

Dismantling Racism Action Resource Guide

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(updated April 22, 2021)

Closing the Health Gap

Summary

Health and health care are complex, multifactorial issues. The issues of health disparities among BIPOC are well documented and have been the focus of multiple government supported initiatives both nationally and in the state of Minnesota. Actually, effecting change in the outcomes of health discrepancy measures has proven to be difficult. These are some of the factors that have been identified as contributing to poor health care outcomes including social support networks, housing - stability and safety, food security and “food deserts,” environmental safety affecting home and work, guns, financial stresses, minimum wage employment, educational opportunities, employment opportunities - stable and fulfilling, access to healthcare facilities including mental health, access to healthcare insurance, and implicit bias on the part of healthcare providers and organizations.

“We have a two-tiered health care system that provides wonderful care to those with private insurance and mediocre care to those without. The list of structural factors that make people of color sicker than their white counterparts is long. If providers’ implicit racial biases contribute to excess morbidity and mortality among people of color, we must recognize that individuals with implicit biases practice medicine within and alongside structures that compromise the health of people of color.” - quoted from Learning Opportunity #4 below.

Action Opportunities

- Check with your healthcare organization to make sure they are doing what they can to address White Supremacy culture within the organization. [Health Partners Example](#).
- Many health and insurance providers have Feedback Groups that have a surprising amount of clout on the administration of the organization. You can volunteer to be on one of these groups.
- Look for and make use of a BIPOC healthcare provider. It is stunning how White Supremacy is displayed with a healthcare provider that happens to be BIPOC.
- Volunteer at or donate to [Annex Teen Clinic](#) in Robbinsdale or [Phillips Neighborhood Clinic](#) in South Minneapolis.

Learning Opportunities

- The Commonwealth Fund provides a good overview of racial issues in healthcare – [“In Focus: Reducing Racial Disparities in Health Care by Confronting Racism”](#)
- [“Implicit Bias and Racial Disparities in Healthcare”](#) from the American Bar Association
- [“Cultivating a Healthy Equity Ecosystem”](#) from the MN Department of Health with good resources at the end
- [“Disparities in Health and Health Care: Five Key Questions and Answers”](#) from the Kaiser Family Foundation.
- [New study reveals race is a factor in infant mortality](#) reported on by The Ledger.
- [Online Harvard test](#) designed to help you explore your own implicit bias.

Closing the Wealth Gap

Summary

In 2019, the median wealth (without defined-benefit pensions) of Black households in the United States was \$24,100, compared with \$189,100 for white households. Therefore, the typical Black household had 12.7 percent of the wealth of the typical white household, and they owned \$165,000 less in wealth. The average gap is somewhat smaller in relative terms but much larger in dollar terms. The average Black household had \$142,330 in 2019 compared with \$980,549 for the average white household. This means that, on average, Black households had 14.5 percent of the wealth of white households, with an absolute dollar gap of \$838,220. The gap between Black and white households appears to have widened again in the latter part of 2020 as the pandemic and deep recession took hold, especially hurting Black Americans.

The persistent Black-white wealth gap is the result of a discriminatory economic system that has always made it difficult for Black households to acquire and keep capital, and this lack of capital has created a persistently large racial wealth disparity, as African Americans have had less wealth to pass on to the next generation than white households. Obstacles to building wealth include Black workers face labor market discrimination, the financial system often denies Black households access to investment opportunities and affordable credit, Black households face housing market discrimination making it harder for them to own a home. Additional factors such a systemically worse treatment in education, health care, and in the criminal justice system also feed into the persistent Black-white wealth gap. White households have been able to build wealth for themselves and their descendants, while whatever wealth Black families could amass was regularly stripped away.

Action Opportunities

Take action to support the [THRIVE Act](#) which offers a blueprint for economic renewal backed by unions, racial justice, climate, and other grassroots groups. The bill will be introduced in Congress in April 2021 (MN Rep. Ilhan Omar is a lead sponsor).

