



# Communities Count

## Racism as a Public Health Crisis: What is the Role of Data?

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Communities of Opportunity, June 2021



Communities Count is a resource that supports King County communities in the use of data to promote and achieve equity. Communities Count does this by: Providing data support and trainings to King County communities & Highlighting data on disparities, inequities and strengths in our community.

We are a public – private partnership, with staff based in Public Health – Seattle & King County.

## Land Acknowledgement

We gather today on the ancestral land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People.

We honor with gratitude the land itself and the Duwamish Tribe, and all of the Native people who call King County home.

This acknowledgement is one small step against the erasure of our Native communities. In addition to the Duwamish, King County is home to the traditional lands of the Muckleshoot, Snoqualmie, and Tulalip tribes and other Coast Salish people. Today, King County is home to a vibrant and diverse community of indigenous people from across North America and beyond. Resources:  
<https://www.duwamishtribe.org/land-acknowledgement>  
<https://www.realrentduwamish.org/land-acknowledgement.html>

# Acknowledgements

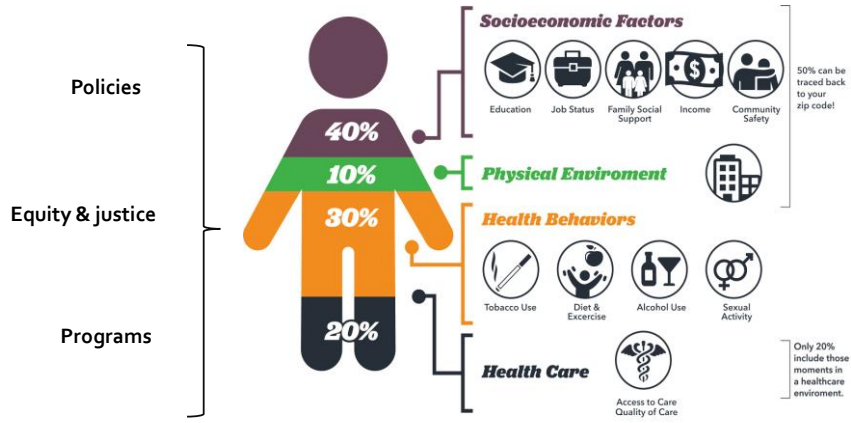
- This workshop is supported by the [Communities of Opportunity \(COO\) Learning Community](#).
- COO is a public-private-community initiative, funded by King County through [Best Starts for Kids](#) and the [Seattle Foundation](#), that works through community-driven partnerships to create greater racial, economic, and health equity so that all youth, families and communities in King County thrive and prosper. The COO [Learning Community](#) leverages the power of collective knowledge to accelerate change, focusing on providing resources for shared learning opportunities, building critical connections, supporting capacity building, and the creation of equity tools, models and conditions that actualize the thriving communities we envision.
- Visit <http://www.coopartnerships.org> to learn more.



## Meeting Norms

- Kids, pets, and sweats are ok!
- Take care of yourself: Snacks and drinks are welcome. Take a break if you need one.
- We love to see your faces and welcome you to be on camera if you would like to, but feel free to stay off-camera if you are more comfortable that way.
- We will be monitoring chat as well as pausing to invite spoken questions.
- Respect the experiences and perspectives others share.
- *Optional*: Introduce yourself in the chat, with your name and organization!

# What influences health & wellbeing?



This presentation will cover some elements related to socioeconomic factors, physical environment, health behaviors, and healthcare. It is also important to note that policies, equity/justice, and programs all impact an individual’s experience and access to these resources.

Image source: <https://noahhelps.org/sdoh/>

Percentages from County Health Rankings model:

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/measures-data-sources/county-health-rankings-model>

## Introduction

- Oppressive systems and racism continue to create disparities in access to services, resource allocation, economic opportunities, and health outcomes.
- In 2020, COVID-19 intensified this spotlight to highlight how communities of color are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- Communities of color experience higher rates of underlying health conditions and are less likely to have access to quality health care.
- The presentation will highlight the impact of policies and systems with data snapshots across the lifespan.

