Greater Carolina
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 Greater Carolina 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 Greater Carolina Region, ioby hired Raymundo Garcia in Durham, North Carolina, who has a strong background in social entrepreneurship, community engagement, and philanthropy. Raised in Marietta, a suburb of Atlanta, he grew up in a predominantly black and brown community characterized by significant disinvestment. As the first in his family to graduate college, he holds degrees in Public Policy and History from UNC Chapel Hill. During his undergraduate career, Garcia served as the Co-President of the Carolina Hispanic Association where his activism efforts contributed to the creation of an on campus Latinx Center. Thereafter, he joined So Good Pupusas, a social justice food truck and catering company, that has received coverage from prominent media outlets including Univision, Indy Week, and NowThis. Garcia also worked at the William R. Kenan Charitable Trust where he worked to bolster community-based investment in Latinx Durham through community asset-mapping. Most recently, Garcia worked with Lead For America as the Director of Development where he built systems for people to join LFA’s mission through all forms of giving. Now, he supports My Brother’s and Sister’s Keeper Orange County as the Manager of Local Programs where he serves as a key partner in Orange County communities, working together to implement action plans with a key focus on critical mentoring while working with local implementation partners to encourage continued momentum.

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 November 15, 2019 in Charleston, SC and November 26, 2019 in Durham, NC. Attendees provided valuable feedback on ioby’s mission, training content, and approach to grassroots fundraising.

INTERVIEWS

From a total of 30 one-on-one conversations with civic leaders and 27 attendees of ioby’s grassroots fundraising workshops in the Greater Carolina Region, 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, he also relied on existing contacts who introduced him to additional leaders in the region.

INTERVIEWEES AND WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Interviewee or Workshop Attendee</th>
<th>Title and Affiliation(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atrayus Goode</td>
<td>MENTOR North Carolina</td>
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<td>Eliazar Posadas</td>
<td>El Centor Hispano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adam Eigenrauch</td>
<td>Emily K Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Young</td>
<td>PASOs</td>
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<td>Name of Interviewee or Workshop Attendee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Wells</td>
<td>Partners for Youth Opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Warren</td>
<td>RAIN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donna Dunlap</td>
<td>Big Brother Big Sisters</td>
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<td>Geraud Stanton</td>
<td>Helius Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Rodriguez</td>
<td>Student Action with Farmworkers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kerry Brock</td>
<td>El Futuro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lizzie Biddle</td>
<td>Center for New North Carolinians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Leloudis</td>
<td>UNC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff Howell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathryn Firmin-Sellers</td>
<td>United Way of Central Carolinas</td>
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<td>Kim Pervia</td>
<td>Organizer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol Morris</td>
<td>Robinson Center for Civic Leadership</td>
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<td>Hafeezah Yates</td>
<td>People Against Rape</td>
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<td>Megan Maginault</td>
<td>I Am Voices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cara Leepson</td>
<td>Redux Contemporary Art Center</td>
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<td>Tom Hanchett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nijeeah Richardson</td>
<td>We Are Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ivanna Gonzalez</td>
<td>Blueprint NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Chea</td>
<td>Carolina Youth Action Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tessa Torgovitsky</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damon Circosta</td>
<td>AJ Fletcher Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yazmin Garcia Rico</td>
<td>Cone Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennett Jones</td>
<td>Enough Pie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federico Rios</td>
<td>City of Charlotte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cecilia Polanco</td>
<td>SEEDS</td>
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ioby 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 111 survey responses from the Greater Carolina region:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share of Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Race</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native/Indigenous</td>
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<td>0.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>111</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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The Greater Carolina Region’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. Greater Carolina’s civic assets are numerous. They include:

- Highly active nonprofit sector
- Strong historical legacy of community organizing
- Critically engaged residents, particularly in fights for equity

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

- Insufficient funding sources for traditional nonprofits and grassroots projects
- Lack of collaboration between nonprofits across sectors and issue areas
- Stark digital and financial divide between rural and urban centers
ENTRENCHED INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY
For ioby to be successful in a place, residents must step forward with ideas for creating positive change, and neighbors must feel comfortable turning to each other to fund their projects. To develop our strategy for growing our impact in Greater Carolina, we must first understand where and how patterns of disinvestment and social, economic, and public health trends have impacted residents’ perceptions of their towns, neighborhoods, cities, and region.

Interviewees overwhelmingly agreed that, throughout the Greater Carolina region, systems of racism, classism, and disinvestment have had profound and lasting impacts, especially in communities of color. We heard that these systems of oppression have disenfranchised Black, Latinx, and Native communities across North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. The majority of interviewees agreed that the Greater Carolina region is seeing an increasing wave of gentrification that is fueled by financial interests of corporate leaders from inside and outside of the region, at the expense of deeply rooted low-income communities.

In most areas in the region, interviewees told us that local government, philanthropic groups, community organizers, faith leaders, and other key stakeholders have worked to address the growing social dislocation caused by significant commercial investment in the region. We heard examples of civic leaders and residents working to stem the tide of gentrification, including groups calling for affordable housing, demanding reparations, and leading grassroots advocacy campaigns to ensure that existing residents are meaningfully included in public decision-making processes.

