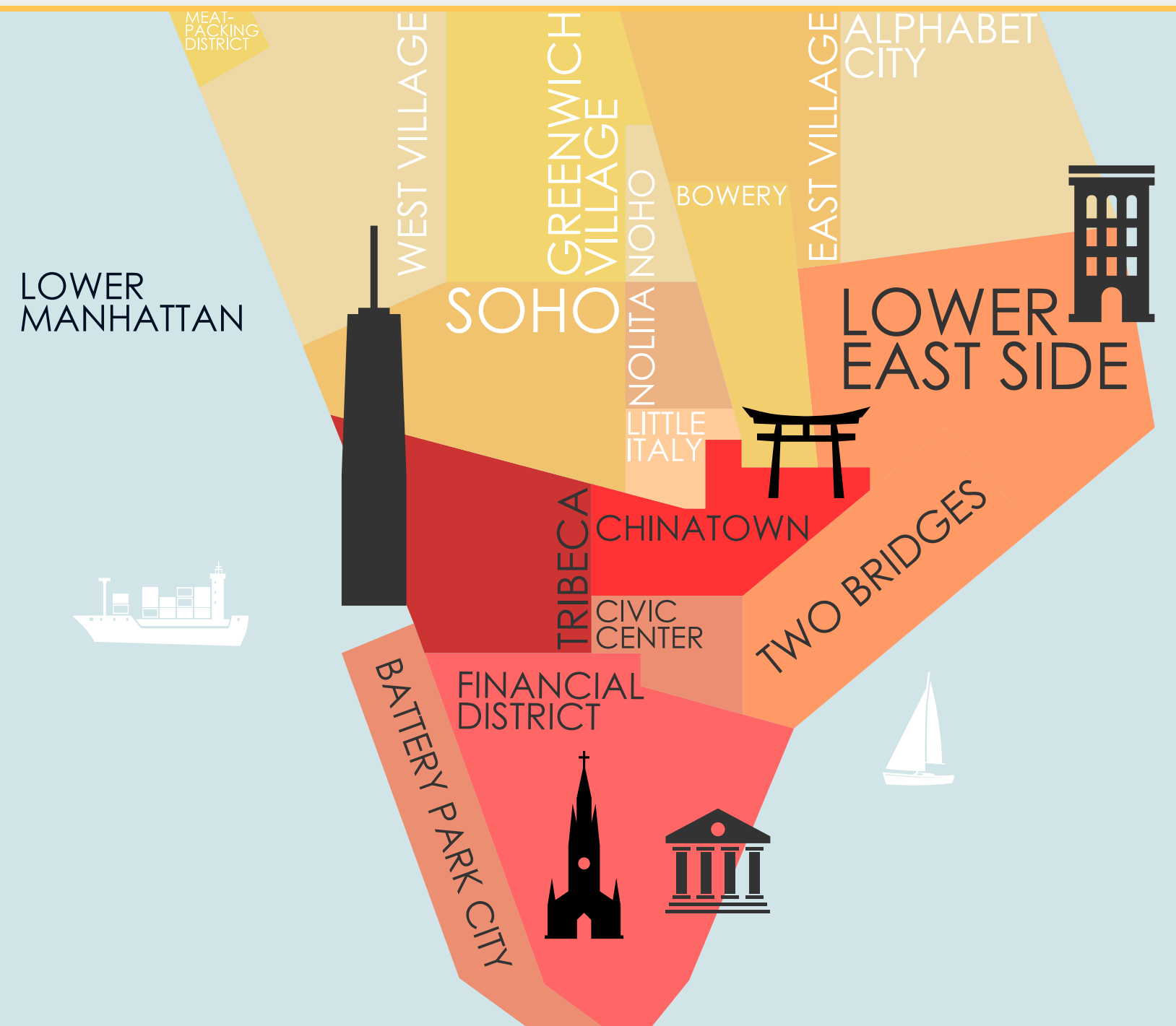May 2, 2022

Lower Manhattan Needs Assessment
Office of the Chief Community Impact Officer

Report produced in collaboration with Center for Community Resilience,
The George Washington University

Trinity Church Wall Street
76 Trinity Place
New York, NY 10006

MEAT-PACKING DISTRICT

WEST VILLAGE

GREENWICH VILLAGE

NOHO

BOWERY

EAST VILLAGE

ALPHABET CITY

LOWER MANHATTAN

SOHO

NOLITA

LOWER EAST SIDE

LITTLE ITALY

TRIBECA

CHINATOWN

TWO BRIDGES

CIVIC CENTER

FINANCIAL DISTRICT

BATTERY PARK CITY

Contents

A. Background

Trinity Church Wall Street, originally chartered in 1697, has served as an anchor institution in Manhattan for over three centuries. Long committed to supporting communities in New York City and globally, the church opened Trinity Commons in 2019 to serve as a resource and spiritual hub for all in Lower Manhattan. To complement the opening of Trinity Commons, Trinity Church Wall Street introduced its Neighborhood Support division, which actively works with the church's neighbors—residents, children, youth, and parents in Lower Manhattan—to improve their wellbeing and build resilience. This task is no small one: the neighborhoods surrounding Trinity are densely populated communities, diverse in terms of wealth, race, educational attainment, language, and nation of origin.

To inform a grantmaking strategy and advocacy agenda, Trinity's Neighborhood Support division collaborated with the Center for Community Resilience (CCR) at the George Washington University to conduct a needs assessment. Trinity Church Wall Street launched this needs assessment in October 2021 with a Town Hall that brought together nearly 100 participants from across Lower Manhattan to identify the needs and priorities of their communities. Attendees were divided into groups and asked to focus on specific topic areas—such as health and wellbeing, education, or social capital—to establish a shared understanding of how these issues connect to each other and within the larger social and political context of Lower Manhattan.

Following the Neighborhood Support Town Hall, fifteen community stakeholders (Appendix D, Table 15) participated in in-depth interviews between January and March 2022 to provide additional insight regarding root causes of community needs and opportunities for change. Each interview lasted up to 80 minutes. Town Hall group discussions and community stakeholder interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. This report details findings from the Town Hall and interviews with community stakeholders, drawing on publicly available quantitative data when relevant.

In a parallel process to the Town Hall and CCR's facilitation of in-depth interviews with community stakeholders, Trinity Church Wall Street's Neighborhood Support team conducted listening sessions with 150 participants affiliated with Lower Manhattan institutions and community organizations. These community partners included the Metropolitan College of New York, the Borough of Manhattan Community College, School District 1 in Lower Manhattan, the Chinese American Planning Council, and Loisaida, Inc. Residents and community leaders used these sessions to express their most urgent needs and their aspirations for the community. Each session lasted 60 minutes. These sessions were not recorded, therefore the excerpts throughout this document are from the Town Hall and in-depth interviews alone.

The timing of the needs assessment is noteworthy, as the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of the longstanding inequities experienced by residents in Lower Manhattan. This needs assessment provides analysis and insight from community voices that can help inform strategic efforts by Trinity Church Wall Street to help promote healing, equity, and community resilience in Lower Manhattan.

A.1. Our Guiding Framework: The ASCEND 2Gen Model

The Neighborhood Support division at Trinity Church Wall Street takes a holistic, place-based approach to family and community wellbeing. Its programming and grantmaking is grounded in the ASCEND framework developed by the Aspen Institute in 2011 (see Figure 1). In this framework, family wellbeing and prosperity are built through a two-generation approach that prioritizes the needs of both parents and children. The success and wellness of parents and children are intertwined, making the family unit of paramount importance.

The ASCEND framework highlights six drivers of family wellbeing, including physical and mental health, early childhood education, postsecondary and employment pathways, economic assets, and social capital. Trinity's Neighborhood Support programs will focus on these drivers to bolster families' resources and build multi-generational wellness and success.
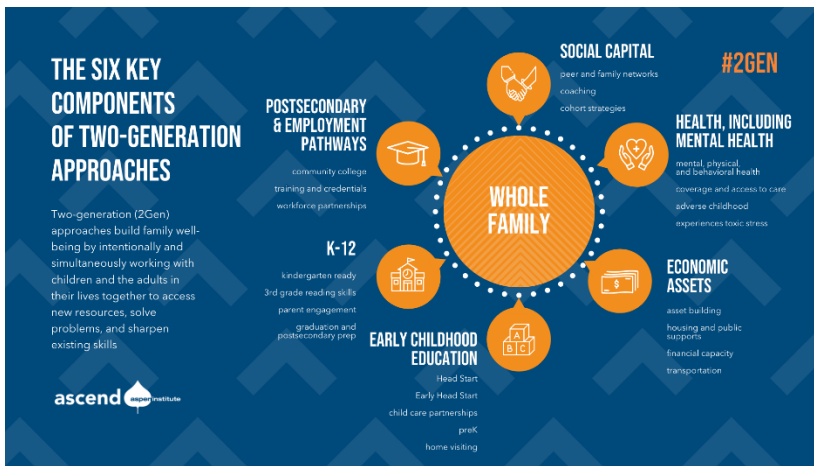

Figure 1: The ASCEND Two Generation (2Gen) Approach[1]

A.2. Context: Overview of Lower Manhattan

For its initial programming, the Neighborhood Support division has chosen to focus on Trinity Church Wall Street's immediate community of Lower Manhattan (Appendix C, Table 14). Lower Manhattan is geographically delineated as south of 14th Street in the borough of Manhattan, on the ancestral lands of the Lenape people. It comprises several neighborhoods including but not limited to Chinatown, Lower East Side, West Village–SoHo–TriBeCa, and the Financial District. As described in Table 1, Lower Manhattan is a culturally diverse and immigrant-populated region with nearly 336,000 people. The racial and ethnic composition of its residents is 22.7% Asian, 5.4% Black, 15.7% Latino, 4.9% two or more races, and 50.7% White residents. As the home to the New York Stock Exchange, the Freedom Tower, and City Hall, it is both a center of global economy and local governance. Chinatown and the Lower East Side, historically hubs for immigrant populations, are also located in Lower Manhattan. Long-standing community members include Black, Jewish, Latino, and Asian families from predominantly working-class backgrounds.