Oppressive systems and racism continue to create disparities in access to services, education, economic attainment, and life expectancies for communities of color. In 2020, COVID-19 intensified this spotlight to highlight how communities of color are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 - often driven by underlying disparities. This includes the degree to which communities of color experience higher rates of underlying health conditions and are less likely to have access to quality health care.

The presentation will highlight different snapshots across the lifespan including: infant mortality, housing, food insecurity, unemployment, economic insecurity, and life expectancy as well as a few policies that impact each though we know in reality policies, discrimination, systemic racism, and access to resources do not occur in isolated moments but rather occur dynamically and often simultaneously throughout the entire lifespan and across generations drive these inequities.

# The Role of Data



- The role of policy in data:
  - Office of Management & Budget (OMB) definition of 5 race/ethnicity categories: American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, White
  - This does not reflect the variety of diverse racial/ethnic groups
  - These aggregate racial/ethnic categories provides an inaccurate reality of unique and highly diverse populations which can result in invisibility in policy considerations at the federal, state, and local level.
- Policies impact data collection, and data impacts policies
  - Community engagement is essential for both!
- Community engagement, translations/interpretation, and outreach are important in this cycle

We see this conversation as part of this never ending feedback process where data collection and dissemination changes as a result of community engagement. Just want to make sure we are responsive to what folks have told us for the data that we're sharing today, we're referring to the whole population of King County. But we don't have one definition for every purpose or project - for example with some projects we connect directly with families and young people, for others we work with community-led organizations

This presentation is due in part to feedback from community to look at the historical context and identify what are the structural reasons for the inequities we see. Before going into the data itself, we want to make sure to take some time to actually address the role of data in general in perpetuating inequities.

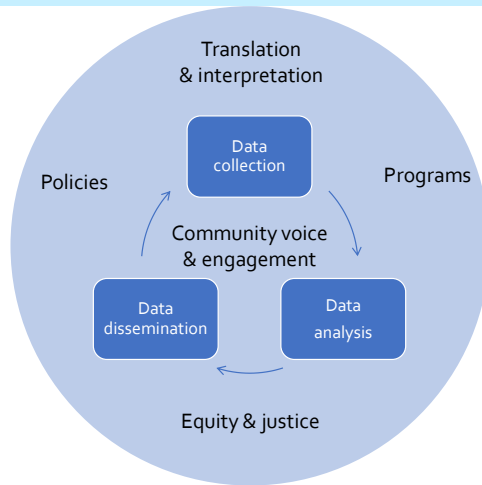
We have often heard that existing racial and ethnic categories do not necessarily correspond to the identities of groups. This is actually in policy. And we and community continue to push back against those- which we will show in a couple slides.

Community engagement is NOT done by the institutions in charge of data collection and policy: this has been a key driver of data that has harmed communities.

# Data Cycle

**Data sovereignty:** the right to govern the collection, ownership, and application of one's own data

**Data justice:** examples include culturally adapted surveys & tools, translation, centering community voice & knowledge



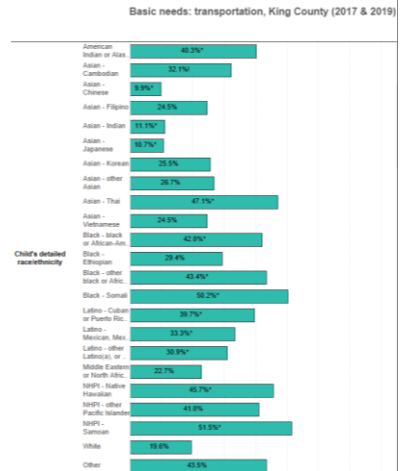
**Data equity should be incorporated** in funding, motivation, project design, data collection & sourcing, analysis, interpretation, and communication & distribution

We see this conversation as part of our overall data cycle. At the heart of the work should be community voice and engagement to inform all the other parts of the circle. We are hoping to engage in conversations around decolonizing traditional data collection standards, collecting community stories, and disaggregating data all of which are important components of the data cycle.