Twentieth century Home owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) maps (“redlining” maps) in Durham, Charlotte, Columbia, and Greensboro, as well as the first-hand accounts of interviewees in the region, illustrate the many ways in which Black communities in the Greater Carolina region have been denied full participation in the marketplace as entrepreneurs, business owners, and credit holders. Despite this systemic oppression, interviewees told us that people of color have built communities of support and grit. We heard from residents across the region that Black, Latinx, and Native groups have etched their histories of struggle and hope in the asphalt under their feet.

Map 1: The Greater Carolina region is heavily segregated by race; Black and Hispanic residents are most heavily concentrated in the region’s cities.

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

Population Distribution by Race

Map 1: The Greater Carolina region is heavily segregated by race; Black and Hispanic residents are most heavily concentrated in the region’s cities.

Examples of this resilience include rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs), also called “tandas” in the Latinx community. As a form of social giving, ROSCAs are “locally organized groups that meet at regular intervals; at each meeting each member contributes funds that are given in turn to one or more of the members; once every participant has received funds, the rosca can disband or begin another round.” This form of resilience has historically allowed individuals to bypass nefarious financial policies, such as redlining, that barred low-income people from procuring a loan. By building communities of resilience in core urban centers throughout the Greater Carolina region, underserved populations have built anchors that carry generational lineages of their people, history, food, culture, and language.

However, with the recent wave of gentrification taking place in cities such as Greensboro, Raleigh, Charleston, Columbia, and Savannah, the roots that have connected marginalized groups to their geographical locations for generations are being threatened. Many interviewees told us that, with the trend of middle- and upper-class white residents moving to urban cores, Black and Brown people have been met with rising property costs, rent prices, and an overall increase in cost of living. The majority of interviews conducted in the Greater Carolina region capture this act of gentrification rippling across and rippling through communities of color.

Residents in large portions of the region, such as the areas surrounding Murfreesboro and Elizabethtown, North Carolina, 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.

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Interviewees suggested that each time a developer erects a luxury condominium in Charleston, or an entrepreneur sets up a co-working space in Raleigh, low-income families are forced to leave their community. In some cities in the South, transportation has also played a role in social dislocation under the guise of urban renewal.

In Durham, the Hayti neighborhood was regarded as a community of tightly-knit and educated Black families wherein a variety of businesses, schools, library, theatre, hospital, and other institutions served Black residents. In the 1960s, the Durham Freeway tore Hayti’s community apart. The Freeway began with a bond referendum in 1963 as an effort to ease commuting for suburban (mostly white) resident and streamline traffic through older parts of the city. As construction took place, the majority of houses in the path of the proposed Freeway were seized and demolished. In all, 4,000 families and 500 businesses were uprooted. The Hayti community underwent a painful period of disruption that had a profound and lasting impact on Black residents. Residents in Durham remember the history of Hayti as a staggering failure of urban renewal. Similarly, in Greensboro, urban renewal projects in the mid-twentieth century resulted in the displacement of more than 500 families in Warnersville, the city’s first planned African American community. In these neighborhoods, urban renewal programs permanently ruptured relationships, networks, and communities.

Interviewees across the Greater Carolina region underscored a key truth: the needs of communities of color did not take priority against promising financial returns on investment in building a robust Southern city. In each city, local public officials’ visions of modernity rested on the displacement and disenfranchisement of Black and Brown communities. Many interviewees confirmed that segregation throughout the Greater Carolina region still exists today, especially when considering those who have access to wealth and those who do not. More than 50 years after the end of the Jim Crow era, the zip code of the place where a person in the Greater Carolina region is born is a reliable predictor of that person’s chances of economic mobility.

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7 “7. Dismantling Hayti: Who Caused All This?” Bull City 150. https://www.bulicity150.org/uneven_ground/dismantling_hayti/who Caused_this/.
9 “Warnersville.” City of Greensboro. https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/planning/learn-more-about/historic-preservation/heritage-communities/warnersville#:~:text=Warnersville%20was%20recognized%20as%20Greensboro's,limits%20of%20Greensboro%20around%201865.
10 Nelson.
OPPORTUNITY ZONES
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. These Opportunity Zones, nominated by the governor of each state, are typically in rural areas and low-income neighborhoods with histories of disinvestment.

BROKEN PROMISES TO COMMUNITIES
The legacies of urban renewal, redlining, and targeted disinvestment have left low-income communities throughout the Greater Carolina region skeptical of the intention and effectiveness of projects led by government and philanthropy. This skepticism has contributed to a lack of trust and hope in democratic institutions. For example, interviewees said that Black and Brown residents do not see their participation in the civic sector—such as attending a town hall, voting in a city council election, or giving feedback on their city’s ten year plan—as a positive contributor to their wellbeing.

Recent promises made by governments across the Greater Carolina region have largely centered on revitalization. Interviews from across the region told ioby that many nonprofit leaders believe that conversations regarding revitalization often cloak institutions’ intentions to gentrify neighborhoods. In cities like Charleston and Savannah, “revitalization” has meant the complete removal of historical residential homes in order to erect chain stores. As a result of rising real estate values, communities who have historically resided in and around downtown Charleston have been forced to move farther north on the peninsula.

The tenuous relationship between communities and government stems from residents’ perceptions that public officials have not acted boldly enough in creating and preserving affordable housing and instituting rent control policies, despite governments’ promises to help residents affected by increasing commercial investment.

