



ioby

**Eastern Gulf
Phase 0**

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Introduction

ioby's MISSION AND THEORY OF CHANGE

ioby directly supports residents rebuilding and strengthening healthy and sustainable neighborhoods, towns, and cities. We blend resource organizing and crowdfunding to help leaders of local projects find the resources they need within their own communities. Our vision is to create a future in which our communities are shaped by the powerful good ideas of our own neighbors. Our mission is to mobilize neighbors who have good ideas to become powerful civic leaders who plan, fund, and make positive change in their own neighborhoods.

ioby removes friction from neighborhood action, helping people to make positive change. ioby supports resident leaders in every step, from idea through implementation. We focus on local residents because we know that they have great ideas to improve the neighborhoods where they live, work, and play. But there are many barriers to leading positive change, such as: lack of funding, lack of confidence, lack of knowledge about permitting processes, lack of 501(c)3 status, lack of teammates, and fear that no one will help.

ioby's model—including a crowdfunding platform, coaching, fiscal sponsorship, resources, and project implementation support—removes these barriers, so that great ideas from residents can be implemented locally, quickly, and with neighbor support. Making it easier for residents to take neighborhood action is important because neighborhoods are the most tangible, relatable, accessible places for us to practice civic participation and flex the civic muscle we need for a healthy democracy.

While ioby is available to residents across the United States, we currently have Action Strategists—community organizers who work intentionally to support residents, increase civic engagement, and strengthen community power in neighborhoods with histories of disinvestment—working with residents in Memphis, Cincinnati, Detroit, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh to support them in making positive change happen where they live.

WHAT IS PHASE 0?

Before we begin a deliberate phase of work in a new place, ioby strives to learn as much as possible about the civic landscape from the very people who we will eventually be supporting. We do not make any assumptions at the outset about the skills, needs, and resources of the community leaders whom we hope will eventually be using our platform and services. We aim to support and contribute to, rather than supplant or duplicate, the services of existing local technical assistance providers. The Phase 0 research reveals residents' goals for their communities and helps us develop a strategy to best position our services toward those goals.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

ioby aims to identify opportunities and craft a strategy for our team to increase civic engagement and enable residents to complete projects that improve public spaces and make their neighborhoods, towns, and cities stronger. To be successful in the Eastern Gulf Region, ioby must first:

1. Improve ioby's understanding of the region's civic landscape.
2. Assess competition and new opportunities for ioby to add value to the region's civic sector.
3. Measure the region against ioby's predictors of success.
4. Evaluate potential demand for ioby's services in the region.
5. Identify the trends that drive communities' interest in taking on projects like those that ioby typically supports.
6. Characterize civic participation across the region.
7. Recommend strategies to source and serve ioby project leaders across the region.

Methodology & Limitations

LOCAL RESEARCH FELLOW

To conduct Phase 0 research in seven regions in the South, ioby felt that it was essential to engage with local research fellows who had deep roots and connections in their region. In the Eastern Gulf, we hired Rachael Reichenbach in Tallahassee, Florida, who holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs from The George Washington University with concentrations in sustainable development, anthropology, and human services. A connector and facilitator at heart, Rachael’s work primarily focuses on community food systems and group processes for change makers. Since 2015 Rachael has held various roles in the Florida food system, including farmers market manager, value chain coordinator, and coordinator of Fresh Access Bucks, Florida’s statewide nutrition incentive program. In 2018 Rachael served as the co-chair of the Florida Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival and is currently an active participant in the Wallace Center’s Food Systems Leadership Network.

GIS FELLOW

ioby hired a GIS Fellow, Sarah Kontos, to help us understand and visually represent the diverse social, economic, and physical landscapes in each of the southern regions. Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the IRS, and other sources, Sarah Kontos created maps that informed many of the findings and strategies presented in this report. Sarah Kontos is a spatial analyst and urban designer based in Brooklyn, New York. She has worked for a wide and varied range of nonprofits and city-adjacent agencies to translate lived experiences into novel spatial and analytical frameworks. She also has previous experience as a GIS analyst-for-hire, a data visualization specialist, and a teacher, and has served on volunteer boards related to pedestrian and bicycle advocacy. She holds a B.A. in Urban Studies and History from the University of Pittsburgh and an M.S. in Design and Urban Ecologies from Parsons, The New School.

WORKSHOPS

ioby’s Local Research Fellow led two grassroots fundraising workshops, on October 16, 2019 in Tallahassee, Florida, and on November 13, 2019 in Quincy, Florida. Attendees provided valuable feedback on ioby’s mission, training content, and approach to grassroots fundraising.

INTERVIEWS

From conversations with a total of 37 civic leaders and 30 attendees of ioby’s grassroots fundraising workshops in the Eastern Gulf, ioby began to identify the context, opportunities, and challenges involved in working in the region. While the fellow was already connected to some of the interviewees, she also relied on existing contacts who introduced her to additional leaders in the region.

INTERVIEWEES AND WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

Name of Interviewee or Workshop Attendee	Title and Affiliation(s) <small>*at the time of interview or workshop</small>
Janice Lucas	LEAD Coalition of Bay County
Abena Ojetayo	Chief Resilience Officer & Director at City of Tallahassee
Richard Fetchick	Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality; formerly Appalachian Regional Planning Council
Miaisha Mitchell	Tallahassee Food Network, The Greater Frenchtown Revitalization Council

**Name of Interviewee or
Workshop Attendee****Title and Affiliation(s)**

Devan Leavins	Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department
Caitlyn Peacock	Tampa Bay Network to End Hunger
Cindy Bigbie	Community Connections
Sarah Stout	Community Foundation of North Florida
Laura Harwin	Community Foundation of North Florida
Ronstance Pittman	Jackson County NAACP
Ginger Littleton	Bay District School Board
Tessa Schreiner	Leon County Recycling and Sustainability Manager
Talethia Edwards	Greene Bond Neighborhood Association
Ron Boyce	Executive Director, AMIkids Panama City Marine Institute
Joe Parramore	President of New Journey Ministries
Felina Martin	Institute for Nonprofit Innovation and Excellence
Karen Woodall	Executive Director, People's Advocacy Center
Lucy Gafford	Executive Director Mobile Arts Council
Carolyn Ford	Executive Director, North Florida Educational Development Corporation
Monique Ellsworth	CEO, Connecting Everyone with Second Chances (fmr.)
Bryan Fuenmayor	Rainbow Mobile
Thomas Whitley	Chief of Staff to the Mayor of Tallahassee
Hiba Rahim	NW Florida Regional Coordinator, Center for American Islamic Relations
Kristin Dozier	Leon County Commissioner
Christian Wagley	Coastal Organizer for Gulf Restoration Network
Antonio Cuyler	Interim Chair, Department of FSU Art Education
Casey Cox	Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District
Perri Campis	Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District

Name of Interviewee or Workshop Attendee	Title and Affiliation(s)
Jimmy Dunson	Mutual Aid Disaster Relief
Brooke Errett	Florida Organizer, Food & Water Watch and Food & Water Action
Taylor Sanchez	Gulf Coast Regional Director, Office of United States Senator Marco Rubio
Frank Barragan	Coastal Coalition for Immigrant Justice
April Wilkes	Executive Director, St. Joe Community Foundation
Marie Rattigan	Dream Defenders
Calvin Avant	Unity in the Family Ministry
Robin Reshard	Pensacola Network
Kofi Hunt	Political Director, Fight for \$15

SURVEY

ioy designed a survey to uncover new perspectives on the civic landscape and asked community-based organizations to share it with constituents. The survey included questions about civic pride, attachment, trust in institutions, and the region’s existing culture of giving to grassroots projects. As an incentive for residents to complete the survey, respondents were entered to win one of thirty \$200 gift cards.

We ultimately received 127 survey responses from the Eastern Gulf:

Race/Ethnicity (Self-reported)	Count	Share of Total
Black	17	13.39%
Latinx	4	3.15%
White	75	59.06%
Asian	0	0.00%
Mixed Race	1	0.79%
Native/Indigenous	0	0.00%
No response	30	23.62%
TOTAL	127	100%

LIMITATIONS

We have identified limitations in our market research in the Eastern Gulf region. Because the region is large and varied, compared to the way ioby has typically focused Phase 0 research on a single city, the perspectives of interviewees are not representative of the entire region. Rather, perspectives are only representative of the town or city of the participant.

The Eastern Gulf's Assets and Challenges

Guided by the tenets of asset-based community development, ioby always aims to understand the existing conditions of a place before we make plans to grow our local presence. Based on our interviews with residents and leaders in the Eastern Gulf, the region's assets include:

- Local governments in the region's small and mid-sized cities tend to be accessible to the people. Specifically, it is easier to develop relationships with local government staff and elected officials that can be leveraged.
- While the numbers of individuals who are actively civically engaged may be relatively small in many communities across the region (Tampa and Tallahassee have particularly robust civic engagement landscapes), there are deep senses of passion, commitment, and loyalty that keep community leaders pushing forward in service of their communities.

These assets have aided the region as residents and community-based organizations have grappled with profound challenges in their towns, cities, and neighborhoods. According to interviewees, these include:

- Individuals in power are largely committed to the status quo; there is not a widespread appetite for systems change, commitment to social justice, or deep desire for community-centered progress.
- Much of the wealth is concentrated in a small number of families that have passed down their wealth intergenerationally. This small concentration of wealth creates an environment of funding scarcity for nonprofit and community groups. Simply put, there is not enough philanthropy in the region for organizations to do the civic engagement work that is needed in the region.
- There is a sense that many people are focused on their own individual or household needs, either out of a need for survival (e.g. "I don't have time to be civically engaged because I am working overtime to meet my basic needs") or due to class comforts that have an insulating effect on one's experience (e.g. "my life is fine; why do I need to be engaged in community and civic work?").

Objective #1: Improve ioby's understanding of each sub-region's civic landscape.

Systems of racism, classism, and disinvestment continue to pervade the Eastern Gulf region, ranging from remnants of systems born from the United States' origins of slavery, to current patterns of development and gentrification.

Mobile, Alabama

Community activist and leader of Rainbow Mobile, Mobile's first LGBTQ advocacy organization, Bryan Fuenmayor described Mobile as a racially segregated city, divided between white and Black communities, in part due to white flight to the suburbs. Fuenmayor also described economic segregation; wealth is concentrated among a small number of old Mobile families who hold a preponderance of the power and positions of authority. Fuenmayor said that these families abuse this power by making backdoor favors, giving contracts to cronies, and generally perpetrating corrupt economic and governance practices. Fuenmayor acknowledged that while there are a handful of people of color in positions of power, the more widely held experience is that a handful of wealthy, white families have blocked opportunities for people of color.

Fuenmayor described the communities of Prichard and Africatown as the most disinvested and segregated in the Mobile area. During WWII, the shipbuilding industry expanded into Mobile and many black workers moved to Prichard to work in the shipyards. The shipbuilding industry, as well as two paper mill factories that provided numerous jobs, have since shuttered, leaving high rates of crime and poverty in their wake.¹ In 1860, the Clotilda, an illegal slave ship and the last slave ship to make landfall in the United States, arrived in Mobile Bay. The 110 enslaved people on board were sold upriver. Following the end of the Civil War, 32 of the original 110 Clotilda captives returned to Mobile Bay and settled Africatown as their own community. Africatown is adjacent to Prichard and has suffered many of the same symptoms of disinvestment, including segregation, poverty, and environmental injustice related to the irresponsible and harmful handling of waste from the factories located along Mobile's waterways.²

Mid-century urban renewal projects also had a profound impact on Mobile's demographic and social makeup. By the late 1960s, an estimated 837 families had been displaced by urban renewal projects in Mobile.³ These projects disproportionately impacted Black families; although Black residents accounted for only 35% of Mobile's population in 1970,⁴ 61% of families displaced by urban renewal projects were families of color.⁵

Frank Barragan of the Coastal Coalition for Immigrant Justice described the ways that systemic racism impacts the immigrant, Hispanic, and Latinx community in the Mobile Bay area. In 2011, the Alabama state legislature passed HB56, a racial profiling law that created what the Southern Poverty Law Center called a "humanitarian crisis in Alabama."⁶ The law, based on Arizona's SB 1070, allows police officers to ask for proof of a person's immigration status if they have reason to suspect that a person whom they have stopped or arrested is undocumented.⁷ According to Barragan, about half of the immigrants in Alabama, including documented people, left the state out of fear. A large portion have returned but continue to live in a state of fear and constant concern. Most recently, the August 2019 ICE raids in Mississippi, which rounded up 680 immigrants at food processing plants on the first day of school, has sent fear through the south Alabama immigrant community. Barragan reported that people are "on a negative alert" and believe that "if they are out of sight, then they are out of mind."

Panama City, Florida

Interviewees in Panama City mentioned three heavily disinvested communities: Millville, St. Andrews Towers (public housing), and Glenwood. Janice Lucas is the Executive Director of the LEAD Coalition, a community-based organization that seeks to build trust within historically disinvested neighborhoods and across those neighborhoods to the greater community. Lucas described these communities as majority minority communities of lower socioeconomic standing where people are isolated and desperate. Lucas understands that desperate people do desperate things and wonders, "What's in our community recipe that's reducing folks to abusing substances, engaging in gangs, warring with each other in those gangs, and killing each other?"

Glenwood is the largest historic African American neighborhood in Bay county. Founded in 1896 and formerly known as the East End or Shinetown, Glenwood is the original African American community in the Panama City area. Once a thriving and vibrant community, Glenwood was a safe haven for the Black community, where African American-owned businesses served the African American community. Two moments fundamentally altered the makeup of Glenwood: integration and the widening of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.⁸ Integration introduced freedom of movement and purchasing power: African Americans were now able to spend their money or raise their families outside the boundaries of historically Black communities. This created attrition within historically

1 "Prichard, Alabama." Wikipedia, retrieved 25 Dec. 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prichard,_Alabama.

2 "Clotilda (slave ship)." Wikipedia, retrieved 29 Oct. 2019. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clotilda_\(slave_ship\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clotilda_(slave_ship)).

3 Nelson, Robert K. et al. "Renewing Inequality." American Panorama. <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/renewal/#view=0/0/1&viz=cartogram>.

4 "Census Tracts: Mobile, Ala. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area." 1970 Census of Population and Housing, U.S. Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census. <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1970/phc-1/39204513p13ch03.pdf>.

5 Nelson.

6 "Alabama's Shame: HB 56 and the War on Immigrants." Southern Poverty Law Center, 1 Feb. 2012. <https://www.splcenter.org/20120131/alabamas-shame-hb-56-and-war-immigrants>.

7 Ibid.

8 Tucker, Kayla. "SPECIAL REPORT: The Legacy of Glenwood." Nexstar Broadcasting, 25 Feb. 2019. <https://www.mypanhandle.com/news/special-report-the-legacy-of-glenwood/>.

Black communities across the region, not only in Panama City, and reduced cohesion among previously tight-knit African American communities. Due to its proximity to downtown, Glenwood has also been the target of various efforts at development and revitalization that have fragmented the community. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd was widened in order to ease traffic on the thoroughfare, but the wider road effectively split the community and eliminated its center. Recent Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) projects in Downtown North such as landscaping, water features, and sidewalks have sparked ire among community leaders who believe that the City should be using these funds to address deteriorated and deteriorating properties in the neighborhood.⁹ Most recently, the community experienced displacement when 33 houses were demolished to make way for new development.

On October 10, 2018, Hurricane Michael made landfall in Bay County and left near total destruction in its wake. A problem in Glenwood that Hurricane Michael brought to a head—and that disproportionately impacts Black families—is the prevalence of “heir properties,” or properties that are owned by two or more people, usually people with a common ancestor who has died without leaving a will or title. In the absence of legal documentation proving ownership of the property, descendants whose families have owned the land for multiple generations (and who have been paying property taxes) do not have the proper documentation to prove ownership. Janice Lucas estimates that there are roughly 2,000 heir properties in Glenwood, creating major obstacles to legal ownership, permitting, and accessing FEMA funds. Opportunists are offering property owners somewhere in the range of \$30,000 for their homes, which many people are accepting in the wake of total loss, but which falls far short of what they will need to purchase a new home and rebuild their lives.

