

Executive Summary

This month marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UDHR proclaims that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” While progress has been made since 1948, inequalities persist in New York City, in the United States, and around the world. Numerous groups, from racial and ethnic minorities, to immigrants, to individuals with disabilities, face disadvantages across multiple domains. The purpose of the Equality Indicators is to track these disparities over time, and to serve as a catalyst for change where inequalities persist. Each year, we explore whether and where progress is being made, and highlight local policies that aim to address inequality in key areas over time.

We began this project in New York City, which is the focus of this report. However, in partnership with The Rockefeller Foundation and its 100 Resilient Cities initiative, we have worked with local partners to develop and implement tools in five new cities: **Dallas, Oakland, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Tulsa**. Six cities are now using Equality Indicators tools to track progress and inform policy.

In envisioning the Equality Indicators, we recognized that inequalities exist across numerous areas of life, and that these areas are inextricably linked to one another. In New York City, we chose six foundational domains in which to track progress for those most likely to experience inequalities: **Economy, Education, Health, Housing, Justice, and Services**. Data are collected from a number of sources ranging from government agencies, to Census surveys, to our own public survey of New Yorkers conducted each year.

The Equality Indicators framework consists of the six **themes** described above, each divided into four **topics** consisting of four **indicators**, 96 indicators in total. Each year, we calculate a static score for that year, and then a score measuring change. The static citywide, theme, topic, and indicator scores range from 1 to 100, with the former representing the highest possible inequality and the latter representing the highest possible equality. Scores for each of the 96 individual indicators drive scores at each of the successively higher levels: scores for the four indicators under each topic are averaged to produce the score for that topic; the four topic scores under each theme are averaged to produce the score for that theme; and the six theme scores are averaged to produce a citywide score. Change scores at citywide, theme, topic, and indicator levels are produced by simply subtracting the baseline year’s static score from the current year’s static score.

In response to changes in the data available to measure them or to enhance the way they are operationalized, we made changes to a number of indicators this year. While some involved only updating data, we discontinued or moved five indicators, while we changed the data source for two. In all cases, if we made a change to this year’s indicator, we also changed the prior three years’ indicators and their scores; for this reason, the 2015, 2016, and 2017 scores do not precisely map onto what was reported in those years.

We believe the insights our framework offers can be used to guide better public policy, as identifying persistent problem areas provides an opportunity to work on solutions. With this in mind, our work goes a step beyond documenting changes in each domain, to highlighting current policy initiatives that have the potential to effect change in those areas. Of course, the tracking of indicators over time does not allow us to attribute change (or lack of change) to any particular initiatives or policies—this would require extensive evaluation work. With that said, connecting our findings to current initiatives allows us to consider how they can improve outcomes for disadvantaged residents of the city.

More information is contained in the full report and online at nyc.equalityindicators.org, while general project information and links to findings from other cities are available at equalityindicators.org.