In cities like Durham and Charlotte, local governments have stepped up their efforts to create affordable housing in areas undergoing booming revitalization, in order to stem the negative effects of gentrification. A few interviewees said that city officials have implemented several measures to create forums and townhalls for residents to voice their thoughts on affordable housing. One civic leader in Charleston told ioby that many of the people who show up to these public discussions tend to be the same crowd. According to this interviewee, city officials tend to miss the people truly impacted by revitalization efforts often, and residents perceive that this continued oversight stems from the same patterns of negligence and racism that have long eroded communities’ trust in government.

Consequently, public forums on affordable housing do not capture the narratives, lived experiences, and thoughts of those most impacted by the massive wave of gentrification rippling across the Greater Carolina region. This is especially the case when, in the past, affected communities have tried to voice their concerns through participating in government surveys or research interviews, and have not been met with the change they have been demanding for years.

Currently, the promise taking shape in most cities across the Greater Carolina region is the incorporation of affordable housing into long-term planning. Undergirding this promise are a series of other promises including talking to community residents and creating accessible pathways for community input. With the trauma that continues to shape affected communities’ relationships with government and funders, conversations around revitalization are inextricably attached to conversations around gentrification. People want revitalization, but they also want to stay in their neighborhoods.

HEALING AND REPARATIONS
Some interviewees in Durham mentioned William “Sandy” Darity, Samuel DuBois Cook Distinguished Professor of Public Policy at Duke University. Darity, one of academia’s leading figures on U.S. racial inequity for many years, was featured last September in a Washington Post article entitled, “Which black Americans should get reparations?” Written by Wesley Lowery, the article covered Darity’s report that gives both a rationale for why descendants of slaves should be paid reparations and recommendations for how to institute such a program. In effect, the report aims to catapult the topic of reparations to the national stage. In the Greater Carolina region, it appears that conversations around reparations still appear to be on the fringes of Black activist circles.

The Racial Equity Institute (REI), a national organization that trains and supports leaders and organizations to become anti-racist, is based in Greensboro. REI has trained hundreds of leaders of nonprofits, community-based organizers, government agencies, academic institutions, and foundations in cities across the country. Ioby has worked with REI in the past to become a more explicitly and effectively anti-racist organization, and to better understand and dismantle the systemic racism that we encounter in our work.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC
According to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, “more than 12,000 North Carolinians died from opioid-related overdoses” between 1999 to 2016. In North Carolina, communities most affected by the opioid epidemic include Wilmington (an abuse rate of more than 11.6%), Hickory (9.9%), Jacksonville (8.2%), and Fayetteville (7.9%).

In South Carolina, the Centers for Disease Control found that death rates jumped 42.5% from 2006 to 2016, the decade preceding the peak of overdose deaths in the United States. South Carolina communities most affected by the opioid epidemic include Columbia, Charleston, Greenville, Myrtle Beach, and Georgetown.

In 2018, the Georgia Bureau of Investigations Crime Lab found that the state’s counties with the highest rates of abuse were Cobb, Fulton, Gwinnett, Dekalb, and Chatham counties. Interestingly, a 2016 study found that individuals who abuse opioids are more likely to live in the rural South than anywhere else in the country. As indicated by the communities most affected by the opioid epidemic in the Greater Carolina region, it is clear that rural and coastal areas have been hit the hardest and continue to struggle with the long-term public health implications of this epidemic.

MASS INCARCERATION
Residents and grassroots leaders across Greater Carolina are grappling with the local effects of mass incarceration, a national trend. In a report on the current state of the country’s criminal justice system, the Sentencing Project says, “there are 2.2 million people in the nation’s prisons and jails—a 500% increase over the last 40 years.” Furthermore, mass incarceration has disproportionately targeted Black and Latino men more than any other group. As estimated by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the lifetime likelihood of imprisonment for Black men born in 2001 is 1 in 3, Latino men is 1 in 6, and White men is 1 in 17.

19 Knopf
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
While mass incarceration has had diminishing returns on increasing public safety, it has had an alarming impact on the separation of families and the flaring of racial tensions.\textsuperscript{23}

In North Carolina, 639 people are incarcerated for every 100,000 residents in 2018.\textsuperscript{24} As of 2015, the counties most affected by mass incarceration—defined by those imprisoning more than 500 people per 100,000 county residents—include several rural communities: Martin, Person, Lenoir, and Rutherford.\textsuperscript{25} According to the Vera Institute of Justice, “Today, the highest rates of prison admissions are in rural counties, and pretrial detention continues to increase in smaller counties even as it is on the decline in larger counties.”\textsuperscript{26}

As of 2015, in South Carolina, the counties with the most prison admissions per 100,000 include McCormick (1,332), Cherokee (554), Union (539), Spartanburg (467), and Florence (420).\textsuperscript{27} Within the prison population, approximately 60% are Black despite making up only 29% of South Carolina’s overall population.\textsuperscript{28} White people account for 37% of the prison population and 64% of the state’s overall population.\textsuperscript{29}

In 2015, Georgia had incarcerated 84,556 (or 970 per 100,000) people in its prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice facilities.\textsuperscript{30} The Chatham County Jail in Savannah houses about 1,670 inmates.\textsuperscript{31} The Coastal State Prison, also in Savannah, has a capacity of 1,836 prisoners.\textsuperscript{32} In 2020, the nonprofit Deep Center in Savannah received a $30,000 grant from the Vera Institute of Justice to sustain their grassroots efforts to curb the use of incarceration in Savannah and across Chatham County.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{DIGITAL DIVIDE}

The digital divide in the Greater Carolina region has contributed to the exacerbation of socioeconomic inequality across communities. The digital divide refers to disparities in how individuals and groups access information and communication technologies, and in the knowledge and skills needed to effectively use the information gained from connecting.