The demographics of Lower Manhattan are changing, however. Between 2010 and 2020, the resident population increased by 34% in the Financial District, 6% in West Village-SoHo-TriBeCa, and just over 1% in the Lower East Side. In Chinatown, the total population declined by 3.4%. The decline in Chinatown's population was exclusively in the Asian population, with the population in other race/ethnicity groups increasing over the past decade, from a 7.2% increase in the Latino population to a 137% increase in people identifying as some other or two or more races. The percent of population under age 18 increased in the Financial District (73%) and West Village–SoHo–TriBeCa (20%) but declined in Chinatown and the Lower East Side (Table 1). Demographic shifts are partially attributed to significant increases in real estate costs, low-quality housing, and rising cost of living, which have resulted in the displacement of communities historically composed of Black, Brown, and immigrant families.

In Lower Manhattan, there are several organizations providing support related to housing, education and enrichment, skills development, art and culture, health care, and mental health services. Some organizations have built trusting relationships with the community over time and become respected institutions. For

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1 Aspen Institute. ASCEND 2Gen. Accessed April 5, 2022. **https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/2gen-approach/**

example, numerous settlement houses, some dating back to the late 1800s, are situated south of 14th Street. Established to provide essential services for immigrant populations, settlement houses advocated for tenants' rights, fair labor standards, and sanitation and have evolved along with the communities in which they are rooted. Newer community-based organizations, community organizing groups, and artist communities also provide essential services or promote social change in Lower Manhattan neighborhoods. These organizations and collaboratives have great potential to reach community members and foster social cohesion. As one community stakeholder described:

> *"One of our greatest assets here ... we're not lacking for organizations that are on the ground right now, doing this type of work. And they've done it for decades, if not longer, you know, if not a century. So, you have the social infrastructure that exists there ... I think there's a great network and constellation of groups that just need more help and more support." —Organization Leader*

Many residents in Chinatown and the Lower East Side have long-standing roots in these neighborhoods and hold a shared a sense of responsibility and commitment to their communities. Some families have lived in their building for generations, passing down stories of their neighborhood's rich history and community expertise. Community stakeholders reported strong social cohesion among small groups of residents in the Lower East Side and Chinatown, who came together around their shared histories, experiences, countries of origin, or cultural or racial identities.

Understanding the context of Lower Manhattan requires focusing on the experiences and history of those that live, work, and play in each neighborhood. In the past two decades, Lower Manhattan has faced a series of adverse events that contributed to the demographic changes we highlighted: rapid gentrification, the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the economic fallout of the Great Recession in 2008, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these shocks to the community, its financial wealth and abundant history, culture, and diversity are valuable strengths that can be leveraged to promote community wellbeing and build resilience. Economic resources and diverse community expertise are met with a range of committed community organizers, community-based organizations, and service providers who will be crucial mobilizers and co-creators of the Neighborhood Support work.

Neighborhood	Total	Age < 18	Asian	Black	Latino	Other / 2+ Races	White
Financial District +	53,000 (+33.5%)	7,589 (+72.8%)	10,815 (+34.9%)	1,780 (+37.7%)	4,711 (+54.1%)	3,156 (+77.2%)	32,538 (+25.3%)
West Village, SoHo, TriBeCa	117,835 (+5.9%)	13,773 (+19.6%)	15,370 (+1.9%)	3,455 (+17.0%)	9,506 (+28.8%)	6,767 (+92.9%)	82,737 (+0.2%)
Chinatown	44,526 (-3.4%)	5,898 (-19.4%)	27,177 (-14.5%)	2,858 (+37.6%)	6,697 (+7.2%)	1,004 (+137.4%)	4,820 (+42.1%)
Lower East Side	120,585 (+1.2%)	13,057 (-12.0%)	23,011 (-1.5%)	9,918 (+7.6%)	31,971 (-5.8%)	5,457 (+138.8%)	50,228 (+1.5%)
Lower Manhattan – Total	333,476 (+6.3%)	40,317 (+5.9%)	76,373 (-2.4%)	18,011 (+15.9%)	52,885 (+4.4%)	16,384 (+95.3%)	170,323 (+5.5%)

Table 1: 2020 Census Population Estimates (Population Change, 2010 – 2020)[2]

A.2.1. Financial District +

The Financial District and Battery Park City are wealthy neighborhoods in Lower Manhattan. For the purposes of this report, we use "Financial District +" and "Financial District" to refer to the combined neighborhoods of the Financial District and Battery Park City in our data sets.

Together, the Financial District and the West Village-SoHo-TriBeCa neighborhoods have a median household income of $140,213—more than three times the median income of households in Chinatown and Lower East Side.[3] Located at the south end of Manhattan, the Financial District is home to the New York Stock Exchange and Trinity Church Wall Street. It is the neighborhood most directly affected by the 9/11 terrorist attack that destroyed the World Trade Center buildings. At that time, the Financial District had a minimal stock of residential housing. Over the intervening years, some office buildings were converted into residential units and, between 2010 and 2020, the population in the Financial District increased by 33.5% (Table 1).

Although mostly wealthy, some residents in the Financial District experience insecurity related to housing and food, with 7.2% individuals reporting food insecurity in 2016 and 2.9% households receiving SNAP benefits (Appendix B, Table 8 and Table 9). When looking at the Financial District and the West Village-So-Ho-TriBeCa neighborhoods together, data show 16.6% of all households experience rent burden and 56.9% of low-income households experience rent burden (Appendix B, Table 3).

A.2.2. West Village-SoHo-TriBeCa

For the purposes of this needs assessment report, we combined the West Village, SoHo (South of Houston Street), and TriBeCa (Triangle below Canal Street) as one neighborhood. The West Village–SoHo–TriBeCa neighborhood is predominantly White, with more than 70% of residents identifying as White in the 2020 Census. Black and Latino populations increased more rapidly than the White population between 2010 and 2020 (Table 1). Similar to the Financial District, West Village-SoHo-TriBeCa residents are largely wealthy, with only small proportion experiencing housing insecurity and food insecurity (Appendix B, Table 8 and Table 9).

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2 New York City Decennial Census Data. New York City Department of City Planning. Accessed March 10, 2022. h**ttps://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ planning/download/office/planning-level/nyc-population/census2020/nyc_decennialcensusdata_2010_2020_change.xlsx?r=1**
3 NYC Data2Go, 5th edition. Measure of America. Accessed March 10, 2022. **www.data2go.nyc**.

A.2.3. Chinatown

Historically a hub for immigrants from China and East Asia and home to a diversity of residents, Chinatown has a higher proportion of older adult residents, foreign-born residents, and those with lower socioeconomic status and limited English proficiency. Twenty percent of Chinatown residents are over age 65, and among them, more than half are foreign-born (Appendix B, Table 2). Some residents live in intergenerational tenement apartments or multi-family households, where unrelated families cohabitate in the same housing unit. Chinatown used to be a predominantly Cantonese-speaking neighborhood, but the languages spoken have become increasingly diverse and include Mandarin, Hakka, Fujianese, and others.

Residents of Chinese heritage in Lower Manhattan's Chinatown are leaving the neighborhood, some after living in the same tenement buildings for generations. Without high-quality and affordable housing nearby, former Chinatown residents have relocated to other neighborhoods with growing Asian American communities, such as Flushing, Queens, and Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

Chinatown is also a politically fragmented neighborhood that is divided among Community Districts 1, 2, and 3. The fragmentation means its representation is diluted across all three community districts, which limits the power of Chinatown residents to effect changes in their neighborhood. Parts of Chinatown share a ZIP code with higher socioeconomic status neighborhoods (TriBeCa and SoHo), which made Chinatown businesses ineligible for COVID-19 relief grants and loans and contributed to closures of small businesses. Moreover, Chinatown is part of Council District 1, which comprises most of Lower Manhattan, including affluent areas such as Battery Park City, Financial District, TriBeCa, and Washington Square. Because Chinatown faces different issues than its wealthier neighbors, residents' concerns may not receive the attention they need from New York's City Council.

A.2.4. The Lower East Side

One of New York City's first neighborhoods, the Lower East Side (LES) has been an epicenter for newly arrived immigrant communities since the 1800s. Today, long-time residents of LES continue to face economic challenges. Together, Chinatown and LES residents have a median income of $43,705 in 2018—about one-third of the median income of residents in the Financial District and West Village-So-Ho-TriBeCa—before the COVID-19 pandemic destroyed the local economy.[4] Food retail in the Lower East Side is predominantly bodegas and small groceries, leading to easy availability of calorie-dense, non-nutritive foods and limited access to fresh, nutritious foods. These food retail options are not only less healthy, but they are typically more expensive, resulting in food insecurity for many residents (Appendix B, Table 8). A large percentage of LES residents also live in public housing. Combined data from Chinatown and LES show nearly a quarter of residents in these two neighborhoods live in public housing complexes run by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). In comparison, there are no NYCHA housing units in the Financial District and West Village-SoHo-Tribeca (Appendix B, Table 3).

As evidenced by the neighborhood's rising cost of living, rapid gentrification has contributed to growing resource inequities within the community. Since LES has become unaffordable for many of its residents, several have been displaced and dispersed across boroughs. Residents noted rising prices in grocery stores, restaurants, and other local businesses, even before the wave of inflation in early 2022. Families have limited opportunities for leisure and play due to lack of child-friendly spaces that are safe and well-maintained. However, the Lower East Side has significant green space that could be rehabilitated to provide spaces for exercise, play, and urban agriculture to improve food security.

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4 NYC Data2Go, 5th edition. Measure of America. Accessed March 10, 2022. **www.data2go.nyc.**

B. Understanding Community Needs and Opportunities in Lower Manhattan

In this section, we outline the most prominent needs identified by community stakeholders who participated in the Town Hall and during in-depth interviews for the community needs assessment. We also include diagrams that show how education, childcare, employment, and other factors interact in ways that contribute to widening disparities in wellbeing across Lower Manhattan.

Based on qualitative data collected from the Town Hall and subsequent stakeholder interviews, researchers at the Center for Community Resilience developed diagrams of "causal loops" to illustrate the root causes of adversities and how different systems operate in Lower Manhattan. In the "Main Causal Loop," which includes Education, Employment, and Family Income and Resources, the diagram shows how families with limited resources are prevented from upward mobility, leading to greater disparity in Lower Manhattan.