2018 NYC EQUALITY SCORE

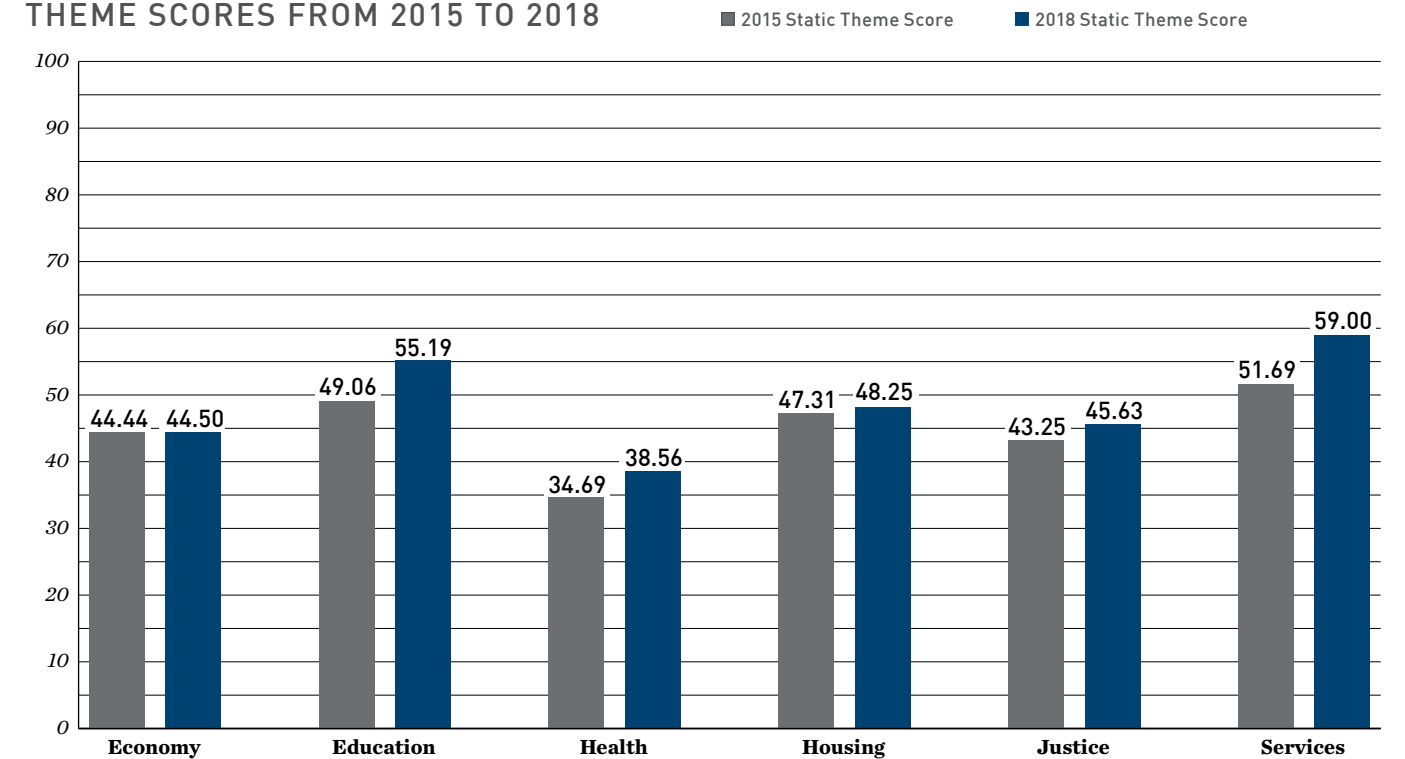
The **2018 NYC Equality Score** was 48.52 out of a possible 100. Generally speaking this score means that overall, the disadvantaged groups represented here continue to be almost twice as likely as those not disadvantaged to experience negative outcomes in fundamental areas of life, as measured by the Equality Indicators.¹ This year’s score represents an **increase of +3.45** from the 2015 score of 45.07 (despite a decrease of -0.21 from the 2017 score of 48.73). While this increase is small, many of the inequalities represented here are deeply entrenched, and we expect change to be incremental. It is our hope, however, that over time we will be able to sustain—and hopefully increase—the positive change we see each year.

OTHER KEY FINDINGS: THEME, TOPIC, AND INDICATOR SCORES

2018 THEME SCORES

All six themes saw positive change from baseline. Among them, the largest positive change was found in **Services** (+7.31), followed by **Education** (+6.13), **Health** (+3.88), and **Justice** (+2.38). Though positive, the scores for **Housing** (+0.94) and **Economy** (+0.06) remained largely unchanged. **Services** and **Education** had both the highest static scores and the highest change scores in 2018.

THEME SCORES FROM 2015 TO 2018



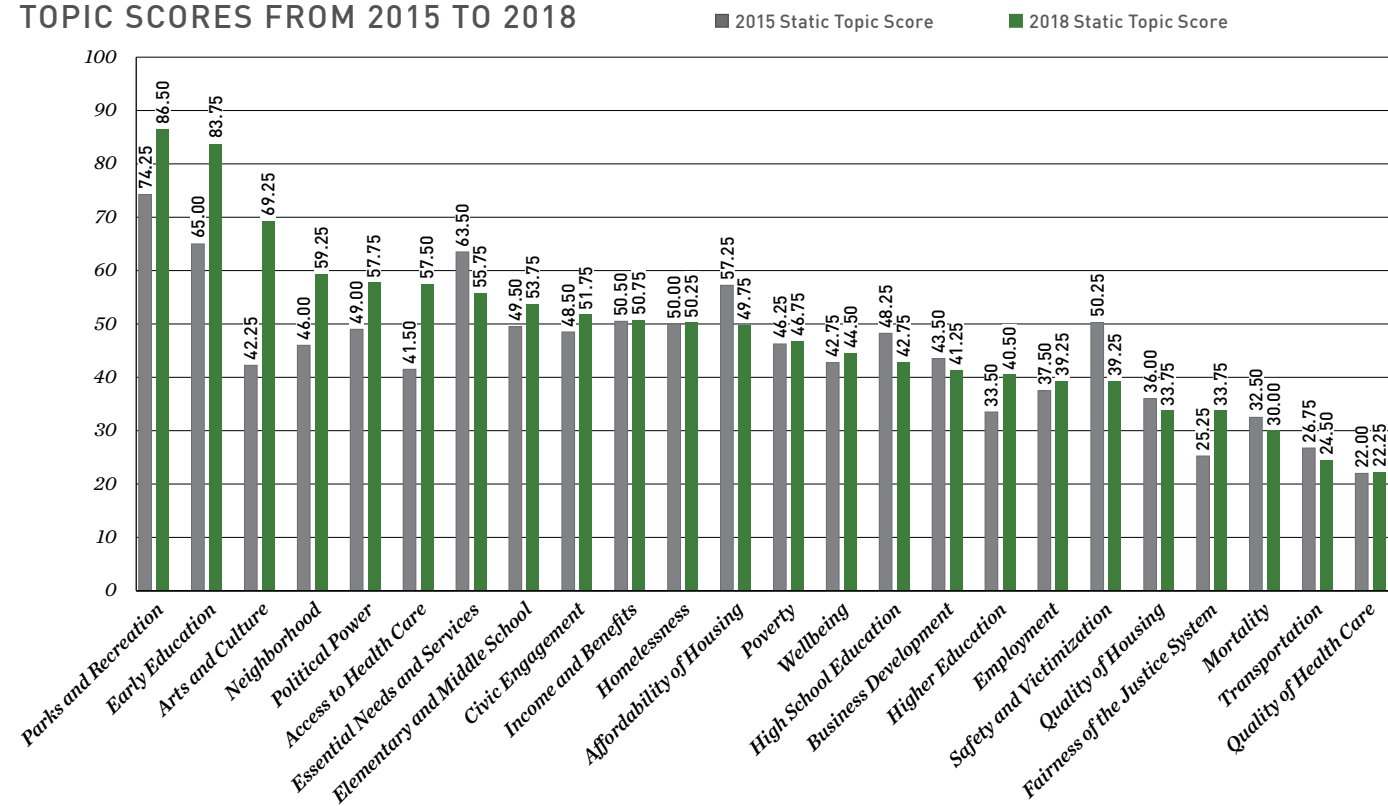
¹ The score of 48.52 corresponds with ratios of 1.800-1.824 (see Appendix D).

