

STATE OF BLACK AMERICA® UNMASKED

2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE PUBLICATION
www.stateofblackamerica.org



ABOUT THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

The National Urban League is a historic civil rights and urban advocacy organization. Driven to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights for our nation's marginalized populations, the National Urban League works towards economic empowerment and the elevation of the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities.

Founded in 1910, and headquartered in New York City, the National Urban League has improved the lives of more than two million people annually through direct service programs run by 90 local affiliates in 36 states and the District of Columbia. The National Urban League also conducts public policy research and advocacy work from its Washington, D.C. bureau.

The National Urban League is a BBB-accredited organization and has earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, placing it in the top 10% of all U.S. charities for adhering to good governance, fiscal responsibility and other best practices.



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ABOUT THE STATE OF BLACK AMERICA®

THE *STATE OF BLACK AMERICA*® IS THE SIGNATURE REPORTING OF THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE.

First issued in 1976, the *State of Black America*® is one of the most highly-anticipated benchmarks and sources for thought leadership around racial equality in America across economics, employment, education, health, housing, criminal justice and civic participation. Each edition contains penetrating commentary and insightful analysis from recognized authorities and leading figures in politics, the corporate and tech sectors, the nonprofit arena, academia and popular culture. This year, the *State of Black America*® also includes the Equality Index™, a quantitative tool that tracks the progress of racial equality in America.

The 2020 *State of Black America*®, *Unmasked*, matches the national mood for serious introspection, exposing the human toll and economic devastation of a global pandemic on Black America while laying bare the deep-rooted inequities that predated the pandemic and accelerated the virus's deadly spread.

America caught the coronavirus and Black America caught hell.

As states began to collect race-based data, a bleak picture emerged: Black, Latino and Indigenous people were getting sick and dying in higher numbers. African Americans are reportedly three times as likely to contract the coronavirus and nearly twice as likely to die from COVID-19 as whites. The latest findings tell a chilling tale of a nation divided along racial fault lines that first erupted upon the arrival of enslaved Africans in 1619. It recounts the birth of a nation whose institutions and laws were built on top of racist ideologies that continue to oppress, terrorize and disenfranchise the descendants of the enslaved today.

Against the grim backdrop of an exploding public health crisis, the nation watched as a Black man was denied his God-given right to breathe, losing his life under a police officer's knee pressed into the back of his neck for almost nine minutes. George Floyd's last words: "I can't breathe," ignited a firestorm of protests over his unjust death. Americans spilled out into the streets, insisting—once more—that Black lives matter.

Our reporting reveals the common denominator in the alarming and disproportionate ratio of Black people left gasping for air in emergency rooms and at the hands (and knees) of law enforcement: centuries of systemic racism.

Through our partnership with the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Equity, we examine the racial underpinnings of the pandemic, honing in on the indisputable link between our nation's legacy of systemic racism and higher rates of Black death to COVID-19. Our authors tackle the reach of the outbreak into how we live, work and vote. They delve into the erasure of Black wealth and job gains in the wake of the historic economic collapse and record-setting unemployment. They also analyze our interconnectedness, reminding us that prisoner health is indeed public health. The fate of HBCUs come fall is debated, along with the increased risk for disinformation and voter suppression in our November 2020 election.

The pandemic has forced Americans to grapple—yet again—with the enduring consequences of slavery and the prevalence of systemic racism in our society. Our public and private institutions and political systems have all been infected by this insidious disease—and must be remedied.

The National Urban League stands united with all people committed to the monumental task of reckoning with our nation's racist past—and present. We stand resolute and ready to leverage our influence and resources to break the pattern of papering over injustice with hollow reforms and symbolic gestures. We believe that without real justice, there can be no peace.

To heal our nation, we must fearlessly acknowledge and address the straight and unbroken through-line that connects 1619 to COVID-19.

LEARN MORE AND GET MORE AT
www.stateofblackamerica.org

UNDERSTANDING

THE 2020 EQUALITY INDEX™

WHY DOES THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE PUBLISH AN EQUALITY INDEX?

Economic empowerment is the central theme of the National Urban League's mission. The Equality Index gives us a way to document progress toward this mission for Black and Hispanic Americans relative to whites.

WHAT IS THE EQUALITY INDEX TRYING TO DO?

Imagine if we were to summarize how well African Americans and Hispanics are doing compared to whites in the areas of economics, health, education, social justice and civic engagement and represent that by a pie.

The Equality Index measures the share of that pie which African Americans and Hispanics get.

Whites are used as the benchmark because the history of race in America has created advantages for whites that continue to persist in many of the outcomes being measured.

THE 2020 EQUALITY INDEX OF BLACK AMERICA IS 73.8%. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

That means that rather than having a whole pie (100%), which would mean full equality with whites in 2020, African Americans are missing about 26% of the pie (Fig. 1A). Similarly, a Hispanic Index of 78.8% indicates that about 21% of the pie is missing for Hispanics (Fig. 1B).

HOW IS THE EQUALITY INDEX CALCULATED?

The categories that make up the Equality Index are: economics, health, education, social justice and civic engagement. In each category, we use nationally representative statistics to calculate a sub-index that captures how well African Americans and Hispanics are doing relative to whites. Each category is weighted based on the importance that we give to each. The weighted average of all five categories is then calculated to get the total Equality Index.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO SEE HOW WELL AFRICAN AMERICANS AND HISPANICS ARE DOING IN EACH OF THE CATEGORIES?

Yes. We show this in the tables included with the Equality Index.

