

COVID 19 RACIAL DISPARITIES



WHAT CAN CITIES DO?

Wondering what cities and counties can do to close the gap on Covid-19 racial disparities?

This report highlights best practices in 10 cities throughout the country, from innovative public-private partnerships to equity frameworks for Covid recovery...



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ATLANTA CAPSTONE STUDENTS

OCTOBER, 2020



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, MN

TARGETING DISPARITY AT ITS ROOTS

[The City's initiatives](#) address the root causes of Covid-19 and address health and well-being impacts on Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities by:

- Providing culturally sensitive COVID-19 messages to BIPOC communities
- Connecting with BIPOC communities through schools, local faith groups, housing properties, business, rental and income assistance programs
- Encouraging volunteering at a local food bank that helps low-income individuals and families regardless of citizenship status
- Supporting the work of the City's Racial Equity Coordinator to prioritize integrating race and equity principles into all City operations, projects, and services

"THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO ACT ON THOSE THINGS THAT WE'VE ALREADY BEEN DOING OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS.

WE CAN PRIORITIZE RACIAL EQUITY AND ACT WITH MORE URGENCY IN ORDER TO ADDRESS SOME OF THOSE ROOT CAUSES"

- FAITH JACKSON, RACIAL EQUITY COORDINATOR

(Source: [City of Bloomington, 2020](#)).



**"...EVERYTHING WE DO
IS LASER FOCUSED ON
ENDING SYSTEMIC
RACISM AND
ACHIEVING RACIAL
EQUITY IN OUR CITY."**

**- MARTIN J. WALSH, MAYOR
OF BOSTON**

(Source: [Markos, 2020](#)).

CITY OF BOSTON, MA

RECOVERY BUILT ON EQUITY

The City launched the [Boston Resiliency Fund](#), raising \$32.4 million dollars and supporting 247 non-profits and over 225,000 Boston families by:

- Providing 645,000 prepared meals and distributed 478,000 by partnering with the food bank, hiring 55 unemployed workers for food distribution and 20 local minority-owned restaurants to cook meals
- Providing 1000 families with a one-month supply of diapers and formula
- Funding 18 community health centers for Covid-19 testing, and 21 with expanded telehealth services Distributing \$1.1 million to families that did not qualify for federal coronavirus relief
- Distributing 7,200 gift cards for families to use at local grocery stores
- Purchasing 8,000 chromebooks for students to support remote learning

Other City initiatives:

- Creating a -19 Health Equities Task Force and declaring racism a public health crisis
- [Providing free confidential Covid testing](#) for disproportionately impacted neighborhoods (including walk-up options, no registration required);
- Established a \$6 million rental relief and small business fund (Reopen Boston Fund)
- Eased small business licensing restrictions to help small businesses and created the Boston Tax Help Coalition to help low-income residents eligible to receive federal stimulus checks



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**"WE'RE SEEING THIS
MANIFEST IN LARGE
URBAN AREAS WITH
LARGE BLACK
POPULATIONS....**

**OTHER PLACES ARE
EXPERIENCING THE
SAME THING, BUT WE
ARE GOING TO STEP UP
AND DO SOMETHING
ABOUT IT"**

**- LORI LIGHTFOOT, MAYOR OF
CHICAGO**

(Source: [Corley, 2020](#)).

CITY OF CHICAGO, IL

RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

- Launched a [Racial Equity Rapid Response Team](#) (RERRT) to address needs in black and Latinx neighborhoods including jobs, health care, and food
- Distributed 750,000 free masks in disproportionately impacted neighborhoods
- Created a [Covid-19 Recovery Task Force](#)
- Passed an [anti-retaliation ordinance](#) to prohibit employers from punishing employee for obeying Covid-related government orders
- Establishing testing facilities in each targeted area
- Partnering with the Greater Chicago Food Repository on [food distribution sites](#) to feed 1,000 families per week for six weeks
- [Partnering with three dozen](#) Chicago health care organizations to combat systemic racism in healthcare, distribute PPE in disproportionately affected neighborhoods, and improve access to care
- Education and outreach, including [virtual town hall meetings](#) hosted by trusted community partners
- Chicago Transit Authority [shifting larger buses](#) into predominantly black areas to aid in social distancing to and from work



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**"[DECLARING] RACISM
IS A PUBLIC HEALTH
CRISIS, REALLY
MOTIVATED US TO BE
MORE INTENTIONAL
ABOUT TRACKING
WHERE COVID WAS IN
OUR COMMUNITIES"**

**- JEANETTE KOWALIK,
MILWAUKEE HEALTH
COMMISSIONER**

(Source: [Mock, 2020](#).)

