

## Gentrification Continues to Displace Families

By Keiarra Bray

Though gentrification is meant to improve communities by bringing in new businesses and improving the overall economic status, it often does more harm than good to those that need it most. Individuals are often removed from their communities because they can no longer afford the cost of living in the gentrified area. The neighborhood racial make-up changes dramatically as those new investments enter communities and low-income families have to move to worse neighborhoods.



Photo by Tyler Lariviere 2016 protest against gentrification and displacement

Merriam-Webster defines gentrification as the process of an influx of middle-class/wealthy individuals moving into more impoverished neighborhoods to refurbish homes and businesses while increasing property values. This process often displaces prior residents of the neighborhood rather than allowing them to benefit from the new investments. The inequitable experiences of housing disparities have existed since the 1930s, the start of [redlining](#).

The federal government fixed neighborhoods inhabited by minority groups to be labeled as risky for investments, preventing people of color from obtaining loans for housing, and prohibited the communities' property value from increasing as no new businesses were created. Over time, white

neighborhoods have gained an influx of businesses and investment opportunities such as public transit, while neighborhoods containing minority groups have continued to stay low.

The [GI Bill](#) was created to reduce housing for returning World War II soldiers, but racial inequities implemented into the bill prevented black veterans from purchasing. These inequalities prevented African Americans from living in developed suburbs and often left them to live in communities with fewer resources and more significant environmental health hazards.

As urban renewal continues to control low-income neighborhoods, some individuals who reside there are forced to leave as they are no longer able to afford mortgages, rent and purchase necessary groceries. As these crises continue to exist, individuals with higher income purchase these homes, flip them and sell them for twice as much. These changes create the ongoing cycle of communities that were once majority-minority to become majority white as affordability is no longer plausible with new investments that enter the neighborhoods.

Though the expansion of the city population and investments are needed, it should not be at the expense of equal housing opportunities for all individuals. Gentrification creates [direct, indirect and cultural displacements](#) for those residing in the gentrified neighborhoods.

Residents are left with the inability to afford new investments incorporated in neighborhoods. With an influx of businesses and an increase in property value, the demographics in neighborhoods drastically change, forcing residents to feel they are no longer accounted for. Before incorporating economic development projects, it is vital to recognize those most vulnerable, limiting prior residents' displacement.



Moving forward, to maintain the economic and cultural diversity in neighborhoods [affordable housing units must be incorporated](#). We must continue to question legislation until all individuals have equal access to housing and the resources incorporated in neighborhoods.