## Examples of steps we are taking

- Community led data collection to highlight community stories (Communities of Opportunity)
- Disaggregated data in Best Starts for Kids Health Survey: NHPI, Asian, Black, Latinx (examples: Samoan, Ethiopian, Cambodian, Mexican)
- Disaggregated data in Healthy Youth Survey: Asian
- Qualitative data collection: [Youth and Young Adult Gun Violence Report](#); [LGBTQ Spotlight Report](#)
- [Data dives](#) for Best Starts for Kids Health Survey
- Adding question about racial discrimination to statewide Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (adults)



Last part of this background before going to the data itself. Thus far, what have we as Communities Count and the larger APDE done so far?

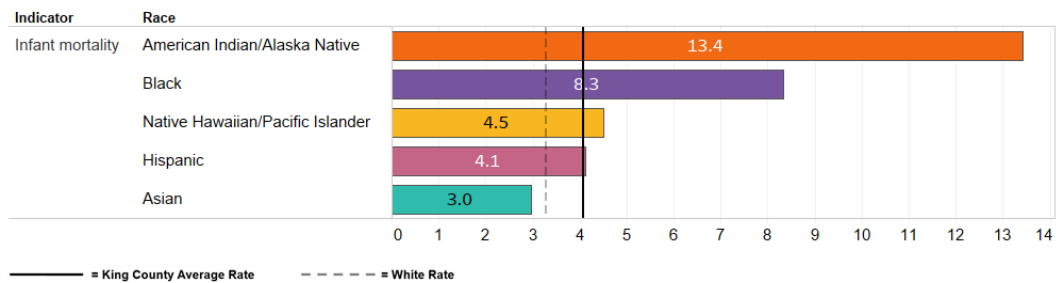
"Wherever we can collect and share data that is disaggregated by more specific racial/ethnic identities, we do"

CHNA reports are released every 3 years (not yearly)

# Infant Mortality: Data

Babies born to American Indian/Alaska Native and Black mothers are over twice as likely to die in their first year of life as King County average.

Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births), King County average (2012-2016)



Source: WA State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificates

## Infant Mortality: Summary

- Infant mortality is linked to stress that accumulates for women of color from generational and lifetime experiences of racial discrimination and systemic oppression.
- These inequities all take a toll on the body and create biological changes that affects the health of mothers, newborns, and infants.
- *Many* policies contribute to these inequities, including:
  - Access to healthcare, including prenatal and perinatal care
  - Paid family leave to care for newborns

Studies have shown that factors including poor nutrition, obesity, smoking, drinking, mother's education, mother's income, or poor prenatal care do not fully explain the inequities in birth outcomes. Racial discrimination and stress are also a key contributor.

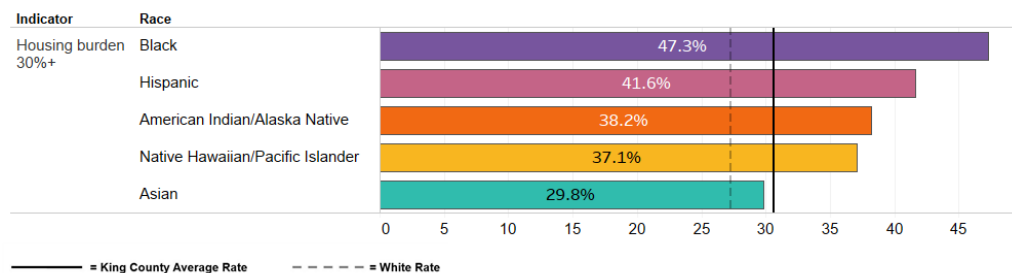
<https://www.communitiescount.org/blog/2019/1/14/babies-must-survive-before-they-can-thrive-part-1-of-2-posts-on-disparities-in-birth-outcomes?rq=infant%20mortality>

Acknowledging that each is a short snapshot that provides a peek into how complex systems impact key points of life course