We estimate an index for each category that can be interpreted in the same way as the total Equality Index. So, an index of 59.2% for the economics category for African Americans in 2020 means that African Americans are missing close to half of the economics mini-pie. Fig. 1A and Fig. 1B summarize the total 2020 Equality Index and the index in each category for African Americans and Hispanics.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO SEE HOW WELL AFRICAN AMERICANS AND HISPANICS ARE DOING OVER TIME?

Yes. The National Urban League has published the Equality Index of Black America and all the variables used to calculate it since 2005 (Fig. 2A). The Hispanic Equality Index goes back to 2010 (Fig. 2B).

IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THERE'S BEEN MUCH IMPROVEMENT IN THE EQUALITY INDEX. WHAT'S THE POINT?

The Equality Index is made up of a lot of different parts. Improvements in one area are sometimes offset by losses in another area, leaving the overall index unchanged.

Change often happens slowly. The Equality Index offers solid evidence of just how slowly it happens, making the index an indispensable tool for shaping the policies needed in the ongoing fight against inequality.

NOT ALL AFRICAN AMERICANS AND HISPANICS ARE DOING POORLY AND NOT ALL WHITES ARE DOING WELL. WHY DOESN'T THE EQUALITY INDEX CAPTURE CLASS DIFFERENCES?

The Equality Index was created to capture racial inequality. Most of the data points are reported as averages for African Americans, whites and Hispanics. An average is the easiest way to summarize a large amount of information but can mask class differences within each group. While the Equality Index does not detail class differences, it does highlight regional differences in racial inequality through our rankings of metro area unemployment and income inequality (not included this year but available for prior years).

KEY / WEIGHTED INDEX CATEGORIES

- Equality Index
- Economics 30%
- Health 25%
- Education 25%
- Social Justice 10%
- Civic Engagement 10%

