

City of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

Improving Safety and Policing

In December 2020, the City of Brooklyn Park hired Wilder Research to study safety and policing in Brooklyn Park. Find the full results of this study at <https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/brooklyn-park-equity-in-public-safety>.

Purpose of the study



Understand root causes of violence in Brooklyn Park



Develop recommendations for improving community safety



Create a scorecard to assess Brooklyn Park Police Department

Study methods



Review 66 research reports



Analyze 18 Brooklyn Park community indicators



Interview 56 people who live in and/or work for Brooklyn Park

Key findings

There are risks of violence when people are not economically secure, or do not feel connected to their community.

Community data about:

- Living wage work
- Affordable housing/homeownership
- Positive connections for youth
- Neighborhood connections

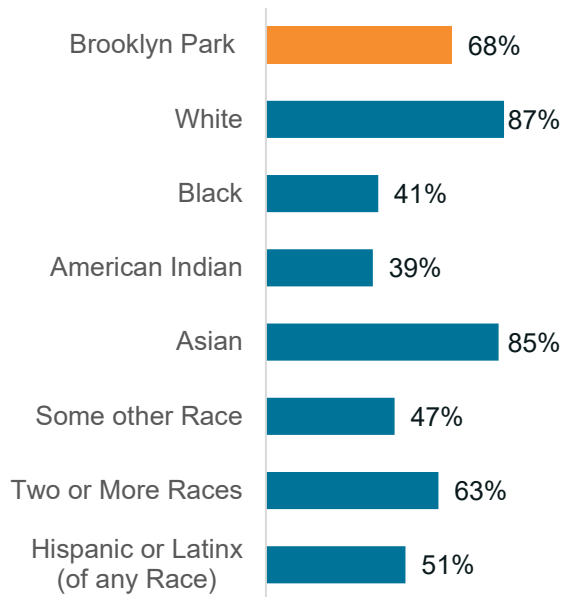
and more can show where risk factors are. Systemic racism contributes to the unequal presences of risk factors.

Before I even moved here, I heard there's quite a range of economic backgrounds in Brooklyn Park. Especially when you go towards more of the southern side versus the northern side.
– Community interviewee

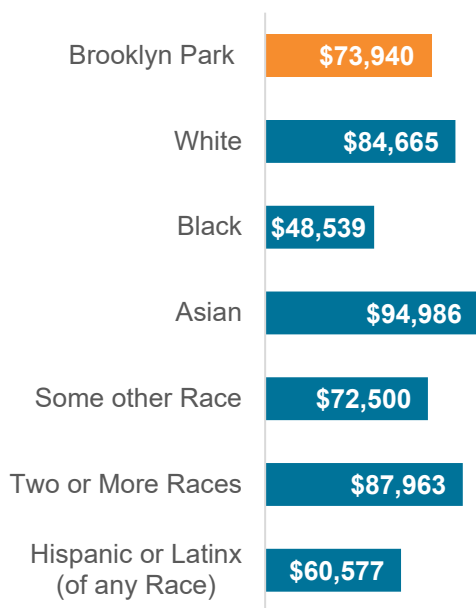


Data show disparities in Brooklyn Park that likely contribute to violence and disorder (see Figures 1 and 2).

1. Homeownership rate by race



2. Median household income by race



Homeownership and income data source: Minnesota Compass. (n.d.). *Location profiles: Brooklyn Park data*. <https://www.mncompass.org/profiles/city/brooklyn-park>

Improving policing may have limited effects on community safety

- Community safety happens before the police are called. Research shows that police, prosecution, and incarceration have little to do with crime rates in a community.
- Community-based crisis response, pre-charge diversion, and treatment and restorative justice can be more effective than police and jail at increasing safety.
- Changes that result in police using less force against community, or police being more accountable to community, can reduce violence. Other changes to policing may have limited or no effect on community safety.

There is definitely times when we're called to do work that just isn't typical of law enforcement. Like, "this isn't a law enforcement thing that I can solve, but I don't want to just leave you hanging either." – BPPD officer

Recommendations

- Focus on prevention.** The City of Brooklyn Park should take steps to ensure that all residents, regardless of race or place, are immersed in the social conditions where safety thrives.
- Improve the interventions.** The city should consider expanding restorative interventions, and exploring community-based mental health and substance use response, school-based safety workers, and other ways to reimagine policing. Additionally, BPPD, in partnership with community and City staff, should use the scorecard to illuminate and prioritize areas for improving BPPD
- Assess BPPD for improvements.** Wilder developed a scorecard to measure BPPD performance. We recommend the city, BPPD, and community members impacted by systemic marginalization and police contact partner to assess and recommend changes to BPPD. Find the scorecard at <https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/brooklyn-park-equity-in-public-safety>.