# Housing: Data

Communities of color face barriers to home ownership and accessing affordable housing—Black households are 1.7 times as likely and Latinx households are 1.5 times as likely to be housing cost burdened in King County

Housing Cost Burden (pays over 30% of income on housing), King County average (2012-2016)



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

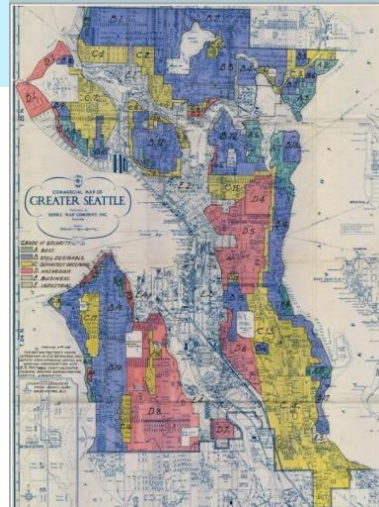
Housing stability is an important part of health and well being and a key part of that is Housing affordability, of which housing cost burden is an indicator for. From the data shown here we see that communities of color experience housing cost burden at higher rates than white residents. --With black and Hispanic/Latino households experiencing the highest rates in King County

It's important to know when looking at these data that Disparities in housing affordability are rooted in long standing policies related to lending practices, wealth accumulation and access to resources. While this is one housing indicator, we see local inequities in housing in other areas such as:

- Homeownership rates among whites are more than twice that of Black residents in King county
- Locally, Black adults are evicted 5.5 times more often than white adults and Latino adults were evicted twice as often as White adults.

## Housing: Causes and Policies

- Redlining, covenants and other racist real estate practices prohibited people of color from certain neighborhoods for decades
- Zoning policies have largely centered the interests of wealthy white homeowners
- Current combined practices of credit rating agencies, lenders and real estate industries perpetuate barriers to accessing housing



Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) with redlining.  
Green/blue neighborhoods were  
all-white and red neighborhoods were  
primarily where people of color were able to find housing.

There are many contributors to housing disparities going far back in our history but some of the primary factors can be traced back to Redlining and other racist real estate practices which defined areas that were “ideal” for banks to invest and sell mortgages. These policies combined with racial restrictive covenants prohibited people of color from buying, renting, or living in certain neighborhoods for decades—with lasting ramifications to the present day.

For decades Zoning policies have largely centered the interests of wealthier whiter homeowners, exacerbating disparities and contributing to our current affordable housing challenges

Inequities in access to houses, condos and apartments continue to be perpetuated through the combined practices of credit rating agencies, lending and real estate industries

## Housing: Summary

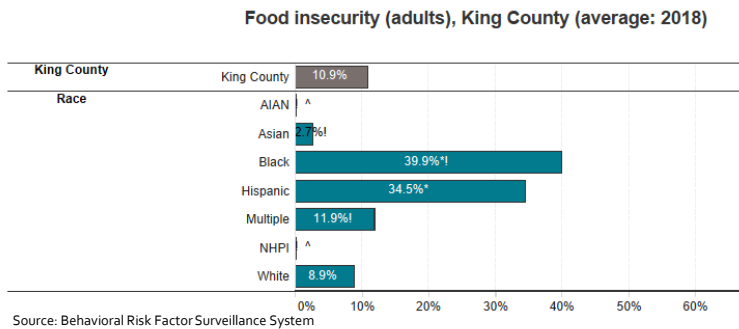
- Stable, safe, affordable housing is a key contributor to health and well being
- Over generations, barriers to homeownership has led to extreme wealth gaps by race
- Lack of affordable housing and evictions can put people in a cycle of housing instability
- Neighborhood segregation and divestment in communities of color contributes to disparities



- Stable, safe, affordable housing is a key contributor to health and well being
- Over generations, barriers to homeownership has led to extreme wealth gaps by race, reducing financial security and housing stability for communities of color
- Lack of affordable housing and evictions can put people in a cycle of housing instability—for example, evictions and homelessness go hand-in-hand and research has shown that evictions reinforce poverty as well as makes it increasingly difficult for an individual to find stable, affordable housing after an eviction notice
- Disinvestment in segregated neighborhoods leads to communities of color to have less access to resources and services than white communities –exacerbating disparities

# Food insecurity: Data

Disparities continue with basic needs, such as food. In King County, Black and Hispanic/Latino adults are about 4 times as likely to run out of food without money to purchase more than White adults.