Pensacola, Florida

In Pensacola, Christian Wagley, Coastal Organizer for Healthy Gulf, described an east-west divide in terms of economic and racial segregation. The east side of Pensacola has more access to the water and higher property values. Shipyards, light manufacturing, and other industrial businesses are concentrated on the west side, making it less desirable for residential communities. Lower-income communities and communities of color are concentrated on the west side, including Warrington, Brownsville, and Wedgewood.

Calvin Avant, founder of and community organizer with Unity in the Family Ministry, elaborated on the current landscape within the communities of Wedgewood, Rolling Hills, and Olive Heights. These three communities are African American communities that span a 25-mile radius. There are 13 construction and demolition landfills in the community, creating a myriad of negative environmental, health, and quality of life impacts for local residents. These communities have existed since at least the 1950s, but zoning laws were changed in the past thirty years to allow for the location of these landfills in this area. Robin Reshard, creator of the documentary film *Belmont-DeVilliers: The Making of a Neighborhood*, described a now-familiar trajectory of once segregated and vibrant African American neighborhoods. Located adjacent to downtown Pensacola, Belmont-DeVilliers experienced fracture and loss of community cohesion following the end of segregation as residents and business owners sought opportunities elsewhere. Following an extended period of disinvestment, disregard, and disrepair, there has been a recent uptick in outside interest in the neighborhood as downtown Pensacola experiences a season of revitalization.

According to Pensacola community leaders, Aviation Field, a thriving Black neighborhood, was demolished in order to construct Interstate-110. Calvin Avant described watching the construction as a child, and the subsequent loss of his aunt’s home as a result. As Avant remembers it, 1966 Democratic gubernatorial candidate Robert King High was in favor of constructing the Interstate along the beach line; however, Republican candidate Claude Kirk won the race and chose to build I-110 straight through a Black community.

Tallahassee, Florida

Devan Leavins, Special Projects Administrator at Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department, is the department’s liaison with the historic Frenchtown community, Florida’s oldest historically African American neighborhood where newly freed African Americans moved following the end of the Civil War. Devan described a story of how the community became a thriving business center for the African American community as a result of redlining and segregation. Frenchtown was the sight of many historic actions during the Civil Rights Movement, ultimately leading to desegregation. This resulted in many businesses relocating to other areas of the city, as well as the closing of Lincoln High School, the community’s African American high school. The loss of businesses and the community school began the fracture of the community,

⁹ McDonald, Zack. “Glenwood reps disagree with CRA spending.” Panama City News Herald, 21 Dec. 2013. <https://www.newsherald.com/1.252996>.

later compounded by the crack epidemic of the 1980s and infrastructure changes that disrupted the community's main business corridor. Macomb Street, once the community's primary retail corridor (and a draw for African Americans across the region) was shifted to connect with Old Bainbridge Road, a thoroughfare leading north of town to the suburbs. Macomb Street, once designed to encourage people to stop and shop, was now designed to move people through the community, effectively damaging economic activity in the neighborhood. Today Frenchtown faces pressure from outside development due to its desirable location adjacent to Florida State University and downtown Tallahassee. Residents are committed to seeing the neighborhood revitalized in a way that serves those in the community, creating tension between the community, the City, and private development companies.

Miaisha Mitchell, Executive Director of the Greater Frenchtown Revitalization Council and respected community elder, described the impacts of urban renewal policies on her childhood neighborhood, Smokey Hollow. Mitchell described a happy childhood in the "quarters," the small and closely quartered houses in Smokey Hollow. Growing up with an abundance of nearby relatives, fruit orchards, and backyard gardens, Mitchell was unaware as a child that she and her family were considered poor. Mitchell explains that Black renters had a hard time compelling their white landlords to adequately maintain their properties. Because the landowners allowed their properties to deteriorate, the area was subsequently declared a blighted slum, making way for demolition and redevelopment.

Smokey Hollow was destroyed in the 1960s as a direct result of the widening of Apalachee Parkway in the late 1950s. Once a two-lane highway, Apalachee Parkway was widened to create more thoroughfare access to downtown and the Florida capitol. The much wider and faster moving Apalachee Parkway cut right through Smokey Hollow. Miaisha Mitchell described the impact of that expansion: "In the case of Smokey Hollow, just the idea that a whole set of people were moved — displacement really has a hardship on people. We don't understand the factors that are involved, particularly when it comes to emotional trauma, when it comes to the loss of spirit and loss of family and loss of support systems."¹⁰

Tampa Bay Area

A St. Petersburg (St. Pete) based community organizer whom ioby interviewed named the following disinvested communities in the Tampa Bay Area: East Tampa (includes the area around northbound 275 which is populated primarily by African American and Latinx communities and is the poorest side of Tampa), West and Central East Clearwater (predominantly migrant Latinx), north Tarpon Springs (predominantly African American), Janice City (predominantly low to moderate income white residents), areas in Pinellas Park where there are large trailer park communities, and south St. Petersburg, the city's historically segregated African American community and the focus of most of the interviewee's community organizing.

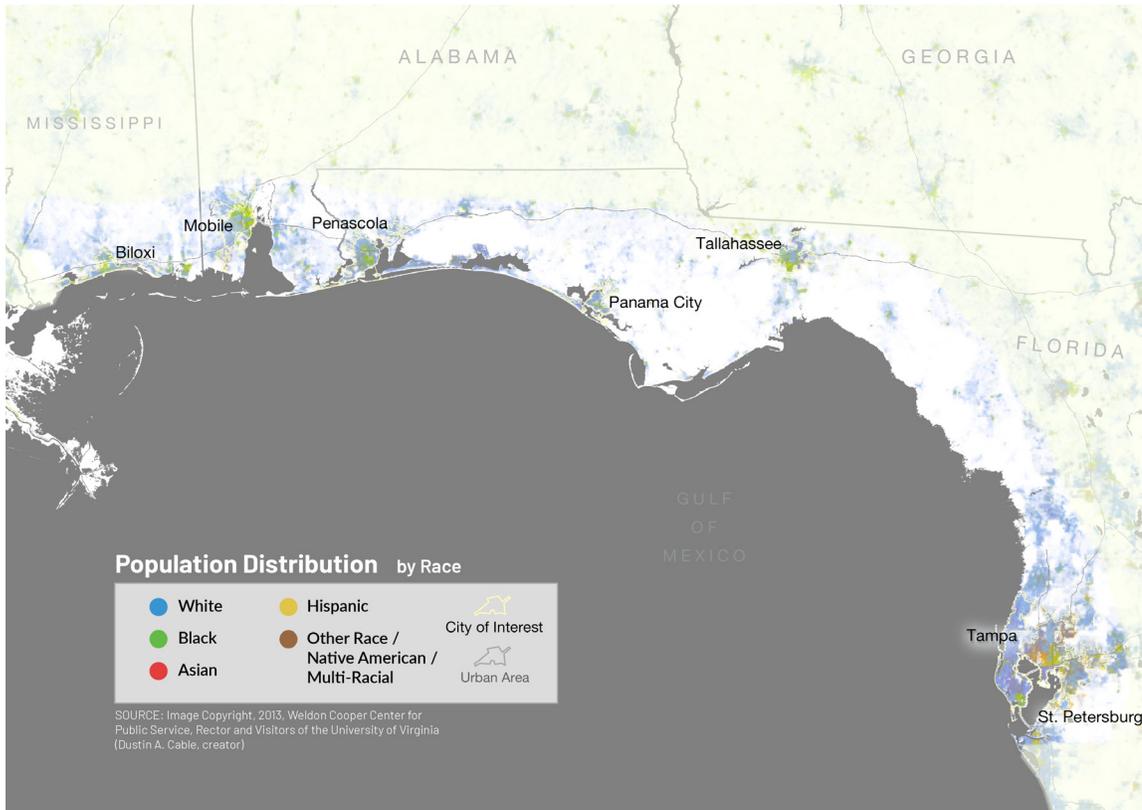
In the early 1970s, the St. Petersburg City Charter was amended to remove a segregation mandate but, according to the same community organizer whom ioby interviewed, many people still live under that system. There are multi-generational families with deep and wide family networks in South St. Pete. According to the interviewee, South St. Pete is "ridiculously economically underdeveloped," built for people to live there and go north to work for white people. The area is a large food desert and there are no hospitals in the community. The interviewee explained that the legacy of segregation makes African Americans in the community feel as if they are not entitled to the same services and access ("my grandfather wasn't legally allowed to go downtown, so I don't go there"). The interviewee even described firsthand experiences with local residents who are visibly afraid of leaving South St. Pete. In 1996 there was a riot after an African American man was killed by the police. For two days residents battled in the streets with the police and mandatory curfews were imposed. Then-Vice President Al Gore came down and hosted a panel with the community, a Black police chief was hired, and new public housing projects were built. The sentiment among residents is that money was invested to improve the look of the area, but that the fundamental dynamics were left unchanged.

In Tampa, an estimated 1,242 families were displaced by mid-century urban renewal projects, 92% of which were families of color.¹¹

The map below reveals that the region remains heavily segregated by race, with the majority of the region's

10 Jordan, Gina. "The Cycle of Urban Renewal Continues: Lessons Not Learned From The Demise of Tallahassee's Smokey Hollow." Local Routes, WFSU Public Media, 26 Sep. 2019. <https://wfsu.org/local-routes/2019-09-26/tallahassee-smokey-hollow-in-the-shadow-of-the-capitol/>.

11 Nelson.



Map 1: The Eastern Gulf region is heavily segregated by race.

Rural communities in the region

Community leaders in rural areas of the region described how segregation and systemic racism persist. In Jackson County, a rural county in Northern Florida with a 28% African American population, the NAACP is working with the County to hire more Black teachers and administrative positions in schools and local government offices. The historically African American town of Jacob was only recently placed on the map, literally, as a result of the NAACP's advocacy. In Camila, a rural town in SW Georgia with a population that is 70% African American, the election of Mayor Rufus Davis has stirred controversy due to his assertions of systemic racism, including the segregation of the City-owned cemetery, the absence of African American police officers, and the near total segregation of the town's schools.¹²

BROKEN PROMISES TO COMMUNITIES

Promises regarding the environment, creation of jobs, economic development, and community revitalization were consistent themes across the region.

Tallahassee

In Tallahassee, revitalization is on everyone's mind but is perceived through a variety of lenses. Local government has made promises regarding reducing violent crime, increasing economic prosperity, addressing poverty, developing infrastructure, and investing in Tallahassee's green spaces and natural environment.

Tallahassee has developed a reputation as a violent city, with high levels of gun violence, particularly among Black teenagers from low-income families. According to Cindy Bigbie, coordinator of Tallahassee's Community Connections restorative justice program, while the City and County acknowledge the violence and the need to address it, not much is actually happening to address the root causes of the violence. Bigbie sees connecting teenagers with jobs as a piece of the puzzle necessary to curb violence in the city, and was not impressed with the City and County's efforts in this regard. Tallahassee, like many cities and towns, is making policy efforts and financial investments in both attracting outside industry to the city in order to create jobs, as well as offering training opportunities to prepare residents to access those jobs.

While much of the City's Office of Economic Development's efforts focus on attracting high skill jobs, or

12 Martinez, Matthew. "The mayor says his city is segregated - so he's boycotting city council meetings." Miami Herald, 16 Dec. 2017. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/national/article190152294.html>.

developing infrastructure that is attractive to the creative class, other City and County programs such as Tempo, Career Source, and Tallahassee Future Leaders focus on connecting young people and people living in poverty with low-skill, low-wage jobs. While these programs have varying levels of success, they do not address systemic and structural issues that impede young people's access to jobs. Namely, in a city with two universities and a community college, there is a glut of young people willing to work low-skill, low-wage jobs. Teenagers, some with criminal records, are less competitive in this market. Similar to Knight Creative Communities Institute's "community building" initiatives designed to attract the creative class, the City's focus on attracting outside companies to create jobs does not actually address the economic insecurity that is a piece of Tallahassee's violence problem.

In 2015 the University of Toronto's Martin Prosperity Institute named Tallahassee as one of the most economically segregated cities in the U.S. The Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce took issue with the report, disagreeing with the notion of economic segregation and calling into question the report's research methodology. Regardless of what words are used to describe poverty, poverty persists in Florida's capital. Tallahassee's 32304 ZIP code has the highest concentration of children living in poverty in the state of Florida, according to the State's Chamber of Commerce.¹³ In 2019 the Tallahassee City Commission named poverty as one of their top priorities.¹⁴ According to interviewees, deliveries on this promise have yet to be seen.

Almost every government representative who spoke with ioby described the value and success of Blueprint, the intergovernmental agency that develops and implements infrastructure projects, and considered Blueprint projects as promises kept. While government representatives agreed on the success of Blueprint projects, and pointed to the referendum to continue Blueprint for the next twenty years as an indicator of its success, community activists have concerns about the ways that infrastructure projects negatively impact communities. To activists whom we interviewed, these negative impacts include displacement, erasure, and the development of infrastructure that does not serve the people in the community where the infrastructure "improvements" are made. This sentiment about infrastructure improvements mirrors conversations about development, specifically the role of out-of-town developers who are rampantly building luxury student housing adjacent to Florida State University's campus and downtown, impeding on the character and boundaries of surrounding neighborhoods. According to Miaisha Mitchell, "Instead of revitalizing, there seems to be a tendency to tear down and replace in communities that are least able to have a real voice in the process."

Across conversations with interviewees in Tallahassee it was clear that there are divergent opinions on revitalization (i.e. attracting outside development and outside industry to spur job creation), and a palpable frustration among many communities with how changes are being made without meaningful community input. A local nonprofit leader expressed frustration that local government officials have promised meaningful collaboration but, in reality, collaboration stops at the level of conversation and does not include collaborative action between local government and the nonprofit sector.

Tallahassee interviewees also mentioned some positive actions taken by the local government in recent memory. Faith leader Joe Parramore spoke of Mayor John Dailey's commitment to LGBTQ+ issues, a commitment that was confirmed in December 2019 when the Mayor spoke in support of protections against conversion therapy. Parramore also described how local community organizing efforts resulted in Leon County commissioners signing off on an ordinance designed to close the gun show loophole for background checks in 2018. Lastly, multiple interviewees described Tallahassee residents' love for the natural environment throughout and surrounding the city. According to Abena Ojetayo, Tallahassee's Chief Resilience Officer and Director, the City has doubled down on investments in environmental stewardship as well as green spaces and city parks.

Mobile

Bryan Fuenmayor, a nonprofit leader in Mobile, described similar promises to those made in Tallahassee. Local government has promised to bring big industry to Mobile, including Air Bus and additional shipyard activity in the Port of Mobile, one of the South's most active ports. Fuenmayor also described the efforts of two Black members of City Council to improve parks and community centers in neighborhoods with histories of disinvestment. In line with the city's conservative culture, Fuenmayor also pointed to local

13 Waters, TaMaryn. "Florida's poorest zip code is in Tallahassee. For Chamber speaker, it's a rallying cry." Tallahassee Democrat, 2 Oct. 2018. <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/money/2018/10/02/poverty-talent-retention-continued-priority-areas-chamber-tallahassee/1496352002/>.

14 Schweers, Jeffrey. "Tallahassee City Commission makes major policy changes on public speaking, meetings, lobbying." Tallahassee Democrat, 16 Jan. 2019. <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/2019/01/16/tallahassee-city-commission-makes-big-changes-public-speaking-time/2595693002/>.

adoration of police. This culture of police admiration contributed to recent election outcomes, with the city voting in a mayor who ran on campaign promises to make infrastructure improvements and raise salaries for Mobile police and fire departments.