FIGURE 1A. BLACK-WHITE EQUALITY INDEX BY CATEGORY

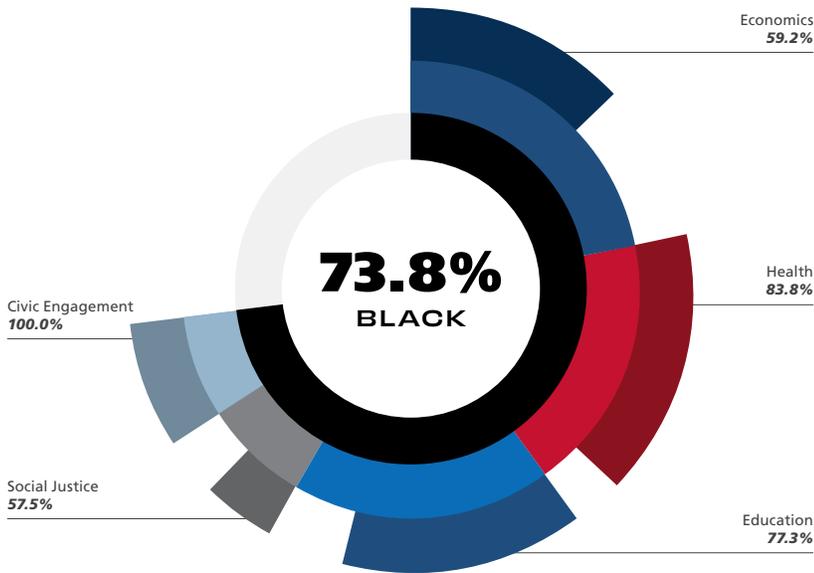


FIGURE 2A. BLACK-WHITE EQUALITY INDEX COMPARISON 2005 VS 2020

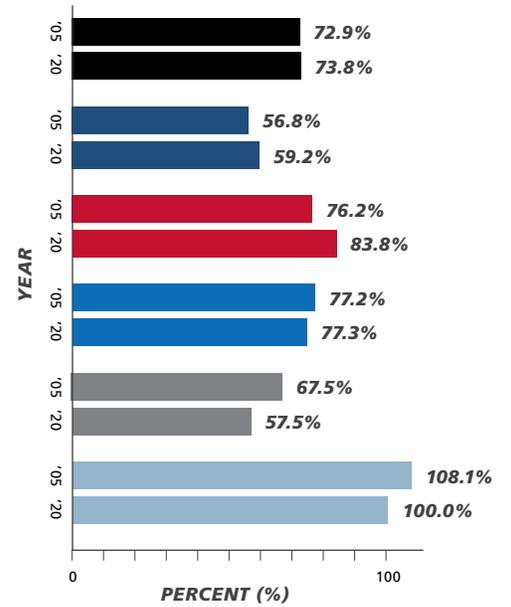


FIGURE 1B. HISPANIC-WHITE EQUALITY INDEX BY CATEGORY

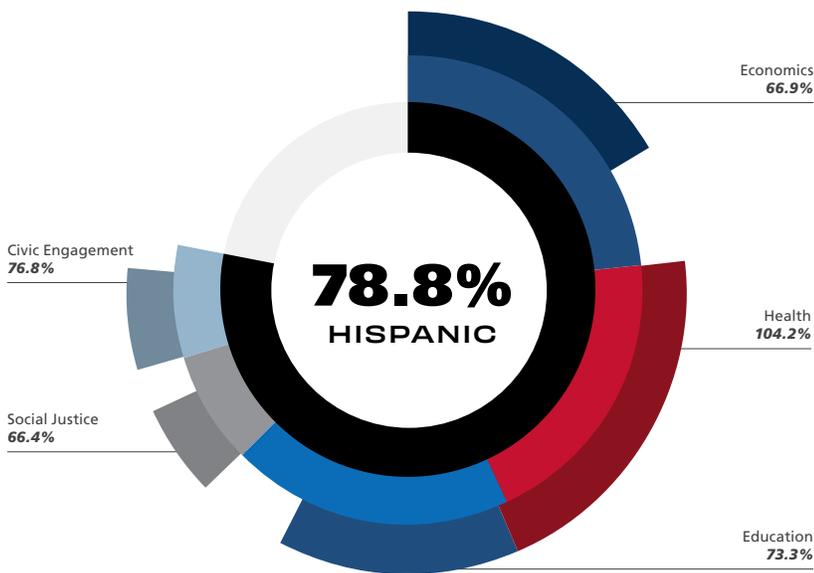
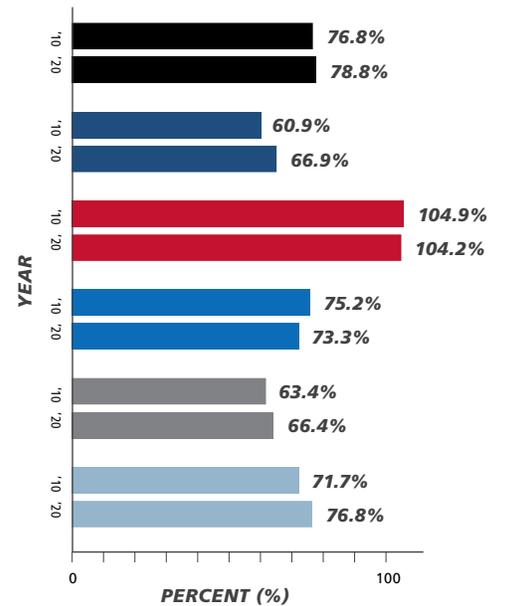


FIGURE 2B. HISPANIC-WHITE EQUALITY INDEX COMPARISON 2010 VS 2020



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

19 LESSONS OF COVID-19

By Marc H. Morial
President & CEO,
National Urban League



America in 2020 is an America unmasked. The coronavirus disease epidemic that upended every aspect of American life has exposed the naked face of institutional and interpersonal racism. While there are endless lessons to be learned from this era of COVID-19, here are 19:

1 / Racism is the pandemic within the pandemic.

The massive demonstrations against police racism and brutality that erupted after George Floyd's death did not lead to spikes in coronavirus infection as many had feared. But those who went to protest were willing to accept the risk. "Am I going to let a disease kill me or am I going to let the system—the police?" one protester told the *New York Times*. "Folks who don't have much else to lose—they understand that this system isn't built for Black people. And that's why people are in the streets."

2 / Bias in health care is both explicit and implicit.

Black people with COVID-19 symptoms in February and March were less likely to get tested or treated than white patients. Studies showed that doctors downplayed Black patients' complaints of pain, prescribed weaker pain medication, and withheld cardiac treatments from Black patients who needed them. According to the *New York Times*, research suggests that the decisions are the result of "ingrained assumptions, cultural ignorance and hostile attitudes toward African-Americans."

3 / Leadership matters.

States where governors ignored scientific advice and lifted stay-at-home orders and other safety measures saw dramatic spikes in coronavirus infections. After New York implemented mask orders in April, new infections fell while rising elsewhere. Across the country, the actions—and inaction—of state leaders can be directly linked to the health and economic impact of the pandemic.

4 / Americans have enormous capacity for compassion.

College students volunteered to replace sidelined Meals on Wheels drivers. Owners of empty RVs offered them to health care workers who needed to isolate. Wealthy celebrities and ordinary Americans alike donated laptops for school children, bought meals for essential workers, and chipped in to pay their neighbors' bills. Amid the despair, acts of kindness shone through.

5 / #BlackLivesMatter

Millions of Americans have taken part in demonstrations for racial justice, making Black Lives Matter the largest protest movement in U.S. history. Monuments celebrating white supremacy have come down. Mississippi is dropping the Confederate flag. Washington's football team has dropped its racist logo and name. The rage in response to police killings was like a match dropped into the powder keg of grief created by the pandemic. The American people are seeing—many for the first time—the stark and deadly results of racism on an enormous scale.

6 / Black communities never fully recovered from the Great Recession.

Even at record lows, in recent years the Black unemployment rate consistently remained twice as high as the rate for whites. The Great Recession wiped out 50 years of rising Black homeownership, with the rate now as low as it was before the Fair Housing Act. The net worth of a typical Black family is about one-tenth that of a white family. Black household incomes still have not returned to pre-recession levels. Economic policies that don't specifically address racial disparity do not reduce racial disparities.

7 / Racism threatens our national security.

"If Americans refuse to meaningfully address race relations, the United States will grow weaker and less effective both at home and as an international actor," Los Angeles Urban League President and CEO Michael Lawson and international policy expert Dr. Jerrold D. Green wrote in May. The international community has watched the United States struggle with its twin pandemics of racism and COVID-19 with horror and disgust. To regain the respect of the international community and our standing within it, the United States must fully commit to ending institutional racism.

8 / Essential workers, disproportionately people of color, are undervalued.

Millions of low-wage essential workers risked their lives on the COVID-19 frontlines for a median pay of \$13.48, according to the Brookings Institution. Twenty percent of them live in poverty and more than 40% rely on public assistance. The nightly applause from New York City windows was inspiring, but it didn't keep a roof over anyone's head or food on the table. A national living wage tied to inflation is long overdue.

9 / We meet adversity with creativity.

