



## Noticing & Repairing Broken Social Systems during the Coronavirus Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to worsen social inequities that have long been the norm within our interdependent systems. Each day, news headlines reveal how our economic, healthcare, criminal justice, and other systems intersect. Historically marginalized communities continue to be most impacted financially by this crisis, and many people from these communities work in essential jobs that have been key for ensuring people continue to have the materials they need while sheltering-in-place.

To create a more just society, we must change the power dynamics that have exploited certain communities throughout history. In this moment, we must acknowledge the ways in which our systems are failing people at a time when we need them most. We must offer a new path forward. This document is designed to highlight some resources that can help us to weather the pandemic responsibly and emerge from it with a more equitable mindset—one that is built on community care and solidarity.

### **Who can benefit from these resources?**

After considering many resources, we've compiled the ones that we found most useful for nonprofits, values-aligned banks, and businesses interested in how they can be allied with those in need during the pandemic.

Making socially responsible decisions isn't just good—it's good for business. With the COVID-19 pandemic leading us into an economic recession, consider what researchers looking at the last global recession found: ["B Corps had a greater revenue growth rate than public firms of comparable size... underscoring that an all-stakeholder governance model can translate to better financial performance and lower risk for investors in the long term."](#)

## **Resources**

### **How to talk about the pandemic:**

Language is important because it gives us all a common framework to communicate. According to the [World Health Organization](#), the most accurate term for the disease is COVID-19, which is an abbreviation derived from Corona Virus Disease 2019. When referring to the disease, it is important to refrain from using language that may disparage a person based on race, ethnicity, nationality or country, as such terms tend to perpetuate misinformation and bias.

For more guidance on language and narratives related to COVID-19, please see the resources below:

- [How to Talk about COVID-19: Narratives to Support Good Decision-Making and Collective Action](#) (PDF). This publication by New Zealand communications nonprofit, The Workshop, explores how to communicate around COVID-19 from a place of hope and compassion.
- [Talking about Coronavirus: Centering Language around Inclusion, Empowerment, and Justice](#). This post on the Opportunity Agenda website provides a concise framework for constructive messaging around COVID-19.
- [Pandemic Metaphors: Tracking the Narrative](#). This post on the Public Interest Research Centre website tracks prominent metaphors currently in use around COVID-19, and their implications.

### **Who is most impacted:**

#### *Socioeconomic Factors*

Due to social inequality, trends in health disparities occur along racial and class lines. Certain groups are disproportionately impacted by both the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. The reasons for this include differences in social and economic status, combined with the fact that people of color are more likely to live in urban areas and work in essential industries. Data shows that a disproportionate number of Black Americans are dying from COVID-19. And many southern states are observing more deaths among young people due to underlying health conditions associated with poor access to medical care. While these trends may not be surprising, the results remain shocking for the affected communities. It is important for us to do what we can to reverse them.

These articles provide insight on how racism and discrimination worsen public health outcomes:

- [Mapping racial inequity amid COVID-19 underscores policy discriminations against Black Americans](#) – Brookings Institute
- [The Coronavirus's Unique Threat to the South](#) – The Atlantic
- [Coronavirus could 'decimate' Latino wealth, which was hammered by the Great Recession](#) – NBC News
- [Younger Blacks and Latinos are dying of COVID-19 at higher rates in California](#) – Los Angeles Times

- [Four Graphs that Show How Financially Vulnerable Americans Will Bear the Brunt of COVID-19](#) – Financial Health Network

#### *People in Custody and Institutions*

Prisons, jails, immigration detention centers, and other institutions within the prison industrial complex are notorious for overcrowding and poor sanitation. Thus, people who are detained in such institutions are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 exposure. Because of this, some have called for the release of [“nonviolent offenders.”](#) Going a step further, the pandemic is causing some leaders to [reflect on the design and effectiveness](#) of these institutions in the first place.

This webinar recording explores this issue in greater detail:

- [National Emergency Webinar on COVID-19 and Criminal Legal and Immigrant Detention Systems](#) – The Justice Collaborative

#### *Gender Considerations*

Disease outbreaks can serve to reinforce gender inequality by reducing access to reproductive healthcare and childcare, as well as by increasing risk of exposure to domestic violence. Additionally, women represent most of the health and social sector workforce, a population that is inherently at greater risk of infection due to the nature of their jobs. While some reports show that the virus can be more fatal for men if infected, it is important to recognize the challenges women face, whether experiencing illness or dealing with the economic fallout from this pandemic.

To learn more about gender considerations of COVID-19, we recommend checking out these resources:

- [COVID-19: A Gender Lens](#) – United Nations Population Fund
- [Local Advocacy: Centering Girls\\* in COVID-19 Responses Workshop Series](#) – Alliance for Girls

#### **How to take further action:**

You can take action to fight for social justice during the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to stay well informed, supporting organizations that are working toward a more just recovery, and exploring some of the resources below:

- [List for Allies on How to Help During Pandemic.](#) This list is curated and updated by health care workers and medical social networks.
- [#ShareMyCheck campaign.](#) For those in the position to donate, this is a campaign to encourage wealth redistribution by donating your stimulus check to those who need it most.
- [Showing Up for Racial Justice.](#) This is a national network of groups and individuals working to undermine white supremacy and to work toward racial justice. Local chapters are doing what they can to protect and care for the most vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Other helpful resources on social justice & COVID-19:**

- [Human Rights Dimensions of the COVID-19 Response](#) – Human Rights Watch
- [Ten Equity Implications of the Coronavirus COVID-19 Outbreak in the United States](#) (PDF) – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- [COVID-19 Response Strategy Mini Equity Audit](#) – Beloved Community
- [Social Justice in a time of Social Distancing](#) (PDF) – Design Studio for Social Intervention
- [COVID-19 Racial Equity & Social Justice Resources](#) – Racial Equity Tools

*We are always learning and happy to help amplify tools that are in line with our values and our mission to change the banking system for good. Do you have an especially useful resource related to social justice and COVID-19 that you would like to share? [Contact us](#).*

Thanks for reading and please **stay safe!**