CITY OF MILWAUKEE, MN

RACISM AS PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

- [Quickly identified](#) racial disparities in testing, infection, and death using county data
- Doubled testing in the most vulnerable communities
- Developed culturally relevant messaging to reach diverse communities
- Declared [racism a public health crisis](#)—becoming the first city in the country to do so
- Used police powers to [adopt/enforce public health ordinances](#) (e.g., masks, isolation orders, etc.)
- Provided 300,000 free masks to residents
- Collaborated with community partners like federally qualified health centers to reach Latinx communities



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**"GETTING A FREE TEST
HERE IS SAFE AND
CONFIDENTIAL AND IT
WILL NOT
IMPACT YOUR
IMMIGRATION STATUS"**

- LIBBY SCHAAF, MAYOR OF
OAKLAND

(Source: [Melendez, 2020](#)).

CITY OF OAKLAND, CA

INCLUSIVE TESTING STRATEGIES

- Increased testing in disproportionately impacted neighborhoods, with the [Mayor visibly promoting free, confidential testing](#) that did not affect immigration status
- To reach disproportionately impacted populations, census workers within the City of [Oakland also ask residents](#) if they want coronavirus testing
- Established a [Covid-19 Racial Disparities Task Force](#).
Examples of recommendations included:
 - Developing a Covid vulnerability index to inform equitable decisions;
 - Proactively collecting demographic data to inform equity strategies;
 - Proactive health check-ins for high-risk populations



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"TRUSTED COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE CITY... VETTED ELIGIBILITY AND DISTRIBUTED FUNDS TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN MORE THAN A DOZEN DIFFERENT SPOKEN LANGUAGES"

- LAUREN COX, OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

(Source: [Flinn Jay, 2020](#).)

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, PA

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

- Established a [Philadelphia Worker Relief Fund](#) utilizing a public-private partnership (the Mayor's Fund) to raise \$3 million
- Provided emergency cash assistance to families and workers who did not receive any COVID-19 assistance (federal or state)
- Partnered with 14 community-based organizations to distribute funds and one-time \$800 gift cards
- Provided funding support for [Black Doctors Covid-19 Consortium to test more than 10,000 residents](#) free of charge and [offer walk-up testing](#) at community-events hosted by local community members to promote trust



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**"COVID-19 DOES NOT
DISCRIMINATE.
ANYONE CAN GET IT..."**

**BUT WE ALSO KNOW
SOME PEOPLE
ARE MORE
VULNERABLE THAN
OTHERS. THIS
INCLUDES PEOPLE OF
COLOR"**

**- ADAM BELLOW, MONROE
COUNTY**
(Source: [Spicer, 2020](#)).

ROCHESTER CITY + MONROE COUNTY

CITY AND COUNTY WORK TOGETHER

- Both municipalities [partnered with health and medical facilities on initiatives](#) to reduce racial and ethnic disparities related to COVID-19
- Two new respiratory health clinics, including a mobile site [Monroe](#)
- [County partnered with Foodlink](#) to distribute emergency food supply boxes throughout the county at no-touch drive-through sites
- City of Rochester collaborated with United Way to distribute over 2,000 laptops to students in Grade 5 and under to support virtual learning and close the digital divide
- Mailed masks to every household in the city
- ["Protect your Circle"](#) multi-media (in 10 languages) and public art campaign



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SAN ANTONIO, TX

EQUITY FRAMEWORK FOR DECISIONS

**"OUR COMMUNITY
HEALTH WORKERS ...
HAVE DONE A LOT OF
COMMUNITY
EDUCATION —
SPECIFICALLY IN THE
WEST SIDE, THE EAST
SIDE [AND] THE SOUTH
SIDE — SO THAT
PEOPLE UNDERSTAND
THEIR RISKS [AND]
UNDERSTAND HOW TO
PROTECT
THEMSELVES"**

- JUNDA WOO, METRO
HEALTH MEDICAL DIRECTOR

(Source: [Peck, 2020](#))