High schools held graduations at racetracks and drive-in theaters. Musical groups collaborated online to produce videos. DJ D-Nice launched an Instagram sensation of virtual dance parties—MC Lyte convened one to support the National Urban League.

10 / Lax firearms laws increase the risk of violence, and Black communities pay the price.

Americans have purchased millions more guns than usual in 2020, leading to a surge in gun violence. A disturbing detail: Purchases have been higher in states with greater levels of racial animus. Many of these gun sales took place without background checks and no system in place to ensure that guns are handled and stored safely. The tragic stories of children caught in the crossfire make it all too obvious the nation needs a comprehensive gun safety plan.

11 / Election systems need an overhaul.

The danger of coronavirus means more Americans need access to absentee voting, extended early voting, and more polling places so voters don't need to stand too close for extended periods. Instead, some states are limiting access to the polls, especially in Black and Latino neighborhoods where voters stood in line for hours. We need to invest in modernizing and streamlining the voting process.

12 / "Grassroots" is often Astroturf.

Armed protesters who stormed state capitols demanding an end to stay-at-home orders appeared to be motivated by a spontaneous uprising. In fact, these demonstrations were organized by wealthy political patrons encouraging the myth that coronavirus is a hoax and shutdowns were a political conspiracy. The misinformation that fuels these dangerous crusades flourishes on social media. Tech companies need to do more to stop it.

13 / Police culture must be dramatically reimagined and reformed.

Derek Chauvin appeared neither deterred nor concerned that he was being recorded as he crushed George Floyd's neck with his knee. In the weeks of protest that followed, police repeatedly used excessive force and unauthorized methods against demonstrators, fully aware of the cameras trained on them. Officers have rarely been held accountable for

misconduct. Legislation pending in Congress could change that, but police departments must commit to a transformation of the relationship between officers and the communities they serve.

14 / Workers need fair unemployment insurance.

From the moment businesses began shutting down, policymakers recognized that the unemployment insurance program administered by individual states would not be sufficient to keep workers afloat and added a one-time payment and a \$600-per-week supplement. Administrative burdens keep 20% to 30% of eligible people from accessing benefits, and many people have waited months for payment.

15 / #SayHerName

Even as support for the Black Lives Matter movement skyrocketed in 2020, justice for Black women victims of police violence lagged. Months after Breonna Taylor was killed by police executing an illegitimate warrant and firing "blindly" into her home, no arrests had been made. Black women victims of violence are too often overlooked and forgotten.

16 / Coronavirus intensifies the threat of a Census undercount.

The National Urban League's *State of the 2020 Census* report in June warned that Black communities stand to lose billions of dollars and their rightful political representation if something is not done quickly to overcome delays caused by the pandemic. The National Urban League has urged an audit of Census operations to ensure a safe and accurate count.

17 / Too many African Americans still lack health insurance.

More than five million workers who lost their jobs also lost their families' health insurance, affecting as many as 27 million Americans. With Black workers losing jobs at twice the rate of whites, the racial health insurance gap has drastically widened.

18 / Cities are the nation's economic engines.

The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on America's cities has shone the spotlight on the nation's dependence on cities' economic health. We can't have a prospering nation unless our cities, large and small, are able to provide the services that keep our industries running.

19 / Mayors are driving the recovery.

Absent leadership on the federal level, and in some cases on the state level, it has been left to the nation's mayors to develop and enforce policies aimed at bringing the pandemic under control and keeping businesses and workers afloat in the meantime. In the wake of George Floyd's killing, Black women mayors, in particular, have taken the lead in speaking out against the brutality and protecting the safety of their communities.

A black and white photograph of a raised fist, symbolizing solidarity and protest. The fist is the central focus of the image, set against a dark, textured background. The lighting highlights the texture of the skin and the strength of the grip.

NATIONAL

URBAN

LEAGUE

**2020
EQUALITY
INDEX™
OVERVIEW**

DATA PROVIDED BY IHS MARKIT

BY VALERIE RAWLSTON WILSON, PH.D.

This year has quickly developed into a historic moment of truth and clarity for the United States of America. Certainly, the parallel between the year 2020 and the expression “20/20 vision”—a term used to describe visual acuity, or more specifically, perfect vision—should not be overlooked in this moment. This year, systemic racism, economic inequality, and the state of our democracy have been brought into sharp focus as the nation battles a public health crisis, an economic crisis, and social uprisings rightfully fueled by a refusal to allow demands for racial justice and accountability for those in power to go unanswered any longer. Coincidentally, the fact that 2020 is also an election year means that Americans have an opportunity to cast their ballots, representing their vision of what our country should be.

As the National Urban League continues to press the case for closing the divide in economic opportunity, education, health, social justice, and civic engagement, the 2020 Equality Index is a critical quantitative tool for tracking Black-white and Hispanic-white racial equality in America. In addition, this year’s Equality Index also includes a 2000 Equality Index, allowing readers to observe how much progress has been made over the last two decades.

While the 2020 Equality Index does not capture the effects of the coronavirus pandemic or the resulting economic recession that began in February 2020, it does reflect long-standing racial and ethnic disparities across nearly every area of American life than what have been “unmasked” during these concurrent crises. It also demonstrates that the progress made during more than 10 years of economic expansion was not sufficient to significantly close gaps in economic outcomes or in the area of social justice. In many ways, the persistent racial and ethnic disparities documented in the Equality Index are predictive of what we now see. Unless significant changes are made to dismantle anti-Black racism in our society, it will continue to shape disparate social and economic outcomes for Black Americans and other people of color.