We also identified three groups of factors that directly interact with the cycle in the Main Causal Loop. These factors are presented in the following sections: (B.1) Community Mental Health and Wellbeing, (B.2) Education, and (B.3) Affordable Childcare. Section B.4 describes three overarching themes that emerged from conversations with community stakeholders: Collaboration, Social Cohesion, and Space. While community needs around mental health and wellbeing, education, and childcare are presented as leverage points that influence other parts of a system, the themes in Section 4 emerged as key elements for all initiatives intended to promote wellbeing and resilience in Lower Manhattan.

B.1. The Main Causal Loop: Reinforcement of Inequity in Lower Manhattan

The relationship most discussed by Town Hall participants and community stakeholders was a reinforcing cycle in which families who do not have the necessary resources to support education then struggle to find employment that provides a living wage. This lack of well-paid employment undermines a family's ability to access resources and the cycle repeats (Figure 2). We refer to this relationship as the Main Causal Loop because additional relationships tend to feed into or result from this loop.

Figure 2: The Main Causal Loop involves Family Income and Resources, Education, and Employment.

The Main Causal Loop can be either virtuous or vicious. It is **virtuous** (i.e., the more resource you have right now, the more you will have in the future) to the families with enough resources, while **vicious** for families without adequate resources (i.e., the fewer resources you have right now, the less you and your children will have in the future).

At the community level, the reinforcing nature of the Main Causal Loop **widens disparity over time** between families with and without resources in Lower Manhattan.

> *"[There are] ways that the system is designed to keep people in poverty … [Someone accepting] employment that's slightly above minimum wage means that they lose access to their housing voucher, or they lose access to other benefits that would keep them afloat and get their basic needs met … Instead of going for a job that might have better longer-term opportunities for them, or might even make a bit more doing the math for themselves, it makes more financial sense to have that stability with something like the housing voucher, making less [money], and ultimately keeping them trapped in this cycle … It's very cyclical." —Town Hall Participant*

This Main Causal Loop demonstrates the cycle of intergenerational poverty—families with the fewest resources also lack access to the supports and opportunities necessary to achieve upward mobility. The next three sections (Community Mental Health and Wellbeing, Education, and Affordable Childcare) feature causal loops that interact with and reinforce the cycle shown in Figure 2. Because each of the following three sections influence the Main Causal Loop, the opportunities noted in each section have the potential to reduce inequity and promote upward mobility for families. The final section describes overarching themes of collaboration, social cohesion, and physical space in Lower Manhattan that are critical components for lasting community change.

B.2. Community Mental Health and Wellbeing

Data from 2018 on frequent mental distress—defined as the percent of adults whose mental health has interrupted their daily activities for more than 14 days in the past 30 days—show notable differences between the Financial District (9.5%) and West Village-SoHo-TriBeCa (9.8%) versus Chinatown (13.0%) and the Lower East Side (13.5%) (Appendix B, Table 10). Since March 2020, community members have overwhelmingly reported significant increases in stress and a growing need for mental health support for children, individuals, and families.

There are many causes of increased stress and poor mental health, and families likely experience many of them simultaneously. Community stakeholders and Town Hall participants cited financial instability, housing instability, and lack of other resources as the primary drivers of family stress. Below, we describe how current systems increase stress and the need for mental health support in Lower Manhattan and can ultimately threaten overall community wellbeing. Finally, we offer potential opportunities to effectively address mental health needs and mitigate some systems-driven stressors that contribute to poor mental health.

Stress and mental health needs are connected to the Main Causal Loop (Figure 2), but also feature in their own reinforcing cycle. In this cycle, stress leads to increased need for mental health support, which is often unmet given access constraints. These unmet mental health needs prevent individuals from securing stable employment or may contribute to job loss, thereby increasing household financial strain and resulting in food insecurity, eviction, or loss of childcare (Figure 3). All these outcomes further increase household and individual stress levels. Although the key drivers of unemployment are related to systems-level factors like the local economy, workforce requirements, and the availability of living-wage jobs, Figure 3 demonstrates how stress and unmet mental health needs can prevent families from achieving upward mobility.

Housing Insecurity and Homelessness

Stress

Unmet Mental Health Needs

Family Financial Strains

Unemployment

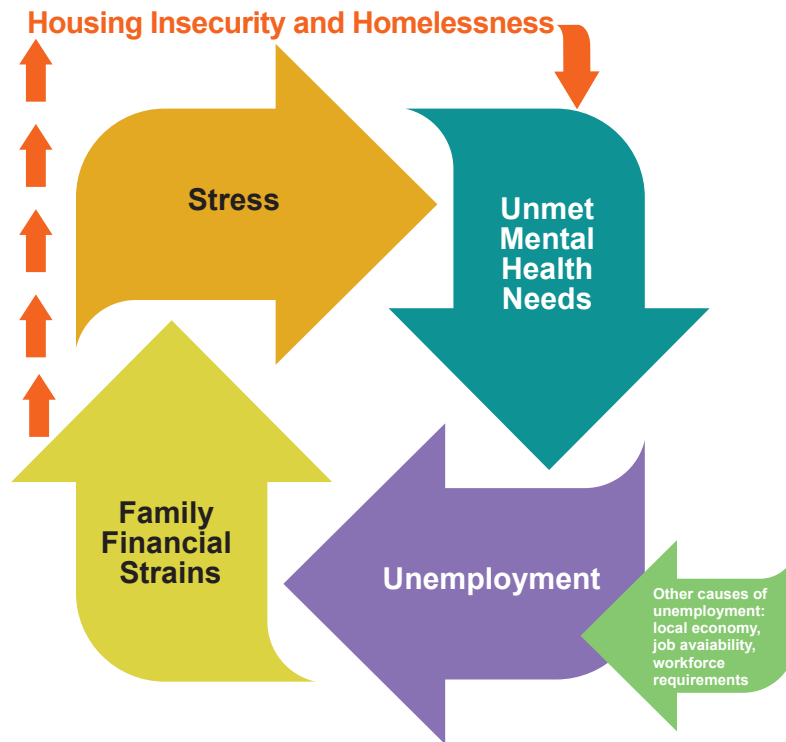Other causes of unemployment: local economy, job avaiability, workforce requirements

Figure 3: Stress and Mental Health Causal Loop. There is a direct connection between stress, unmet mental health needs, and the Main Causal Loop via employment as a mutual factor. Unemployment causes family financial strains, which lead to increased stress as well as housing insecurity and homelessness. Housing insecurity, homelessness, and increased stress can further exacerbate or prolong unmet mental health needs. Unmet mental health needs result in unemployment, which creates financial strain, leading to increased stress and further exacerbating unmet mental health needs.

During the Town Hall, one participant described how external stressors compound mental health needs and ultimately reduce people's ability to be productive at work or school:

> *"There's a lot of shooting … particularly in New York City. And I think that not being able to breathe, we're seeing depression and taking different types of symptoms where people are feeling very, very sick and very fatigued. They're not functional. They're not sustained clearly, and that impacts employment opportunities, and I would say the post-secondary education as well." —Town Hall Participant*

B.2.1. Safety Concerns and Heightened Surveillance

Town Hall participants and community stakeholders also mentioned a reduced sense of safety due to overt racism targeting Asian residents and rising crime rates. Participants' worries about safety are borne out in the city's crime data. For example, the violent crime rate in Lower Manhattan in 2021 was 488.2 per 100,000 residents and the property crime rate was 1,430.6 per 100,000 population. These rates are notably higher than New York City as a whole. In comparing the percent change from 2021 to 2022, violent crimes in Lower Manhattan were up by 47.5% and property crimes increased by 73.1% (Appendix B, Table 4). Between 2020 and 2021, the five precincts that comprise Lower Manhattan saw a spike in hate crimes, rising from 25 to 62 in 2021. The percent of those crimes that were driven by anti-Asian bias increased from 20% to 38.7% (Appendix B, Table 5). Worry about safety due to crime was deepened by growing concerns about climate change and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These stressors have been worsened by an overflow of information and increase in misinformation from social media and other sources.

Feeling unsafe is compounded by families' concern about being surveilled and criminalized by systems with which they regularly interact. For example, mistrust of systems and fear of deportation among undocumented residents contribute to increased stress and inhibit them from using essential services for which they are eligible. Additionally, parents—especially in low-income households and in families of color—described tremendous pressure to ensure their children are attending school on-time and performing well out of fear that school staff may report them to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). One parent we spoke with described how mistrust of the school system and fear of being investigated by ACS can prevent parents from seeking out support when they need it:

> *"If [parents] feel that they can't come to the school and tell them something without there being some sort of possible punishment associated with that vulnerability aspect … I can't risk, you know, talking about this need, or explaining what's going on with me in this moment. And I'm sure other parents, you know, feel that … I'm sure that was a stark reality for a lot of people, and not being able to say anything, like not being able to access any sort of resources was frightening." — Parent Leader*

The fear of involvement with ACS also increases stress and exacerbates existing mental health needs. For some, an open case with ACS could limit a caregiver's employment opportunities, trapping the family in the vicious cycle of the Main Causal Loop.

B.2.2. Housing Insecurity, Homelessness, and Unmet Mental Health Needs

Insecure housing and unmet mental health needs also operate in their own reinforcing loop (Figure 4) that feeds into the Main Causal Loop. Several community stakeholders spoke about the complex relationship between homelessness and serious mental illness, including substance misuse. Mental health treatment requires stability—before a person can effectively address their mental illness, they need to meet basic needs like food, safe shelter, and a place to sleep.

Figure 4: Housing Insecurity and Unmet Mental Health Needs Causal Loop. There is reinforcing cycle between homelessness/ housing insecurity and unmet mental health needs. The more individuals and families in Lower Manhattan experience unmet mental health needs, the more likely they experience housing insecurity and homelessness. The more individuals and families experience housing insecurity and homelessness, the less capable they are at meeting their mental health needs due to overall instability, lack of resources, and inability to hold onto resources.