Tampa and St. Petersburg

Interviewees in Tampa and St. Petersburg described a sense of consternation and mistrust with regard to government promises. In St. Petersburg, a community activist described the public's suspicions that city government's promises regarding environmental policy improvements are merely symbolic, given that they have not translated into actions accompanied by funding in the city's budget. Although these promised environmental policies have not yet been enacted, the interviewee also told ioby that the St. Petersburg government is typically accountable, in contrast to Tampa's government, which has struggled with public trust. Taylor Sanchez of Senator Marco Rubio's office echoed this sentiment, explaining to ioby that broken campaign promises have fomented mistrust among the public, especially in disinvested communities that are consistently left behind. The election of Tampa's new mayor has spurred excitement amongst Tampan, and residents are keeping a close eye on whether or not she will fulfill her campaign promises.

Pensacola

Christian Wagley, a longtime community advocate in Pensacola, told ioby that local government has recently re-upped their promises to maintain public beach access, an issue important to Pensacolans given the centrality of the beach in Pensacola's culture. The recommitment to public beach access has been spurred by controversy in nearby Walton county, where customary use (the public's right to use all beaches for recreation, regardless of their adjacency to private property) has been challenged by state legislation that revokes local government's right to codify customary use ordinances. Customary use has evolved into a major issue in the Florida Panhandle, and the case is slated to reach the United States Supreme Court, where a ruling in favor of the public or in favor of beachfront private property owners promises to have far-reaching, national implications. Wagley, an urban planner by trade and advocate for walkable and bikeable urban centers, also told ioby that the Pensacola City Commission has made commitments to making streets safer for cyclists and pedestrians. This issue has risen to the forefront of people's minds in the past few years, following more than a few pedestrian deaths, especially in low-income minority communities where there is heavy pedestrian traffic. Wagley has seen some of these safe street initiatives begin to be implemented.

Rural communities in the region

Ronstance Pittman, a community leader in rural Jackson County, echoed local government promises of job creation, telling ioby that county government has tried to put forth an effort to develop properties to attract new employers. Unfortunately, Hurricane Michael escalated the rural brain drain that has already impacted the region. Hurricane damages resulted in a loss of jobs, forcing parents to leave the area in search of work, and draining students from the local school system as parents uprooted families to move. The government is now tasked with efforts to retain the people who are already in Jackson county, bring displaced residents back to the area, and continue to pursue policies to attract outside business to spur job creation.

PLANS UNDERWAY

Elected officials and staff across various Tallahassee-Leon County government agencies described multiple planning initiatives that are currently underway, as well as the City and County's strong commitment to community engagement. Multiple interviewees pointed to the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency as a model for community engagement on large-scale infrastructure projects. In 2000, residents voted in favor of extending a one cent sales tax until 2019. Sales tax revenues would be used to make critical improvements to "green and grey" infrastructure projects, transportation, and public green spaces. Blueprint is unique because the majority of the sales tax revenues were committed to projects proposed by the Economic and Environmental Consensus Committee (EECC), a diverse group of residents who represented business and environmental interests in the community.¹⁵ Blueprint 2000 is nearing completion, and Blueprint 2020 was voted on and approved in 2014, continuing the one-cent sales tax and its emphasis on infrastructure projects until 2040.

Multiple interviewees also spoke of Neighborhood First Plans and Placemaking Plans, resident-driven community improvement plans in the Tallahassee neighborhoods of Frenchtown, Bond, South City, Providence, Griffin Heights, and Midtown, as well as the rural Leon county community of Miccosukee. Talethia Edwards, president of the Greater Bond Neighborhood Association, spearheaded the historic Greater Bond Neighborhood First Plan process, which was subsequently funded by the Tallahassee

Community Redevelopment Agency to the tune of \$6.4 million. Despite the successful funding of the Bond plan, Edwards described Tallahassee’s planning processes as antiquated. Other interviewees shared similar sentiments—despite the City and County’s efforts to engage the community in planning processes in a meaningful way, these efforts have not always resonated with residents.

Interviewees also mentioned the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan and the Tallahassee Community Resilience Plan. In 2019, the City of Tallahassee and Leon County hosted a series of meetings to gain input from the community about the Land Use and Mobility elements of the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan, a joint document adopted by both the City of Tallahassee and Leon County that is meant to translate community values and aspirations into public policy.¹⁶ The Tallahassee Community Resilience Plan, focusing on Public Safety and Preparedness, Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation, Planning and Integration, and Equity and Social Cohesion was developed with input from nearly 2,500 residents who were reached by a variety of outreach activities over the course of 2018.¹⁷

HEALING AND REPARATIONS

There are active efforts towards reconciliation in Pensacola and Tallahassee, and strong political movement and community organizing furthering the dialogue around reparations in St. Petersburg.

The Tallahassee Community Remembrance Project “seeks to remember and acknowledge past and present racial violence and injustice in Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida, and to inspire our community to come together for dialogue, education, understanding, action and, ultimately, for healing and trust.”¹⁸ One of the Project’s objectives is to coordinate with the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama to erect a memorial plaque remembering African American victims of Leon County lynching, and retrieve the Leon County monument from the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

A similar effort is underway in Pensacola. The Community Remembrance Project Committee for Escambia county has collected soil at all six of the documented sites of racial terror lynchings in Escambia county. A public ceremony was held in September of 2018 as soil was collected from the site of two public lynchings in Plaza Ferdinand, the same square where Pensacola became a part of the United States.¹⁹ Similar to the efforts in Tallahassee, this group will erect a memorial marker and retrieve the Escambia County monument from the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

Farther south, the Uhuru Solidarity Movement (USM), under the leadership of the African People’s Socialist Party (APSP), is politically active and strategically engaged in electoral politics in St. Petersburg, known as “the City of African Resistance.” In 2017 Uhuru Solidarity Movement National Chair Jesse Nevel ran for mayor of St. Petersburg with the slogan “Unity Through Reparations.” According to USM’s website, “This joint campaign made reparations real for thousands of people, answering the question, ‘What do reparations look like?’ Reparations look like the center of the St. Petersburg city budget, instead of the police who terrorize African people. They look like genuine economic development in the hands of the African working class. They look like the land on which sits Tropicana Dome, which used to be the home to 800 black families and 100 black owned businesses, being returned to the black community. They look like an end to gentrification, gerrymandering and police on school campuses. They look like workers’ power and black community control of the police, schools and healthcare. They look like justice for Kundé Mwamvita, mother of Dominique Battle, and all families of black people murdered by the State.” Though Nevel lost the mayoral race, the campaign built Communities United for Reparations and Economic Development (CURED), an on-the-ground organization that continues the fight to achieve the goals of the electoral campaign.²⁰

Mobile, Alabama has recently captured attention in the national dialogue surrounding reparations following the discovery of the Clotilda (sometimes spelled “Clotilde”), the last slave ship to make landfall in the United States. According to Zenobia Jeffries Warfield, “The discovery of wreckage from slave ship Clotilde near Mobile, Alabama, earlier this year presents an ideal test case for reparations. Descendants of the ship’s owner are among the city’s wealthiest citizens - with land worth millions - while descendants of the

16 “Community Input Needed for Comprehensive Plan Updates.” Leon County, 22 Feb. 2019. <http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/Home/Departments/Community-and-Media-Relations/News-Highlights-Display/community-input-needed-for-comprehensive-plan-updates>.

17 “Tallahassee Community Resilience Plan.” City of Tallahassee. <https://www.talgov.com/publicsafety/resplan.aspx>.

18 Tallahassee Community Remembrance Project. <https://www.tallahasseeremembrance.com/>.

19 Averhart, Sandra. “Escambia Group Plans Next Steps Toward A Memorial To Lynching Victims.” WUWF, 23 Oct. 2018. <https://www.wuwf.org/post/escambia-group-plans-next-steps-toward-memorial-lynching-victims#stream/0>

20 “St. Petersburg.” Uhuru Solidarity Movement, 25 Oct. 2018. <https://uhurusolidarity.org/tag/st-petersburg/>.

110 Africans brought over on the Clotilde ‘scrape by’ on working-class wages.”²¹ One of the ideas being considered for how reparations might actually be distributed to descendents of the enslaved peoples brought to the United States on the Clotilde is through tourism income generated by memorializing the ship and lifting up the story of the Africatown community. “The ship should be raised and put on display in Africatown and become part of the Civil Rights Trail,” Raines said. “It should generate millions of dollars in tourism for a community that needs and deserves it more than anywhere else.”²²

MASS INCARCERATION

Escambia County, Florida’s westernmost county where Pensacola is located, leads the country in the number of children per capita who are incarcerated. The League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Florida, and the Escambia Youth Justice Coalition are working together to address the harsh policies that feed a racially disproportionate number of children into the school-to-prison pipeline.²³

DIGITAL DIVIDE

Government officials in Tallahassee and Tampa, the two largest metro areas in the Eastern Gulf region, described the digital divide in the region as a disparity of speed. Thomas Whitley, Chief of Staff to Tallahassee Mayor John Dailey, described the speed disparities across communities as a matter of private investment. According to Whitley, private companies have not developed high-speed infrastructure in lower-income communities or neighborhoods. Whitley also mentioned that MetroNet plans to make a \$75 million investment for a new high-speed fiber optic internet, TV, and phone network. Tallahassee will become a “gigabit city,” wired with the fastest internet speeds available. During an October City Commission meeting where the Commission voted unanimously to change policy to grant MetroNet access to utility poles, Commissioner Jeremy Matlow expressed his desire to avoid creating a digital divide across neighborhoods and encouraged inclusive service. Matlow said, “We want you here, but we also want to make sure all of our neighborhoods are taken care of here.”²⁴ Whitley indicated that MetroLink would start by building out the fiber optic infrastructure in Bond, South City, and Frenchtown, three of Tallahassee’s historically African American, lower-income, and disinvested communities.

In Tampa, Taylor Sanchez named that rural communities east of Tampa (Hernando, Citrus, Polk, and Hardy Counties) technically have high-speed internet but residents report that it is not actually high-speed. This is a common experience nationwide; a 2019 report in The Wall Street Journal confirmed that Internet service providers often lie about the typical speed of their users’ connections.²⁵ These communities are also more dispersed and have less access to community resources, including a public library where they would be able to access the internet.

Objective #2: Assess competition and new opportunities for ioby to add value to the region’s civic sector.

EXISTING SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR NONPROFITS AND GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS

Interviewees from across the region were very clear that there is no expectation for projects to be funded by any particular institutions. Rather, nonprofits expect to fundraise, and employ a diversity of fundraising tactics, to meet their needs. Multiple interviewees mentioned funding that is available through Community

21 Jeffries Warfield, Zenobia. “Reparations Is Not Only About Money, It’s a Healing Process.” Yes! Magazine, 2020 (Winter), 30.
22 Bourne, Joel K. (2019, May 31). “With slave ship Clotilda found, the work of healing a community begins.” National Geographic, 31 May 2019.
23 Averhart.
24 Waters, TaMaryn. “MetroNet bringing high-speed fiber optic option to Tallahassee.” Tallahassee Democrat, 17 Oct. 2019. <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/money/2019/10/17/metronet-brings-its-fiber-optic-network-tallahassee/4007205002/>.
25 Fitzgerald, Drew, et al. “Your Internet Provider Likely Juiced Its Official Speed Scores.” The Wall Street Journal, 12 Dec. 2019. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/its-hard-to-trust-the-numbers-internet-providers-inflate-official-speed-results-11576171855?shareToken=st7fba30f6e6c84f668ae7ea4e8f46457f>.

Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs), typically a municipal body dedicated to urban revitalization in a specific geographic area with a history of disinvestment. CRAs utilize tax-increment financing (TIF) (projected tax revenue surpluses) to subsidize or fund redevelopment and community improvement projects. CRAs tend to start by investing in larger projects. Examples include a shared commercial kitchen facility in Tallahassee's Frenchtown neighborhood and a brewery in South St. Petersburg. Although CRA funds are available to smaller organizations, the process of accessing those funds can be opaque and the strategy of CRAs is to initially prioritize larger projects that generate economic activity.

Community leaders in Mobile, Alabama and Panama City, Florida described local government funding of nonprofits that has declined in recent years. In Panama City, County funding for nonprofits has been eliminated in the wake of Hurricane Michael in 2018. In Mobile in 2012, city government reduced funding to local nonprofits in order to prioritize "core city services."²⁶

In Tallahassee, interviewees mentioned three programs designed for projects led by residents and community-based organizations:

- The Vibrant Neighborhood Grant Program was recently established "to invest in resident-initiated projects designed to enhance the quality of life in City of Tallahassee neighborhoods."²⁷
- Second, the Council on Culture and Arts (COCA) administers grant programs on behalf of the City of Tallahassee and Leon County, disbursing over \$1 million annually to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations.
- Leon County's Community Garden Program offers "technical, material and grant support to citizens looking to start or revitalize a community garden anywhere in the County."²⁸

CROWDFUNDING IN THE REGION

No interviewees mentioned a crowdfunding platform with a strong presence in the region. In fact, 80% of survey respondents (101 out of 127) indicated that they had never crowdfunded before. Janice Lucas of Panama City participated in Global Giving's September 2019 Accelerator, "an opportunity for you and your organization to build skills, access tools, and grow your base of supporters to achieve crowdfunding success. When you graduate, your organization becomes a permanent member of GlobalGiving, and you'll have access to all the tools, training, and one-on-one support available in the GlobalGiving community."²⁹ Sleep Out: Tallahassee is an annual joint effort between three non-profits in the Tallahassee area focused on ending homelessness that used everydayhero's peer-to-peer fundraising platform for Sleep Out: Tallahassee 2019.

Interviewees raised no potential misgivings or concerns about funders or other organizations in the region perceiving ioby as duplicating, competing with, or undermining their work.

We assessed data from Mobile, Alabama and Pensacola, Panama City, Tallahassee, and Tampa, Florida, and found that more than 28,345 residents have used crowdfunding platforms like GoFundMe (13,094 fundraisers currently listed)³⁰ and Kickstarter (2,847 projects currently listed)³¹ to meet their personal and creative funding needs. 12,404 teachers in schools located in and near these places have successfully fundraised with DonorsChoose for classroom supplies.³²

ioby's intention is to supplement, rather than compete with, these crowdfunding platforms in the Eastern Gulf Region. ioby differs from these platforms in key ways:

- We support projects from an through implementation, and focus our support and our evaluation of our success on the development of the leader of the project, rather than on the project or on the financial transactions. Informed by organizing models such as asset-based community development (ABCD) and resource organizing, ioby's training and coaching are designed to build the confidence and fundraising capacities of grassroots leaders.

26 Sharp, John. (2012, October 12). "Mobile city budget cuts hurt agencies, social services." Advance Local Media, 12 Oct. 2012. https://www.al.com/live/2012/10/mobile_city_budget_cuts_hurt_a.html.

27 "Grants." City of Tallahassee. https://www.talgov.com/neighborhoodservices/na_grants.aspx#:~:text=The%20City%20of%20Tallahassee%20has,in%20City%20of%20Tallahassee%20neighborhoods..

28 Sharp, John. (2012, October 12). "Mobile city budget cuts hurt agencies, social services." Advance Local Media, 12 Oct. 2012. https://www.al.com/live/2012/10/mobile_city_budget_cuts_hurt_a.html.

29 "GlobalGiving Accelerator." GlobalGiving. <https://www.globalgiving.org/accelerator/>.

30 GoFundMe. <https://www.gofundme.com/>.

31 Kickstarter. www.kickstarter.com.

32 DonorsChoose. www.donorschoose.org.

- As a nonprofit, ioby is able to guarantee that all donations made on our platform are tax-deductible. For groups without 501(c)(3) status, we offer project-specific (Type C) fiscal sponsorship.
- ioby believes that residents know what is best for their neighborhoods. We only require that projects be based in the United States or its territory and have a public benefit.
- ioby is mission-driven to focus on communities with the most need, and so we deliberately build networks of leaders in areas with histories of disinvestment.
- ioby stewards a national network of civically engaged neighbors that project leaders join when they run a campaign with us. We encourage our nationwide network to learn from each other, and provide opportunities for them to do so.

