



NAEH COVID-19 Webinar Series: Ensuring Racial Equity During the COVID-19 Homelessness Response

Key Takeaways

The pace of African Americans dying from COVID-19 has brought racial inequity into clear focus.

- Because of historic and systemic racism/racist policies, African Americans tend to be poorer and are more likely to be underemployed, live in substandard housing and in areas with food deserts, and lack access to adequate health care
 - Coupled with African Americans being more likely to have pre-existing conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and heart disease because of historic and systemic racism, these factors make COVID-19 particularly dangerous for this group

Systems should design an equitable response to COVID-19.

- Implementing measures like uniform and inclusive data collection (e.g., race and housing status) can inform how funding like the stimulus package should be distributed to meet the needs of the marginalized groups most severely impacted by the pandemic

Long-term systems change is needed to address racial inequity.

- Service providers should have an understanding of the impact structural racism and racial bias have on [African Americans experiencing homelessness](#).
 - Using a racial equity lens informs organizations about who is most vulnerable, what services are needed, when services are provided, and how the work is done
- Fewer than 20% of Black workers are able to work from home because they are overrepresented among service workers or essential staff (e.g., outreach workers)
 - These positions typically have less power in an organization and are in the lowest salary bracket

Organizations should consider ways to compensate frontline staff.

- Measures such as hazard pay and bonuses are ways to value staff at all levels equally

Continue to advocate for measures that protect frontline staff.

- Expand tele-health services
- Consider resources needed for front-line heroes to balance time with their own families and to take on challenging work during the pandemic