However, health care providers interviewed noted that in many cases people who inject drugs or who display acute symptoms of mental illness are systematically denied access to housing services:

> *"I think one barrier I've seen kind of systemically is, in order to get housing, [housing programs] want [people accessing housing services] to not be using drugs, or they want you to be stable health-wise ... So the people who are really not doing well kind of get marginalized more because it's like, 'Oh, you have a positive urine drug screen. You can't be a part of this program'... I think without addressing the housing and having all of these rules around it, it's really — for a lot of the patients I see—it's excluding them from that resource." — Healthcare Provider*

As such reflections indicate, unmet mental health needs are a direct barrier to accessing or retaining stable housing. Homelessness then further exacerbates unmet mental health needs, demonstrating its own vicious cycle. This pattern plays into the prior causal loops: unmet mental health needs prevent individuals from pursuing education and gaining employment, create additional financial strains (Figure 2), thereby increasing stress and further exacerbating mental health needs (Figure 3).

B.2.3. Sharing Responsibility for Sheltering the Unhoused

Though secondary to the Homelessness-Unmet Mental Health Needs Causal Loop, the uneven distribution of homeless shelters in Lower Manhattan is also a cause of profound stress. Chinatown and the Lower East Side have most of Lower Manhattan's shelters and other need-based housing services. As of January 2022, only one commercial hotel in the Financial District was serving as a dedicated shelter space for adults. By contrast, the Lower East Side and Chinatown had five adult shelters, three commercial hotels dedicated to adult shelter, and three shelters for families with children.[5] Moreover, since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the average length of stay in a shelter in New York City has increased dramatically, from an average of 440 days in 2019 to an average of 543 days in 2021.[6]

During an in-depth interview, one community leader called for the city to diversify where it builds and maintains shelters:

> *"You can point out glaringly to the community that say, 'Well, you said affordable housing, in your wealthy community, where did you allow affordable housing to be built?' Right? If you want to have a fair share, you think [people living with mental illness] deserve treatment, where's the mental [health] treatment facility in your own neighborhood, right? ... All the homeless, all the drug rehab [centers], and all the mental [health facilities], and all the jails are on this side of town. [New York] City has a law about fair share—where's your fair share? Shouldn't you at least have one?"*
> *—Organization Leader*

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5 NYC Department of Homeless Services, Buildings by Borough and Community District. Accessed via NYC OpenData, March 14, 2022.
   https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Social-Services/Buildings-by-Borough-and-Community-District/3qem-6v3v.
6 Coalition for the Homeless, New York City. Accessed March 14, 2022.
   https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/NYCHomelessShelterPopulationWorksheet1983Present.pdf.

Our interviews with Lower Manhattan residents highlighted the importance of a stable environment that provides for an individual's most basic needs. Community members also reported that financial insecurity, housing instability, and food insecurity were among the most significant stressors contributing to poor mental health outcomes. Consequently, the causes of poor mental health and the barriers to addressing them overlap significantly.

Removing barriers to clinical services by providing supportive housing and increased financial security can maximize improvements in mental and behavioral health in Lower Manhattan. High quality and culturally relevant integrated supports offer a unique opportunity to improve overall community health and wellbeing, increase equity, and build resilience for Lower Manhattan residents.

B.3. Education

As demonstrated in the Main Causal Loop, education plays an important role in economic mobility for families. During group model building sessions, education was widely recognized as the key to a successful career. This section concentrates on education-related needs in Lower Manhattan, demonstrating a clear connection between family income and resources, educational success, and well-paying job opportunities. The section ends with opportunities for cross-sector collaboration using a multi-generational approach to address inequities in education and beyond.
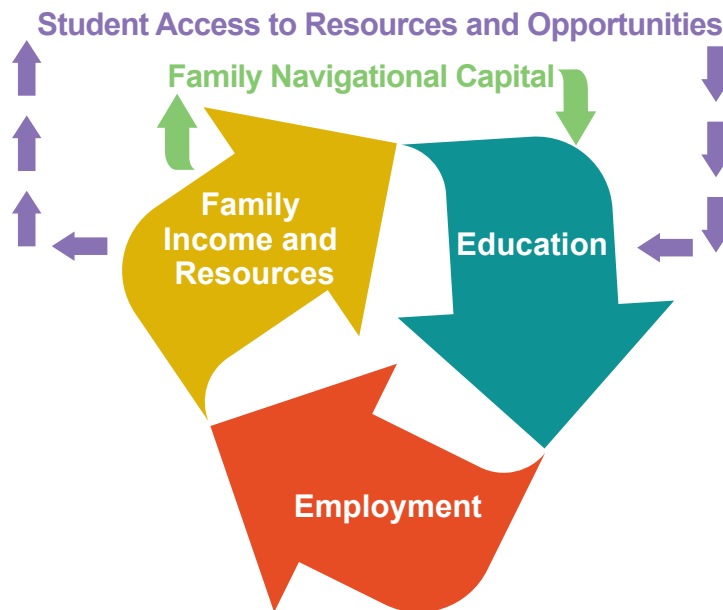
Figure 5: Education's Role in the Main Causal Loop. The causal relationship between Family Income and Education is doubly reinforced, first through Family Navigational Capital and again via Student Access to Resources and Opportunities. To help families experience the Main Causal Loop as a virtuous cycle requires solutions to address all three layers of causal relationships.

The Main Causal Loop in Figure 2 describes the relationship between family resources and education: as family income and resources increase, students are more likely to achieve high education outcomes, such as earning advanced degrees and obtaining professional licensures, which then cascade into greater family resources in subsequent generations.

B.3.1. Family Navigational Capital and Student Access to Resources

The causal relationship between a family's resources and education is reinforced by two factors: (1) The family's ability to navigate systems to access information and services, or what we refer to as "family navigational capital" and (2) student access to resources and opportunities, as shown in Figure 5. Examples of navigating systems include understanding the process for school enrollment, having the technology to receive timely information from schools, and knowing how to use social services to meet essential needs such as access to supplemental nutrition programs or mental health supports. One Town Hall participant described the importance of supporting families to navigate the early childhood and K–12 education systems:

> *"I'm talking about parents feeling from an early point that they have been given the tools and resources and the ways in which to engage with the system so that all along the way with their child that if there's anything that they need to do, they have access. They know how to move things forward … [For example,] a single mother is working, how does she figure that [out] and how does she navigate that?" —Town Hall Participant*

Together with income, Family Navigational Capital can provide greater Student Access to Resources and Opportunities. Such access to resources and opportunities may take the form of enrolling children in academic tutoring, art lessons, or extramural sports. On the other hand, families with lower income and Navigational Capital have fewer means to negotiate school and social support systems, have limited capacity to support student learning outside of K–12 public schools, or to pay for higher education.

B.3.2. Student Access to Resources and Structural Racism in Schools

Student Access to Resources and Opportunities also ties into structural racism within public education. Town Hall participants noted that a disproportionately high number of Black and Brown students are enrolled in special education, which provides instruction with lower expectations of students and less access to enrichment activities. Town Hall participants also observed that schools with a higher proportion of Black and Brown students have different disciplinary policies when compared with schools with more White students.

> *"I mean, based on observation in the schools that I've been in, in the past also like guidance counselors are used sometimes more as security guards. And I don't know if that is the intent of the school, or if it's because the students that are struggling the most in terms of behavior do tend to be Black or Latinx, or those are the students that are being disciplined the hardest, like the classroom management for them is at a stronger level. … And then I also think that there's been policies set in place that impact our students of color as well." —Town Hall Participant*

Like all New York City public schools, Manhattan Districts 1 and 2 are open districts, allowing students from across the city to enroll. The school choice system, combined with school financing strategies, makes the K–12 school enrollment process challenging for families and increases disparities between schools. Schools are financed via three funding streams: per pupil, supplemental funding, and grant allocations to high-need schools (Title I). Well-resourced schools are in high demand and maintain high enrollment rates. When students in schools with fewer resources transfer, the schools with already limited resources lose funding. Schools often rely on Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) to raise supplemental funds and contribute resources to schools. Consequently, schools with more affluent families receive a boost in resources that are not restricted in how they may be used. High-need schools, as determined by the economic needs of the student population, are eligible for Title I funds. Unlike supplemental funds, however, Title I funds are restricted, limiting high-need schools' ability to adapt to the needs of students and their families.

The ways in which schools are financed can perpetuate inequities between schools, but parents also reported concerns about how schools engage with families and their community. Some parents felt excluded from school decision-making:

> *"Our school, again, is really very privileged. There are people [in the PTA] who are pulling public records, looking at the budget, seeing where money is going. And [parents in other schools] didn't even know that that was possible … It's not only money, it's also … How are the parents empowered? How do they know how they can actually utilize these resources? How do they have ways to say what is important to them? How can they feel safe in a school? I remember… some of the PTA was just like, 'our administration doesn't want us to be empowered. They don't want us to know.' That was there. I don't know if that was the actual truth, but that was how they felt. So, they definitely didn't feel empowered to be like, 'Hey, this is what we want to do.'"*
> *—Parent Leader*

Parents spoke about the importance of seeing schools involved in their communities and treating families as partners in their children's education. They observed a pattern of predominantly White staff teaching in majority Black or Brown schools and neighborhoods, and some parents felt school staff do not always understand or meaningfully engage with the communities from which their students come.

B.3.3. Potential Opportunities for Promoting Education Equity

The cycle featured in Figure 5 demonstrates how multiple systems come together to reinforce racial and economic inequities in education. To disrupt this cycle, the most successful policies, programs, or initiatives seeking to improve learning outcomes or educational attainment will also create tangible pathways to success for entire families. For example, schools, districts, or the public school system may consider options for providing direct financial support to families. Such support could supplement their incomes so adults can pursue educational or professional opportunities, take more time to engage in their children's schools, or support their children's postsecondary goals. Some community stakeholders noted that direct financial support would also be a way in which schools could meaningfully engage with families and the school community. Community stakeholders provided specific examples of what direct financial support could look like at the school level: PTA funding dedicated to mutual aid for parents experiencing financial hardship; stipends for parent volunteers; and small unrestricted grants or participatory budgeting activities for parents in schools.