Learning Opportunities

The above information was provided by the Center for American Progress. Source: "[Eliminating the Black-White Wealth Gap Is a Generational Challenge](#)" by Christian E. Weller and Lily Roberts, March 19, 2021

New Policing Models

Summary

Despite the tireless work done by many police departments and communities, Black people continue to experience more frightening and potentially violent police interaction than White people. According to the Statista Research Department, between 2015 and March 2021, the [rate of fatal police shootings](#) in the US shows large differences based on ethnicity – 35 per million of Black Americans compared to 14 per million of White Americans. A new [NYU study](#) also shows that Black drivers were about 20 percent more likely to be stopped than white drivers, were searched about 1.5 to 2 times more often, and were less likely to be carrying drugs, guns, or other illegal contraband compared to their white peers. Many progressive organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Movement for Black Lives, and Campaign Zero are leading the fight for a reimagined vision of the role, presence, and responsibilities of police in America. Theories abound for how to realize this new vision of policing including:

- reducing the size and responsibilities of traditional police departments coupled with increased investment into community-based services that are better suited to respond to actual community needs
- creating and enforcing new use of force standards
- ending militarization of civilian police departments

Action Opportunities

- Educate yourself about expanded policing models like the [CAHOOTS](#) program in Eugene, Oregon and the [violence prevention effort in Minneapolis](#). Advocate for a similar program in your city.
- Request the Use of Force policy that governs your local police department and compare it to the [Model Use of Force Policy](#) developed by Campaign Zero. Advocate for change with letters to your Mayor, City Council, and Police Chief. Communicate your concerns via social media.
- Review the union contract in effect for your local police officers and identify any areas where the contract creates unfair protection for police officers. Check out Campaign Zero's [Fair Police Contracts](#) for ideas for improvement. Advocate for change with letters to your Mayor, City Council, and Police Chief. Communicate your concerns via social media.
- Research what percentage of your community's police force live in your community. Write to your mayor, city council, and police chief if you think the percentage should be increased.

Learning Opportunities

- Attend a police department citizen academy to more deeply understand how your local police department works. Offered in [Minnetonka](#), [St. Louis Park](#), [Plymouth](#), and [Eden Prairie](#)
- ["Minneapolis to shift \\$8 million from police budget amid defund the police movement"](#) from CBS News – December 2020
- ["How Do We End Racism in Policing?"](#) – ACLU web site
- ["An Agenda to End Police Violence"](#) from Campaign Zero
- Learn about the history of policing in America and its roots in white supremacy in the NPR Throughline broadcast ["American Police."](#)
- Review ["Alternative Community Security: Initiatives and Stories"](#) created by the Shanti Sena Network and Nonviolent International to learn about nonviolent models for keeping our communities safe.

Criminal Laws and Incarceration Policies

Summary

Despite making up close to 5% of the global population, the U.S. has nearly 25% of the world's prison population. Since 1970, our incarcerated population has increased by 700% – 2.3 million people in jail and prison today, far outpacing population growth and crime.

One out of every three Black boys born today can expect to go to prison in his lifetime, as can one of every six Latino boys—compared to one of every 17 white boys. At the same time, women are the fastest growing incarcerated population in the United States.

There are twice as many people sitting in local jails awaiting trial and presumed innocent than in the entire federal prison system. And each year, 650,000 men and women nationwide return from prison to their communities. They face nearly 50,000 federal, state, and local legal restrictions that make it difficult to reintegrate back into society. Our prison system costs taxpayers \$80 billion per year. This money should be spent building up, not further harming, communities. Investment, not incarceration, is how we improve safety. *(Excerpted from American Civil Liberties Union discussion of [Mass Incarceration](#))*

Action Opportunities

- Support [ACLU's petition](#) to President Biden to Bring 25,000 People Home Through Clemency
- Review the [2019 ACLU study](#) about mass incarceration in Minnesota. Select one of the key issue areas (full legalization of marijuana, eliminating cash bail, limiting pre-trial detention, capping probation terms, reducing probation revocations) and write to your Minnesota state representative and senator asking for action and change.
- Spread the work about MN mass incarceration problem in your social media channels by sharing the [ACLU Smart Justice Blueprint for Minnesota](#)

Learning Opportunities

- [“Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020”](#) by Wendy Sawyer and Peter Wagner from the Prison Policy Initiative
- [Oregon just decriminalized all drugs](#) – here's why voters passed this groundbreaking reform from The Conversation.com – December 10, 2020

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Summary

The U.S. economy was built on the exploitation and occupational segregation of people of color. Government policies and institutional practices helped create this system. Policy decisions concentrated workers of color in chronically undervalued occupations, institutionalized racial disparities in wages and benefits, and perpetuated employment discrimination.

