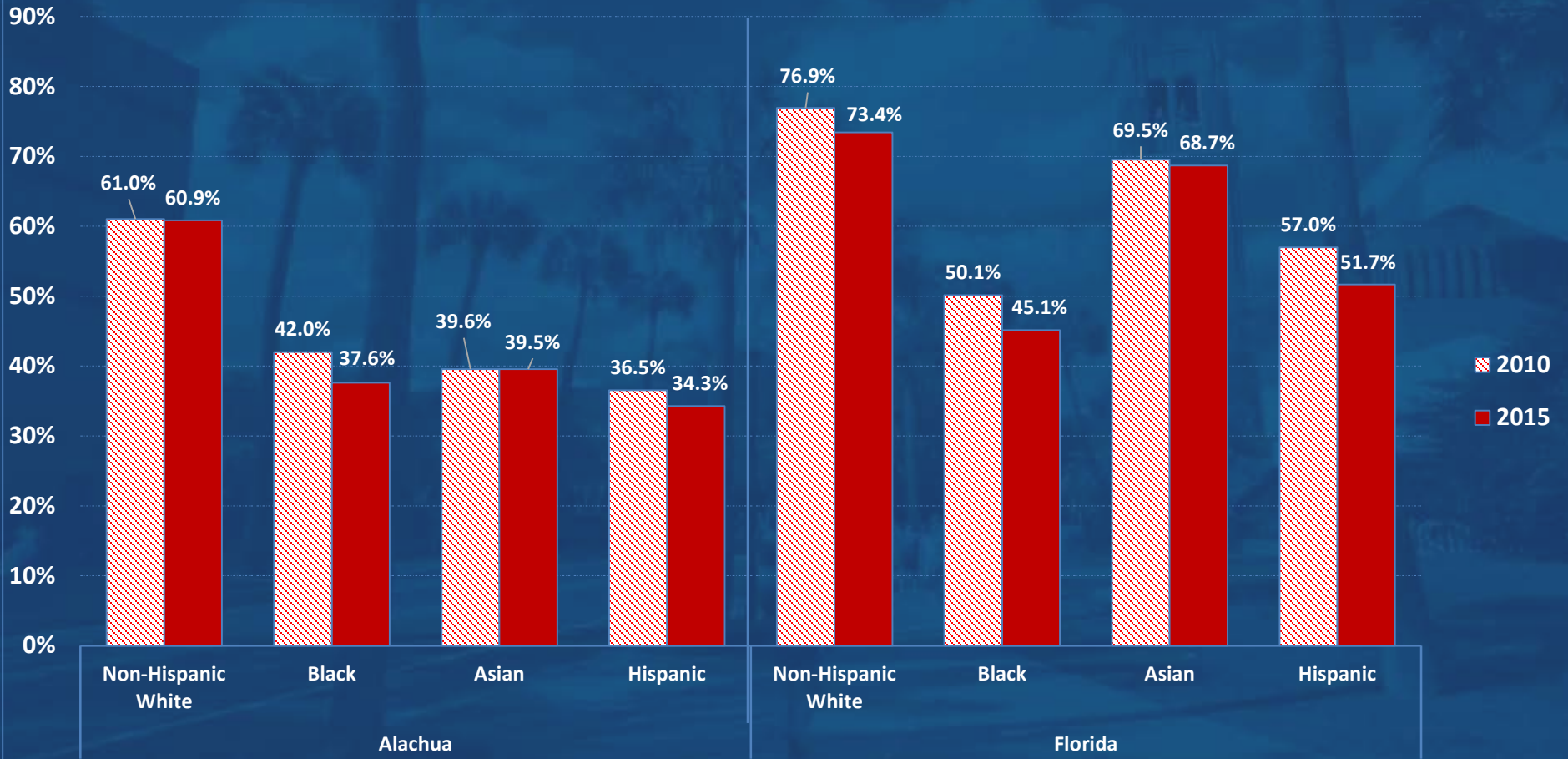
- Alachua County magnet schools
  - Minority's perceptions might be unintentionally reinforced as these minorities perform at lower levels than the high performing students

School zero tolerance policies

- When a student is suspended,
  - They fall behind and may also develop resentment
  - They are likely to be at home alone and might create a difficult situation for the family and/or other problems that might get reported to the police

