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Explore the data and report: <https://brook.gs/2GXf7J2>

## America's older industrial cities are vital to the nation's economic future, says new Brookings report

Washington, D.C. — A new report from the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program identifies 70 urban areas in the United States deemed *older industrial cities*, together accounting for one-eighth of the U.S. population and economy, that represent critical focal points for strategic investment and new policy interventions.

The report, "[Renewing America's economic promise through older industrial cities](#)," argues that growing regional inequality poses serious economic, social, and political consequences for the United States. Older industrial cities, primarily located in the Midwest and Northeast, have strong manufacturing legacies but have lagged behind other urban areas in achieving inclusive economic growth. A renewed focus on these cities through public policy and private investment could capitalize on their considerable innovation, talent, and place assets, helping them to overcome challenges and scars of the past, and contribute to a stronger future for the country as a whole.

The report comprehensively benchmarks the 70 older industrial cities against other urban areas on how well they are positioned to adapt to the key trends shaping America's economic future: technological change, urbanization, and demographic transformation. The 70 older industrial cities are categorized into four groups based on their recent economic performance, with strong/emerging older industrial cities like Pittsburgh, Pa. and Louisville, Ky. generally better positioned than their stabilizing/vulnerable counterparts like Youngstown, Ohio and Flint, Mich.

"Ideas for addressing regional inequality in America focus primarily on building more housing in 'superstar' cities like San Francisco and New York, or investing in small, rural communities hit hardest by industrial decline," says Alan Berube, senior fellow and lead author of the report. "There's an enormous opportunity between those two extremes to harness the significant economic and human potential of these older industrial cities, which anchor regions of the country at risk of being left behind."

This report offers a framework and promising responses that state and local leaders in older industrial cities are adopting to achieve inclusive economic growth, including:

- **Learning from older industrial cities that have effectively transitioned from their industrial past and embraced the goal of inclusive economic growth.** Public and private actions have focused on (1) identifying and investing in key technological capabilities; (2) spurring strategic urbanization; (3) preparing a diverse workforce for current and future opportunities; and (4) stewarding inclusive growth at the regional scale.

- **Building on existing local and state efforts already at work in older industrial cities, while emphasizing collaboration and shared responsibility among local stakeholders.** These efforts promote increased job creation, job preparation, and job access, with strategic emphasis on overcoming stark legacies of out-migration and racial/economic segregation.
- **Expanding economic opportunity for people and neighborhoods of color, and establishing new metrics and frameworks for inclusive success.** Older industrial cities house one-fifth of the nation's black working class. The economic strength of these cities overall, and the economic resiliency of their racial and ethnic minority populations, are closely related.

Read the report: <https://brook.gs/2GXf7J2>

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