In rural North Carolina and South Carolina, a lack of access to high-speed broadband infrastructure reinforces barriers for under-resourced communities to participate in the digital era. At a time when 28% of the North Carolina population lives in a rural area, a lack of access to digital resources poses long term challenges in health, education, economic mobility, and civic participation.\textsuperscript{34} Bridging this access will become increasingly urgent as the country continues digitizing the ways in which residents are expected to access basic human services and interact with each other.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{23} Ibid
\bibitem{26} Ibid.
\bibitem{28} Ibid.
\bibitem{29} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
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

According to interviewees, both government and philanthropy have historically been sluggish in funding small to mid-sized projects led by residents and small community-based organizations. Interviewees remarked about having to pay out-of-pocket or lead frequent fundraising campaigns to subsidize community projects.

Having to rely on personal income and the generosity of residents has placed a strain on the ability of grassroots leaders to carry their projects to fruition. Not having a reliable source of funding from local or county government, or from a community foundation, has placed the onus of fundraising on the grassroots leader who is seeking to create community-wide change.

According to several interviewees, private philanthropy and local, county, and state governments in the region seem to prefer to award grants to bigger, well-established, and polished nonprofits as opposed to scrappy, unincorporated groups of residents. Resident-led groups are shut out of grants that require staff capacity, nonprofit tax status, or other related resources. As a result, residents in the Greater Carolina region seeking to jumpstart civic projects have had to be creative with their sources of revenue. Interviewees mentioned holding frequent cookouts and yard sales. These efforts encapsulate the strong drive that residents have in manifesting their locally rooted projects in spite of a lack of community-based funding available in their neighborhoods.

In recent years, government and philanthropy have begun to demonstrate interest in supporting grassroots projects. For example, an interviewee told ioby that Charlotte’s local government seeks out local projects led by residents, including those that require a fiscal sponsor. According to this interviewee, the City of Charlotte has created a fund that serves the sole purpose of supporting local civic projects through microgrants to get them off the ground.

Similarly, the Knight Foundation funds startup nonprofits in Charlotte’s Historic West End neighborhood.35 The goals of Knight’s Charlotte program include funding initiatives that promote community engagement, increase the neighborhood’s capacity to create a shared community vision, and create and program public spaces that allow for interaction and connection among residents.36 Interviewees said that a shift to supporting grassroots organizations and leaders has made it more possible for residents and small community-based organizations to tap into funding streams from which they have historically been barred.

In Charleston, a local nonprofit leader mentioned that the city’s Hotel Accommodation Tax has established a grant pool for nonprofits to receive funding for events that aid in bringing tourism to the city. Interviewees said that other foundations that have been stepping up to fund grassroots efforts include the Coastal Community Foundation and the Durham Public Schools Foundation.

Crowdfunding in the Region

No interviewees mentioned a crowdfunding platform with a strong presence in the region. In fact, only 32% of survey respondents (35 out of 111) indicated that they had ever crowdfunded before. In talking with community leaders involved in both nonprofits and foundations, there appears to be no local crowdfunding platforms in the region. Crowdfunding platforms that have been leveraged by nonprofit executive managers include national organizations such as GoFundMe and Kickstarter, rather than locally rooted entities.

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.

36 Ibid.
As we begin to raise ioby’s profile in new places, we find that our platform is often compared to other crowdfunding platforms with which residents are already familiar. We assessed data from a sample of cities in Greater Carolina (Charlotte, Greensboro, Durham, and Raleigh, North Carolina; Columbia and Charleston, South Carolina; and Savannah, Georgia) and found that more than 62,750 residents have used crowdfunding platforms like GoFundMe (25,900 fundraisers currently listed)\(^ {37}\) and Kickstarter (5,707 projects currently listed)\(^ {38}\) to meet their personal and creative funding needs. 31,145 teachers in schools located in and near these cities have successfully fundraised with DonorsChoose for classroom supplies.\(^ {39}\)

ioby’s intention is to supplement, rather than compete with, these crowdfunding platforms in the Greater Carolina 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.
- 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 Greater Carolina:** **STRONG**

In many ways, giving has always been a way of life in Southern communities.

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\(^ {39}\) DonorsChoose. https://www.donorschoose.org/.
Faith communities give collectively on a regular basis to sustain the operations of their place of worship. Economically distressed communities give amongst each other when a family is going through devastating hardship or when some butter is needed for a meal. An interviewee who works with a nonprofit organization in Durham told ioby that “the Latino community is very philanthropic in giving when someone is in need, in sending money back to their home country, and giving in Church.” Residents seem to understand that their fates are inextricably connected and that when one person is down, extending a communal hand of giving is an act of self-love. Nonprofit leaders, funders, local historians, and government leaders told ioby that the culture of giving in the region’s communities has evolved in parallel to changes in the region’s demographics.

