



## ALBANY COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION SUMMARY

### PARTNERSHIP FOR SOUTHERN EQUITY

***This report is an overview of the small group discussions held during a community listening session in Albany, GA on Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 9:00am – 11:00am at Albany State University. Participants included community organizers, nonprofit professionals, local leaders, and ASU students, staff, and faculty.***

**Partners:**

Albany State University  
Open Arms, Inc  
SOWEGA Rising  
United Way of Southwest Georgia

**Report created by:**

Partnership for Southern Equity  
[www.psequity.org](http://www.psequity.org)

## PSE Equity Tour Albany Listening Session

*During the first quarter of 2023, PSE held Community Listening Sessions in Albany and Brunswick to build on our work in 2020 with [the Georgia Systems Change Alliance](#), further cultivating relationships with community stakeholders who serve, support, and live in these communities. As a part of these sessions, PSE facilitated conversations with participants, designed to further understand the existing equity gaps, the efforts being made to address inequity, and how PSE can support these efforts. Below you will find the discussion questions, common themes, and key response.*

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### QUESTION #1: WHAT ARE THE EQUITY GAPS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

#### KEY RESPONSES

"Collaboration is important. Facilitating that collaboration is even more important."

"How often will we have these roundtables, bringing together all these orgs in one place?"

"How to begin to stabilize the equity gaps without connection to begin the understanding of needs from the East, west, North and South- surrounding Albany?"

"Change moves at the speed of trust."

#### COMMON THEMES

Some of the key equity gaps identified in the Albany community include the lack of quality, affordable housing, the lack of quality public PK-12 education, food insecurity, and disparities in health outcomes. Review the full list of equity gaps participants identified below:

<p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing</li> <li>• Weatherized homes</li> <li>• Funds and availability of safe housing</li> <li>• Fair Housing</li> <li>• Tenant bill of rights</li> <li>• Connecting households and building trust in resources in the community</li> </ul>	<p><b>Health care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largest city/ county utilizing peach state</li> <li>• Disparities around race – understanding</li> <li>• Elderly resources (esp. Caregiver)</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Better healthcare</li> </ul>
<p><b>Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at numbers and actionable plan to improve job interests</li> <li>• Access to better education (resources)</li> <li>• Mentoring programs</li> <li>• Graduation rates</li> <li>• Financial Literacy</li> <li>• Early education</li> <li>• Certified therapist in every school</li> <li>• Access to hands on experience</li> <li>• Lack of experienced teachers/ educators</li> <li>• Real history and study of racism in school</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other Equity Gaps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skilled workforce better jobs – better life – better health</li> <li>• Only low-income jobs available</li> <li>• Revitalize the city</li> <li>• Bring in wealth to community</li> <li>• Safer spaces/ streets</li> <li>• Cleaning up the homeless population</li> <li>• Smoke pollution</li> <li>• Expensive to eat healthy (bad food quality)</li> <li>• Food insecurities</li> </ul>

## QUESTION #2: HOW WOULD YOUR COMMUNITY BE DIFFERENT IF THESE GAPS WERE CLOSED?

### KEY RESPONSES

“Stronger economic growth- average median household income increased”

“Graduation rates would increase  
– create a better environment for

“Less violence”

“Community will be informed”

### COMMON THEMES

If the identified equity gaps were closed, participants believe that the Albany community would have healthier residents, less violence, productive citizens, and better educational opportunities for higher learning, better jobs, and resources. Additionally, participants identified the following improvements:

- Better healthcare options and elderly resources
- Public transportation
- Bringing wealth to the community
- Healthier food options
- Skilled workforce
- Better jobs - better life
- Safer spaces

## QUESTION #3: WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO REALIZE THIS CHANGE?

### KEY RESPONSES

“Advocates – like family – are necessary.”

“Go to the people and ask what they need.”

“Connectivity with groups like this – asking ‘who do you know?’”

“Building trust in resources in the community “

### COMMON THEMES

Some common responses included civic groups being activated, more funds and availability of safe housing, trauma-informed training and resources, and mentoring.

Additionally, participants identified the following:

- Tenant Bill of Rights
- A cultural change
- Connecting households to resources
- Better education
- Equity in government representation
- Voting increase
- Better communication between city leaders, business leaders and community
- Streamline marketing
- Bring in community into conversations about equity
- Coming together as a community to spark real change

## QUESTION #4: HOW CAN PSE SUPPORT YOUR EQUITY WORK?

### KEY RESPONSES

“Collaboration is important. Facilitating that collaboration is even more important.”

“Publicize the many organizations and contact information – to recruit interested persons”

“How often will we have these roundtables, bringing together all these orgs in one place?”

“How does your organization support the gaps in education?”

### COMMON THEMES

Some common responses for the support that PSE can bring mostly revolved around bringing the community into the conversation about equity gaps by collaborating with community officials and the community, hosting more roundtable discussions, and increasing government representation to achieve the changes necessary. Other responses included:

- Funding and training
- Leadership
- Facilitating collaboration- bringing together all organizations in one place
- Networking with CEOs, presidents, and group leaders
- Being a connection between community and government
- Knowledge about availability of resources

## QUESTION #5: WHAT PRACTICES HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ADVANCING THIS WORK?

### KEY RESPONSES

“Could there be a certified therapist at each school?”

“Is there any possibility that PSE could come visit Daugherty High School to inform students of equity?”

“Mentoring programs - financial literacy classes.”

### COMMON THEMES

Some successful practices that would benefit this work and help close the equity gap within the Albany community are mentoring programs, social justice, education and knowledge of laws and rights and having access to available resources for the community to easily access.

- Social justice
- Networking and leadership
- Knowledge about rights and laws
- Increase in voters
- Collaborating
- Pooling resources