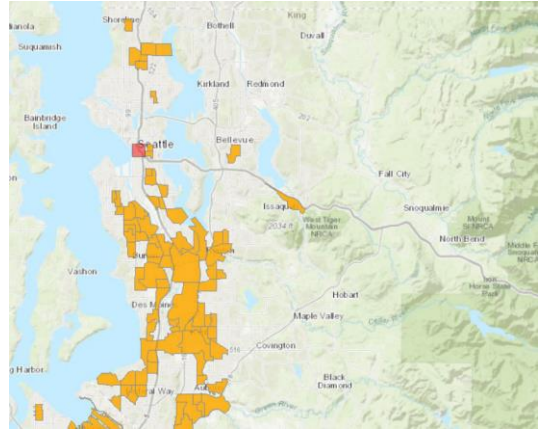


Disparities continue with basic needs, such as food. here we see large disparities by race in the rates of food insecurity in King County, Black and Hispanic/Latino adults are about 4 times as likely to run out of food within a month without money to purchase more, than White adults.

# Food insecurity: Causes and Policies

- Disparities in meeting basic needs are linked back to systemic inequities
- Food insecurity has impacts on long term health across the lifespan
- Eligibility requirements and the effect of public charge can create barriers in accessing assistance programs
- Food deserts disproportionately affect communities of color in King County

Map of areas in King County with lower food accessibility



Source: USDA Economic Research Service

- In our society food insecurity is not caused by insufficient food, but inequities that disproportionately impact communities of color. Disparities in meeting basic needs are linked back to systemic issues that create differential opportunity for living wages and the conditions for economic stability.
- While food insecurity has direct and indirect consequences across the lifespan, food insecurity—is especially impactful on the long term health, development, and well-being of children and families. Older adults too are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity
- Assistance programs such as SNAP and WIC can help mitigate food insecurity, but eligibility policies, documentation requirements and the impact of public charge requirements can create barriers for many experiencing food insecurity
- Food deserts (defined as an area with limited access to affordable and nutritious foods) also disproportionately affect communities of color in King County and create geographic and economic barriers to consistent access to sufficient food to support health



## Food insecurity: Summary

- Consistent access to food is essential for individuals and families to support health
- Systemic barriers create inequities in meeting basic needs such as food
- Nutrition assistance programs, are only a start—further systemic changes and supports are needed to address food insecurity and promote health



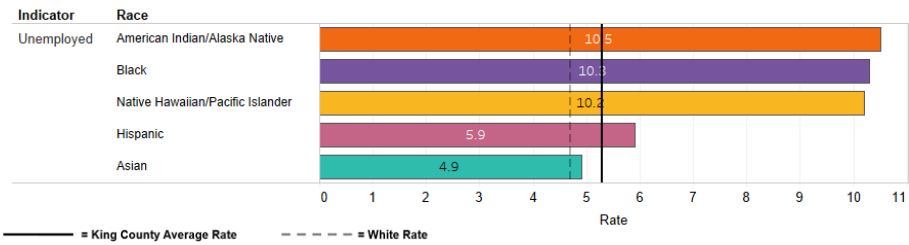
Consistent access to affordable food is essential for individuals and families to support healthy growth and development early in life as well as through the life course. Systemic barriers create inequities in meeting basic needs such as food, and also create situations where people are having to choose between essentials like critical medical, care, housing, food and transportation, which can create further challenges that exacerbate health disparities

In addition to nutrition support programs, other systemic changes and supports are needed to create equitable access to affordable, nourishing and culturally relevant food to support health in our community

# Unemployment: Data

Employment is directly linked with an individual and family's ability to afford necessities, access benefits, and generate economic security. In King County, American Indian/Alaska Natives, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic adults are all more likely to be unemployed compared to white adults and the King County average.

