

Opportunity Atlas Policy Analysis



MOLLY BALDWIN

Founder & CEO, ROCA
Chelsea, MA

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Setting meaningful benchmarks

What we have discovered in our journey at Roca is that if you want to develop interventions that work, having very clear data about the population you are aiming to serve and the geographic area you are hoping to serve is really key to be able to demonstrate and prove meaningful outcomes. And while having benchmarks to compare against is critical, they are often hard to come by. It is often really challenging to understand what those benchmarks are if you don't have good visuals. The Opportunity Atlas empowers organizations to be more data driven, to do a better job of setting meaningful benchmarks, and to make more informed decisions about where they might want to work or partner with others in their work.



BILL BYNUM

CEO, Hope Credit Union
Jackson, MS

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Effectively Target

As the chief executive of a community development financial institution with branches across the Deep South, I know all too well the gaps that limit opportunity in high poverty communities. The Opportunity Atlas provides a credible and accessible tool to analyze the consequences of such choices, clearly articulate why investment is needed, and more effectively target robust, affordable and responsible financial services that strengthens communities, and helps hard working people climb the economic ladder. With the recent expansion of our efforts to close equity gaps in Alabama, I am reminded more than ever of the power of data-driven investment.

Better-informed decisions

Since first previewing it at a gathering of mayors, I have eagerly been looking forward to seeing the Atlas go live. I came into office convinced of the power that data has to improve urban management and the Atlas will be a great resource for my team as we continue our important work in South Bend. Seeing where opportunity is lacking and being able to map mobility outcomes at the neighborhood level will empower me and my staff to make smarter and better-informed decisions to improve the lives of South Bend's residents, and especially our children.

PETE BUTTIGIEG

Mayor
City of South Bend, IN

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BECKY J. HATTER

Executive Director & CEO,
Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Eastern Missouri
St. Louis, MO

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Rethink our models of service

We see great opportunity in the Atlas. Our ultimate goal is for our Little Brothers and Little Sisters to be self-sustaining, living a joyful life and earning a living wage. To achieve this vision, it is helpful to be able to predict the headwinds. The Atlas will strengthen our outcome dashboard, help us truly understand the lived experiences of our Littles and families and challenge us to rethink our models of service and support. Poverty is generational. Inequity is systemic. This kind of longitudinal data is invaluable, presenting new questions and new opportunities.

Data-driven decision-making

Mayors throughout the country will tell you that there is a growing concern about income and wealth inequality in cities throughout America, but for too long we have been lacking the tools to meaningfully measure how our cities fare in terms of mobility. As I prioritize making even deeper investments in initiatives that promote social and economic mobility here in Providence, the Atlas will enhance my team's ability to make informed and data-driven strategic decisions about where and how to target those investments.

JORGE ELORZA

Mayor
City of Providence, RI

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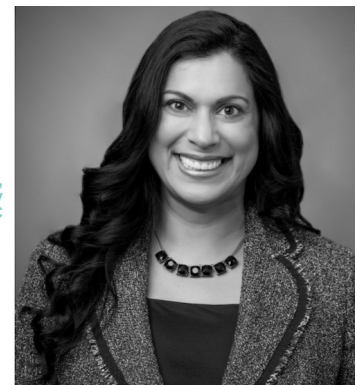
Complement community-informed knowledge

Leading on Opportunity is excited to partner with the Atlas. They add a nuanced, data-informed view of opportunity at neighborhood levels which will help us further develop the work we've embarked upon in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Their research expertise complements our community-informed knowledge of bright spots - what's working at the local level - to advocate for stronger policies that build greater opportunity and upward mobility for all

DR. STEPHANIE COOPER-LEWTER

Executive Director,
Leading on Opportunity
Charlotte, NC

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GREG RUSS

Executive Director/CEO,
Minneapolis Public
Housing Authority
Minneapolis, MN

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Data and policy connection

Often public policy is the flavor of the moment and the program choices that result are not well defined. Research and testing are all too often divorced from the programs we administer so that we are not, in fact, 'learning' by doing.' The creation of Opportunity Insights, coupled with the Opportunity Atlas, changes the game. We now have data and an economic map -- a new geography -- that is rich with opportunities for families and their children. Our task is to apply this information to the programs we administer and determine what factors best help families make and sustain a move. This is the power of a rich data and policy connection - and it can make many lives substantially better and families more secure.

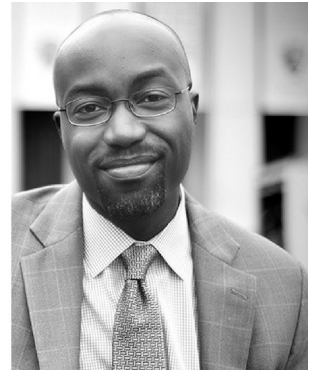
Visualizing inequality

Atlas is potentially a very powerful tool for visualizing inequality, using some of the most cutting-edge research on mobility available and taking it down to the local level in an accessible way. It has potential uses for policymakers, for advocates, and for community organizers because it goes beyond the academic to having a real-world impact. As communities consider making investments in particular places, it is incredibly helpful to know where those investments are likely to translate into greater mobility, particularly for low-income children. This tool adds some objectivity to long-term planning to increase economic viability in communities where opportunity has been lacking.

JASON PURNELL

Director, Health Equity Works,
Washington University in St. Louis
St. Louis, MO

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Refine our thinking

The Atlas is an incredible tool that will help to inform our work. The tool and its various filters and advanced search function will allow us to analyze areas of opportunity, both in Detroit and across the country, and refine our thinking on the policies and programs that create economically mobile neighborhoods. Even in areas with poor outcomes, the specificity the tool enables allows you to see pockets of success that stand out, raising more questions - and potential solutions - to investigate.

LUKE SHAEFER

Director, Poverty Solutions
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI

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STEPHEN NORMAN

Executive Director,
King County Housing Authority
Seattle, WA

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Shape effective engagement

Having established that neighborhood quality matters, the founders of the Equality of Opportunity Project are now tackling the question of exactly how successful communities create opportunity for poor children with their new organization, Opportunity Insights. This, for practitioners engaged in helping children in poor neighborhoods across the country succeed, is critical research. The findings will inform policy on the national level and help shape effective engagement and investment strategies on the ground to bring new opportunity to where it is needed.