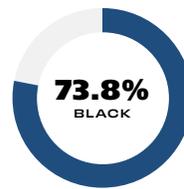
BLACK-WHITE INDEX

OVERVIEW

The 2020 Equality Index of Black America stands at 73.8%, an improvement of 1.6 percentage points from the revised 2018 index of 72.2%. Revisions to the previous year's index are done for greater comparability across years and reflect data points that have been corrected, removed from the current year's index, or re-weighted so that less emphasis is placed on older data. Ironically, the two categories that contributed most to the overall improvement in the Equality Index between 2018 and 2020 were health (from 79.3% to 83.8%) and social justice (from 55.9% to 57.5%), indicating greater equality. There were also modest improvements in the economic (from 58.2% to 59.2%) and civic engagement (from 99.7% to 100%) indexes. It is important to note, however, that these improvements reflect data that predates the coronavirus pandemic, recession and social justice uprisings that hit the country during the first half of 2020. Further, economics and social justice remain the areas where we observe the least equality between Blacks and whites. Education equality was essentially unchanged (from 77.4% to 77.3%).

The improvement in the Black-white economics index between 2018 and 2020 is reflective of the fact that prior to February 2020, the U.S. economy was experiencing the longest economic expansion on record with historically low rates of unemployment for all racial and ethnic groups. While racial economic disparities continued to persist, the improvement in the Black-white economics index was largely driven by greater equality in men's earnings, as well as narrowing of the unemployment rate gap between Black and white men (from 47% to 50%) and Black and white women (from 55% to 57%). Black men's median weekly earnings increased from 70% to 73% of white men's. Other improvements included less disparity in loan application denials—both mortgage loans (from 35% to 41%) and home improvement loans (from 49% to 54%). Related to the trend in loan applications, the homeownership index improved from 58% to 61%.

The increase in the Black-white health index reflects greater equality of outcomes for Blacks and whites as it relates to substance abuse, obesity and the share of uninsured children. The share of uninsured Black children declined to less than 5%, bringing the index value for this indicator to 91% in 2020 (up from 76% in 2018). In the area of substance abuse, where African Americans already exhibited less propensity for binge drinking and smoking as indicated by index values greater than 100%, these favorable gaps widened further. While there was greater racial equality on rates of obesity (index value increased to 85% in 2020 from 75% in 2018), outcomes were actually worse for both Blacks and whites. Almost half of the African American population was obese, compared to 42.2% of whites. There was also some modest improvement on racial gaps in life expectancy as demonstrated by an increase in the index value to 96% (from 95%). On average, African Americans live 75.3 years compared to a life expectancy of 78.5 years for whites. However, increased national attention on abysmal maternal mortality among Black women is documented by growing racial



The 2020 Equality Index of Black America stands at 73.8%, an improvement of 1.6 percentage points from the revised 2018 index of 72.2%

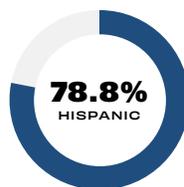
disparities in both maternal and infant mortality. Black women are more than three times as likely as white women (an index value of 29%) to die during childbirth and rates of infant deaths are more than 2.5 times higher for Black babies than for white babies (an index value of 37%).

While the Black-white education index changed very little between 2018 and 2020, there were some notable losses and gains in individual indicators. There was an increase in the percentage of Black students attending schools where they were more likely to have teachers with less than three years of experience, resulting in a large decline in the index value from 91% in 2018 to 65% in 2020. The index value for the share of high school students enrolled in Algebra 2 also declined sharply (from 91% in 2018 to 65% in 2020) as the share of Black students taking Algebra 2 dropped. On the other hand, there was greater equality in college enrollment, especially among those between the ages of 20 and 34. As a result of this longer-term trend, we also observed greater equality in the share of adults age 25 or older who are high school graduates (an increase in the 2020 index value to 96% from 93% in 2018) and bachelor's degree holders (up to 72% from 63%).

The increase in the Black-white social justice index primarily reflects a narrowing of racial disparities in the percentage of high school students carrying weapons (anywhere) and racial disparities in violent crime victimization. Though Black high school students were already less likely to carry weapons than their white counterparts, they continued to widen this gap, resulting in a 2020 index value of 168% (up from 146% in 2018). There was also significant narrowing of the racial gap in violent crime victimization from an index value of 85% in 2018 to 121% in 2020. Other areas of more modest improvement included narrowing of the racial gap in the homicide rate among women—from an index of 30% in 2018 to 33% in 2020—and the racial gap in rates of incarceration—from an index of 18% in 2018 to 19% in 2020. Despite these small improvements, however, these index values indicate that there are still large racial disparities in these outcomes.

The increase in the Black-white civic engagement index involved more equality in the percentage of people volunteering for military reserves—an index value of 100%, indicating full equality and up from 80% in 2018. In spite of "increased equality," the percentage of those volunteering for the military reserves actually declined for Blacks and whites, but the decline was larger among whites. Additionally, there was further expansion of the relative advantage of African Americans over whites in state and local government employment—up to a 2020 index value of 167% from 164% in 2018. Also notable was the ground lost in union membership. While African Americans remain more likely than whites to be union members, that relative advantage has declined—from an index value of 119% in 2018 to 109% in 2020—as overall rates of union membership decline.

HISPANIC–WHITE INDEX



The 2020 Equality Index of Hispanic America stands at 78.8% compared to a revised 2018 index of 79.0%.