White applicants are far more likely to be offered interviews than Black and Latinx applicants, regardless of educational attainment, gender, or labor market conditions. Surveys show that more than half of African Americans, 1 in 3 Native Americans, 1 in 4 Asian Americans, and more than 1 in 5 Latinos report experiencing racial discrimination in hiring, compensation, and promotion considerations.

According to the MN House Report of the Select Committee on Racial Justice (Dec. 2020), compared to White Minnesotans, Asian people earn 94 cents on the dollar, Black people earn 71 cents, Latinx people earn 70 cents, and Indigenous people earn 68 cents. As a result, poverty rates in Minnesota are especially high among Black (28.6 percent) and Indigenous Minnesotans (28.2 percent).

Action Opportunities

Policy Change. Learn about the federal [Protecting the Right to Organize Act of 2021](#). It is said to be the most significant worker empowerment legislation since the Great Depression. The bill empowers workers to exercise their freedom to organize and negotiate for better wages and working conditions. It will remove archaic barriers to organizing, increase worker protections and strengthen the institutions that hold corporations accountable. It will repeal the “right to work” laws that lead to lower wages, fewer benefits and more dangerous workplaces

Address Racism in YOUR Workplace. Speak up whenever you witness inequality, hold perpetrators accountable, support historically black colleges and universities in addition to minority-owned companies, examine recruiting and hiring policies and practices and change them to root out racial bias, analyze compensation structures, facilitate more opportunities to promote Black, indigenous, people of color into leadership positions (not just DEI execs) and support them.

Learning Opportunities

- [“Systematic Inequality and Economic Opportunity”](#) by Danyelle Solomon, Connor Maxwell, and Abril Castro, August 7, 2019
- [“Systemic Racism In The Workplace: How To Move From Acknowledgment To Lasting Change”](#) by Dr. Carol Parker Walsh, Jun 29, 2020

Equitable Education

Summary

One example of institutional racism is how children of color are treated within the U.S. education system. On average, children of color are disciplined more harshly than their white peers. They are also less likely to be identified as gifted and have less access to quality teachers. Minnesota's Achievement Gap between children of color and white children is among the highest in the nation.

Children's outcomes can be predicted by their demographic characteristics, the color of their skin, their family's income bracket, and their home language. These inequities begin before birth and follow children into the early care and education system with which they interact. Discrepancies in brain development are seen during a child's first 1,000 days and persist absent effective intervention.

White supremacy is also reinforced in predominantly white school systems. Children of color are often tracked into less challenging classes, and many report being bullied and lacking support. History and social studies taught in K-12 schools emphasize white people's history through a white lens and fail to include the true history of people of color. Predominantly white school systems often fail to prepare white students for life and work in an equitable, multi-cultural setting. In general, anti-racism is not taught.

Action Opportunities

- [Minnetonka Coalition for Equitable Education](#) – Follow [MCEE on Facebook](#) and check out their [website](#). Get involved in their events and activities including their efforts to elect Minnetonka School Board members that support their efforts to ensure racial justice in the Minnetonka school system. Invite MCEE members to come and speak with your faith community.
- [Education for Liberation MN](#) – Attend one of their events or get involved in one of their projects

Learning Opportunities

- [MN House Report](#) of the Select Committee on Racial Justice Dec. 2020 pp.18 – 22; pp. 40 - 41
- [Being an Antiracist](#) from the National Museum of African American History and Culture - includes excellent chart of Important Elements of Antiracist Education
- Learn about the [legal challenge to segregation in NYC schools](#)

Housing Disparity

Summary

The issues of the White Supremacy culture form the foundation of our housing inequality. These issues were not always present in a codified form. Indeed, in the late 19th and early 20th century people of color lived in a wide swath of our cities. Step by step BIPOC were restricted from the very homes they grew up in and our citizenry intentionally became more segregated. The legislative codification of redlining, the New Deal, and the GI Bill all served to destroy the ability of BIPOC to choose and purchase a home of their liking. This was amplified by racist lending practices and racial restriction covenants placed on deeds. Today, the compressed population of BIPOC in the Twin Cities still looks very much like it did in 1968, despite the Fair Housing Act.