**Unemployment rate, King County average (2012-2016):**



Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

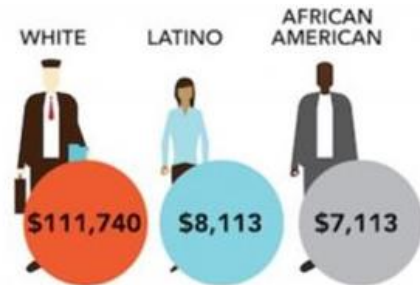
## Unemployment: Causes & Policies

- Individuals in BIPOC communities are more likely to have several low paying jobs at once which equates to less job security
- There are benefits associated with full time employment: retirement, healthcare
- There were direct policies that barred BIPOC communities from certain sectors
- The racial wealth gap in the in the United States is the disparity in median wealth between different racial groups:
  - White households continue to see an increase in wealth while BIPOC households continue to experience a decline

- Individuals in BIPOC communities are more likely to have several low paying jobs at once which equates to less job security and this type of low paying jobs are always hit first during an economic downfall
- There are benefits associated with full time employment: retirement, healthcare which contributes to long-term economic stability
- There were direct policies that barred BIPOC communities from certain sectors- historically, trade unions did not allow those of different ethnic and racial groups to join
- The racial wealth gap in the in the United States is the disparity in median wealth between the different races: white households continue to see an increase in wealth while BIPOC households continue to experience a decline

## Unemployment: Summary

- Disparities exist in the money that people have been able to save in order to pay bills while unemployed or experiencing other disruptions in employment
- How an individual worker or a family can make it through unemployment depends on how much savings, resources, and/or funds they have available to support them



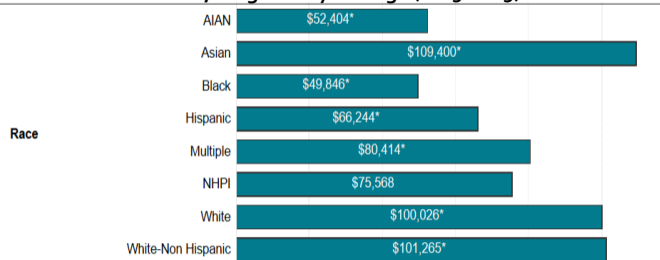
There are disparities that exist in the money that people have saved to pay bills while unemployed

How an individual worker or a family makes it through unemployment depends on how much they can fall back on- there is a significant difference that exists when it comes to this fallback which is based on one's ethnic and racial background

## Economic Insecurity: Median Household Income

There exists considerable disparities across income in King County. Black, Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, and American Indian Alaska Native households earn between \$26,000 - \$51,000 less than the White households.

Median household income, King County average (2015-2019):

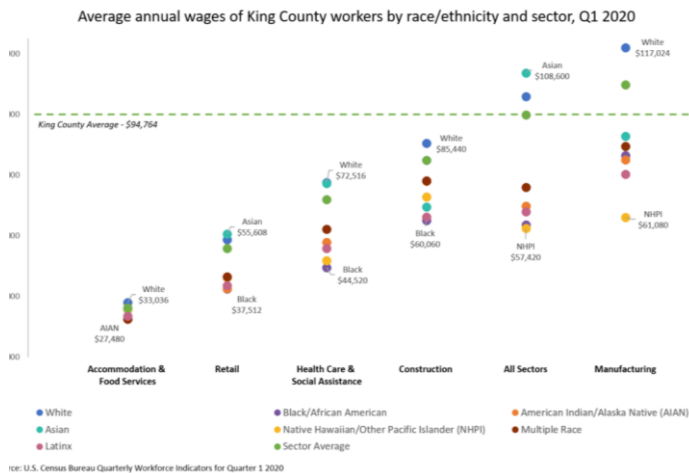


Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Not only do disparities exist in unemployment but in the larger context of income too. This figure shows median household income across racial and ethnic groups. The King County average is 94,000 a year. Lower levels of income makes it harder for communities to support their basic needs but also save for the future. We see across racial and ethnic groups, that black and Hispanic residents have the lowest median income with 50k and 66k respectively which is significantly lower than the median income for a white households.