Objective #3: Measure the region against ioby's predictors of success.

ioby measures success by the number of leaders trained in online grassroots fundraising and supported on our platform, as well as the amount of “citizen philanthropy” funneled to projects led by neighbors and community-based organizations. Based on our experience working in Pittsburgh, Detroit, Cleveland, Memphis, and New York, ioby has identified five predictors of success.

1. CULTURE OF GIVING

Background: A strong culture of giving is characterized by general participation in charitable giving across income brackets and a general comfort with grassroots fundraising among would-be users of ioby's platform. This is measured using a combination of interviews, survey responses, and IRS charitable giving data.

Why this matters: In a place with a robust culture of giving, ioby leaders are more likely to succeed because they are more comfortable asking for donations and their neighbors are already accustomed to donating to charitable projects. For example, the average household in Memphis donates about 5.6% of adjusted gross income to charitable organizations, a figure considerably higher than the national average of about three percent. Coming from Memphis' culture of giving, most ioby leaders in the city have felt comfortable making asks of donors and have had great successes in their grassroots fundraising campaigns.

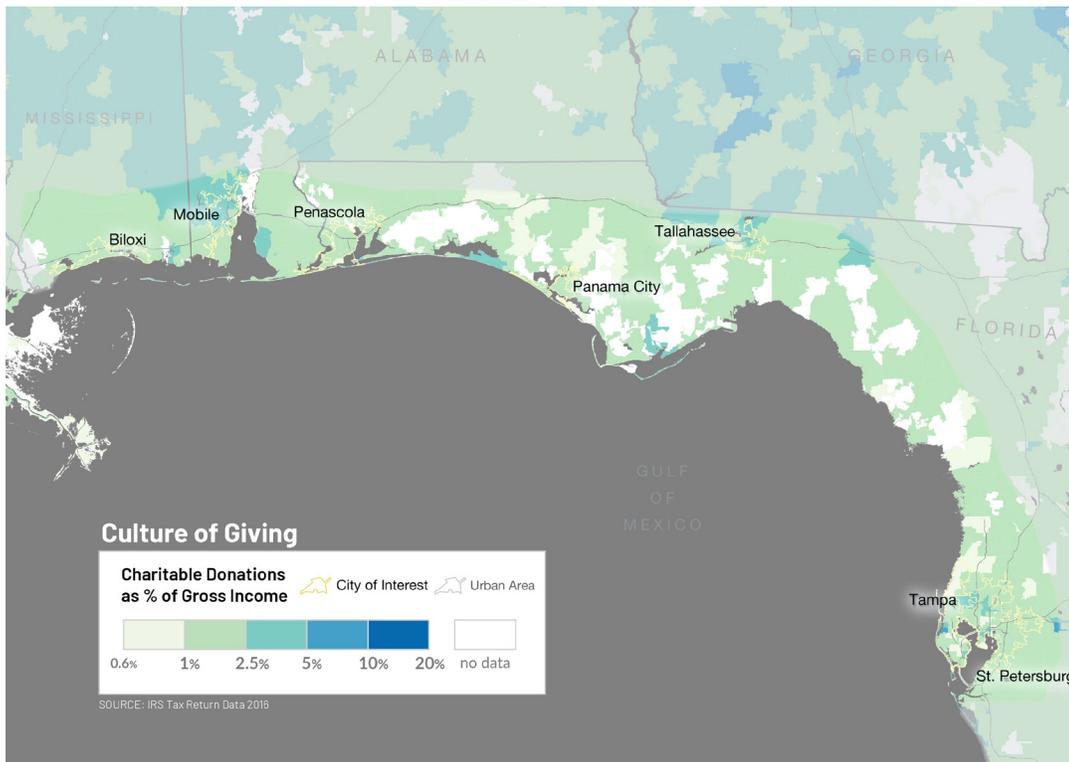
Finding in the Eastern Gulf: MIXED

Several themes emerged about the culture of giving across the region. Interviewees in Tallahassee and Panama City indicated that there is a small pool of major donors who support community and social impact work in their cities. Interviewees in Tallahassee and St. Petersburg also indicated that donors below the age of 55 account for a large amount of nonprofit giving. Interviewees in Panama City, St. Petersburg, and Mobile indicated that faith-based giving is on the decline. Lastly, interviewees in Mobile, Panama City, Tallahassee, and St. Petersburg indicated that household giving is deeply motivated by the personal interests of the donor, as well as the donor's feeling of trust in the organization or individual making the ask.

Using the *Chronicle of Philanthropy's* “giving ratio” (calculated as itemized charitable deductions as a percentage of gross income) as our metric, charitable giving appears most heavily concentrated in the region's metropolitan areas.

Importantly, in areas where income is very low, it is unlikely worthwhile to itemize deductions. For this reason, the “giving ratio” is often criticized for being a great measure of who itemizes donations and little else. We do not find giving ratios to be a complete look at generosity, which would include giving to faith institutions, helping family members in need, and giving cash at local organizations' fundraising events.

While 74% of survey respondents indicated that people in their community were likely to donate to projects that positively impact their community, there was less consensus about people's comfort with donating to projects that have a risk of failing. In response to the question, “Would people in your community feel comfortable donating to a project that has a risk of failing?” 29% of respondents indicated that people in their community would be afraid to take a risk, 35% indicated that their community is comfortable with some risk, and 36% indicated that they did not know their community's level of comfort with risk.



Map 2. Charitable giving appears to be strongest in the region's metropolitan areas.

Tallahassee

Interviewees in Tallahassee described the city's culture of household giving as lukewarm. When asked if Tallahassee was a giving community, one nonprofit leader flatly responded, "no." Monique Ellsworth, who has held senior leadership positions at a number of Tallahassee's largest nonprofits, describes donors in Tallahassee as primarily white women between the ages of 45 and 55. She also explained that millennials typically prefer to volunteer prior to making a donation; they want to invest sweat equity before making a financial investment. Representatives from the Community Foundation of North Florida explained that, in Tallahassee, only a small segment of the community donates and a much larger portion are served by nonprofit organizations. Foundation staff described the charitable giving that is done through the foundation as primarily being made to donors' alma maters, churches, and their children's schools. Foundation giving is primarily motivated by donors' personal interests rather than the needs of the community.

Panama City

Panama City interviewees shared mixed perceptions of the city's culture of household giving. Janice Lucas described Panama City as "one of the most giving communities." In contrast, Hiba Rahim said that she would not describe Panama City as a great fundraising community. There was also disagreement about the role of churches in charitable giving. Ginger Littleton, Chair of the Bay District School Board, mentioned that the practice of tithing, or committing a certain percentage of income to charitable giving, continues in many faith communities. Conversely, Lucas surmised that as church attendance is declining, so is faith-based giving. Rahim described the Muslim community as particularly generous and often on the receiving end of requests for donations. There was agreement that there are a relatively small number of "major" donors, either large businesses such as auto dealerships or wealthy families with foundations, and that this number (and their amount of giving) has diminished following Hurricane Michael.

One interviewee described family foundations as the "good old boys network," explaining that there is no transparent grantmaking process. In order to solicit a contribution, a personal connection must be made. There was also agreement that household giving is predicated on two basic common elements: how the cause aligns with individual personal interests and the credibility of the person or organization who is making the ask. Trust is important; donations depend on who is making the ask, how much influence they have, how they tell the story, how they draw connections between the donor's personal interests and the community's need, and on whose behalf the ask is being made. Specifically, Lucas explains that people have a strong sense of not wanting to donate to people who are not working, and only wanting to donate to causes in which the people who are being served are proactively participating in a solution to their challenges.

Tampa Bay Area

Interviewees in Tampa and St. Petersburg described a robust culture of household giving. Activists in St. Pete described the nuance of a progressive, majority white city supporting grassroots community work. According to Brooke Errett, St. Pete native and Florida Organizer for Food and Water Watch, wealthier households are unlikely to give to smaller, piecemeal work because they want to give to bigger projects for the grandeur and potential name recognition (i.e. capital improvement projects). She also said that faith-based giving is struggling because people want to see real, tangible results, rather than supporting charitable programs that persist without creating sustainable change (e.g. church-based soup kitchens). Brooke also describes that donors in their mid-50s and younger are particularly interested in community-based giving and are not risk-averse if they believe in the cause. Both Errett and Kofi Hunt, a community organizer in South St. Pete, explained that grassroots organizing and smaller community-based initiatives depend both on collecting a large number of small donations (i.e. crowdfunding without the online platform) as well as donations from the progressive white community in the city.

Mobile

Interviewees in Mobile described the centrality of Christianity in Mobile's culture of household giving. Bryan Fuenmayor described Mobile as a city with more churches than pharmacies and said that the majority of nonprofits in Mobile are religious organizations. While religious-based community work is foundational to Mobile's culture, and historically the community has been more receptive toward churches initiating social work than nonprofits, Fuenmayor did describe a growing disappointment that churches are not doing enough to truly change major systemic issues such as homelessness and substance abuse. This disappointment is creating a shift toward supporting secular nonprofits, evidenced by the excitement around Rainbow Mobile's first fundraising gala, which raised \$25,000 and sold out three weeks before the event. Lucy Gafford, Executive Director of the Mobile Arts Council, echoed Fuenmayor's perspective on the centrality of church-based giving in Mobile's culture of household giving. She also explained that household giving is driven by how closely community projects and programs connect with donors' personal interests, as well as the reputation and longevity of the organization that is soliciting donations.

2. COOPERATIVE CIVIC SECTOR

Background: A cooperative civic sector is characterized by a culture of collaboration among organizations and government, where collaboration is born out of a mutually enforced creative or strategic ethos rather than from a funder.

Why this matters: ioby finds it easier to build meaningful connections to organizations and grassroots leaders in cities where nonprofit leaders are deeply committed to each other's success. For example, Memphis nonprofits have deeply interwoven staff, board and members, that are reinforced by social connections. Because Memphis boasts this supremely collaborative environment for nonprofits, our local partners and champions have had great success encouraging other organizations in the city to work with ioby.

Finding in the Eastern Gulf: MIXED

Interviewees shared examples of competition, collaboration, and coordination among nonprofits, and varying levels of connection between nonprofits and residents across the region.

Tallahassee

Publicly, leaders of Tallahassee nonprofits claim to be well connected to the people they serve and collaborate well with one another. 94% of Big Bend nonprofits surveyed by the Institute for Nonprofit Innovation and Excellence (INIE) in 2015 reported that they collaborate with each other around program services, special events, marketing and awareness campaigns, and solicitation and management of grants. However, organizations also reported hesitation regarding collaborations due to concerns about internal capacity (both their own and their partners') and 76% of nonprofits surveyed by INIE reported that they would collaborate more if such partnerships resulted in an increased capacity to deliver programs.³³ The 2017 Council on Cultural Arts Cultural Equity Survey paints a more grim picture of nonprofit relations: 44% of survey respondents disagreed that there was collegiality between members of the arts community and 73% disagreed that funding is allocated fairly and equitably.

Between 2014 and 2017, only three of the ten culturally specific arts organizations in Tallahassee received public funding, collectively receiving only 9% of the total funding available during that time. Other Tallahassee nonprofit leaders indicated that, despite the desire among nonprofits to work together

33 "Sector Forward: Impact and Opportunity." Institute for Nonprofit Innovation and Excellence, 2017, p. 14. <https://www.theinstitutefornonprofits.org/assets/Sector%20Forward%20Report%202017.pdf>.

more collaboratively, there are barriers that impede collaboration. Monique Ellsworth spoke of the need to challenge a scarcity mindset that contributes to a culture of competition, and instill a sense that when the water rises, all boats must float. Community elder and longtime nonprofit leader Miaisha Mitchell described multiple efforts at collaboration that fell flat, attributing these frustrating experiences to a shallow understanding of collaboration and partnership. Leaders at the Community Foundation of North Florida described how limited resources impact nonprofits' capacity to collaborate with one another or engage with the populations they serve in a more meaningful way.

Panama City

In Panama City, the prevailing sentiment is that collaboration has become much more prevalent, out of necessity, following Hurricane Michael. As Janice Lucas put it, "On October 10th [the day after the hurricane] we had a major attitude adjustment. We emerged from what was left of homes, apartments, and buildings concerned about others."

This sentiment was echoed by a regional funder who described Bay County nonprofits as more competitive prior to Hurricane Michael, and more collaborative in the aftermath. Ron Boyce, Executive Director of AMIKids Panama City Marine Institute, explained that residents are very aware of the active nonprofit sector in Panama City, given that the city is not particularly large. He also mentioned that nonprofits are located where they need to be located in order to maximize accessibility to the residents they serve. Panama City nonprofit leaders pointed to the United Way and Rebuild Bay County as good examples of collaboration, describing them as organizations made up of organizations, composed of leaders from nonprofit organizations across the sector.

Tampa Bay Area

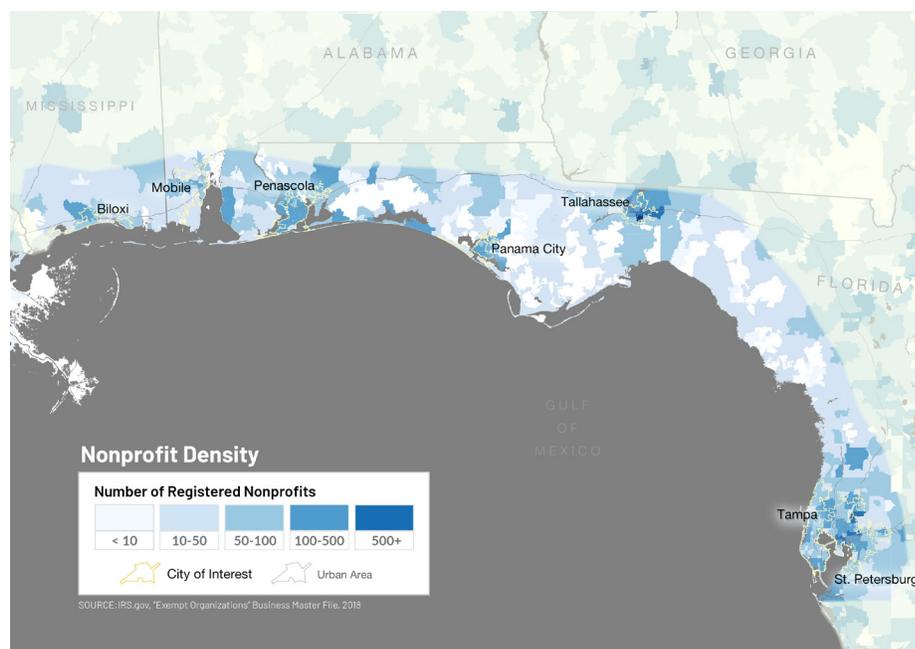
Caitlyn Peacock, Executive Director of the Hunger Free Tampa Bay Network, described the Tampa Bay area nonprofit sector as collaborative, engaged, and grassroots, making intentional efforts to consider the lived experiences of the residents they serve.

Mobile

In Mobile, nonprofit leaders described the nonprofit sector as being primarily competitive within the sector, and largely disconnected from the general public. Nonprofits in Mobile primarily keep to themselves, but with so many nonprofits—many of which offer similar services—there is competition for funding and nonprofits compete for access to a limited local donor pool. Connections between nonprofits and residents are typically targeted toward engaging with residents who are in need of services, as well as with donors who may support nonprofits. Both Mobile-based interviewees who are nonprofit leaders described the sector as primarily competitive, but also offered specific examples of partnerships or collaborations involving their own organizations.

Distribution of organizations

The map below reveals large clusters of incorporated nonprofits in the region's metropolitan areas, with the greatest concentration in and around Tallahassee, Pensacola, and Tampa.



Map 3. The greatest concentration of nonprofits is in and around the region's cities.

3. OPENNESS TO GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING

Background: To successfully motivate and prepare residents to crowdfund for their ideas, ioby depends on a general openness to the tenets of grassroots fundraising and asset-based community development. This includes willingness on the part of residents and community-based organizations to ask neighbors, relatives, friends, colleagues, and strangers for donations to their projects.