“There has always been a strong culture of giving, especially in efforts led by faith communities that are social justice oriented. At one time, there was even a strong culture of volunteering.” - Interviewee

“One of the challenges that we have in a rapidly growing place like the Triangle is so many come from somewhere else that they really haven’t rooted their philanthropy where they live yet.” - Interviewee

Durham, Raleigh, Charlotte, Charleston, and Savannah continue to be hit by waves of gentrification, as newcomers are attracted to each city’s increasing popularity and developing economic landscape. These newcomers do not have strong relationships with long-time residents and most are unaware of community-based organizations that have contributed to the strong relational and giving network in an area. The director of a Raleigh-based funder told ioby that “one of the challenges that we have in a rapidly growing place like the Triangle is so many come from somewhere else that they really haven’t rooted their philanthropy where they live yet.” With the disruption caused by gentrification, cultures of giving in expanding cities across the Greater Carolina region have weakened.

Even so, 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 to be strongest in the region’s metropolitan areas.

Important, 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.

Map 4. Charitable giving appears to be strongest in metropolitan areas.
While 71% 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 fundraising from their personal networks and 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?" 42% of respondents indicated that people in their community would be afraid to take a risk, 32% indicated that their community is comfortable with some risk, and 25% indicated that they did not know their community’s level of comfort with risk.

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 Greater Carolina: MIXED

The map below reveals large clusters of incorporated nonprofits in the region’s metropolitan areas, with the greatest concentration in and around Charlotte, Greensboro, Durham, and Raleigh.

In considering the health of the nonprofit sector in a given community, it is important to assess the level of collaboration between community-based organizations and the depth and breadth of organizations’ connections with residents. While this indicator varies from city to city, a few key themes arose throughout the Greater Carolina region:

1. Community-based organizations are more likely to collaborate with other organizations when they are mission-aligned and working in the same issue area (e.g. nonprofits advocating for education reform tend to partner with other education nonprofits).
2. Larger nonprofits tend to be more distant from each other and more difficult for residents to reach and engage with, compared to smaller and grassroots organizations.

3. Undocumented and Latinx populations are often left out of community-based organizations’ engagement efforts.

An interviewee with an organization that provides technical assistance to nonprofit organizations in the region noted that “nonprofits, at least ones that we work with throughout the state, prioritize coalition-building with leaders in their issue area, including residents and other nonprofits.” The interviewee suggested that, due to their limited capacity, the region’s nonprofits must prioritize connecting with some stakeholders over others. In speaking with other nonprofit leaders across the Greater Carolina region, it became increasingly clear that nonprofits tend to collaborate with peer organizations involved in their issue area. In doing so, this collaboration within issue areas has in part contributed to the creation of siloes that separate the work of community-based organizations and larger nonprofits that do not share an issue area (e.g. environment, education, democratic participation). This a concern to some interviewees, as many of the challenges that face the Greater Carolina region are intersectional and necessitate cross-sector solutions. As organizations grow, an immediate challenge is maintaining a high level of on-the-ground presence in communities. Interviewees remarked that they have seen a noticeable decline in community engagement among large community-based organizations in the Greater Carolina region that have historically maintained a strong presence in the communities.

Another issue with connectivity in terms of resident engagement centers on the growing presence of Latinx and undocumented people in the region. Between 2010 and 2019, the South saw the fastest Latinx population growth (26%) of any U.S. region. In 2007, the Population Reference Bureau highlighted that, while the Latinx population is growing the fastest in large urban centers in the South, Latinx people increasingly are moving to rural areas and helping to offset population losses in communities with stagnant or declining populations.

However, some interviewees noted that many community-based organizations in the region have not successfully integrated culturally competent, intersectional frameworks for engaging a rapidly expanding group of residents. An interviewee who works with a nonprofit healthcare provider in the region noted that “there are a variety of health-based nonprofits providing excellent direct services to residents; however, I don't think they are at the point of effectively engaging the Latinx population in Alamance County.” The lack of intentional support and engagement for the Latinx population, including undocumented people, continues to weaken the overall connectivity that community-based organizations have with its residents in the Greater Carolina region.

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 Greater Carolina: STRONG**


if you live in a city) in some way, who do you think would be very likely to fund it?" 60% of survey respondents would approach people in their networks, similar to the 59% who said that they would approach a foundation.

In response to the question, "How likely are people in your community to fundraise from their neighbors, friends, family, and colleagues?" 62% of respondents answered that they were "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to do so.

Residents and civic leaders told ioby that organizations, especially those that work at the grassroots level, tend to rely on family, friends, and fellow residents for donations, in-kind donations, and volunteer support. For example, the founder and executive director of a nonprofit that works with survivors of domestic violence told ioby that "many of the residents volunteer because they know that the need is huge. Many of them have been impacted by these issues." The work of grassroots leaders in the region tends to be driven by community and fueled by contributions from residents.

Community leaders and leaders of the region’s nonprofit organizations largely do not expect a private funder or government to foot the bill for their civic projects. This may change, as the philanthropic sector moves toward funding resident-led projects and community leaders begin to receive more funding for small projects that had not been available in the recent past. In Charlotte, the City is also stepping up to provide funding strictly for grassroots projects that are led by groups without 501c3 status. Overall, residents leading grassroots initiatives still rely largely on personal fundraising efforts in their communities in order to build the capacity necessary for their projects.

