

Supporting Communities of Color During the COVID-19 Crisis

Health Inequities

People of color (POC) face environmental, systemic, and structural inequities that increase risk for negative health status. Before COVID-19, we already know that POC are at a greater risk of chronic health conditions. These existing inequities are further exasperated during the current public health crisis, where access to medical resources is limited across the country. For example, [recent articles](#) revealed that mortality in several states that report COVID-19 deaths by race and ethnicity [disproportionately impact Black](#) individuals, who already were negatively impacted by chronic disease and lack of access to health care. In communities across the nation, this type of analysis is difficult to obtain because public health departments often do not report (or report limited) data by race and ethnicity.

Economic Inequities

Historical and contemporary racial injustice has led to unequal wealth distribution, negatively impacting POC. POC are overrepresented in vulnerable groups: low-wage earners, lack of health insurance, paid sick leave, homeless, and incarceration. During the COVID-19 crisis, POC have been disproportionately impacted by job loss, particularly [Latino individuals](#).

Educational Inequities

Students of color have unequal access to academic resources, including small class sizes, curriculum, and teacher quality, technology access at home, parental engagement in academics, and development of sense of belonging in schools. Most students around the nation are no longer attending school in-person due to COVID-19. In response to this development, US Department of Education, Office of Civil rights released [guidance](#) to schools on anti-discrimination laws and ensuring online education is accessible. Students of color are [disproportionately impacted by online learning](#) as they have less access to technology at home, are more likely to need to provide care for other children in the home, more likely to experience food insecurity, and less likely to have adults at home to help with school work.

Action Steps to Support POC

There are a range of ways you can support POC during the COVID-19 crisis. Start where you can, considering your skills, resources, and networks.

- Learn about experiences that people of color are experiencing. Here are some places you can start: [Homemade Masks](#), [Working Latino Immigrant](#), [Feel the Bite of Prejudice](#).
- Increase your understanding of systemic inequities POC face. Here's an [accessible resource](#) to start.
- Support POC-owned businesses. In many communities, Farmer's Markets are essential businesses and provide opportunities to support local POC agricultural operations.
- Raise public awareness on social media (be sure to share factual information and ask before posting about people's personal stories).
- Track social media platforms of organizations that serve POC for information and resources.
- Engage family and friends by sharing what you have learned about supporting communities of color and the impacts of COVID-19 on POC.
- Ask your employer's decision-makers to build organizational awareness and institutional practices to address disproportional impacts.
- Work with your employer's decision-makers to review policies, examine how they may disproportionately impact people of color, and develop supports.
- As the pandemic wanes identify strategies to institutionalize practices and programs to provide resources and support to minimize the impact of future health and community disruptions
- Request that public health officials, school districts, and chambers of commerce track impacts and outcomes by race and ethnicity.
- Consider providing public comment at City Council and County Board of Supervisor meetings to raise awareness, ask that preventative strategies be put in place, and that data be tracked.
- Support efforts to engage state and national elected officials in addressing these issues.