Why this matters: ioby may predict the extent to which residents and leaders of community-based organizations will embrace ioby's model of online grassroots fundraising by looking at local examples of successful fundraising campaigns and by surveying residents about their proclivities for fundraising. Example: When ioby first set down roots in Cleveland, leaders of some community development organizations were already looking at how they might use crowdfunding to extend their reach to grassroots donors. This openness to grassroots fundraising enabled ioby to quickly grow our presence in Cleveland.

Finding in the Eastern Gulf: **STRONG**

In response to the question, "How likely are people in your community to fundraise from their neighbors, friends, family, and colleagues?" 75 (59%) survey respondents responded, "very likely" or "somewhat likely," compared to only 14 (11%) who responded "very unlikely" or "somewhat unlikely."

A "multi-legged stool approach"

Nonprofit leaders and funders across the region described a "multi-legged stool approach" to fundraising. Organizations pursue grants as well as other fundraising strategies, including fundraising events and direct solicitation of individual donors. Felina Martin, Executive Director of INIE in Tallahassee, described grants as the number one way to raise funds for Tallahassee nonprofits, followed closely by fundraising events. Other nonprofit leaders described a dependence on events to raise critical funds for nonprofits. The Community Foundation of North Florida described this as one of the primary ways that Tallahassee nonprofits coordinate - by ensuring that they are not scheduling fundraisers on the same days.

Leaders in Panama City and Tallahassee indicated that a lack of large corporate or industry presence in their cities creates a situation wherein the same limited pool of wealthy individuals or relatively small family foundations are approached repeatedly by various nonprofits to make donations.

A nonprofit leader in Tampa explained that funders in Tampa Bay are looking for collaboration and collective impact as well as social enterprise solutions. Specifically, Tampa-area funders are moving away from offering competitive grants and toward funding projects to develop passive income streams. The philanthropic sector sees that this need is growing but resources are not. Among local Tampa funders, there tends to be a bias toward larger, more established organizations with which the foundation has a rapport. These funders are also more risk averse and are not as likely to fund innovative ideas.

This combination of reliance on grantmaking as well as soliciting donors (through individual donor campaigns or fundraising events) is also reflected in survey responses. In response to the question, "If you had an idea for a project that would improve your town (or neighborhood, if you live in a city) in some way, who do you think would be very likely to fund it?" 80 (63%) of respondents would approach people in their networks, and 72 (57%) would approach a foundation.

Willingness to crowdfund

To the question, "If you had an idea for a project that would benefit your community in some way, how likely would you be to crowdfund for that project?" 57 (45%) respondents answered "very likely" or "somewhat likely," compared to only 25 (20%) who answered, "very unlikely" or "somewhat unlikely."

Tallahassee survey respondents indicated the following reasons for being unlikely to crowdfund:

- "seems overdone"
- "time consuming"
- "do not want to burden family"
- "seems sketchy"
- "needs to limit how many times they ask their contacts for donations"
- "not enough people with money"
- "hesitation to place a financial burden on civilians given that it is the local government's responsibility to fund projects that improve the community"

Given that ioby's success depends on local leaders' willingness to crowdfund, we are particularly concerned by some survey respondents' belief that civic crowdfunding places a financial burden on a community. Importantly, research indicates that there is no correlation between a community's median household income and the success of a crowdfunding campaign in their neighborhood.³⁴ Even so, this perception, regardless of whether it is grounded in an accurate assessment of residents' giving habits, may prevent civic leaders from attempting to lead grassroots fundraising campaigns.

Despite some residents' misgivings about online fundraising for community-led projects, leaders in the region have successfully used crowdfunding tools to create their projects:

- In July 2019 Sundiata Ameh El, founder and owner of Compost Community, Tallahassee's first and only compost collection and production service, successfully used Facebook's fundraising feature to crowdfund for a commercial compost training that will allow him to scale his business. In four days, sixty people donated a total of \$2,140, surpassing Ameh El's goal of \$1,500. On the fundraiser page Ameh El wrote, "I must say that this call to action has put me on a high like no other. Thank you Thank you Thank you! To my Tallahassee family, I can't thank you all enough for stepping up. To my family located outside of Tallahassee, I love you just as much. I didn't really have too many expectations when I started the fundraiser but I've been blown away from the amount of support that has been shown over the past 4 days. I will not let you all down. I will continue to fight the good fight to bring large scale Composting to our city and county. As our Urban Ag scene continues to grow, we will need a quality resource to promote and encourage the growing of good, nutrient dense food for our community. I and my team want to be at the forefront of the production of a super, power charged, and affordable high quality compost that will foster the expansion of our Urban farming network. This vision is one step closer to manifestation all because of folks like yourselves. I am continuing to learn what it means to be a servant of the people. It is becoming more and more clearer every day."³⁵
- In August 2019 Mobile-based artist E. Allen Warren successfully used Facebook's fundraising feature to crowdfund for the materials needed to create a mural at Penelope's Closet, a thrift store that is owned and operated by Penelope House, a services provider for victims of intimate partner violence.³⁶ In two days, thirty people donated a total of \$1,595, surpassing Warren's goal of \$1,500.³⁷

4. TRANSPARENT, ACCESSIBLE GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Background: ioby determines the transparency and accessibility of local government by examining the extent to which residents find it easy to obtain permission for projects in public spaces.

Why this matters: Because many ioby projects take place in public spaces, project leaders often seek permits for their work. In municipalities and counties where residents are easily able to obtain official permission to execute a project, ioby leaders are able to complete their projects more quickly and, often, with greater efficacy. Example: In Pittsburgh, the Office of Community Affairs and the Mayor's Bureau of Neighborhood Empowerment proactively educate residents at public forums in neighborhoods across the city about the kinds of permits that are required for projects in public spaces and assist them in navigating bureaucratic processes. The City of Pittsburgh's willingness to assist residents as they seek support for their projects has been an asset for ioby in the city.

Finding in the Eastern Gulf: **STRONG**

Government representatives in Tallahassee and Leon county described proactive community engagement as a part of local government culture. Abena Ojetayo, the City of Tallahassee's Chief Resilience Officer, told ioby that "getting closer to the people is becoming part of city government culture." Ojetayo named the Departments of Neighborhood Affairs, Parks & Recreation, Law Enforcement, and Code Enforcement as

34 Brent, Daniel A. and Lorah, Katie. "The Geography of Civic Crowdfunding: Implications for Social Inequality and Donor-Project Dynamics." Louisiana State University, July 2017, https://www.lsu.edu/business/economics/files/workingpapers/pap17_09.pdf.

35 Sundiata, Ameh El. "Commercial Composting Facility: Fundraiser for Sundiata Ameh El." Facebook, 25 Jul. 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/donate/2406607616235958/>.

36 Allen Warren, E. "Mural at Penelope's Closet." Facebook, 14 Aug. 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/donate/1315595405264477/>.

37 Ibid.

city agencies where there is an intentional effort to engage more directly with residents. Richard Fetchick, Business Intelligence Manager at the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality, spoke highly of the efforts of the Development Support and Environmental Management (DSEM) department, “a group of divisions and programs within Leon County which provides one-stop permitting and processing services related to development activities.”³⁸

Thomas Whitley, Tallahassee Mayor John Dailey’s Chief of Staff, explained to ioby that the Mayor’s external affairs team goes to neighborhood association meetings just to listen, and says “yes” to meeting with anyone who asks, based on the belief that local government is meant to be inherently accessible to residents. He echoed Ojetayo, naming that engaging with residents boils down to doing the hard work of building relationships, and that this largely happens at the staff level, through public-facing departments such as the Office of Neighborhood Affairs.

Tessa Schreiner, Leon County Recycling and Sustainability Manager, described the County’s commitment to accessibility, citing her office’s policy to always answer the phone and connect the caller with a person who can help meet their need (rather than directing them to a website or a voicemail) as well as the “big blue button,” which can be found on the homepage of the County’s website to help residents connect with the right government representative to address their questions or concerns.

Grassroots community leaders in Tallahassee were less effusive about the accessibility of local government services, but were also clear that they are not prohibitively opaque. Talethia Edwards, leader of the Greater Bond Neighborhood Association, explained that local government plans and services have unintentional consequences and described government processes as clear but daunting. Joe Parramore, a local faith leader, explained how the genuine desire of bureaucratic staff to serve the public can be hindered by the power and control issues that exist among elected politicians.

Panama City

Ginger Littleton, longtime Bay District School Board member, described local government in Bay County and Panama City as “acceptably accessible,” elaborating that many government offices act as a “black hole” of information and problem solving. She attributed this dearth of efficiency and proactivity to the South’s slower pace, and department cultures in which government workers are not accustomed to working hard and fast. Hiba Rahim, NW Florida Regional Coordinator for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) Florida, described local government as not being very transparent. She explained that many decisions are made “behind the scenes” and are heavily influenced by “tit for tat agreements and money.”

St. Petersburg

Organizer and activist Kofi Hunt described St. Petersburg local government as “not terribly opaque or bureaucratic, but it takes some navigating.” He went on to say that the St. Petersburg City Council has a desire to offer accessible government services. However, there is still work to be done in order to overcome the gap between people’s understanding of how to navigate the system, and the reality of how to actually access government services.

Mobile

Mobile nonprofit leader Bryan Fuenmayor expressed that most of the City and County staff with whom he has worked are committed to going into communities and listening, even if it is to their detriment. Lucy Gafford of the Mobile Arts Council expressed frustration with navigating local government bureaucracy, describing long wait times, repetitive requests for paperwork and processing fees, having to interact with multiple offices to accomplish one goal, and receiving incorrect or partial information (she went so far as to describe half of the pages on the City’s website as being broken and without content).

Pensacola

Pensacola activist Christian Wagley described both Pensacola City and Escambia County employees as fairly high quality staff who truly care and have a desire to help. He also described government services as fairly accessible, largely because Pensacola is not a big community. Robin Reshard described her approach to working with local Pensacola and Escambia government as relational, making connections and continuing to explore who else might be helpful. She explained that, if her personal connection is not the right person to meet her need, then she “goes up the ladder or finds another ladder.” She admitted that this takes effort and can be exhausting to keep trying and not make progress. She also expressed that there are many different people in local government who are passionate about their respective divisions of local government.

38 “Department of Development Support and Environmental Management.” Leon County. <http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/Home/Departments/Development-Support-and-Environmental-Management>.

Ronstance Pittman, leader of the Jackson County NAACP, described to ioby her efforts to not only literally put her small, rural hometown of Jacob (population of 280) on the map, but also to bring basic infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks and paved roads. She said that the process was, “not totally easy, and not totally hard.” She made the right contacts, stated her case, invited and brought politicians and bureaucrats to come out and see the need, raised local awareness, and pursued state and federal grants to cover these infrastructure projects. She indicated that, prior to her efforts, the Town of Jacob did not have a great deal of interaction with state and county government, either from Jacob residents reaching out for support, or from government officials engaging with and paying attention to the needs of the town.

5. CIVIC PRIDE

Background: Civic pride refers to residents’ demonstrable sense of pride to be from their town, neighborhood, city, and region. ioby measures pride through interviews and survey.

Why this matters: When residents are proud to be from a neighborhood, town, city, and/or region, ioby is more likely to be able to motivate them to create and fund civic projects. Example: ioby has found that many New Yorkers have a strong pride in their city, and connect their personal identities to their borough. Project leaders in New York City are willing to spend time working with neighbors to fundraise for and implement an ioby project because they have personal and long-term interests in making their neighborhoods stronger and more sustainable.

Finding in the Eastern Gulf: MIXED

Interviewees in Florida did not report a strong sense of hometown, state, or regional pride. In fact, multiple Florida interviewees mentioned feeling a sense of embarrassment about being from or living in Florida. The “Florida man” trope, a 2019 internet fad that surfaced a number of outlandish stories from Florida, perhaps best encapsulates that sense of embarrassment.³⁹

Across the region, interviewees described a deeper sense of pride among people who were born and raised in their city or town, or are from families who have lived in the same state, town, or city for multiple generations. Many of the community leaders who spoke with ioby have moved back to their hometown after moving elsewhere for work or education. Their commitment to returning home seems to reflect the sentiment of Valencia Richardson, who asks young southerners, “If you don’t take up the cause of creating a better South, then who else will?”⁴⁰

Survey respondents confirmed that residents are generally proud to be from their towns, cities, and region. To the question, “Are people generally proud to be from your town or city?” 94 (74%) answered “yes.” To the question, “Are people generally proud to be from your region?” 85 (67%) answered “yes.”

While people across the Eastern Gulf region do not openly and loudly express regional or hometown pride, interviewees did express love and commitment. The one city in the region that did express some amount of city-specific pride is Tampa, and Tampanans are very clear to distinguish themselves from their neighbors across the bay in St. Petersburg. It is notable that Tampa is the largest city in the region, experiencing the most growth and providing the most opportunities to young people, making it perhaps easier for a segment of the population to feel pride. In other places, residents and leaders expressed a quieter sense of feeling at home. Longtime residents said that their town or region is where their family and friends are, where they came from, and they feel that it is the place that raised them. Leaders across the region who are civically engaged seem motivated by a desire to improve their communities, not because they are already great, but because they recognize a deep need to make them better places that offer more opportunities to more people.

39 Lou, Michelle and Orjoux, Alanne. “Googling ‘Florida man’ is the latest internet fad. Here’s why so many crazy stories come out of the state.” CNN, 22 Mar. 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/22/us/florida-man-google-challenge-trnd/index.html>.

40 Richardson, Valencia. “If Not Me, Then Who?” The Bitter Southerner, 15 Aug. 2019. <https://bittersoutherner.com/from-the-southern-perspective/if-not-me-then-who-valencia-richardson>.

COMPARING THE EASTERN GULF TO IOBY'S FOCUS PLACES (AT THE TIME OF IOBY'S ARRIVAL)

When measured only against other places where ioby has hired local staff, the Eastern Gulf Region appears to be a weak fit for ioby's typical approach to working in a new place. (We propose an alternative model for working in the Eastern Gulf in Objective #7, beginning on page 34.) This is largely due to an uneven culture of giving across the region, a civic sector that appears more competitive than cooperative in some cities, and little evidence of civic pride among residents in large parts of the region.

Some scores from ioby's previous Phase 0 reports have been changed to more accurately reflect the nuance in our findings.

	The Eastern Gulf	Cleveland	Pittsburgh	Detroit	Memphis	New York
Culture of Giving	MIXED	STRONG	STRONG	MIXED	STRONG	STRONG
Cooperative Civic Sector	MIXED	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG	MIXED
Openness to Grassroots Fundraising	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG
Transparent, Accessible, Government Services	STRONG	MIXED	STRONG	MIXED	MIXED	MIXED
Civic Pride	MIXED	VERY STRONG	VERY STRONG	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG

Objective #4: Evaluate potential demand for ioby's services in the region.

Before determining ioby's approach to working in a place, we must predict the degree to which residents will be interested in using ioby's crowdfunding platform, grassroots fundraising coaching, and fiscal sponsorship service. This prediction hinges on the extent to which Eastern Gulf residents and community-based organizations have led and donated to the types of community-led, "DIY," and tactical urbanism projects that ioby tends to support.

Urban planners in Tallahassee described to ioby the 2016 Frenchtown Better Block project, a collaboration between Florida State University, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department, the Better Block Foundation, and longtime Frenchtown residents and community leaders. The project included bike lanes, miniparks, features to increase pedestrian safety and prevent speeding, market kiosks, a greenhouse, new sidewalks, a mural and outdoor entertainment stage, and the reactivation of previously closed storefronts.⁴¹ While conceived of as a tactical urbanism project, Frenchtown Better Block became an

41 Nixon, Rob. "FSU Planning students work to build a 'Better Block.'" Florida State University News, 22 Nov. 2016. <https://news.fsu.edu/news/university-news/2016/11/22/fsu-planning-students-work-build-better-block/>.

academic project, with FSU and FAMU students designing multiple projects over a six-month time frame to be executed over the course of a single weekend in November 2016.