In 1968, Congress passed the Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) which outlawed housing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. In 1988, it was expanded to prohibit discrimination based on familial status (e.g. the presence of children) or disability. In recent years the Fair Housing Act has come under fire.

Action Opportunities

- Contact the [National Association of Real Estate Brokers – Twin Cities](#) to hire a BIPOC realtor when buying or selling your home
- Get involved with a local organization working to provide affordable housing in Minnesota
 - [Homes Within Reach](#) – West Hennepin Affordable Housing Land Trust
 - [Beacon](#) - Interfaith Housing Collaborative
 - [Habitat for Humanity](#) - Advocate, Donate, Build
 - [Edina Neighbors for Affordable Housing](#) – all volunteer organization of Edina residents
 - Minnetonka Housing Team – contact Cynthia at cynthiafarkasjung576@gmail.com

Learning Opportunities

- [Kare 11 News report](#) that discusses racial covenants, which prevented BIPOC from owning or living in homes in certain Twin Cities areas and how they led to today's housing disparities.
- [Blog article from Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity](#) that traces the history of the segregation in the Twin Cities and the impact of redlining and The New Deal on BIPOC communities. It offers opportunities for individuals and groups (congregations) to volunteer.
- History Channel article [“How the GI Bill’s Promise Was Denied to a Million Black WWII Veterans.”](#) illustrates how the GI Bill added to the wealth divide and made it harder for African Americans to get a loan.
- Center for American Progress article [“3 Ways HUD Is Using Regulatory Attacks to Dismantle Fair Housing Protections”](#) discusses changing regulations during the Trump administration designed to dismantle the fairness in the Fair Housing act.
- Wilder Foundation article [“Minnesota’s Unsheltered Homeless: Understanding Who’s Affected.”](#)
- University of Minnesota website [Mapping Prejudice](#) exposes the covenants that limited where BIPOC could buy homes. Many times this stopped BIPOC from participating in the expanding and financially enriching Twin Cities real estate market.

Immigration Policies and Practices

Summary

Federal laws that criminalize immigrants were first [promoted by eugenicists](#) in the early 20th Century. Coleman Livingston Blease, a white supremacist Senator from South Carolina, [introduced the law](#) criminalizing border crossings to please nativists who wanted to stop Mexican migration during the 1920s. The law was broadly written to harness growing anti-Mexican sentiment and punish unauthorized entry by barred classes like Asian immigrants. Blease's law [passed](#) and became 8 U.S.C. § 1325, ultimately subjecting any immigrant who entered the U.S. outside a lawful entry point to fines and imprisonment. The law has been utilized in the decades since to ascribe immigrants with criminality and then penalize immigrants for that association. (sourced from the National Immigrant Justice Center)

Action Opportunities

Two of the most harmful, costly, and unnecessary provisions in federal immigration law are [1325](#) and [1326](#) of Title 8 U.S.C., which make it a federal crime for someone to enter the U.S. somewhere other than an official port of entry. The [legislative history](#) of these provisions reveals them to have been born from white supremacist ideology and politics.

Striking these harmful laws would leave border crossing as a [civil offense](#), rather than a federal crime. Such repeal is a critical and necessary step toward a humane and just approach to migration law and policy. As long as they remain on the books, Section 1325 and 1326 will fuel the unjust incarceration of immigrants and leave children permanently scarred by the trauma of separation. These are federal laws that require organizing and strategizing on a national level.

- Following organizations like the [National Immigrant Justice Center](#) will be an important first step for anyone looking to engage this work. Immigration and migration justice issues occur locally in Minnesota, as well.
- Those interested in local work might connect with [Interfaith Coalition on Migration](#) (ICOM) or the [Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee](#) (MIRAC).