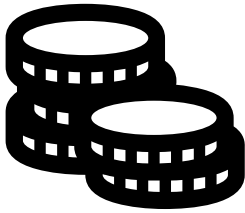
## Economic Insecurity: Wages

Even within the same job sector, BiPOC adults make consistently less money than White adults. The wage gaps across race/ethnicity and gender persist even when factors such as education level and job position type are accounted for.



Median household income is closely tied to employment. This figure is difficult to see but it's the average annual wages across different sectors by race. We can see the across these sectors – accommodation & food services, retail, healthcare and social assistance, construction, all sectors and manufacturing – BiPOC communities are consistently paid lower than white residents and lower than the sector average (the green dot). These disparities are further compounded by gender where The US Bureau of Labor statistics show that white men with some college/associates degrees earn more than Black/Hispanic women with a Bachelors degrees. This inequities are further impacted by the fact that Black students have to borrow more for their education than their white peers which creates even more barriers for these communities to build generational wealth

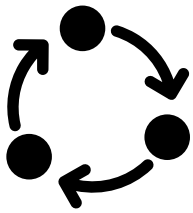
## Economic Insecurity: Causes and Policies



- Median household income is closely tied to educational opportunities and employment.
- Many communities of color have not had access to the same education and employment opportunities that white people have.

BiPOC communities are concentrated in service, domestic, caregiving and agricultural jobs, which have been systemically undervalued and undercompensated. Furthermore, systems involvement and immigration status may further keep communities out of higher paying jobs. Even within these jobs and when people have the opportunity to work - outside of these sectors there exists barriers to entry. Moreover, regardless of job title, industry, or location, minority women applicants were much less likely to report receiving an employee referral than their Caucasian male counterparts.

## Economic Insecurity: Summary



- Disparities in **median household income**, **employment**, and **education** for communities of color contribute to living situations that make it difficult to afford basic needs in life.
- Throughout the years, systemic racism has created this gap through a series of resources and advantages that provide opportunities for White adults to more easily accumulate wealth.

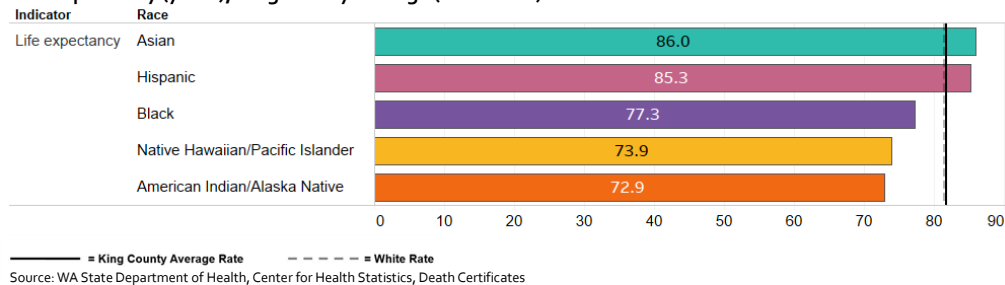
Additional examples of systemic practices include redlining as well as discriminatory labor protections and conditions. In King County, the higher percent of Black individuals who are living in poverty or near poverty compared to White individuals results in increased levels of chronic stress and anxiety.



## Life Expectancy: Data

In King County, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native residents have a life expectancy of at least four years less than White adults.

Life Expectancy (years), King County average (2012-2016)



Here we have the life expectancy of different communities across King County. The average King County rate is comparable to the white rate of 81 years old.