According to Devan Leavins, the project lead within the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department, the majority of the Frenchtown community did not believe that the project was going to happen, and only a handful of residents bought into the planning and design process. In fact, the majority of the volunteers who engaged in the project were young white people affiliated with Florida State University. Despite the dearth of community buy-in leading up to the actual implementation of the various project components, community residents were impressed with the outcome, and expressed a desire to keep up the momentum. Following up to Frenchtown Better Block, Frenchtown resident Annie Harris of the Ash Gallery conceived of the Frenchtown Art Walk, a multi-family garage sale-style event on the 400 block of Georgia St. that showcases local artists. At the time of the first art walk in early 2017, three driveways on the block were painted with colorful murals. As of December 2019, almost every driveway on the block is painted with a mural.

Leavins also told ioby about the Miccosukee Citizens Working Group, a committee of local residents that works to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Miccosukee Rural Community Placemaking plan and organizes other residents to become more involved in the community. One of the group's initiatives is "Do Something Days," an effort to bring community members together to tackle community projects together, without waiting for government or institutional input, resources, or support. In June 2019 the working group organized a Do Something Day to tend to the landscaping at Concord AME Cemetery, a beloved historic African American cemetery in dire need of general landscape cleanup and TLC.

Based on the successes of these projects and several interviewees' stories about transformative community-driven projects in their towns and cities, it is clear that civic leaders in the region have experience working with neighbors to make positive change. For this reason, we predict that there is a strong demand for ioby's platform and services in the region.

Objective #5: Identify the trends that drive communities' interest in taking on projects like those that ioby typically supports.

Learning from our work in New York, Memphis, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and places around the country, we know that ioby's services are most helpful to grassroots leaders working in areas with histories of disinvestment. To be most impactful, we aim to understand how conditions of institutional disinvestment and resource scarcity have shaped residents' approaches to creating projects in their towns and neighborhoods. We also must understand how new investment, particularly in towns and neighborhoods with history of disinvestment, has impacted residents and how community leaders are responding to these changes. The Eastern Gulf has a diverse economic landscape, differing from city to city and from urban to rural communities.

Mobile

Mobile County's strongest manufacturing sectors are shipbuilding and steel. The Port of Mobile has long served Alabama and the region at large. In 2017 Mobile welcomed the only Airbus assembly plant in the U.S. While manufacturing declines across much of the U.S., Mobile leads the state and much of the nation in attracting new manufacturing. Mobile has experienced a 33% increase in manufacturing sector jobs since 2012.⁴²

Pensacola and Panama City

Tourism and the military are major drivers of the economy in Escambia County (Pensacola) and Bay County (Panama City). Escambia county military bases include Pensacola Naval Air Station, Naval Training Center, Eglin Air Force Base, Corry Station Naval, Naval Technical Training Center, and the Air Station Whiting Field.

⁴² Pruitt, Lori Chandler. "Spotlight on Mobile County." Business Alabama, 25 Jun. 2018. <https://businessalabama.com/spotlight-on-mobile-county/>.

The tourism industry employs over 19,000 people in Escambia county.⁴³ Tourism in Bay County contributes to around \$2.7 billion dollars in economic impact⁴⁴ and two of Bay county's largest employers are Tyndall Air Force Base (6,416 employees) and Naval Support Activity (3,300 employees).⁴⁵ While military-based economies tend to be stable, tourism-based economies are vulnerable to economic downturns and "natural" disasters, such as hurricanes and oil spills, all of which the region has experienced in the last decade.

Tampa

Taylor Sanchez of Senator Marco Rubio's office told ioby that Tampa is offering low taxes and incentive packages to attract high tech companies to the city, and simultaneously focusing on education to build an educated workforce that is prepared for these high tech jobs. Polk County, Tampa's rural neighbor, is investing in manufacturing and distribution centers as well as partnering with Florida Polytechnic University on research and development initiatives. New investment in the Tampa metro area has increased suburban sprawl, namely the development of bedroom communities in area suburbs.

Tallahassee

The Tallahassee Metropolitan Statistical Area consists of Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson, and Gadsden Counties. It has a labor force of nearly 200,000 people, many of whom work in federal, state, or local government positions.⁴⁶ With 45.5% of persons aged 25 + holding a bachelor's degree or higher, Leon County is home to the most educated population in the state. This is in large part due to the presence of three highly respected academic institutions within the city: Florida State University, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, and Tallahassee Community College.

Mobile

Mobile County's strongest manufacturing sectors are shipbuilding and steel. The Port of Mobile has long served Alabama and the region at large. In 2017 Mobile welcomed the only Airbus assembly plant in the U.S. While manufacturing declines across much of the U.S., Mobile leads the state and much of the nation in attracting new manufacturing. Mobile has experienced a 33% increase in manufacturing sector jobs since 2012.

Community elder and nonprofit leader Carlyn Ford of rural Gadsden county expressed skeptical hope about the arrival of a Trulieve Medical Marijuana production facility in the rural community of Quincy. While the arrival of Trulieve represents job creation, Ford is concerned that Gadsden County residents will not be paid their fair share of the medical marijuana giant's exponentially growing profits. Gadsden county's economy was built on shade tobacco (a direct outgrowth of the slavery-dependent plantation economy), which once provided a living in one way or another for 80 percent of residents. Other manufacturing businesses moved in; however, in the last 10 years three major employers succumbed to the recession. Gadsden County has a 20.6 percent poverty rate, affecting one in five residents and one in three children.⁴⁷

Frank Barragan, organizer of the Coastal Coalition for Immigrant Justice in Mobile, explained to ioby that there are fourteen plant nurseries and seven chicken processing plants in the wiregrass region, a small area that includes Bowen county, Dothan, Troy, and Eufala. These facilities are largely staffed by Hispanic and Latinx workers, whom Frank is deeply concerned about following the ICE raids on agricultural workers in Mississippi on the first day of school in 2019.

Ronstance Pittman, leader of the Jackson county NAACP succinctly described the economic challenge of her rural community: the county is making efforts to attract jobs while the population shrinks.

NEW INVESTMENT

Among community leaders and activists in Tallahassee, there is a widely held belief that development and new, outside investment is disproportionately benefitting outside developers and those within the Tallahassee establishment who have economic and political power, while displacing, harming, or ignoring

43 "Pensacola Employment." Citytowninfo.com. <https://www.citytowninfo.com/places/florida/pensacola/work>.

44 "Communities." Bay County Chamber of Commerce. <https://panamacity.org/relocate-to-bay-county/communities/>.

45 "Business Climate." Bay Economic Development Alliance. <https://www.bayeda.com/business-climate>.

46 "Economic Dashboard." Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality. <http://oeforbusiness.org/economic-dashboard/>.

47 Waters, TaMaryn. "For struggling Gadsden County, medical marijuana and Trulieve 'may be our future.'" Tallahassee Democrat, 7 May 2018. <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/money/2018/05/04/impooverished-gadsden-county-pins-hopes-trulieve-medical-marijuana/553196002/>.

historically disinvested communities. In Frenchtown, Florida's oldest historically African American neighborhood, residents are deeply concerned about the encroachment of Florida State University, specifically private student housing. Jim Bellamy, Executive Director of the Frenchtown Neighborhood Improvement Association, pointed out that there is only one direction for the university to grow, and that is into Frenchtown. In 2017 Frenchtown leaders and allies fought the construction of The Standard, a \$50 million luxury student housing complex for 915 students surrounding an 880-space parking garage on a five-acre parcel in the heart of Frenchtown. Landmark Properties of Athens, Georgia purchased the parcel directly from the City, sparking outrage among residents who were concerned that the construction of The Standard would drastically impact the character of the neighborhood and the quality of life of its residents. By the time residents caught wind of development plans, the project was already underway. In response to community outcry, the developer and City ultimately worked together to offer concessions to residents. Nevertheless, the project moved forward, and today The Standard looms over the neighborhood.

Community leaders in historically African American and disinvested communities are particularly concerned that phrases such as "urban renewal" and "revitalization" are coded language to describe efforts to tear down, rebuild, and gentrify. In contrast, Knight Creative Communities Institute (KCCI) believes in revitalization as a tool for attracting "the creative class" to Tallahassee and spurring economic development. Couched in the language of "catalysing community" and "placemaking," KCCI's focus is on attracting outside white collar workers, rather than investing in the quality of life of existing Tallahassee residents. To some local civic leaders, this amounts to an attempt to gentrify the area.

Thomas Whitley, Chief of Staff to Mayor John Dailey, told ioby that Tallahassee's South City neighborhood will join the 'Purpose Built' community improvement network. Purpose Built Communities (PBC) is an Atlanta-based nonprofit that invests in a holistic, transformative revitalization within targeted communities. The model is controversial, with critics citing displacement as a concern for residents who live in neighborhoods slated for PBC revitalization. Whitley spoke of plans to redevelop Orange Avenue Apartments, a public housing complex, and acknowledged concerns of displacement. Referencing the displacement of Goodbread Hills residents who either did not or were not able to move back once redevelopment was complete, Whitley explained that the City will provide financial assistance for people to relocate while the project is under construction, and will also pursue development in phases so that residents do not need to move away during construction. Tallahassee's public housing tenant association has already voiced ire with the project, citing mistrust of and exclusion from the planning process.⁴⁸

Tampa Bay Area

Interviewees in Tampa and St. Petersburg described rampant development and gentrification in the Tampa Bay area. A Tampa activist and community organizer pointed to Seminole Heights, Tampa Heights, and Sulphur Springs as neighborhoods experiencing gentrification, highlighting a pattern of gentrification creeping north along Interstate 275. Taylor Sanchez of Senator Marco Rubio's office told ioby about the West River Redevelopment Plan, a new model for urban living on Tampa's riverfront that includes more than 1,600 new residential units, including a variety of housing styles and affordability. The ultimate goal of the plan is to create a "a genuinely diverse and economically integrated community."⁴⁹ In order to make way for this development, 2,000 residents who lived in the North Boulevard Homes public housing complex were relocated over the course of eighteen months. About 52% of families ended up in East Tampa, Sulphur Springs, or the University Area, communities with some of Hillsborough County's highest poverty rates. Three-quarters of residents remained within the City of Tampa limits.⁵⁰ Sanchez claimed that new development will create more opportunities for young people, and that people are generally happy about the revitalization happening in Tampa, with a few minor exceptions. These few minor exceptions include workers whose wages do not cover market housing but who earn too much to qualify for government assistance, residents in outlying communities who worry about mass-market subdivisions being developed around their five-acre parcels, environmental advocates and urban planners who are fighting against sprawl, and disinvested communities who are consistently left behind.

St. Petersburg activists and organizers also described predictable patterns of gentrification. As housing

48 Schultz, Zachary. "Tallahassee tenant association objects to redevelopment: 'We're not at the table.'" Fight Back! News, 12 Nov. 2019. <https://www.fightbacknews.org/2019/11/12/tallahassee-tenant-association-objects-redevelopment-we-re-not-table>.

49 "West River Redevelopment Plan." City of Tampa, Florida. <https://www.tampagov.net/west-river-redevelopment-plan>.

50 Martin, John. "Two thousand public housing residents were uprooted from West Tampa. Here's where they went." Tampa Bay Times, 22 Aug. 2019. https://www.tampabay.com/news/Two-thousand-public-housing-residents-were-uprooted-from-West-Tampa-Here-s-where-they-went_165936461/.

costs skyrocket, working class people who fuel St. Pete's tourist economy are forced to move across the Bay to Bradenton, or north to New Port Richey. South St. Petersburg, St. Pete's historically African American neighborhood, is also being infringed upon by opportunists who have seized upon access to cheap property. Kofi Hunt explained that, just as in cities across the country, breweries and art communities in St. Pete have proven to be harbingers of gentrification. The Three Daughters brewery has become a destination for younger white people, as well as the Warehouse Arts District, a light industrial district that was mostly empty before South Florida and New York artists bought up a number of buildings and retrofitted large warehouses to create the arts district. Such activity has attracted residents from outside the neighborhood to purchase and build houses in the area, and has also spurred CRA investments that further economic development in this vein.

Clearwater, St. Petersburg's neighbor to the north, is experiencing a different type of real estate investment. The Church of Scientology and companies run by its members have spent \$103 million over the past three years, buying up vast sections of downtown Clearwater, doubling its footprint. According to the Tampa Bay Times, "The land grab started as tensions grew between the church and the Clearwater City Council. Each had proposed major redevelopment projects, designed to lure new business into the empty storefronts that surround the city-owned waterfront and the church's spiritual headquarters. Then the council interfered with a land deal that Scientology demanded for its plan. The church stopped communicating with the city. Almost immediately, a decades-long trickle of purchases by church members turned into a flood." While the City of Clearwater is unsure what the Church's plans are for Downtown, former Scientologists have concluded that the Church is buying up property in order to insulate its Clearwater headquarters from outside interference, which the organization perceives to be a threat to the financial operations of the Church.⁵¹

Panama City

Panama City is experiencing its own struggles with gentrification and revitalization as it relates to recovery and rebuilding efforts following Hurricane Michael. Ron Boyce, Executive Director of AMI Kids, explained to ioby that all signs point to Panama City's recovery looking more like the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans than post-storm recovery efforts in South Florida, which typically include a three-to-four year development boom after a storm. He explained that a Category 5 hurricane is like a tornado 20 miles wide, so the recovery process is going to be long and slow. He predicted that it will take at least 5-10 years to get the population, housing stock, and local businesses back to a pre-storm baseline. Several businesses have closed and not reopened, largely because it is not economically viable to invest in a community with a declining population. Low-income residents were hardest hit by the hurricane. In many communities, demolition had yet to begin at the time Boyce spoke with ioby in October 2019, a year after the storm made landfall. Virtually all subsidized housing was wiped out and the public housing rebuild process is projected to take two-to-three years. Many subsidized housing residents were given a one-time FEMA payment of \$2,400 and departed Panama City, relocating to a city within driving distance (e.g. Montgomery, Pensacola, and Tallahassee) where they can afford housing and find a job. Because the housing stock has been significantly diminished, decreased supply has led to an increase in the cost of housing, with rental rates doubling. Such increases have outpriced the lowest income strata, and now the working poor are struggling even harder because more of their income is going to housing. Boyce explained that many people are now "couchsurfing" (experiencing homelessness).

The current housing crisis in Panama City has created conditions ripe for "disaster capitalists," the designation coined by Naomi Klein to describe predatory developers who prey on vulnerable communities in the wake of a disaster. In Glenwood, Panama City's oldest historically African American community, residents are experiencing problems with heir properties, land that has been passed down intergenerationally (often directly from formerly enslaved relatives) without formal legal documentation. This lack of documentation precludes property owners from accessing the full spectrum of funds available to property owners for recovery and rebuilding. As a result, these landowners are more susceptible to investors who are willing to pay to take the property off of their hands, for a price that does not properly value the land, but is a larger sum (and requires less interaction with bureaucracy) than what the owners might get by navigating formal channels for rebuilding. Once these outside investors have secured these properties, many of which are completely destroyed, they clean them up, retain ownership until the value increases, and ultimately resell them.

51 McManus, Tracey. "Clear Takeover: How Scientology doubled its downtown Clearwater footprint in 3 years." Tampa Bay Times, 20 Oct. 2019. <https://projects.tampabay.com/projects/2019/investigations/scientology-clearwater-re-al-estate/>.

Despite the city and county government's desire to rebuild low-income housing, developers have not expressed interest because there is relatively little profit to be gained from building low-income housing. Instead, developers see the recovery effort as an opportunity to beautify neighborhoods by building market-rate housing.

HOT TOPICS IN THE REGION

A few hot-button issues surfaced across the region, including police accountability, development, environmental issues, and children.