- The City's Office of Equity developed a [Covid-19 Equity Framework and Rapid Response Tool](#) to ensure all decisions made by the City examine how Latinx and BIPOC communities would be affected
- Identified testing disparities in underserved neighborhoods and housing challenges using the equity matrix
- Concentrated outreach efforts in the census tracts that needed it most by partnering with the metropolitan health district
- Provided \$75 million for the [Covid-19 Workforce Recovery Program](#) to create a city-funded training program for unemployed San Antonians, from CARES funding and the city's general fund
- Free pop up testing sites that rotate around different parts of the city every week
- Passed a \$191 million ["Recovery and Resiliency Plan"](#) using federal and city dollars to provide job training, rent assistance, small business grants



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**"OUR LATINO
COMMUNITY HAS
BORNE THE BRUNT OF
THE COVID PANDEMIC
NOT JUST HERE IN SAN
FRANCISCO, BUT
ACROSS THE COUNTRY"**

**- LONDON BREED, MAYOR OF
SAN FRANCISCO**

(Source: [Sanchez, 2020](#)).

CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, CA

PARTNERING WITH LATINX ORGANIZATIONS

- Permanent and pop-up testing sites placed in 20K or less low-income communities, disproportionately impacted neighborhoods, and several apartment complexes
- [Approved \\$28.5 million for Latino communities](#) to combat Covid-19, including funds for testing, housing subsidies and eviction prevention, food access, family support, and small business/workforce assistance
- Partnered with the Latino Parity and Equity Coalition to focus resources on the community, as Latinos comprised 50% of Covid-19 cases
- [Provided subsidies](#) for workers unable to collect unemployment or sick leave and hotel rooms for affected residents living in close quarters with family members



**"... IN THE WAKE OF
COVID-19...OUR
COMMUNITY COMES
TOGETHER TO FIGHT
THE INJUSTICE OF
RACIAL INEQUALITY..."**

**OUR COLLECTIVE
RESILIENCE AND
COMMITMENT TO HELP
EACH OTHER WILL
CARRY US THROUGH"**

**- SAM LICCARDO, MAYOR OF
SAN JOSE**

(Source: [City of San Jose, 2020](#)).

CITY OF SAN JOSE, CA

STRATEGIC TAX BREAKS

- [Tax break](#) for 6,000 small businesses (e.g., nail salons, etc)
- Adopted a city-wide [anti-displacement strategy](#) to prevent residential displacement of low-income San Jose residents
- Created a [Racial Equity Task Force](#) to study various impacts of Covid-19 on low income communities of color in Santa Clara County, with recommendations including expanded rent relief, expanded reporting on the county's dashboard, and enhanced testing
- Established an [Office of Racial Equity](#) with a \$300,000 budget
- Provided [11,000 students with hotspots](#) to support distance learning
- Through CARES Act funds, allocated [\\$1.5 million for loans](#) and grants to home-based and small childcare providers
- [San Jose Viva Al Fresco](#) funding and ordinance for outdoor programs to assist small businesses



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MORE GREAT TOOLS

THINGS WE LOVED!

- National League of Cities' [Equity Resolution for Cities](#) offers a template for cities that wish to adopt their own equity resolutions, plus talking points and examples of equitable Covid-19 solutions
- Great Covid-19 disparity task force reports such as Chicago's [Forward Together](#), Los Angeles County's [Covid-19 Racial, Socioeconomic Data & Strategies Report](#), State of Oregon's [Covid Equity Framework in Covid-19 Response & Recovery](#) (plus City' of Philadelphia's user-friendly [executive summary](#))
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' [fact sheet](#) with examples of local and state initiatives to address disparate impact of Covid-19 on blacks and other communities of color, from outreach to language assistance to civil rights enforcements.
- KansasHealthMatters.org's powerful [Disparities Dashboard](#) allows residents to easily see and understand Covid-19 and all other health disparities in an understandable manner
- City of Rochester's stellar "Rochester's Recovery" website clearly shows how to get help, resources, and the City's actions: <https://www.jumpstartingroc.com/>
- Detroit's [\\$2 ride shares](#) for those who lack transportation to testing sites (fee can also be waived).



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WANT MORE?
TO LEARN WHAT STATES
CAN DO,
VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

[HTTPS://COVID19DISPARITIES.ONLINE/](https://COVID19DISPARITIES.ONLINE/)



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