Learning Opportunities

[“Decriminalizing Migration: Ending Prosecutions for Border Crossing Violations”](#) by Jesse Franzblau

Unions and Labor Laws

Summary

“The operators of global capital, who have representatives in both US political parties, use a system of white supremacy and structural racism to keep working people disorganized and isolated from each other so that they do not collectively (and successfully) disrupt the owners’ ability to continue to concentrate resources among a tiny, select few. And thus, in order to truly confront global capitalism and reverse the dramatic trends of inequality in the US and elsewhere, the struggle against white supremacy must be a central element of any strategy to build working class power.”

(Quoted from Smiley, Erica (2017) “Time to Tackle the Whole Squid: Confronting White Supremacy to Build Shared Bargaining Power,” Class, Race and Corporate Power: Vol. 5: Issue 2, Article 2)

Action Opportunities

- Show your support for Amazon workers and their unfolding unionization by [sending a personalized email](#) to Jeff Bezos
- Read the article [“Roots Deeper than Whiteness”](#) from White Awake for historic analysis and [take action with the AFL-CIO](#) to promote union building and protect worker’s well-being.

Learning Opportunities

- [“Labor Unions and White Racial Politics”](#) by Paul Frymer and Jacob M. Grumbach
- [“Why Amazon’s Union Vote Matters”](#) – NYT Article by Shira Ovide
- ["Time to Tackle the Whole Squid: Confronting White Supremacy to Build Shared Bargaining Power," Class, Race and Corporate Power: Vol. 5 : Iss. 2 , Article 2.](#)
- Purchase and read *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* by Barbara J. Fields and Karen Elise Fields

Voting Rights and Processes

Summary

Voter suppression is a fundamental attack on democracy. The right to vote is among the most fundamental and sacred rights in American democracy. Yet far too many Americans, especially Black and brown Americans, are deprived of this right. In 2021, lawmakers in 43 states, including Minnesota, have filed more than 250 bills that would restrict voting and disenfranchise voters.

This year, state legislatures and local governments will begin the redistricting process, which is even more prone to corruption given the lack of transparency with which many states approach their constitutional duty to redraw political lines. The U.S Census Bureau's new deadline for releasing population figures for county and local jurisdictions is September, 2021.

Affirmatively and comprehensively codifying the right to vote in the Constitution—and banning the laws and practices that have compromised that right over the centuries—could help realize the unfulfilled promise of democracy and ensure every American has full access to the franchise. Congress could pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would reinstate the requirement (stricken by the Supreme Court) that new voting laws and procedures in jurisdictions with histories of discrimination must be approved by the U.S. Department of Justice. Also receiving attention are proposals to reform the electoral college, and institution of ranked choice voting.

Action Opportunities

- [League of Women Voters of MN](#) – especially their [#FairMaps Redistricting](#) program and the national [Stop Voter Suppression](#) initiative
- [League of Women Voters of Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, Hopkins](#)
- [Fair Vote MN](#) - Ranked choice voting in MN for more inclusive representative democracy
- [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) - Advocating for voting rights across the nation
- [Fair Fight](#) – Stacey Abrams organization promoting voting rights in Georgia and across the nation with a focus on [H.R. 1 – For the People Act of 2021](#)
- [The Frontline](#) - a new initiative from the Working Families Party and the Movement for Black Lives Electoral Justice Project that aims to forge a Black-led, multiracial coalition that can carry forward the energy of the uprising – “the largest social movement in U.S. history” – in both electoral and non-electoral forms.
- [Voter Action Project](#) – support vote by mail for all Americans
- Educate yourself about the [voting legislation](#) proposed by the Minnesota Senate and communicate with your MN Representative and Senator about it.

Learning Opportunities

- [Demos Next 20](#) - Introducing the [Inclusive Democracy Agenda](#)
- [Georgia Takes Aim at Sunday Voting](#) – an article from the New York Times
- Explore the [Brennan Center for Justice's voting rights](#) information and consider signing up for their newsletter