**Willingness to crowdfund**

In response 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% of survey respondents answered that they would "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to do so. Only 13% of survey respondents answered that they would be "very unlikely" or "somewhat unlikely" to do so.

Survey respondents indicated the following reasons for being unlikely to crowdfund:

- "I have no way of gauging public interest and I feel reluctant/ashamed/embarrassed to ask strangers for funding."
- "Difficulty of building a viral campaign."
- "I think it would be difficult to get the funds from my community because of income levels."
- "It takes a lot of work."
- "I don’t have a lot of connections and I don’t think people would donate money."
- "Many people do not enjoy donating."

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. We encounter this myth often in our work, and it often helps residents to know that research indicates that there is no correlation between a community’s median household income and the success of a crowdfunding campaign in their neighborhood. 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.

### 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

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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 Greater Carolina: **MIXED**

Gaining access to permits, approvals, and municipal services proves challenging for many communities across the region. Atrayus Goode, President & CEO of MENTOR North Carolina in Durham, described many challenges navigating bureaucracy, despite being college educated and having connections in local government. Even for people with a higher education and who are well connected, jumping through hoops and hurdles in order to hold a rally downtown or to paint a mural can be especially vexing. Bureaucracy is even more intimidating for people who come from underserved communities. In many ways, the opaque nature of local or county government services inhibits residents from becoming civicly engaged in their communities. Some local governments such as Durham have created a participatory budgeting process whereby local residents can vote on what civic projects they want sponsored.

Efforts to create equitable access to government services have often begun with a bureaucrat who shepherds residents' ideas through the bureaucracy. Throughout the region, it appears that many cities have someone in office who are advancing measures for equitable access to municipal services such as translating materials and creating informational guides. Still, public officials, planners, and others in government with an openness to community-led projects are not always accessible or connected to the communities they serve: only 45% of survey respondents said that they know of someone in local or county government who would be willing to help get necessary approvals, permits, or resources to bring an idea for a community project to life.

Interviewees shared that most local governments are willing to listen and learn from residents, but that listening tends to take a traditional form: a resident attends a city council meeting, they present their case, and then the city council deliberates among each other. These traditional forms of winning endorsements in order to circumvent or streamline the bureaucratic process do not offer a truly participatory, democratic medium for resident engagement.

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 Greater Carolina: **STRONG**

“There is so much struggle and pain, yet there is also pride in the people you care about.” - Interviewee

People take pride in their communities for several reasons, including the nostalgic feeling that comes from conversations about a person's hometown. However, for residents in the Greater Carolina region, being proud and being critical are not mutually exclusive. According to the majority of interviewees, residents are very proud to be from their areas but are not shy about offering critiques regarding the local nonprofit sector, philanthropy, and government. The source and complexity in pride varies by group and is informed by the historical and current challenges faced by a given community.

The complexity in pride—one that carries the troubled history of their city, state, and region—was best
crystalized by an interview with a grassroots leader based in Charleston. When asked about their civic pride, the interviewee remarked that they have a complicated relationship to the city. On the one hand, Charleston holds a troubled history of slavery, segregation, redlining, and targeted disinvestment that continues to inform present legislation and socioeconomic issues. On the other hand, Charleston is home to the Gullah-Geechee people, a community that has deeply shaped the history, culture, arts, language, and food of the city. Charleston is also home to their family, friends, and beloved community members who continue to be affected by systemic oppression. The interviewee told ioby, “there is so much struggle and pain, yet there is also pride in the people you care about.”

Like many community leaders across the Greater Carolina region, being proud of one’s community does not amount to the dismissal of historical injustices and modern-day systems of oppression. On the contrary, for some people of color in the Greater Carolina region, being proud means to hold the complexity of struggle and hope in the work that they do every day. In essence, the motivations behind residents’ pride are the communities of resilience that build a sense of belonging, despite challenges imposed by systems of oppression.

Survey respondents said that residents are proud to be from the Greater Carolina region. To the question, “Are people generally proud to be from your town or city?” 83 (75%) answered “yes,” compared to only 28 (25%) who answered “no” or “not sure.” To the question, “Are people generally proud to be from your region?” 81 (73%) answered “yes,” compared to only 30 (27%) who answered “no” or “not sure.”

**COMPARING GREATER CAROLINA TO IOBY’S FOCUS PLACES (AT THE TIME OF IOBY’S ARRIVAL)**

When measured against other places where ioby has hired local staff, Greater Carolina appears to be only a moderate fit for ioby’s typical approach to working in a new place. (We propose an alternative model for working in Greater Carolina in Objective #7, beginning on page 23.) We expect that our efforts to source and cultivate local leaders with ideas for their communities will benefit from the region’s strong culture of giving, openness to grassroots fundraising, and civic pride.

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

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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 the Greater Carolina region’s 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. There are several examples of community-led placemaking and tactical urbanism projects and programs in the Greater Carolina region. They include:

- **Enough Pie**, a nonprofit whose mission is to “use creativity to connect and empower our community in Charleston's Upper Peninsula,” leads creative placemaking initiatives that bring the arts to parks and public spaces throughout the Upper Peninsula. In doing so, the organization creates avenues for community engagement and community love that inspires other residents to become more involved. Additionally, Enough Pie’s arts initiatives have gained significant traction and have established a strong precedent for public art in the state of South Carolina.