OVERVIEW

The 2020 Equality Index of Hispanic America stands at 78.8% compared to a revised 2018 index of 79.0%. The small decline in the Hispanic-White Index resulted from large declines in the health (from 108.6% to 104.2%) and education (from 75.4% to 73.3%) indexes, indicating less equality between Latinos and whites. These losses were at least partially offset by a major improvement in the civic engagement index (from 70.9% to 76.8%), as well as gains in the economics (from 64.9% to 66.9%) and social justice (from 64.5% to 66.4%) indexes, indicating areas where there has been progress toward greater equality.

As was the case with the Black-white economics index, the increase in the Hispanic-white economics index also demonstrates the positive effects of the 2009 to 2020 economic expansion. Amid record low unemployment, Hispanic men and women both narrowed their earnings gaps with whites. The relative median weekly earnings of Hispanic men increased to 72% of white men’s weekly earnings (up from 62% in 2018) and the relative median earnings of Hispanic women increased to 76% of white women’s weekly earnings (up from 70% in 2018). Similar to African Americans, Latinos also saw a reduction in mortgage and home improvement loan denials, bringing those Hispanic-white index values up to 59% (from 52% in 2018) and 64% (up from 57% in 2018), respectively.

The decline in the Hispanic-white health index reflects lost ground across a number of indicators. Most significantly, the share of people without health insurance is one of the largest gaps between Latinos and whites. Latinos are more than three times as likely as whites to lack health insurance, as indicated by an index value of 30% (down from 39% in 2018). Despite the overall lack of progress, the Hispanic-white health index remains above 100%, signifying that overall, Latinos experience better outcomes than whites on the range of health-related indicators measured in the Equality Index.

The decline in the Hispanic-white education index can be traced to trends in school enrollment at various levels. Latinos actually lost ground relative to whites on the percentage of the population age 3-34 enrolled in school—an index value of 87%, down from 105% in 2018. Contrary to the trend of greater equality in school enrollment between Blacks and whites at nearly every age, school enrollment gaps widened for Latinos at nearly every age between 2018 and 2020. Similar to African Americans, however, there was an increase in the percentage of Latino students attending schools where they were more likely to have teachers with less than three years of experience, resulting in a decline in the index value from 81% in 2018 to 70% in 2020. Additionally, the index value for the share of high school students enrolled in Algebra 2 also declined sharply (from 92% in 2018 to 76% in 2020) as the share of Latino students taking Algebra 2 dropped.

The increase in the Hispanic-white social justice index was related to a narrowing of disparities in the percentage of high school students carrying weapons, disparities in violent crime victimization and more equality in the incarceration rate. While Latino high school students were once more likely to carry weapons (on school property) than their white counterparts, this gap narrowed, resulting in a 2020 index value of 109% (up from 82% in 2018). There was also continued improvement in the rate of violent crime victimization among Latinos relative to whites, increasing to a 2020 index value of 133% from 110% in 2018. Other areas of more modest improvement included narrowing of the Hispanic-white gap in the homicide rate among men – from an index value of 41% in 2018 to 48% in 2020—and the Hispanic-white gap in rates of incarceration—from an index value of 38% in 2018 to 40% in 2020. Despite these improvements, however, these index values indicate that there are still large disparities in these outcomes between Latinos and whites.

The increase in the Hispanic-white civic engagement index involved more equality in the percentage of people volunteering for military reserves—an index value of 67%, up from 40% in 2018. In spite of this “increased equality,” the percentage of those volunteering for the military reserves actually declined for whites but was unchanged among Latinos. Also notable was the lost ground in government employment at all levels: federal, state and local. The federal employment index value declined to 50% in 2020 (from 54% in 2018) and the state and local government employment index value fell to 80% (down from 85% in 2018).