Not just deficit based Asian infants have a life expectancy that is **4 years higher**

Hispanic infants have a life expectancy that is **2 years higher**

In King County,

American Indian Alaska Native infants have a life expectancy that is **9 years lower**

Black infants have a life expectancy that is **4 years lower**

Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander infants have life expectancy that is **9 years lower**

...than the average King County infant

## Life Expectancy: Summary

The chronic stress that accumulates over a lifetime for BiPOC individuals results from generational and lifetime experiences of racial discrimination.

**Government sanctioned policies** and practices including **education**, **homeownership**, and **employment** have created an environment that hinders upward mobility.



These pervasive and daily systemic disadvantages disproportionately impacts the health, social and mental well-being for BiPOC communities and takes a toll on the body. We started from the unequal outcomes for infant mortality to differences in food insecurity then access to income and differences in employment and how they map onto life expectancy. This approach moves away from looking at individuals in a single point of time/snapshot and instead looks across a lifespan to gain a better understanding of the lifelong and generational context for residents across King County.

# Discussion: what is the role of data in declaring racism as a public health crisis?



## Themes from community input on moving towards data justice:

### Breakout 1: Community-based participatory research

Increase community participation in all parts of the data collection process. This includes community input before data is collected and community input to inform the story the data tells.

### Breakout 2: Approaches to data collection

Be more inclusive of different data collection approaches and methods. Value community knowledge the same as academic rigor.

### Breakout 3: Increase transparency

Institutions should be more transparent about the data collection process and the biases that underlie the data.

### Breakout 4: Research agenda

Support the use of data for anti-racist change in policy, process, and practices in institutions and support communities in creating policies.

### Breakout 5: Representation

Recruit and support BIPOC researchers - invest in data and evaluation training as well as the professional development of BIPOC researchers.

Individual responses: [Racism as a public health crisis: What is the role of data? \(padlet.com\)](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ccdataworkshop)

## Instructions:

**Step 1:** Select your breakout room by theme

**Step 2:** In each breakout room (~10 mins) discuss your role, organization, and areas that are within your control (or that King County could consider doing) to incorporate this within processes

**Step 3:** Share back with large group

**Step 4:** Complete survey feedback form here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ccdataworkshop>

We've looked at data and how various policies and underlying factors impact health, social, and economic inequities for communities of color in King County – specifically for infant mortality, housing, food insecurity, unemployment, and economic security. So we are going to shift gears a bit now and we'd like to invite all of you to engage in a discussion about the role of data in declaring racism as a public health crisis.

During a recent presentation at a BSK Summit, we shared a similar presentation and asked participants to provide feedback and ideas on 4 different questions including:

- How we can change the legacy of data being used against communities,
- How data can address racism,
- What additional data/tools/resources you wish you had to address impacts of racism, and
- What does data justice look like?

Based on responses & ideas from these questions we have summarized responses by 5 themes and invite you to select the breakout room theme that you are most interested in discussing. Communities Count staff will be

joining each breakout room to help support breakout rooms by taking notes.

**Breakout 1: (Vanessa)**

**Community-based participatory research**

Increase community participation in all parts of the data collection process. This includes community input before data is collected and community input to inform the story the data tells.

**Breakout 2: (Mariko)**

**Approaches to data collection**

Be more inclusive of different data collection approaches and methods. Value community knowledge the same as academic rigor.

**Breakout 3: (Hani)**

**Increase transparency** Institutions should be more transparent about the data collection process and the biases that underlie the data.

**Breakout 4: (Sara Jaye)**

**Research agenda**

Support the use of data for anti-racist change in policy, process, and practices in institutions and support communities in creating policies.

**Breakout 5: (Joie)**

**Representation**

Recruit and support BIPOC researchers - invest in data and evaluation training as well as the professional development of BIPOC researchers.

## We would love your feedback!

- Please take a few moments to complete this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ccdataworkshop>



**Thank you!**



**Communities  
Count**

**Keep in Touch!**

Visit us at: [communitiescount.org](https://communitiescount.org)

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Thank you so much and visit our website for more data resources, trainings, and more. If you have other questions or want to connect feel free to reach out