- In 2015, Matt Tomasulo, then a graduate student, launched a guerrilla wayfinding movement in Raleigh called “Walk Raleigh.” Tomasulo hung homemade wayfinding signs on lampposts and telephone poles that would point pedestrians to popular downtown destinations and the average time it would take to walk to them. The intent of Tomasulo’s unsanctioned tactical urbanism project was to encourage his fellow residents to walk more.

- In spring 2020, the City of Charlotte will award Placemaking Grants of between $1,000 and $25,000 to residents, business owners, homeowner associations, and community-based organizations to create placemaking projects in public space. The City will also provide grantees with design assistance, help choosing materials, and help securing permits and approvals. The City of Charlotte will also award small Technical Assistance grants to help community groups develop their placemaking ideas and plans to implement their projects. The grant will provide: a half-day workshop with City employees to identify project opportunities, assistance developing plans for implementation, and a small amount of seed funding to kick off the project when plans have been completed. As the City launches and awards these placemaking grants, ioby expects to see an uptick in the number of Charlotte residents and community groups who develop and lead ideas for placemaking interventions in their neighborhoods.

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 Carolinians have a predilection for 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 types and scopes of organizations and community-led projects that interviewees described seemed to vary significantly based on location. More specifically, grassroots organizations in well-resourced urban areas like the Research Triangle tend to be concerned with stemming the tide of gentrification and creating and preserving affordable housing for existing residents who are struggling with rising housing prices. In contrast, organizations in rural areas are working to attract new investment and development to areas of concentrated poverty. ioby expects that organizations and residents in both urban and rural areas of Greater Carolina will find value in working with ioby to create and fund their projects. To most effectively serve these groups, it is important for us to understand the economic conditions that motivate them to take action. We may begin to uncover these motivators by examining the nuances of the regional economy and the urban-rural divide that seems to define it.

THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

Interviewees often characterized the economy of the Greater Carolina region in terms of its urban-rural divide, citing heavy concentrations of wealth in urban areas and deep poverty in rural communities.

For example, the Research Triangle (Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill) of North Carolina is home to IBM, Cisco, Fidelity Investments, Lenovo, GSK, Biogen, LabCorp, and RTI International. Within this conglomerate of cities there also exist elite institutions of higher learning including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University, and North Carolina State University, all within a close driving distance of each other.

The Research Triangle has also become an entrepreneurial hotbed. In Chapel Hill, there is a growing number of startup incubators and accelerators such as Launch Chapel Hill and 1789, as well as venture capital funds such as the Carolina Angel Network and TrueBridge Capital Partners. Downtown Durham features American Tobacco Campus, “a sprawling expanse of outdoor cafés, green space, and startup offices. Sports-scheduling app maker Teamworks is around the corner from the massive American Underground co-working space, which houses 232 companies across three downtown locations, including fintech startup LoanWell.”

Raleigh’s Warehouse District, another entrepreneurial hub, is home to Videri Chocolate Factory, as well as HQ Raleigh’s 20,000-square-foot flagship co-working space. Outside the Triangle in the Greater Carolina region are other urban centers such as Charlotte, NC -- home to a Bank of America headquarters and the Foundation for the Carolinas, two major institutions of wealth -- with other cities on the rise such as Greensboro and Burlington. Coastal cities such as Charleston, SC and Savannah, GA have also experienced serious growth as they nurture their tourism and startup economies.

Ultimately, the diverse economic bases of these urban centers stand in stark contrast to rural economies that mostly rely on service and agricultural industries. Rural economies such as those in Lexington, NC and Ridgeville, SC have not seen significant strides in economic development, particularly in attracting major companies, promoting entrepreneurial innovation, or spurring research efforts. The urban and rural divide has become increasingly stark as economic forces have largely shaped access to healthcare, education, and other basic needs.

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Interviewees suggested that the region’s urban and coastal centers are experiencing the greatest share of new and outside investment. In North Carolina, this includes the Triangle (Durham, Raleigh, Chapel Hill), Charlotte, and Greensboro. Coastal cities such as Charleston and Savannah have also become hotbeds for commercial investment, increasingly in the cities’ downtown areas. Interviewees in each city said that new development has included luxury residential and commercial real estate that ultimately cause increases in housing costs and the cost of living. According to these interviewees, these surges in real estate prices have caused small businesses to be uprooted by chain restaurants and stores. Residents who have historically lived in these communities are rapidly being priced out of their homes. In most cases, interviewees said that these residents have not benefited from new injections of capital in their cities.

This pattern of increased investment and displacement is one that rings true for many community leaders in the Greater Carolina region, including one nonprofit leader from Columbia, SC who told ioby, “Along the West Columbia Riverwalk, there has been a great deal of commercial and public investment. However, what has happened over time is that the families who have historically resided along the Riverwalk are being pushed out.” In many ways, investment throughout the Greater Carolina region has been seen as an effort to promote revitalization.


For some, the term “revitalization” connotes gentrification, which has greatly impacted communities in urban and coastal centers. One interviewee who works with a foundation in Charlotte noted, “Revitalization itself is a good thing, but the shadow that follows is gentrification, which pushes long term residents out. Here in Charlotte, gentrification is a big issue.” Ultimately, new and outside investment continues to find its way into urban and coastal areas in the Greater Carolina region, despite patterns of gentrification that keep resulting as a consequence. While terms such as “revitalization” have been used to cloak the harmful effects of new and outside investment, it is important to note the specific sensitivities that people in the Greater Carolina region have with the term.