COVID-19

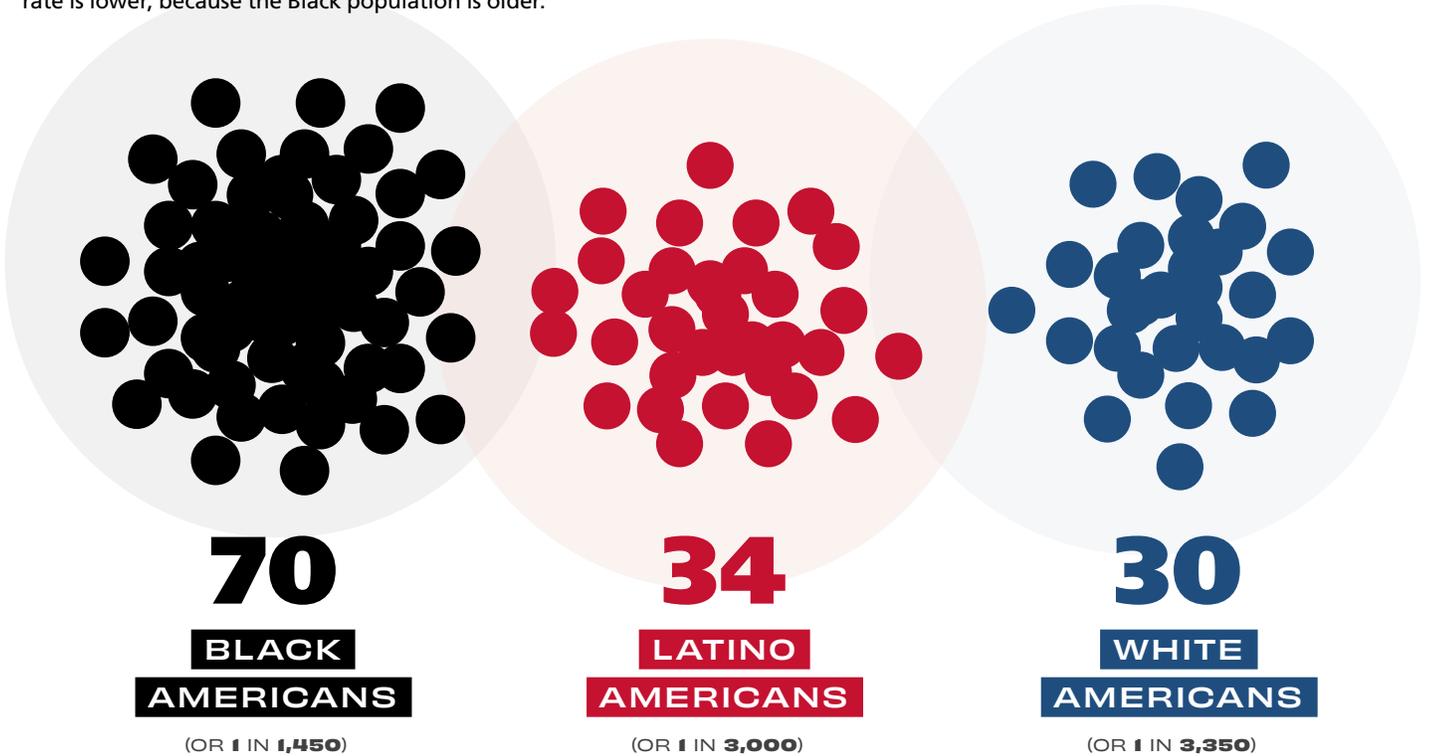
BY THE NUMBERS



Like an earthquake exposes the fault lines in the earth, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fault lines in America's social and economic institutions. The expansion of health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act, which coincided with a decade-long economic expansion, partially masked the health care and economic disparities festering just beneath the surface. Now, they are unmasked.

DEATH RATES

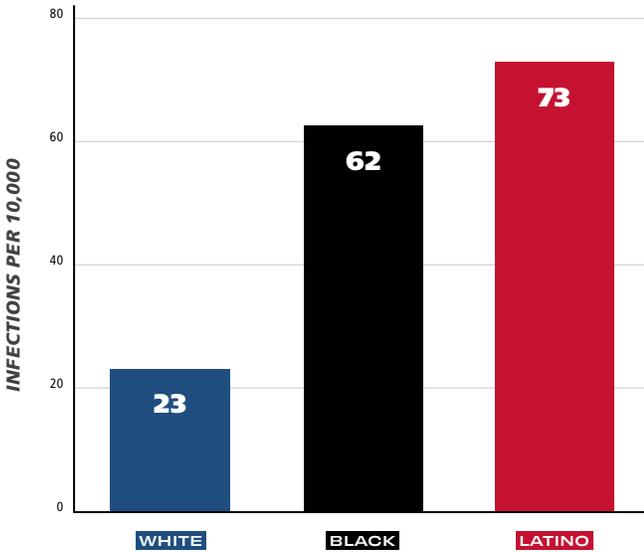
Already at higher risk because of pre-existing health conditions, Black and Latino patients tend to receive less aggressive treatment than white patients. The death rate for Black Americans may be higher than the Latino rate, even though the infection rate is lower, because the Black population is older.



DEATHS PER 100,000

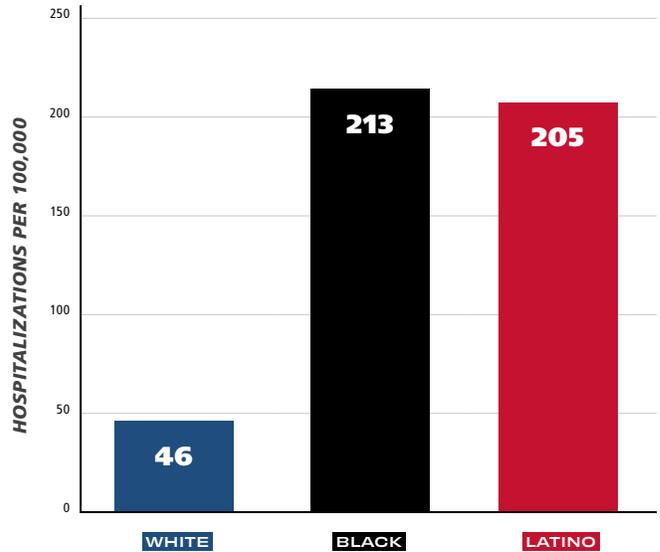
INFECTION RATES

Black and Latino Americans are more likely to live in crowded housing conditions and to work in essential jobs which cannot be performed from home.



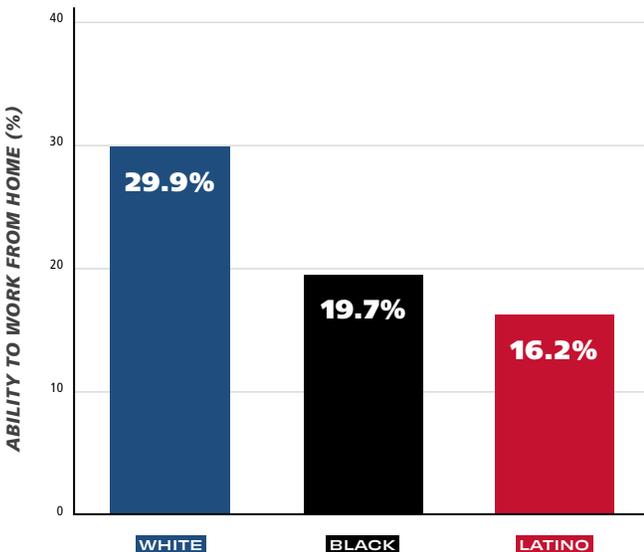
HOSPITALIZATION RATES

Black and Latino Americans who contract the virus are more likely to suffer from pre-existing conditions which increase the risk of severe illness. Overrepresented among the uninsured, they tend to delay seeking treatment and are sicker than white patients when they finally do.