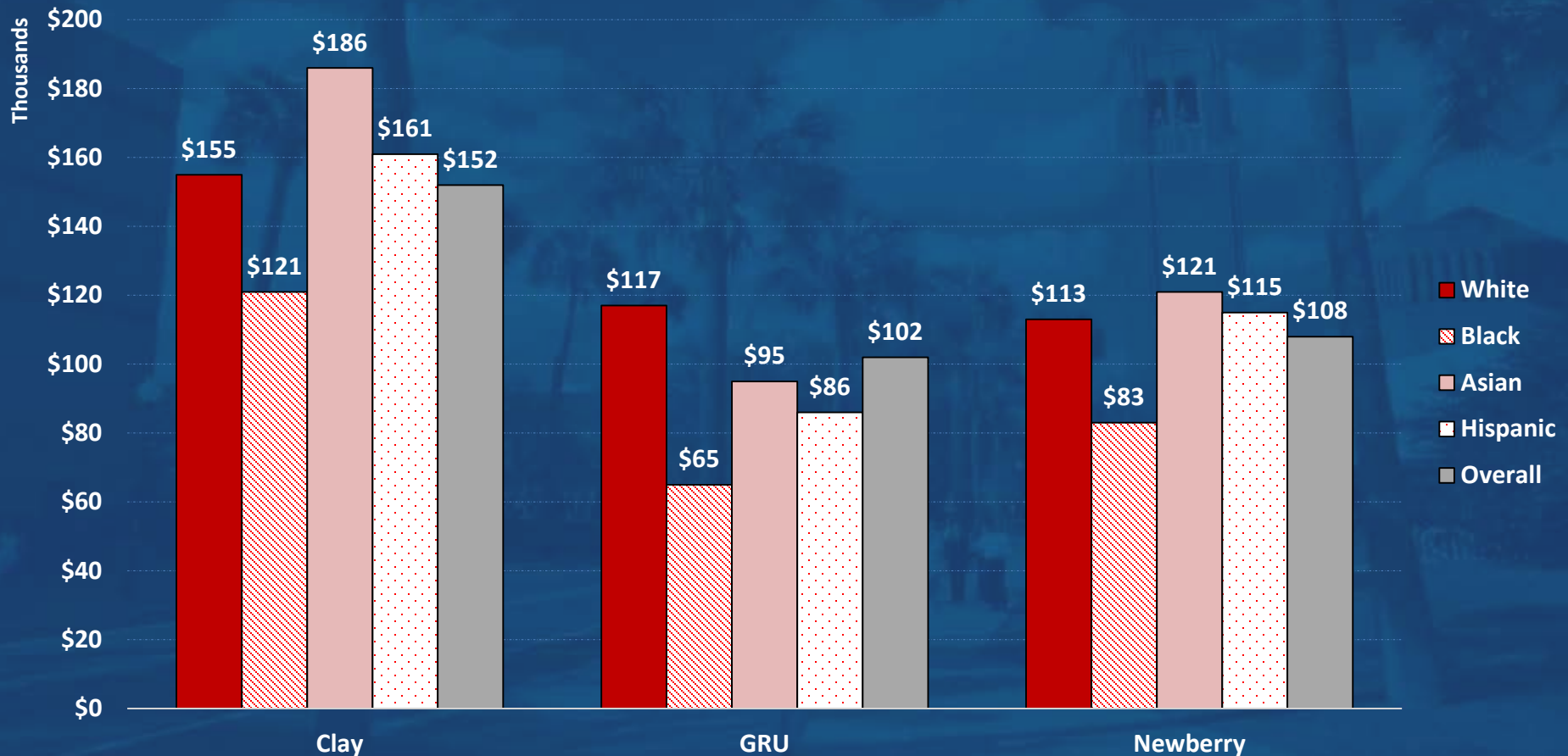
# 4. Lack of wealth accumulation

## Homeownership Rate



## 4. Lack of wealth accumulation

Average Property Values in Alachua County (thousands of dollars)



## 5. Local labor market

- **Mismatch between the skills acquired and skills needed**
  - Disproportionately higher percentage of minorities with lower educational levels and skills
  - Most of the jobs require postsecondary vocational training, an associate's or higher college degree
  - While jobs exist for both higher and lower skill workers, the unemployment rate is higher for lower skill workers
  
- **College students can crowd out the job opportunities** for local minorities
  - Employers see college students as a very attractive employees:
    - Highly flexible schedules
    - Advanced knowledge of technology

## 6. The justice system vis-à-vis minorities

- Employment for anyone with a criminal conviction is difficult because *having a criminal record is a strike against them* for most employers
- African-American men are disproportionately affected because there is a larger percentage of African-American men incarcerated

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## Focus group participants perceptions

### Acknowledge that they live with inequality on a daily basis

- Perceive a tradition of racism and unequal treatment based on race
- Believe racism exists in African American interactions with both the justice and educational systems.
- Believe finding a job is difficult, especially with a criminal record

*“They should have a program for Black men when they come out of prison to help them get a job.”*

*(Participant in the focus group)*

# Focus group participants perceptions

Recognize that *the primary solution to the problem is education*

- Children should be encouraged and helped to complete high school education at minimum
- Zero tolerance policies
- A child may be having problems for reasons related to the child's home environment
  - Lack of proper food and clothing
  - Problems within the family or absence of a family member



## Other minorities perceptions

- Understand that *children need to focus on education*
- Take responsibility for their child's education, but teachers play an important role
- Feel schools are not getting the resources they need
- Aware of the difficulty of getting jobs in the county

*"It's very hard getting a job because more of the college students are coming in. They would rather give the job to a college student than to have the people who live here working."*

*(Participant in the one-on-one interviews)*

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# General Conclusions

- Racial inequity is a massive tangle of issues that are deeply connected.
- Improvement in one area might be possible, but it may draw resources away from others.
- Focusing community efforts in two areas could have a positive long-term impact on all aspects of well-being:
  - Education
  - Employment

# General Conclusions

Provide a high quality educational experience

*A successfully educated resident will have a higher lifetime income, more and better employment opportunities, and is less likely to become involved with the criminal justice system*

- High school diploma is perceived to be the baseline
- College is not necessary to get a good job, but getting good skills training is essential

# General Conclusions

Finally, *more jobs paying a living wage with a wider diversity of skills and educational requirements are needed*

*Jobs are essential to lift people out of poverty, improve educational outcomes, and reduce crime*

# Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County

Report will be available:

<https://www.bebr.ufl.edu/economics/racial-inequity>

Please let us know how you are using the information contained in this report by emailing United Way of North Central Florida

[research@unitedwayncfl.org](mailto:research@unitedwayncfl.org)