Police accountability

Residents in Tampa, Tallahassee, and Pensacola mentioned recent community efforts to hold local police accountable. In 2019, community-based group Tallahassee Community Action Committee (TCAC) spearheaded a successful community organizing and advocacy effort to pressure the City Commission to abandon plans to construct a new \$60 million police headquarters on the Southside of Tallahassee, a mostly Black and disinvested community.⁵²

Jimmy Dunson, Tampa-based leader of the grassroots network Mutual Aid Disaster Relief, described the case of Andrew Joseph III, a 14-year-old who was unjustly detained by the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office at the Florida State Fair, negligently released alongside a dark and busy highway, and subsequently killed when he was hit by an oncoming vehicle. Local groups, including Black Lives Matter Tampa, Bay Area Dream Defenders, and Restorative Justice Coalition, have organized community members to speak out and hold the fairgrounds and sheriff's office accountable for the death of Joseph III.

In Pensacola, Jamil Davis of the Dream Defenders, a Florida-based youth-powered activist group, organized community members to protest the shooting and killing of Tymar Crawford, a 28-year-old Black man who was gunned down by a Pensacola police officer in July 2019.

Development and displacement

Real estate development was also on the minds of many interviewees across the region. In Tallahassee, there are concerns that out-of-town developers are rampantly and irresponsibly developing luxury student housing at the expense of the quality of life of Tallahassee residents. Pensacola has undergone "major revitalization" in the last 14 years, spurred by the vision and investment of businessman Quint Studer. In the last four years alone downtown property values have grown 25.9%.⁵³

Following Hurricane Michael, rebuilding, reviving, and restoring are priorities for Panama City residents. Community and local government dialogue is focused on how to do this, with the understanding that this process has serious implications for communal civic spaces and neighborhoods. In the face of the rebuilding process, some neighborhoods are concerned about gentrification.

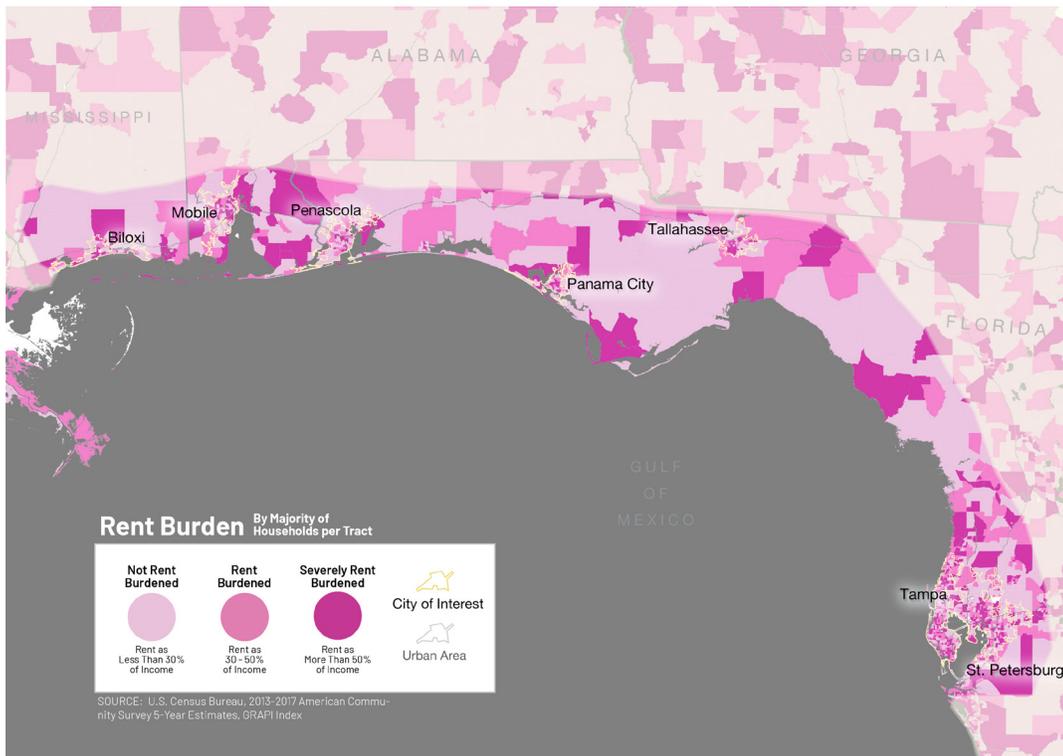
Residents in large portions of the region are already severely rent burdened, paying an average of more than 50% of their adjusted gross income on rent. These residents are most vulnerable to displacement when rents rise due to new investment.

ioby anticipates that the introduction of new funding for real estate projects catalyzed by the federal Opportunity Zones program may deepen residents' concerns about the threat of displacement, particularly in communities of color and low-income areas. Through this program, investors are offered a set of attractive tax benefits for their investments in real estate, housing, infrastructure, and existing or start-up businesses in designated Opportunity Zones.⁵⁴ These Opportunity Zones, nominated by the governor of each state, are typically in low-income neighborhoods with histories of disinvestment.

52 Stark-Bejnar, Satya. "Tallahassee community stops plan to build new police headquarters on the Southside." Fight Back! News, 22 Feb. 2019. <http://www.fightbacknews.org/2019/2/22/tallahassee-community-stops-plan-build-new-police-headquarters-southside>.

53 "Introducing the Pensacola Center for Civic Engagement." Vibrant Community Partners. <http://www.vibrantcommunityblueprint.com/overview/>.

54 "Opportunity Zones Frequently Asked Questions." IRS, 5 Jun. 2020. <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions>.



Map 4. Residents in urban, suburban, and rural areas across the region are severely rent-burdened.

Environmental Issues

Environmental justice issues are also impacting communities across the region. In Jackson County, a rural county in Florida's panhandle, Ronstance Pittman, president of the Jackson County NAACP, led a successful community effort to stop the construction of a deep injection well that would have sent hazardous landfill wastewater deep underground, potentially impacting the aquifer and contaminating drinking water for residents in a multi-county area. Pittman described the community effort to fight the deep injection well as the first time that people from all walks of life banded together across racial, economic, and political lines to mobilize around a shared interest.

Jackson County was hit especially hard by Hurricane Michael, a climate change disaster that both exacerbated existing economic hardships and brought the community together. Dr. Calvin Avant, founder and community organizer of Unity in the Family Ministry in Pensacola, described the neighborhoods of Wedgewood, Rolling Hills, and Olive Heights as environmental justice communities. In these three African American communities there are 13 construction and demolition landfills within a 25-mile radius, creating a myriad of negative environmental, health, and quality of life impacts for local residents. These communities have existed since at least the 1950s, but zoning laws were changed in the past thirty years to allow for the location of these landfills within this area. In the summer of 2019, the removal of two historic oak trees to create a retention pond and extend a thoroughfare in a historically Black neighborhood in Tallahassee sparked such community outrage that the intra-agency meeting (both City and County commissions) where public comments were solicited lasted well past midnight. Lastly, coastal community leaders remembered the 2010 Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill as an issue that mobilized residents across the region.

Children

Interviewees across the region were also concerned about the health, safety, development, and education of children. In 2018, the County Commission in Leon County, where Tallahassee is located, voted unanimously to place the creation of a Children's Services Council on the ballot in 2020. If approved, the Council will have the authority to levy a property tax to fund services for children. The Children's Services Council Planning Committee was convened as an independent, resident-led group, tasked with developing a plan for a future of Leon County Children's Service Council if approved by voters in November 2020⁵⁵

In St. Petersburg, the abandonment of intentional integration practices on the part of the Pinellas County School Board led to extreme segregation of St. Petersburg elementary schools, resulting in plummeting test

55 Burlew, Jeff. "Children's Services Council committee meets for first time." Tallahassee Democrat, 14 Sep. 2018. <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/2018/09/14/childrens-services-council-committee-meets-first-time/1294933002/>.

scores and the creation of “failure factories,” some of the worst performing schools in the state of Florida.⁵⁶ Attendees of ioby’s grassroots fundraising training in Gadsden County, a rural county west of Tallahassee, expressed deep concerns about a number of challenges facing children in their community, including mental health issues, homelessness, poverty (which they defined as a lack of opportunity), and illiteracy.

What these trends mean to our work

The types and scopes of organizations and community-led projects that ioby encounters in our work tends to vary significantly based on a place’s economic and social conditions. For instance, in cities such as Panama City, Tallahassee, and Tampa, where residents are deeply concerned by the threats of gentrification and rising housing prices, we may expect to support groups that are working to create and preserve affordable housing for existing residents. In rural counties that are still rebuilding from Hurricane Michael, we may expect to support mutual aid groups and organizations focused on issues related to climate justice. To most effectively serve these groups, it is important for us to continue to improve our understanding of the economic, social, and environmental conditions that motivate them to take action.

Objective #6: Characterize civic participation across the region.

By most accounts, residents in the Eastern Gulf do not suffer from widespread apathy or a lack of interest in civic activities such as volunteering, donating to a civic project, voting, and meeting with decision-makers.

Interviewees across the region identified five primary barriers to civic engagement:

- Accessibility
- Economic constraints
- Feelings of discouragement
- Distrust of government
- Fear

1. Accessibility:

Interviewees from four of the region’s five cities reported that accessibility of government meetings and services is a barrier to civic engagement. The timing of government meetings, which are typically scheduled during daytime business hours, is not feasible for individuals who are unable to miss work to attend meetings. Meetings also tend to be formal and can feel intimidating. Kofi Hunt, a community organizer in South St. Petersburg also noted that the majority of government services and resources are located outside of disinvested communities, and there is an expectation that people come to the services, rather than the services going to the community.

Multiple interviewees indicated that communication challenges are also a barrier to engagement. Leon County Commissioner Kristin Dozier suggested that residents are suffering from “noise,” or information overload, and the County has difficulty getting the right information out and framing it in such a way that residents believe it is relevant to their lived experience. Robin Reshard, a community leader in Pensacola, echoed this sentiment, naming that people often don’t know what’s going on, and that there needs to be more effective ways to get the word out about what is happening in the community.

Many of the same interviewees who named accessibility as a barrier to civic engagement also acknowledged efforts to improve accessibility. These include periodically shifting meeting times to evenings, shifting the location of meetings outside of city hall (the Tallahassee City Commission holds meetings in different neighborhoods across the city on a quarterly basis), and efforts to make meetings less formal, including town hall style meetings, removing time limits for public comments, and increasing the number of times someone can speak at a meeting.

⁵⁶ Lash, Nathaniel. “Why Pinellas County is the worst place in Florida to be black and go to public school.” Tampa Bay Times, 12 Aug. 2015. <https://projects.tampabay.com/projects/2015/investigations/pinellas-failure-factories/chart-failing-black-students/>.

2. Economic constraints:

Multiple interviewees also explained how economic constraints create barriers to civic engagement. In the region's cities and rural communities, people are working low-wage jobs, struggling to survive, and living in poverty. Interviewees said that poverty places restrictions on resources such as time, transportation, and opportunities to grow wealth or advance economically. Janice Lucas in Panama City told ioby, "When you're struggling at the lower level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, your capacity to trust is limited, it's difficult to embrace the broader, higher, abstract thinking, 'have I been a good person today?'"

3. Feelings of discouragement:

Leaders across the region also indicated that history and lived experience discourages people, primarily those from communities that have been disinvested, from being civically engaged. Speaking to the mindset of people who live in rural communities, Leon County Commissioner Kristin Dozier said that the absence of a large corporate sector in the Florida Panhandle has created a feeling of being left behind amongst residents, and how this feeling of not being cared about places limitations on residents' visions for what's possible within their communities.

One interviewee mentioned apathy and ignorance as barriers to civic engagement. She pointed specifically to how an individual's upbringing impacts their proclivities toward, or away from, civic engagement. Namely, in households where children are not raised with an explicit interest in community and civic participation (either due to the limitations of poverty, or due to class comforts that have an insulating effect on one's experience), they are less likely to be civically engaged as adults. She argued that ignorance and apathy can be passed down intergenerationally, just as awareness and motivation to be civically active can be cultivated from one generation to the next.

Interviewees said that traditional civic engagement spaces, such as local government meetings and nonprofit boards, are dominated by people who have access (i.e. people who identify as white and have financial privilege). In these spaces, people of color and working class people do not feel welcome (i.e. they do not have the look, pedigree, or connections), do not feel heard (i.e. they feel that their voices will not be heard), and do not feel valued or valuable. Bryan Fuenmayor described that people "feel so depressed that they have no interest, enthusiasm, or motivation." Janice Lucas suggested that a decrease in civic engagement parallels the disappearance of the middle class; people must work harder for less. As a result, people are becoming less interested in politics because they are not seeing an impact of politics on their lives and they are not seeing their impact on the political system (i.e. voting and going to meetings).

4. Distrust:

Multiple interviewees also indicated that a broken political system and deep-seated distrust are barriers to civic engagement. Karen Woodall, Executive Director of the Florida People's Advocacy Center, describes our political system as "designed to discourage participation." Carolyn Ford, Executive Director of the North Florida Educational Development Corporation in rural Gadsden county, points to corruption in local government as a barrier to civic engagement. According to Ford, she and those like her who are civically minded have to fight for their interests, combatting government narratives that encourage residents to vote against their own self-interests, and holding the government accountable to allocate funds where they are most needed. Leon County Commissioner Kristin Dozier also named that people in rural areas are less trusting. There is a spirit of doing for oneself, and people do not want to rely on government or outside organizations to get anything done. Kofi Hunt, community organizer in historically African American South St. Pete, named that the legacy of segregation makes people feel as if they are not entitled to the same services and access, and to some extent are even afraid of leaving the community.

5. Fear:

Lastly, fear and silos were also named as a barrier to civic engagement. Joe Parramore, a faith leader in Tallahassee, named a fear among churches of going too public with their politics. Frank Barragan, lead organizer with the Coastal Coalition for Immigrant Justice described that people in the immigrant community are most concerned about watching their backs and staying hidden out of fear of deportation. Because people are living in this constant state of alert and fear, they are less likely to go anywhere that convenes a large group of people from the immigrant community, or puts them unnecessarily in harm's way

(i.e. anything beyond the scope of meeting basic needs).

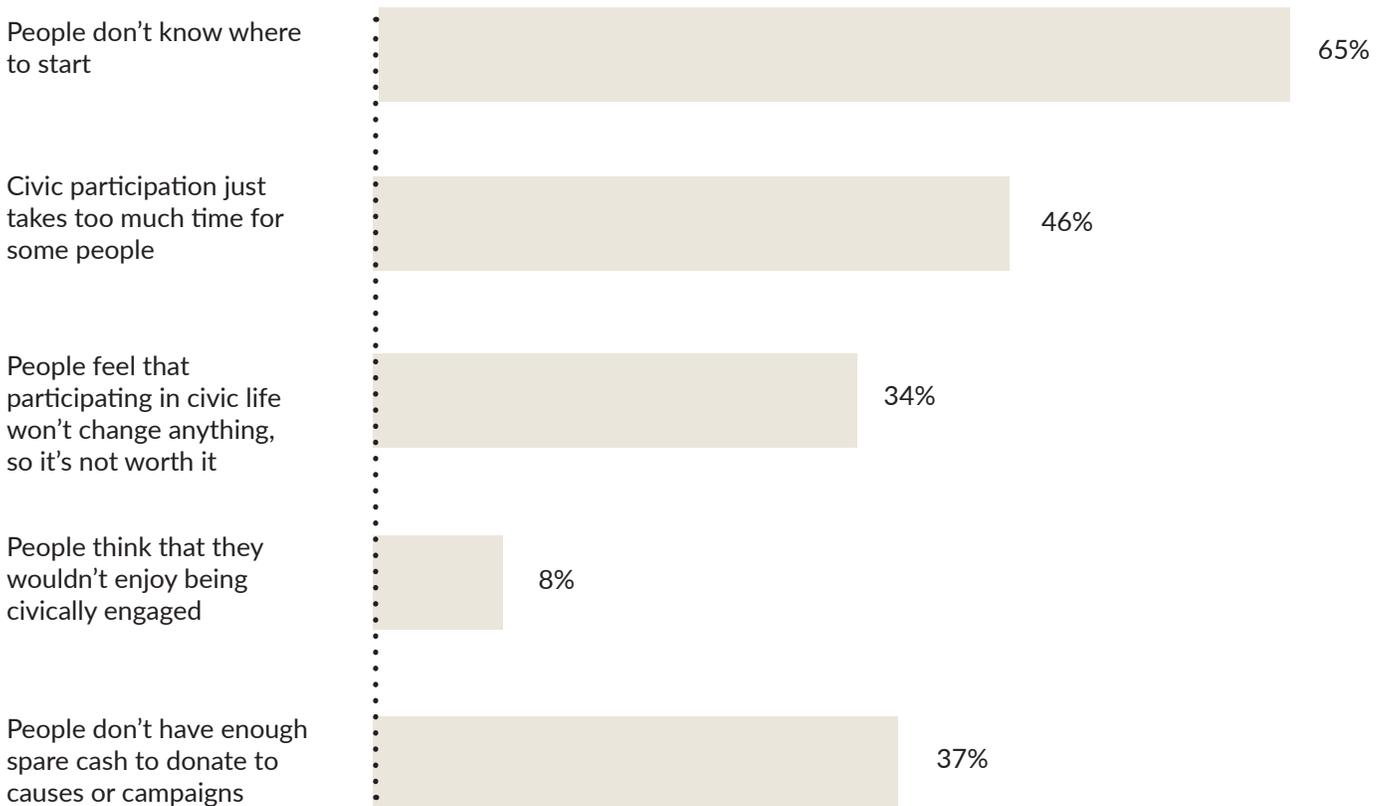
Survey results largely align with interviewees' accounts of the barriers to civic engagement. Respondents reported that the chief barriers that prevent residents from becoming more civically engaged are:

- A lack of knowledge about where to begin (65%)
- Civic participation just takes too much time for some people (46%)

More than a third of respondents (37%) claimed that people don't have enough spare cash to donate to causes or campaigns, and 34% believe that their neighbors are disheartened because they do not believe that their participation will result in any important changes. Only 24% of respondents said that their communities are apathetic or simply do not care enough.