Figure 5 also demonstrates how parents' ability to navigate the complexities of the NYC school system also has a positive impact on education outcomes. Supporting students' access to opportunities aligned with their educational and professional goals, while simultaneously building parents' capacity to navigate the school system, can provide a temporary solution to supporting families with fewer resources to help their children succeed in school. However, helping Black and Brown parents to navigate a school system that was not designed for their children to succeed ultimately puts the burden of responsibility on parents, while upholding the structure that systematically prevents them from achieving upward mobility. Truly addressing inequitable outcomes in schools requires a careful assessment of how the current education system upholds and reinforces racism in its policies and practices. Policy and advocacy efforts at the district, city, or state level, for example, may consider how the school financing structure or enrollment system reinforce school segregation.

B.4. Affordable Childcare

This section outlines the critical role that affordable childcare plays in parents' ability to work, attend school, and achieve upward economic mobility. Affordable childcare is foundational to families' experience of the Main Causal Loop (Figure 2) as a virtuous cycle. As seen below in Figure 6, affordable childcare has a positive relationship with all three elements in the Main Causal Loop: family income and resources, education, and employment. Childcare includes both care for children ages zero to five and afterschool programs, and can be provided by the public school system, private childcare centers, or via friends and relatives within a family's social network. Access to affordable childcare allows adults in families to pursue education or training opportunities needed to advance in their career. For adults who do not need or desire further education, affordable childcare allows them to maintain steady employment. When childcare is affordable, families have more income and resources to dedicate toward other needs, including costs associated with education for both children and adults in the family.
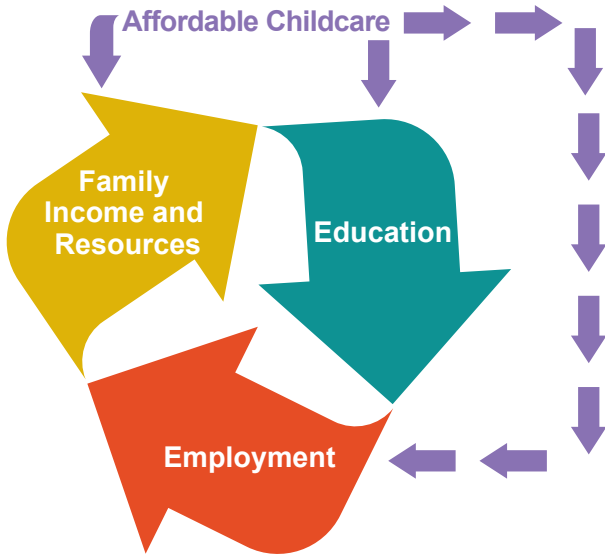

Figure 6: Affordable Childcare Is a Driver for the Three Variables in the Main Causal Loop. More affordable childcare in Lower Manhattan will increase the number of families with adequate income and resources, access to higher education, and residents' ability to sustain employment with competitive pay.

B.4.1. Early Childhood Care (Ages 0–5)

As of 2018, the median cost for care of children under age 5 in New York City was $18,746 for center-based childcare and $10,296 for home-based childcare. These amounts represent different cost burdens in Lower Manhattan neighborhoods. In the Financial District and West Village–SoHo–TriBeCa, these childcare costs represent 6.2% and 3.4%, respectively, of the median income for families with children under 5. By contrast, these childcare costs account for 39.2% and 21.5% of the median family income for families with young children in the Lower East Side and Chinatown. Overall, when comparing the proportion of median income spent on childcare, families in Chinatown and the Lower East Side spend about six times as much of their income for childcare as families in the Financial District and West Village–SoHo–Tribeca (Appendix B, Table 7).

Obtaining childcare can be particularly difficult for new immigrant families, who may not have the navigational capital to access childcare because of language barriers or unfamiliarity with options in a new city. Social networks are a key means for new immigrant families to find new friends who can provide childcare or help them navigate the process of finding and applying for childcare.

> *"... a lot of the families who come here, who are newer immigrants, don't necessarily have that support yet, or don't know how to find it and become very isolated. And that impacts their family, and then just thinking about childcare and if they can't find childcare, or affordable, then a parent can't work. And so that impacts family income."*
> —Town Hall Participant

B.4.2. Afterschool Programs

Similarly, community members view afterschool programs as essential, especially for parents who work multiple low-wage jobs. Although some schools in Districts 1 and 2 offer afterschool programs, not all are free. Of the twenty schools in District 1, six confirmed they offered afterschool programming, but program capacity and times of operation varied. At least three of the afterschool programs had waitlists and a fourth program was at capacity.

> *"[Not] every school in my neighborhood has afterschool [programs], which is another reason why a lot of the progressive schools have trouble recruiting Black and Brown [students], because those schools don't provide afterschool. And if they do, there's a price tag ... Most of us work two jobs, we can't afford to pick up our kids at three o'clock, we need to put our kids in afterschool." —Parent and Community Representative*

One business owner who participated in the Town Hall also spoke about childcare as essential for employers. This perspective highlights the opportunity of working with the business sector in Lower Manhattan to build public will for affordable, high-quality childcare:

> *"Most of my employees are women, and are also head of their households so having good childcare is very important to me because if they don't, they're calling out sick, or having to leave early, or coming in late, so you could always also get public welcoming from employers, who have to be taught that they need to be part of this, because it will help them in the long run as well." —Town Hall Participant*

B.4.3. Affordable Childcare: An Opportunity to Build Economic Mobility for Families

As pictured in Figure 6, access to affordable childcare plays a pivotal role in whether families with children can pursue higher education or postsecondary training opportunities, establish and maintain employment, and provide for their families. Listening session participants repeatedly shared that childcare is too expensive, too inaccessible, or insufficient. Without affordable or accessible childcare, families with limited incomes are left to make the difficult choice of unemployment or leaving children unattended. The lack of affordable childcare not only prevents regular employment, it can also force parents to forgo professional and educational opportunities, thereby limiting career readiness and potential for upward mobility. Training programs for workforce readiness—such as trade schools, apprenticeship programs, skills training, and postsecondary education—may be more effective if enacted with policies and initiatives supporting free and low-cost childcare.

B.5. Initiating Change in Lower Manhattan: The Role of Collaboration, Social Cohesion, and Physical Space

Our interviews with Lower Manhattan residents and professionals revealed three overarching themes that are related to the areas of community mental health and wellbeing, education, and affordable childcare we discussed earlier. The recurrence of these themes throughout the needs assessment process suggests they are important considerations for any initiatives launched in Lower Manhattan to support its communities. Collaboration, social cohesion, and physical space are important outcomes to be measured, as well as avenues through which positive change is made.

B.5.1. Collaboration

Despite the wealth of organizations and resources available to the greater Lower Manhattan community, some noted that many are underused. For many, resources can be difficult to access or navigate due to language barriers, strict eligibility requirements, bureaucratic language and application processes, or unaccommodating schedules of services. Parents shared they often felt unsure where to find resources or only learn about programs after they are filled. According to organization leaders, competition for short-term funding opportunities can create barriers to forming community partnerships that foster collective action. As one community-based organization leader shared:

> *"If we're all working for the community, there is so much shared value in that, and making sure that you build on those partnerships, you lift each other up ... The sad reality is there's a lot of crumbs being thrown out. And that's what makes that competition so intense. And people feel like they're fighting for dollars to keep their organizations afloat. And ... that's really hard—that we don't invest in communities in really kind of impactful, powerful, meaningful ways. More people, more companies, you know, more foundations should do it."*
> *—Organization Leader and Community Representative*

Overwhelmingly, community stakeholders recommended finding ways for different organizations to collaborate on initiatives and coordinate services.

While the diversity across Lower Manhattan is a significant strength, community stakeholders and Town Hall participants also described how differences among residents pose a direct challenge to fostering social cohesion within and across Lower Manhattan neighborhoods. Community stakeholders overwhelmingly agreed that there are significant divisions between residents in Lower Manhattan:

> *"Because there's such diversity in Lower Manhattan, there's not necessarily a lot of community cohesion or identity in the Lower Manhattan area ... These are a lot of people living on [land the] size of a postage stamp, like they really are neighbors, right? And their fates really are kind of heavily intertwined ... [But] there's a lot of work to go to really instill that ... lasting sense of community ... So, I would say that is a major thing, the social cohesion has to be dramatically improved." —Healthcare Provider*

Although the clear economic differences across neighborhoods in Lower Manhattan can impede social cohesion, one Town Hall participant noted that some residents of wealthier neighborhoods want to support lower-income neighborhoods:

> *"As somebody who lives down here ... I think that there's very little connection between the very segregated neighborhoods and very little knowledge. And there are resource-rich neighborhoods down here ... People who are members of this congregation are people who would want to make a difference, and maybe they have access to knowing how, but so many other people don't. And I think that somehow connecting these little sub-neighborhoods ... there are people who would be part of the solution, but I don't think they know how." —Town Hall Participant*

Community stakeholders differed in their views on whether uniting neighborhoods in Lower Manhattan as a larger community would be feasible, but many spoke about the urgent need for unity as residents heal from the sustained isolation experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Families were often prevented from physically connecting with or supporting one another for prolonged periods, creating novel barriers to social cohesion. Lower Manhattan communities possess a strong sense of culture and identity, and many are craving opportunities to keep these connections strong between and within their communities.

Several community stakeholders noted that the most meaningful investments Trinity could make would be those that foster social connection across Lower Manhattan, often using language like "safety," "joy," "a sense of belonging," or "social connectedness" in their descriptions of meaningful change. For example:

> *"I mean, you want to have the ability to feel safe, and productive, and connected and belonging. And those things cannot be achieved by programs ... As a bureaucrat, my solution is always [to] come up with a program, but I don't think that will be the right solution. How do you really create the capacity or the conditions so that people can connect with each other?" —Program Administrator*

This question was echoed by many community stakeholders calling for opportunities to promote social connectedness, mutual support, and community building.

A distinct theme, related to the theme of social cohesion, emerged in conversations about physical space in Lower Manhattan. This section describes how the cost and availability of space in Lower Manhattan present practical challenges to service provision and community building. Despite these challenges, community stakeholders also spoke about physical space as an important solution to many of the issues referenced throughout this report.

As noted earlier, real estate costs continue to rise in Lower Manhattan neighborhoods. Rising real estate costs not only contribute to the displacement of low-income families and people of color, they also complicate the delivery of services and programs by community-based organizations in these neighborhoods. For example, one program leader described how their organization had "outgrown" its current location so that staff resorted to conducting intake interviews in the hallway. Another community stakeholder reported their organization had operated out of over two dozen spaces in the Lower East Side before securing their current building.