Objective #6: Characterize civic participation across the region

Interviewees noted several barriers to civic engagement, including the mental, physical, emotional, economic, and political hurdles that impact low wealth communities in urban areas such as Durham, coastal cities like Charleston, and rural towns like Lumberton. Despite the differences in these locations, several common barriers surfaced, including:

1. A lack of access to basic necessities such as childcare, a living wage, and transportation: In economically distressed communities across the Greater Carolina region, low-income people do not have the time to attend town halls or to cast votes on new referenda. They are often preoccupied with survival, struggling to pay rent or to feed their families. In rural areas like New Bern, NC, not having a robust public transportation system means having to allocate a significant amount of time traversing the city to simply attend a public meeting. In addition, parents who are unable to find or pay a babysitter cannot attend evening meetings. If public meetings do not provide childcare, transportation, and a stipend to cover time taken off from workable hours, people from underserved communities are unable to have the same access to civic life that is afforded to other residents.

2. Distrust in government: On top of these economic challenges, people of color in particular have endured a long history of voter discrimination measures pinned against them in the South. Measures have effectively worked to undermine Black and Brown voting power throughout the Greater Carolina region. Policy protections such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 served to prohibit racial discrimination in voting; however, despite this landmark piece of federal legislation, local and state governments across the Greater Carolina region have produced covert, unethical strategies such as voter ID laws and closing polling sites, that effectively prevent marginalized communities of color from becoming civically engaged. This history of marginalization contributes to widespread distrust of government among communities of color, and has created mental and emotional barriers to civic engagement.

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 (66%)
- Civic participation just takes too much time for some people (51%)
- People don’t have enough spare cash to donate to causes or campaigns (51%)

Almost half of respondents (47%) believe that their neighbors are disheartened because they do not believe that their participation will result in any important changes. Only 35% of respondents said that their communities are apathetic or simply do not care enough.
The data suggest that, in order to broaden and deepen community engagement in the Greater Carolina region, 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.

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

Our research suggests that there is considerable opportunity for ioby to positively impact the Greater Carolina region’s civic landscape, particularly in the places discussed earlier in this report. 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 Greater Carolina**

To build ioby's presence in cities and towns across the Greater Carolina region, ioby will train a cohort of civic leaders, including community-facing members of staff from highly-regarded community-based organizations from cities and rural areas across 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 Greater Carolina region, 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.

Strategy #2: Pursue match fund partnerships in Greater Carolina

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 build on and work with forms of civic participation that are already working? (e.g. Public meetings, charrettes, etc.)

Ioby will form strategic partnerships with government agencies that are led by people who have already earned the trust of civic leaders and potential users of ioby's platform. By positioning crowdfunding as a 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.

In cities and towns like Durham, where we learned that permitting processes can be prohibitively opaque to first-time civic leaders, ioby will pursue partnerships with municipalities to connect resident leaders with government decision-makers who can expedite approvals for projects funded on ioby's platform and learn from these leaders' projects and experiences. These partnerships will be modeled on our successful engagements with agencies and public officials in New York, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Memphis.

We may also design guides for resident leaders looking to pull permits for their projects in public spaces, such as we have done in Cleveland,49 Memphis,50 and Detroit.51

51 "Getting Good Done in Detroit." Ioby. https://ioby.org/resources/gettinggooddinedetroit
Through partnerships with leaders of municipalities’ technical assistance and community engagement programs, we will add our platform and services to the set of tools that they offer to local nonprofits, grassroots leaders, and residents. When we give residents and groups of neighbors the opportunity to easily and quickly fund and create their own projects, we help them to accumulate “quick wins” that inspire others in the community to become more engaged in public decision-making.

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

As we begin to grow our presence in the Research Triangle (Durham, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill) and Charleston, 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 earn the trust of leaders in the region when we are able to point to a series of strong examples of how ioby’s model works in Greater Carolina.

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.

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 so that residents understand that they are able to make meaningful changes without much difficulty.

**Working in rural areas**

Based on our conversations with leaders of organizations across the region, it is clear that residents and civic leaders in rural areas are generally distrustful of organizations led by people from outside of their areas. This distrust seems to stem from a common feeling that solutions are only reasonable or palatable when they come from people in the area. Philosophically, this aligns nicely with ioby’s founding principle—that people closest to a problem are best suited to solve it—and signals a strong fit for our services. In practical terms, this distrust presents a significant barrier to our work. An organization like ioby, from outside of the region, may find it difficult to build trust with civic leaders.

In addition, our research suggests that people in rural areas have been relegated to the position of “passive

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Brent, Daniel A. and Lorah, Katie. “The Geography of Civic Crowdfunding: Implications for Social Inequality and Do
workingpapers/pap17_09.pdf.
recipient of change\(^\text{\textdagger}\) rather than change agent. Civic leaders who aim to bolster engagement in their communities contend with a sentiment that there is simply no point in trying to change anything because no one is listening anyway.

**Outputs**

In the long term, we expect that:

1. More people in the 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.

**Outcomes**

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.

2. 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.

3. 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.
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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