Which of the following barriers prevent people in your community from becoming civically engaged (i.e. volunteering, donating to a civic project, voting, meeting with a decision-maker)?

**Based on 100 survey responses*



The data suggest that, in order to broaden and deepen community engagement in the Eastern Gulf, leaders in government and the nonprofit sector may consider working with ioby to:

- Increase the number and accessibility of entry points for residents who wish to become involved in public decision-making processes but who do not know where to begin.
- Offer opportunities for "quick wins," or community-led projects that are funded and implemented quickly, that prove to neighbors that real and meaningful change is achievable in the short-term.

WHAT DOES CIVIC ENGAGEMENT LOOK LIKE?

Through this research, Tampa and Tallahassee emerged as the most civically engaged cities in the region. Interviewees in Mobile, Pensacola, and Panama City described a less robust landscape of civic engagement in their cities.

Tallahassee

In Tallahassee, multiple government officials described the city as a very civically engaged community. People are more likely to participate in Commission meetings if there is an issue on the agenda on which they have a particular position, but Commission meetings are generally well attended. The last City Commission meeting that was held in the community (outside of City Hall) drew a packed house. One county government employee described that, there is a desire for change within the community, and effort is made on various fronts but without a steady stream of meaningful results. She recommended coaching and organizational support for active community members.

Mobile

Bryan Fuenmayor of Rainbow Mobile explained that Mobile City Council meetings typically draw no more than 30 people, the majority of whom are older. Similar to Tallahassee, the majority of residents show up for City Council meetings when they have a vested interest, and are largely not engaged until there is a hot button issue.

Pensacola

In Pensacola, long time community activist Christian Wagley described City Council and County Commission meetings as drawing mostly a group of people who can regularly engage, and occasionally a hot button issue bubbles up that draws more people. A relatively low number of people attend meetings on a regular basis. Outside the realm of participation in City Council and County Commission meetings, Robin Reshard describes Pensacola as having a history of doing great things for neighbors, because people want to see people do good things and succeed. The recently opened Pensacola Center for Civic Engagement, an initiative of Quint Studer, local businessman, philanthropist, and driver of downtown redevelopment, “will teach a variety of stakeholders how to create a vibrant community.” According to the Center’s website, “The good news is we have some of the most engaged citizens in the country. We want to galvanize our most highly engaged group of local citizens and help them take their engagement to the next level—powerful community action. But we won’t stop there. We want everyone on board. We want to activate and engage the entire community by working with neighborhood groups on how best to deal with local issues that affect them. We want to help people turn ideas into realities.”⁵⁷

Tampa

According to Taylor Sanchez of Senator Rubio’s office, Tampa has strong civic participation and a rich community fabric of nonprofit organizations, neighborhood groups, and community organizers.

Panama City

In Panama City, local activist Hiba Rahim describes civic engagement as “very dry” and “not fruitful.” She explains that local lobbying efforts have been led by very small groups of people, whose needs and positions are not met by their elected officials. Janice Lucas also pointed to a diminishing interest in politics. Rahim pointed to the 2018 Families Belong Together march as an exceptionally well attended public action, drawing 100 people together to express their dismay of the policy of removing immigrant children from their parents as they cross the southern border into the United States. Rahim indicated that, for similar actions, a “good turnout” is about 50 people.

Neighborhood-Level Engagement

Multiple interviewees across the region described the importance of neighborhood-level engagement. In Tallahassee, multiple residents pointed to the work of Talethia Edwards, president of the Greater Bond Neighborhood Association. Edwards spearheaded the historic Greater Bond Neighborhood First Plan process, which was subsequently funded by the Tallahassee Community Redevelopment Agency. Monique Ellsworth, who has held senior level leadership positions in a number of Tallahassee’s largest nonprofits, described Talethia as leading the way in ensuring that residents have a meaningful place at the table. Ellsworth believes that under Edwards’ leadership, this is the first time that this community-driven approach to civic engagement has been amplified at this level. Christian Wagley from Pensacola described neighborhood and community groups as the most basic building blocks of civic engagement. Leon County Commissioner Kristin Dozier pointed to the need to listen to residents and engage them in change processes. The more people are listened to and communicated with, the more their needs are actually being met, the more likely they are to buy into and engage with change processes in their community. Frank Barragan in Mobile echoed the importance of listening to the people. His community organizing

57 “Introducing the Pensacola Center.”

recipe includes asking people to share their concerns, building trust, and listening to what people think needs to be done.

Civic engagement in rural communities

Leaders from rural communities across the region described civic engagement as being driven by grassroots groups that are powered by a small number of engaged and motivated residents. Carolyn Ford, executive director of the North Florida Educational Development Corporation in Gadsden County in northern Florida (Florida's only majority African American county) said that everyone on the board of NFEDC is on numerous other boards in order to push social justice and engage the community in their own best interests.

Similarly, in Sumter County in southwestern Georgia, Perri Campis of the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District (FRSWCD) described how small grassroots groups that care about issues facing the county and the community are organizing themselves to create and advocate for change. Casey Cox, native of Camilla, GA and former Executive Director of FRSWCD explains that there is a great number of people who have a sense of place and have a passion for doing what they can to make the community better. She also expressed concern about the rural-to-urban brain drain experienced by many small, rural communities, resulting in a dearth of young people moving back to the area and being civically engaged. Cox describes that, as a result of the brain drain, the majority of people on boards or in leadership positions are older and looking to pass the baton. With older community members aging out of their positions, and very few young people to fill their shoes, a growing share of the responsibility for leading positive community change is placed on a small number of people.

Objective #7: Recommend strategies to source and serve ioby project leaders across the region.

Despite seeing little evidence that we should hire an on-the-ground organizer in the Eastern Gulf, our research suggests that there is considerable opportunity for ioby to positively impact the region's civic landscape. When developing a strategy to grow ioby's presence in a place, we ask the following questions:

How do we reach people who might be interested in leading fundraising campaigns with ioby?

Strategy #1: Launch a train-the-trainer model in the Eastern Gulf

Rather than following the typical ioby model to hire an Action Strategist to act as a hub for the region, we propose a train-the-trainer program for civic leaders across the Eastern Gulf. To increase ioby's presence in cities and towns across the Eastern Gulf, ioby will train a cohort of civic leaders, including community-facing members of staff from highly-regarded community-based organizations in the region to:

- Learn about community development models and frameworks that can help them more creatively address challenges in their towns and cities, including:
 - Asset-based community development (ABCD)
 - Tactical urbanism
 - Creative placemaking
- Preparing to lead a grassroots fundraising campaigns by:
 - Deciding whether crowdfunding with ioby is right for them
 - Building a strong and diverse fundraising team
 - Crafting and telling a compelling story about their work and its significance
 - Assessing their team's fundraising capacity using a prospect chart
 - Creating an online communications strategy to support their fundraising campaign

The ideal participant in this cohort is a member of staff who spends at least 50% of their time working directly with community residents, and frequently organizes meetings, convenings, workshops, or trainings

with residents who are focused on local project-based work. Each participating organization would be compensated for their staff time. Through this approach to building ioby's presence across the Eastern Gulf, we hope to:

- Equip residents and community-based organizations with the tools and skills that they need in order to access citizen philanthropy for projects that make their towns stronger, more connected, more vibrant, and more sustainable;
- Build strong and authentic relationships with leaders of nonprofit organizations that are highly regarded by leaders who might benefit from ioby's services and platform;
- Cultivate a robust culture of leading and giving to grassroots projects in cities, towns, and neighborhoods with histories of disinvestment.

We hope to engage several of our Phase 0 interviewees in the development of this program, including but not limited to representatives from the Florida People's Advocacy Center, Mutual Aid Disaster Relief, and the Institute for Nonprofit Innovation and Excellence.

Strategy #2: Pursue match fund partnerships in the Eastern Gulf

ioby has found that an effective way to prove our worth to civic leaders in a place is by accruing several examples of projects that are successfully funded and created very quickly.

To accelerate grassroots fundraising efforts in the region, ioby will pursue match fund partnerships. A time-limited, match opportunity with broad eligibility criteria would serve as a strong incentive for organizations to begin connecting residents and community-based organizations in their networks to ioby's crowdfunding platform and services.

ioby expects that this strategy would be most impactful when paired with Strategy #1. Place-based matching funds are most successful when the local leaders and organizations who are promoting the opportunity are equipped to explain the advantages of crowdfunding and prepare people in their networks to run their fundraising campaigns.

When ioby has successfully supported grassroots campaigns across the region, we may begin to see momentum build as well-regarded community leaders and leaders of organizations refer people in their networks to ioby.

How do we attach to and work with forms of civic participation that are already working? (e.g. Public meetings, charrettes, etc.)

ioby will form strategic partnerships with organizations and agencies led by people who have already earned the trust of civic leaders and potential users of ioby's platform. By positioning crowdfunding as an effective supplement to organizations' fundraising and community-building activities, ioby hopes that community leaders will perceive ioby to be an important addition to the local civic infrastructure.

How can we reach well-connected leaders in the region?

As we begin to grow our presence in Tallahassee, ioby will likely need to depend on referrals from highly regarded organizations in the region. These include introductions to community leaders from our partners, as well as the leaders whom we interviewed for this Phase 0 report.

How do we circumvent barriers to civic participation in order to reach the deep roots?

Survey respondents told ioby that the following barriers commonly prevent people in their communities from becoming civically engaged:

1. People don't know where to start

To address this barrier, ioby should create resources that help residents understand how to create and fund projects for their neighborhoods. We may position civic crowdfunding as a first step for residents hoping to become more civically engaged by: helping leaders create their campaign pages, sharpening leaders' grassroots fundraising skills, and connecting them to technical experts in the city and across the region and country who can assist with implementation.

2. Civic participation just takes too much time for some people

From our work in neighborhoods with histories of disinvestment across the country, we have found that “quick wins” are the best way to counter deeply rooted perceptions that civic participation is time consuming, or that low-income people are unable to donate to campaigns. We should be able to dispel these notions, and trust should be easier to gain, when we are able to point to a series of strong examples of how ioby’s model works in Tallahassee and across the Eastern Gulf region.

3. People don’t have enough spare cash to donate to causes or campaigns.

ioby’s local staff would be trained to address this myth in trainings and conversations with leaders who are considering running a campaign on ioby’s platform. As stated previously, research indicates that there is no correlation between a community’s median household income and the success of a crowdfunding campaign in their neighborhood. In fact, compared to people who live in high-income neighborhoods, people in low-income communities tend to give larger shares of their incomes to organizations and causes that are important to them.⁵⁸

4. People feel that participating in civic life won’t change anything, so it’s not worth doing.

By sharing stories of leaders who have successfully funded and built projects in their own neighborhoods, ioby can inspire residents to take action. At the same time, we would encourage leaders to fund and deliver projects quickly in Tallahassee so that residents understand that they are able to make meaningful changes without much difficulty.

Outputs

In the medium term, ioby expects that a training program and match fund for leaders in the region will have the following results:

1. More people in the Eastern Gulf region will lead projects at the town and neighborhood scale that are concerned with making their communities stronger, safer, and more sustainable. These projects will be designed by residents, funded by neighbors, and implemented by the community. Public spaces will have more stewards invested in positive change.
2. Civic leaders across the region will become better equipped to fundraise, use digital communications, and organize their communities.
3. Leaders will have a network of like-minded people doing similar work around the region and country, to whom they can turn for peer support.
4. New, previously untapped sources of citizen philanthropy will become available to civic groups working to make their communities stronger.

Outputs

In the long term, we expect that:

1. Previously disengaged residents will contribute to existing community development and city and regional planning initiatives. As a result, engagement with local community-based organizations will expand and diversify, and the regional civic sector will grow to be more connected.
1. Municipal and county agencies will be better positioned to make smart decisions and policies for residents based on authentic input from community leaders, the ingenuity of residents who live closest to the problems in the community, and small-scale demonstrations that build community buy-in.
1. Residents will feel more ownership over initiatives that affect their towns and blocks, and understand the larger scale impact of their own projects in their communities.

58 Brent.

Appendix A – Survey Questions

1. In which of the following regions do you live?
2. Are people generally proud to be from your town or city?
3. Are people generally proud to be from your region?
4. Have you ever worked on (e.g. volunteered for, donated to, or led) a project to make your community better in some way?
5. Who initiated the project?
6. If you had an idea for a project that would improve your town (or neighborhood, if you live in a city) in some way, who do you think would be very likely to fund it? (Check all that apply)
7. If you had an idea for a project that would benefit your community in some way, do you know of anyone in local or county government who would be willing to help you get the necessary approvals, permits, or resources to make it happen?
8. If you had an idea for a project that would benefit your community in some way, how likely would you be to crowdfund for that project?
9. If you answered that you are unlikely to crowdfund for a project, what are some reasons that you might not pursue this option?
10. How comfortable are people in your community with fundraising from their neighbors, friends, family, and colleagues?
11. Are people in your community likely to donate to projects that they think are positively impacting the community?
12. Would people in your community feel comfortable donating to a project that has a risk of failing?
13. Have you ever crowdfunded for a project before?
14. Was your crowdfunding campaign successful?
15. If you answered “no,” what do you think could have made your campaign more successful?
16. Which of the following barriers prevent people in your community from becoming civically engaged (i.e. volunteering, donating to a civic project, voting, meeting with a decision-maker)?
17. Do people in your town (or neighborhood, if you live in a city) trust each other?
18. Do long-term residents in your town or neighborhood tend to trust new transplants to the community?
19. Do new transplants to your town or neighborhood tend to trust long-term residents?
20. To what extent do you know what nonprofit organizations are doing to support your community?
21. Do you trust government to keep its promises to your community?
22. Do you trust philanthropists to keep their promises to your community? Why or why not?
23. What is your full name?
24. Email address
25. Occupation (if applicable)
26. What is your zip code?
27. In what town or city do you live?
28. What is the name of the neighborhood where you live? (If applicable)
29. How would you describe your race and/or ethnicity?
30. For how long have you lived in your town or city?
31. Who sent you this survey, or how did you discover it?



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