The idea of shared community spaces that serve as multi-purpose hubs for residents and local organizations arose in several conversations with organization leaders. All versions of the community hub model relied on resource-sharing to create centralized spaces where residents and organizations could collaborate, organize, and coordinate efforts to address local needs and service gaps.

Some participants highlighted the emotional impact of physical spaces. The poor conditions of spaces readily available to residents, like the blank walls in the lobby of their organization or broken playground equipment, foster feelings of dislocation or disrespect. These participants suggested small and creative ways to improve the environment and make people feel safe and respected, such as employing local artists for community art projects. They also noted that spaces celebrating the historical, cultural, and creative legacy of Lower Manhattan are often inaccessible to the people who live there. Making museums, galleries, or theaters available to residents with limited financial means is a first step to helping people of all backgrounds meaningfully contribute to the future of Lower Manhattan and New York City.

C. COVID-19: Magnifying Disparities in Lower Manhattan

The disparities across Lower Manhattan's neighborhoods are long-standing, but the emergence of the novel coronavirus magnified existing inequities. The COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly took a toll on the financial stability, safety, health, and wellbeing of all Lower Manhattan's communities, but Chinatown and the Lower East Side were most affected.

When considering the direct outcomes of the pandemic—infection and death rates—the differences are striking. Although the cumulative case rates for COVID-19 were similar across all neighborhoods (ranging from 218 cases to 241 cases per 1,000) the death rate due to COVID-19 was 354.5 deaths per 100,000 residents in Chinatown and the Lower East Side, compared to 73.3 deaths per 100,000 residents in the Financial District (Appendix B, Table 11). Vaccination rates across these communities varied slightly, with the Financial District reporting the highest percent of the population fully vaccinated at 93.7%. Eighty-four percent of residents in SoHo-TriBeCa were fully vaccinated and in LES/Chinatown, 83.4% of the population was vaccinated (Appendix B, Table 12). The difference in deaths despite similar infection and vaccination rates suggests that residents of Chinatown and the Lower East Side had less access to the healthcare supports they needed.

In addition to experiencing the highest rates of death caused by COVID-19, historically marginalized communities were also disproportionately affected by job loss, service breakdowns, barriers to care, and resource limitations in a world that was increasingly accessible only by digital means. Existing inequities by race, gender, and income were exacerbated, became more visible to the public, or became more urgent.

> *"I think the things that we already knew, where underlying issues kind of were exposed to the surface. And so we saw more folks needing food; we saw more [need for] mental health services. Just little things that we didn't think were so pressing are now pressing."*
> *—Resident and Community Representative*

C.1. The Local Economy

The COVID-19 pandemic destroyed much of Lower Manhattan's local economy. Many businesses, especially in Chinatown, were forced to close because of the pandemic and business license applications dropped dramatically. Applications for business licenses, both first-time applications and renewals, demonstrate the strength of the local economy. Data from the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs show that business applications dropped by nearly half—from 2,310 in 2019 to 1,279 in 2020—and only rebounded slightly in 2021. Furthermore, the percent of new applications, which indicate businesses moving into the area, has steadily declined from 2018. Whereas new applications accounted for more than one-third of all applications in Lower Manhattan in 2018, that figure declined to less than one-fifth of all applications in 2021 (Appendix B, Table 6).

The destruction of the local economy has adverse effects on employment and family resources. The US Department of Labor reported a 3,420% increase[7] in unemployment claims for Asian Americans in New York State between April 2019 and April 2020—Lower Manhattan-specific data were not available. Many families who experienced the virtuous cycle of the Main Causal Loop (Figure 2) prior to the pandemic may now experience it as a vicious cycle after losing employment.

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7 US Department of Labor, Office of Unemployment Insurance. Characteristics of Unemployment Insurance Claimants. Accessed April 5, 2022. **https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/chariu2020/2020Apr.html#New_York_Characteristics.**

> *"[If] you look at some of the research that was done by Flushing Chinese Business Association, as well as the Chinatown BID ... they're already seeing that business in Chinatown fell by 50 to 80% going back to January ... And I think part of it is that there's a ripple effect because the small businesses are all tied together."*
> *—Organization Leader*

C.2. Mental Health and Wellbeing

COVID-19 also triggered widely known challenges for healthcare in the city, including disruption of preventive services. In Lower Manhattan, residents also experienced barriers to access mental and behavioral health care during the pandemic. Many were not able to maintain continuity of care due to stay-at-home orders and healthcare systems unprepared to transition to virtual practice.

> *"... COVID was a huge stressor that led to [patients] returning to substance use and a lot of them cite isolation ... Or they were seeing somebody kind of stably for their mental health, and then kind of just everything got a little bit out of whack with the epidemic, or the pandemic, and they just fell out of care."* —Healthcare Provider

C.3. Education

From the start of the pandemic, students experienced a disruption in learning. As remote learning became the norm, households had to equip students with the necessary tools to participate in online coursework. With little outside support, parents scrambled to secure laptops, upgrade internet service, and provide other educational materials. The accessibility of broadband connections in households proved to be a stumbling block for individuals and families as they transitioned to remote work and school in March 2020. Households in Chinatown and the Lower East Side had broadband connection rates just above 50% in 2018. In comparison, the Financial District and the West Village–SoHo–TriBeCa neighborhoods have broadband connection rates of 84% and higher (Appendix B, Table 13).

Organizations in Lower Manhattan played an important role in supporting families with educational needs. Despite these heroic efforts, students fell behind due to interruptions in learning, particularly among the earlier grades. In addition, the pandemic isolated children from their peers, hindering their ability to build social, emotional, and behavioral skills.

> *"[They] did virtual for the entire year, so it really impacted their reading skills, their literacy skills ... Everyone's still so traumatized in so many different ways and this shows up in the classroom."* —Organization Leader and Resident

C.4. Hate Crimes and Anti-Asian Bias

As the pandemic spread, Asian Americans experienced an uptick in discrimination, harassment, and targeted violence because of false and misleading messaging that blamed Chinese and other Asian communities for the rise of COVID-19. Between 2020 and 2021, hate crime complaints nearly doubled in New York City, rising from 265 complaints in 2020 to 524 complaints in 2021 (Appendix B, Table 5). Within Lower Manhattan, the spike in hate crimes was more pronounced. In both years, anti-Asian sentiment has been a greater driver of hate crimes in Lower Manhattan compared to New York City overall, and that has continued even with the drastic rise of reported hate crimes. Community stakeholders describe a feeling of both social and physical isolation as the COVID-19 threat increased the risk of being targeted for violence.

"I know that there still remain folks who have refused to leave their homes ... There are those who are having less hours at their businesses because they are worried about it. There's those who've had to spend more money to upgrade security at their businesses. But there still remain a lot of fears of what could happen not just with COVID, but also the dual pandemics of COVID as well as anti-Asian hate." —Organization Leader

C.5. Housing and Homelessness

Community stakeholders shared that homelessness became starkly visible during the pandemic. In part, COVID-19 increased the number of people at risk of homelessness: Among opioid users surveyed in NYC, 20% experienced housing changes during the pandemic, in many cases shifting from stable housing to unstable housing or unsheltered homelessness.[8] As the rest of Lower Manhattan shut down, indoor space available to unsheltered individuals disappeared, and those who depended on the subway system for a place to sleep were no longer able to seek shelter on trains overnight. Homeless individuals feared shelter environments due to rapid COVID-19 transmission in congregate care settings. As one community stakeholder described the situation for homeless New Yorkers:

"Homelessness was a big issue during the height of [the] pandemic because especially when New York City used to be a 24-hour city, you could go to so many different places to hide or assimilate. No one would notice you, but the city that never sleeps took a nap. You know, that's where you saw all the problems, the underbelly of homelessness started to appear more frequently. And, you know, especially where you have, like, a lot of services, social services just closing, you know, where do you go put [all the people who are unhoused]?" —Resident Community Representative, Local Business Representative

The vicious cycle between mental illness or substance use disorders and homelessness (noted in Figure 4) was recently brought to public attention following a series of violent incidents and homicides in Lower Manhattan perpetrated by homeless individuals with serious mental illness. Following public calls for removing homeless people from the streets, New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced a new plan to increase police presence in the subway system to keep homeless people from sheltering on trains and subway platforms. The mayor's new plan is expected to increase criminalization of homelessness in the city.

Tenants found some relief from housing instability with the local and federal eviction moratoria that started in March 2020 and continued through January 15, 2022. With the expiration of the local emergency order in January 2022, weekly eviction filings have trended steeply upward, from 878 for the week of January 2–9 to 2,197 between March 6–13.[9]

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8 Dominguez Gomez L., Jessell L., Zaidi I., Nolan M., Harocopos A. Basic Needs among People Who Use Opioids in New York City during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Epi Data Brief, February 2022, no. 131. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Accessed April 5, 2022. **https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/databrief131.pdf**.
9 Eviction Lab. Accessed April 5, 2022. **https://evictionlab.org/eviction-tracking/new-york-ny/**

D. Conclusion: Expanding Community Voice

Lower Manhattan is a diverse region, with each neighborhood featuring a distinct character and history. Even so, when assessing the needs of families in the community, we found that issues consistently centered around access to educational and employment opportunities. Families depend on education as a means to employment that provides income and access to other resources. To truly thrive, families need to be able to navigate systems related to education, social services, and healthcare; obtain affordable, quality childcare; and have the space to build community.

By looking deeper into existing disparities, our assessment sheds light on the complex and interdependent relationships within and between Lower Manhattan neighborhoods and the deeply rooted systems that govern and influence them. The excerpt below expresses how structural racism and historical patterns of disinvestment in communities have created the conditions that continue to reinforce social, economic, and racial disparities in Lower Manhattan today.