2018 TOPIC SCORES

Within the 24 topics, change scores ranged from an increase of +27.00 for **Arts and Culture** to a decrease of -11.00 for **Safety and Victimization**. The four highest positive topic changes (increases in equality) were spread across four themes: one from **Services** (**Arts and Culture**: +27.00), one from **Education** (**Early Education**: +18.75), one from **Health** (**Access to Health Care**: +16.00), and one from **Housing** (**Neighborhood**: +13.25). The highest positive topic change in **Justice** was **Political Power** (+8.75), and the highest positive topic change in **Economy** was **Employment** (+1.75), which was far behind the rest. **Justice** had the biggest negative change score (**Safety and Victimization**: -11.00), and **Services** had the second biggest negative change score (**Essential Needs and Services**: -7.75) despite being the highest scoring theme overall. The next two biggest negative change scores were in **Housing** (**Affordability of Housing**: -7.50) and **Education** (**High School Education**: -5.50), followed by **Health** (**Mortality**: -2.50).

This year, we had two static topic scores that rose above 80: **Parks and Recreation** (86.50), which had the highest score, and **Early Education** (83.75). These topics scored considerably higher than the rest—the next highest static topic score was **Arts and Culture** at 69.25. At the opposite end of the spectrum, two of the topics had extremely low static topic scores, below 30. **Quality of Health Care** had the lowest score (22.25), followed by **Transportation** (24.50).

TOPIC SCORES FROM 2015 TO 2018



2018 INDICATOR SCORES

At the indicator level, we saw a much wider variation in scores, some with dramatic changes. Change scores range from a high of +61 (*income and child care facilities*) to a low of -36 (*foster care status and child abuse/neglect*). Overall, 23 indicators had change scores of +10 or above, showing the greatest amount of positive change. On the other hand, there were 13 indicators that had change scores at or below -10, showing the greatest amount of negative change.

This year, four indicators had static scores of 100, indicating equality across the groups measured. Two of these were based on location (*location and senior access to the arts* and *location and public library availability*), while one was based on race (*race and representation in government*) and the other on income (*income and child care facilities*). Four additional indicators had static scores above 90: *location and EMS response times*, *income and access to parks, disability and playground accessibility*, and *income and pre-k quality*.

Two indicators had static scores below 10. With a score of 1, the highest amount of inequality as measured by the Equality Indicators, *probation status and unemployment* received the lowest score. While we note that unemployment decreased among those on probation, a number of factors including discrimination faced by those with criminal records contributed to the fact that it remained well below that of the general population. The second lowest static score was for *race and HIV-related deaths*, and we noted a small increase in disparity, although we note that the mortality rate dropped among all racial and ethnic groups.

CONCLUSION

Because inequality is so deeply embedded in the fabric, structure, and history of our society, it is not something that can be solved overnight. With that said, gradual shifts in attitudes and awareness, coupled with policy change and targeted, on-the-ground work, can effect real change over time. As our findings show, we are beginning to see some of these changes, especially in certain areas; and while we cannot say for sure what is driving progress, it is likely that the City's efforts—many of which are outlined in this report—are contributing. But there is still more work to be done. There are still many areas where no progress is being made or where we have seen setbacks. Our goal is to make sure the most vulnerable in our society are not forgotten, and to ensure that we do not lose sight of where they continue to be left behind. Only by continuing to monitor progress will we be able to do so.