> *"So I think that the challenges that we have in downtown Manhattan are the result of the same policy execution that has stymied upward mobility for generations that, literally for decades, it has been a sustained unwillingness by government and public sectors to make investments in people and in community and everything that's wrapped up in why that is, and whether that's racism or whether that's prejudice and bias against immigrants to the country, those who are starting off in a position of poverty and less means ... All of those prejudices have, you know, coalesced in a series of policies that have not had us invest enough ... in housing, not enough in childcare, not enough in education, not enough in health and other social supports, for people who are in need of any number of ... those elements." —Organization Leader*

In their current state, the systems with which Lower Manhattan residents interact—whether health care, education, childcare, or housing—can deepen adversity for low-income residents while fostering opportunity and abundance to the most privileged residents. To ensure the health, wellbeing, and resilience of Lower Manhattan communities, efforts must explicitly address these sources of entrenched and growing disparities.

This community needs assessment explored a broad range of issues across the Lower Manhattan community. Because findings represent the perspectives of 150 listening session attendees, 90 group model building participants, and fifteen community stakeholders who participated in key informant interviews, the findings presented in this report are limited in depth. Despite interviewing individuals representing a diverse range of identities, areas of expertise, and affiliations within Lower Manhattan, many participants hold professional or leadership positions within their communities. Of the fifteen community stakeholders interviewed, just under one-third identified themselves as residing in Lower Manhattan. Furthermore, because community stakeholders and Town Hall participants were identified by the Neighborhood Support team, the Center for Community Resilience team, or at the recommendation of other community stakeholders, the sample of participants may be subject to selection bias. To mitigate bias, the research team sought insight from additional informants as new themes emerged, and population-level quantitative data were used to validate qualitative findings, when possible (see Appendix B for supplemental tables and graphs).

Despite limitations, this report intends to capture and elevate the voices of Lower Manhattan residents who have graciously shared their stories, hopes, and concerns with our research team. In this report, we highlight

potential starting points to address immediate community needs as well as build long-term efforts to address inequities. The Neighborhood Support team at Trinity Church Wall Street is in a unique position to strengthen efforts across Lower Manhattan to build community and convene stakeholders across neighborhoods to foster collective change. These potential solutions should be implemented by leveraging the wealth in Lower Manhattan and the commitment to community evident among Lower Manhattan's residents and the organizations serving them.

This needs assessment report is built upon the experience, wisdom, and time given by community members who live and work in Lower Manhattan. As solutions are implemented, whether through grantmaking or community-based advocacy efforts, community voices should continue to guide Trinity's understanding of the needs in Lower Manhattan and how to best address them. By building trust through authentic engagement, Neighborhood Support can support real progress toward a more equitable, resilient, and united Lower Manhattan.

Appendix A. Causal Loop Diagram

Full Causal Loop Diagram

The full causal loop diagram consists of 91 variables. It was constructed first based on the input of participants of the Neighborhood Support Town Hall on October 28, 2021. The diagram was further modified based on qualitative data obtained through community stakeholder interviews. The version shown below contains modifications up to March 18, 2022. The pink arrows denote cause-and-effect relationships explicitly stated by Town Hall participants and community stakeholders. The light orange arrows denote cause-and-effect relationships either mentioned by Town Hall participants and community stakeholders as speculations, implied without explicit statements, or supported by literature but without direct support from qualitative data.
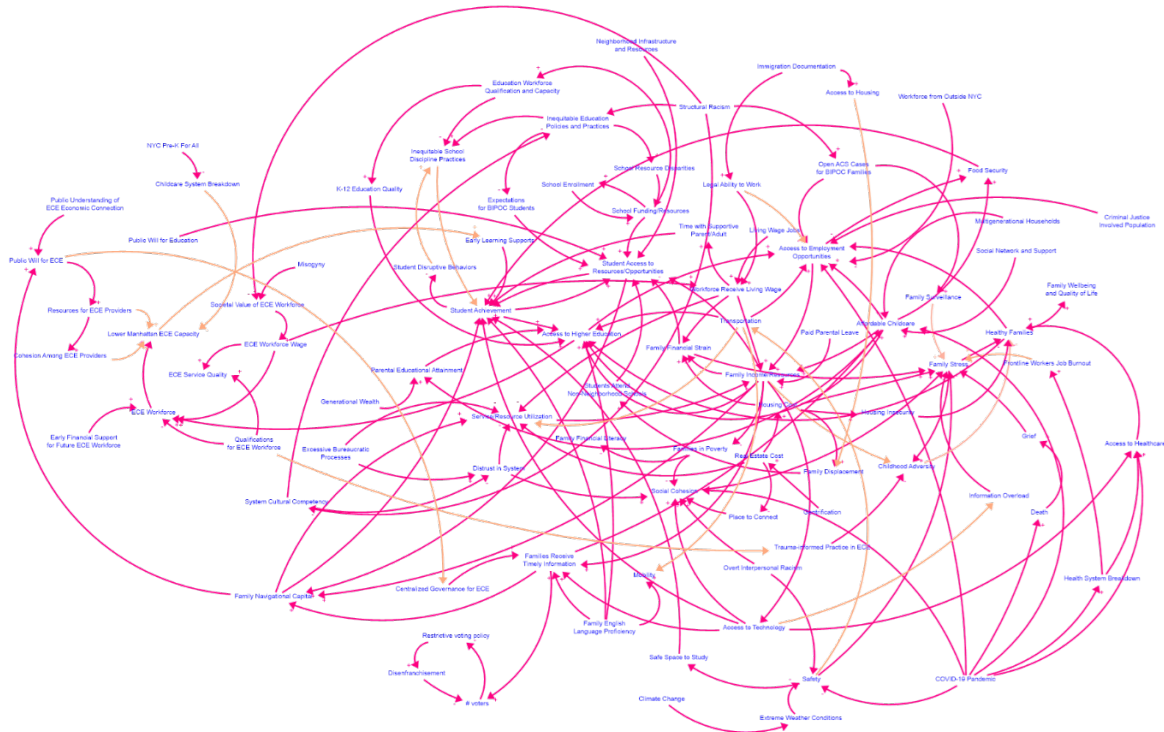
Appendix B. Data Tables

Table 2: *Older Adults and Foreign-born Residents, 2018*[10]

Neighborhood	Age 65+	Foreign-born
Financial District +	7.0%	28.3%
West Village, SoHo, TriBeCa	15.2%	21.2%
Chinatown	21.9%	51.1%
Lower East Side	16.2%	28.0%

Data note: Values represent a population-weighted average of census tract-level estimates.

Table 3: *Housing Availability and Cost by Community District, 2019*[11]

Indicator	MN01: Financial District	MN02: West Village - SoHo – TriBeCa	MN03: China-town and Lower East Side
Homeownership rate	31.6%	31.6%	10.8%
Housing units	95,498	95,498	83,942
Rental vacancy rate	4.7%	4.7%	2.9%
Serious housing code violations (per 1,000 privately owned rental units)	4.9	29.9	46.6
Severe crowding rate (% of renter households)	4.1%	4.1%	3.8%
Total housing code violations (per 1,000 privately owned rental units)	15.2	115.6	179.7
Median rent, all (2020$)	$2,840	$2,840	$1,070
Median rent, recent movers (2020$)	$2,940	$2,940	$2,540
Rental units affordable at 30% AMI (% of recently available units)	4.7%	4.7%	7.2%
Severely rent-burdened households	16.6%	16.6%	23.8%
Severely rent-burdened households, low income	56.9%	56.9%	35.9%
Housing choice vouchers (% of occupied, privately owned rental units)	0.6%	0.6%	2.3%
Public housing (% of rental units)	0.0%	0.0%	23.8%

10 NYC Data2Go, 5th edition. Measure of America. Accessed March 10, 2022. **www.data2go.nyc.**

11 New York Neighborhood Data Profiles. NYU Furman Center, New York University. Accessed March 10, 2022.
   https://furmancenter.org/neighborhoods

Data note: Due to methodological issues, housing data for Community District 1 (the Financial District) and Community District 2 (NW Port – SoHo – TriBeCa) are identical.

Table 4: *Lower Manhattan Crimes by Type, 2021 and 2022*[12]

Criminal Complaint	2021 Rate per 100K pop.	2022 Count Through 3/6/2022	2021 Count Through 3/6/2021	% Change 2021−2022
Violent Crimes	488.2	295	200	+47.5%
Murder	4.5	2	3	-33.3%
Rape	22.9	14	7	+100.0%
Robbery	208.1	154	97	+58.8%
Felony Assault	252.7	125	93	+34.4%
Property Crimes	1430.6	1,009	583	+73.1%
Burglary	286.7	215	141	+52.5%
Grand Larceny	1054	757	413	+83.3%
Grand Larceny Auto	89.9	37	29	+27.6%

Data notes: The area south of 14th Street in Manhattan is comprised of Manhattan's 1st, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 9th police precincts. Crime counts were combined across these five precincts to calculate 2021 violent crime and property crime rates for Lower Manhattan.

Crime counts for 2022 through the most recent reportable week are compared to counts from the same time period in 2021.

Table 5: *Lower Manhattan and NYC Hate Crimes, 2020 and 2021*[13]

Complaint by Bias	2020 (%)	2021 (%)	Change (% Change, 2020−2021)
Lower Manhattan	**25**	**62**	**37 (+148%)**
Anti-Asian	5 (20%)	24 (38.7%)	+19 (+380%)
Anti-Black	2 (8%)	1 (1.6%)	−1 (−50%)
Anti-Jewish	9 (36%)	21 (33.9%)	+12 (+133%)
Anti-LGBTQ	2 (8%)	10 (16.1%)	+8 (400%)
Other	7 (28%)	6 (9.7%)	−1 (−14.3%)
NYC Total	**265**	**524**	**+259 (+97.5%)**
Anti-Asian	27 (10.2%)	131 (25%)	+104 (+385.2%)
Anti-Black	41 (15.5%)	38 (7.3%)	−3 (−7.3%)
Anti-Jewish	116 (43.8%)	198 (37.8%)	+82 (+70.7%)
Anti-LGBTQ	37 (14%)	97 (18.5%)	+60 (+162.2%)
Other	44 (16.6%)	60 (11.5%)	+16 (+36.4%)

Data notes: Bias categories are presented individually for those that comprise at least 10% of all hate crime complaints citywide.

Anti-LGBTQ complaints include anti-gay (male), anti-gay (mixed), anti-lesbian, anti-gender non-conforming, and anti-transgender complaints.

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12 NYPD Borough and Precinct Crime Statistics. Accessed March 13, 2022.
   https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nypd/stats/crime-statistics/borough-and-precinct-crime-stats.page
13 NYPD Hate Crime Complaints, Annual, 2020 and 2021. Accessed March 21, 2022.
   https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nypd/stats/reports-analysis/hate-crimes.page.

Table 6: *Lower Manhattan Business Applications, 2018−2022*[14]

Year	Total Business License Applications	Renewals (% of total)	New Applications (% of total)
2018	2,396	1,532 (63.9%)	864 (36.1%)
2019	2,310	1,771 (76.7%)	539 (23.3%)
2020	1,279	1,055 (82.5%)	224 (17.5%)
2021	1,460	1,196 (81.9%)	264 (18.1%)
2022	359	300 (83.6%)	59 (16.4%)

Data notes: Data include applications for businesses located within the following ZIP codes: 10002, 10003, 10004, 10005, 10006, 10007, 10009, 10011, 10012, 10013, 10014, 10038, 10280, and 10282. ZIP codes based on NYC DOHMH Manhattan ZIP Code file: **https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/Manhattan.**

Table 7: *Median Childcare Costs for Infants & Toddlers Percent of Median Household Income, 2018*[15]

Household Type	MN01: Financial District	MN02: West Village - SoHo – TriBeCa	MN03: Chinatown and Lower East Side
Home-based Childcare			
All Households	3.4%	3.4%	21.5%
Married Couples	3.4%	3.4%	11.2%
Single Parents	7.2%	7.2%	42.9%
Center-based Childcare			
All Households	6.2%	6.2%	39.2%
Married Couples	6.2%	6.2%	20.5%
Single Parents	13.1%	13.1%	78.1%

Table 8: *Healthy Food Outlets and Food Insecurity by Community District, 2016*[16]

Measure	MN01: Financial District	MN02: West Village - SoHo – TriBeCa	MN03: Chinatown and Lower East Side
Ratio – Bodegas to Supermarkets	6	7	18
Food Insecurity (% of individuals)	7.2%	9.0%	17.9%

Data notes: The ratio of bodegas to supermarkets is a useful metric to demonstrate the availability of nutritious food in a community

Food insecurity is defined as when the quality, variety, or desirability of a person's diet declines. Even individuals with adequate caloric intake can be considered food insecure if they are unable to fulfill their preferred diet (i.e., culturally appropriate foods, balance of macronutrients).

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14 NYC Department of Consumer Affairs License Applications. Accessed via NYC OpenData, March 13, 2022. **https://data.cityofnewyork. us/Business/License-Applications/ptev-4hud.**

15 Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Keeping Track Online database: Cost Burden for Infant/Toddler Child Care. Accessed October 21, 2021. **https://data.cccnewyork.org/data/map/1450/cost-burden-for-infanttoddler-child-care#1450/454/3/1751/40/a/a.**

16 Measure of America, Data2Go.NYC, 5th Edition. Accessed March 13, 2022. **https://data2go.nyc/**

Table 9: *SNAP Benefit Participation by Community District, 2018*[17]

Measure	MN01: Financial District	MN02: West Village - SoHo – TriBeCa	MN03: Chinatown and Lower East Side
All Occupied Housing Units	29,465	50,759	65,833
Households Reporting SNAP Benefits (#)	852	2,071	17,275
Households Reporting SNAP Benefits (%)	2.9%	4.1%	26.2%

Data note: The percent of households using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits can also serve as an indicator that food security is marginal or low.

Table 10: *Frequent Mental Distress Among Adults, 2015−2018*[18]

Year	FiDi+	West Village – SoHo – TriBeCa	Chinatown	Lower East Side
2015	8.1%	8.5%	12.2%	12.2%
2016	8.1%	8.5%	11.9%	11.9%
2017	9.1%	9.5%	12.9%	13.3%
2018	9.5%	9.8%	13.0%	13.5%

Data notes: Data for Frequent Mental Distress come from the CDC's PLACES: Local Data for Better Health program. Neighborhood-level values represent a population-weighted average of tract-level prevalence for frequent mental distress.

"Frequent mental distress" is defined as the percent of respondents who reported their mental health prevented them from daily activities for more than 14 days in the past 30 days.

Table 11: *Cumulative COVID-19 Case and Death Rates*[19]

Measure	MN01: Financial District	M02: West Village - SoHo – TriBeCa	M03: Chinatown and Lower East Side
Covid-19 Cases (Confirmed and probable)	6,540	33,021	50,474
Covid-19 Case Rate (Per 1K pop)	217.8	237.5	241.1
Covid-19 Deaths (Confirmed and probable)	22	241	742
Covid-19 Death Rate (Per 100K pop)	73.3	173.3	354.5

Data notes: Data are reported at the ZIP code tabulation area (ZCTA) level and aggregated into Community Districts.

One factor that may contribute to differences in death rates is the stage of the pandemic in which the community was most affected (i.e., communities impacted before vaccines became widely available would experience higher mortality). Because these data are not age-adjusted, age may also contribute to the difference in death rates.

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17 USDA Economic Research Service Food Access Research Atlas 2019. Accessed March 14, 2022.
    https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/download-the-data/

18 NYU City Health Dashboard, 2021. Census-tract unemployment data. Accessed October 24, 2022 via API at **www.cityhealthdashboard.com**.

19 NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene COVID-19 Data. Accessed March 14, 2022. **https://github.com/nychealth/coronavirus-data.**

Table 12: *COVID-19 Vaccination Rates[20]*

Measure	MN01: Financial District	MN02: West Village - SoHo – TriBeCa	MN03: Chinatown and Lower East Side
Percent of population (age 5+) with 1+ doses	~100%	97.4%	95.1%
Percent of population (age 5+) fully vaccinated	93.7%	84.3%	83.4%

Data note: Data are reported at the ZIP code tabulation area (ZCTA) level and aggregated into Community Districts.

Table 13: *Households with Broadband Connection, 2017−2019[21]*

Year	FiDi+	West Village–SoHo–TriBeCa	Chinatown	LES
2017	89.6%	84.5%	54.5%	56.6%
2018	90.5%	84.3%	54.6%	4.2%
2019	91.6%	84.5%	56.9%	55.2%

Data note: Neighborhood-level values represent a household-weighted average of tract-level prevalence for broadband connection.

20 NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene COVID-19 Data. Accessed March 14, 2022.
https://github.com/nychealth/coronavirus-data.

21 NYU City Health Dashboard, 2021. Census-tract broadband connection data. Accessed October 24, 2021 via API at
www.cityhealthdashboard.com.

Appendix C: Lower Manhattan Geographies for Quantitative Data

For its Neighborhood Support work, Trinity Church Wall Street considers Lower Manhattan south of 14th Street as comprised of four neighborhoods: Financial District, West Village–SoHo–TriBeCa, Chinatown, and the Lower East Side. These neighborhoods do not fall neatly into any of the administrative districts by which New York City's data is commonly collected. The following table provides an approximate crosswalk between the neighborhoods identified by Trinity and the most common administrative units. Neighborhood Tabulation Areas (NTAs) are aggregations of census tracts and nest imperfectly within Community Districts (CDs). The number of census tracts that comprise each Trinity-defined neighborhood is included in the table.

Table 14: *Geographic Crosswalk, 2020*[22]

Trinity Neighborhood (# of Census Tracts)	Community District	Neighborhood Tabulation Area
Financial District + (10)	MN01	MN0101: Financial District – Battery Park City MN0191: The Battery – Governor's Island
West Village, SoHo, TriBeCa (25)	MN02	MN0102: TriBeCa – Civic Center MN0201: SoHo – Little Italy – Hudson Square MN0202: Greenwich Village MN0203: West Village
Chinatown (7)	MN03	MN0301: Chinatown – Two Bridges
Lower East Side (24)	MN03	MN0302: Lower East Side MN0303: East Village

Other Geographies in Lower Manhattan

For some measures, data are collected at other geographies – Crime statistics are reported at the police precinct level and education measures are reported at the school district level. Lower Manhattan has five police precincts: Manhattan's 1st, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 9th precincts. Public schools fall into two districts: Districts 1 and 2. District 1 is a geographically small district that falls within the Lower East Side and District 2 includes the Financial District, Tribeca, West Village, Clinton, Midtown, Gramercy, and the Upper East Side.

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22 2020 Census Tract Relationship File. New York City Department of City Planning. Accessed October 19, 2021.
https://home3.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/office/planning-level/nyc-population/census2020/nyc2020census_tract_nta_cdta_relationships.xlsx?r=092221

Appendix D: Community Stakeholders

Table 15: *List of Community Stakeholders Interviewed*

Stakeholder ID	Neighborhood	Sector	Role
Stakeholder #1 (KII 001)	Lower East Side	Education, Community Organizing and Advocacy	Parent and Community Representative +
Stakeholder #2 (KII 002)	Lower East Side	Education	Parent Leader
Stakeholder #3 (KII 003)	Lower East Side	Health	Healthcare Provider
Stakeholder #4 (KII 004)	Greater New York City	Youth Justice	Organization leader *
Stakeholder #5 (KII 005)	Greater New York City	Community Organization	Healthcare Provider
Stakeholder #6 (KII 006)	Lower East Side	Youth Justice Child Welfare	Program Administrator
Stakeholder #7 (KII 007)	Lower East Side	Education	Organization leader *+
Stakeholder #8 (KII 008)	Chinatown	Social Services, Community Advocacy	Organization leader *
Stakeholder #9 (KII 009)	Greater New York City	Community Organizing and Advocacy	Community Program Leader
Stakeholder #10 (KII 010)	Lower Manhattan	Health	Healthcare Provider
Stakeholder #11 (KII 011)	Chinatown	Economic Development	Community Representative, Small Business Representative +
Stakeholder #12 (KII 012)	Lower Manhattan	Housing	Program Administrator
Stakeholder #13 (KII 013)	Chinatown	Economic Development	Organization Leader *
Stakeholder #14 (KII 014)	Greenwich Village	Social Services	Organization Leader *
Stakeholder #15 (KII 015)	Lower East Side	Community Organizing and Advocacy, Social Services	Organization Leader *+ Community Representative

* Includes Chief Executive Officers, Public Servants, Executive Directors

+ refers to individuals who reside in Lower Manhattan