WORK FROM HOME RATES

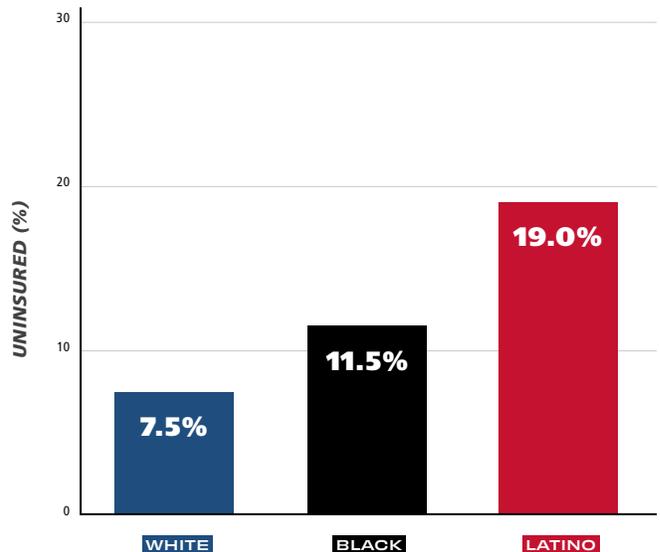
Black and Latino Americans are overrepresented in low-wage jobs that offer the least flexibility and increase their risk of exposure to the coronavirus.



Source: Economic Policy Institute

UNINSURED RATES

Black and Latino workers are more likely to hold jobs that don't offer health insurance benefits and are overrepresented among poor adults in states that did not expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

AUTHORS



Timothy Murphy,
Board Chair, National Urban
League; General Counsel,
Mastercard

United We Stand: Building a Better Future for All

“*The road to recovery from the coronavirus and our reckoning with entrenched racism will be long and hard, but we can change the course of our nation’s trajectory. We will face this crisis together, resolved to advocate for our nation’s most vulnerable and united in our goal of becoming the more perfect union we aspire to be.*”

ECONOMICS



Dr. Bernard E. Anderson,
Senior Economic Advisor,
National Urban League;
Whitney M. Young, Jr.
Professor of Management,
The Wharton School of the
University of Pennsylvania

Off Track: How COVID-19 Derailed Black Employment Gains

“*African Americans were not only overrepresented in COVID-19 cases and deaths, but they were disproportionately impacted by the attendant job loss. As our nation reckons, yet again, with its history of anti-Black racism, it is clear that high priority must be placed on targeted policies that eliminate racial inequality in the labor market. Solutions that reconcile these historic and structural wrongs will bring the practice of America in line with the promise of America and finally usher African Americans and people of color out of the caboose and upgrade them to first class citizenry.*”

EDUCATION



Dr. Kristen E. Broady,
Dean, College of Business
& Barron Hilton Endowed
Professor of Economics at
Dillard University

We Shall Overcome: HBCUs > COVID-19

“*The demise of HBCUs would have an asymmetrically devastating impact on long-term economic growth and competitiveness of this country and on the communities and families we serve. It is my hope that this “black-swan” event will serve as a catalyst for a national conversation to repurpose and reimagine higher education in this country.*”

HEALTH



Lisa A. Cooper, MD, MPH,
James F. Fries Professor
of Medicine; Bloomberg
Distinguished Professor
in Health Equity, Johns
Hopkins University Schools
of Medicine, Nursing &
Bloomberg School of
Public Health

The Silver Lining in COVID-19’s Dark Clouds

“*The silver lining during these dark times is that this pandemic has revealed our shared vulnerability and our interconnectedness. Many people are beginning to see that when others don’t have the opportunity to be healthy, it puts all of us at risk.*”

HEALTH



Linda Goler Blount,
President & CEO, The Black
Women’s Health Imperative



Alexis McGill Johnson,
President & CEO, Planned
Parenthood Federation of
America and the Planned
Parenthood Action Fund



Nia Eshu Martin-Robinson,
Director of Back Leadership
and Engagement, Planned
Parenthood Federation of
America and the Planned
Parenthood Action Fund

The State of Black Women’s Health Calls for a Reproductive Revolution

“*The fight for sexual and reproductive health for Black communities is not only waged at the Supreme Court. It is not only waged through civic participation. It is waged every time we must be on our guard and advocate for ourselves at the doctor’s office, state capitols, town halls, and in our own communities. This year, we took our fights to streets all across America, demanding that this country recognize, once and for all, that our lives matter.*”

HOUSING



Funke Aderonmu, Policy Analyst, Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality's Economic Security & Opportunity Initiative

By Policy and Practice: The Causes and Consequences of Racial Wealth Inequality

“*Uncovering the drivers of racial wealth inequality requires examining a major source of wealth creation: homeownership. The path to homeownership in this country is one that has been closed off to Black people by policy and practice at different points throughout our nation's history.*”

JUSTICE



Van Jones, CEO, REFORM Alliance; CNN Host & Political Commentator

No One Was Sentenced to Death by a Virus: A SAFER Plan for COVID-19 in US Jails & Prisons

“*We should want to create a new normal on the other side of the pandemic that delivers justice in areas where we now find injustice; this includes re-thinking mass incarceration and committing to maintaining those pandemic-era reforms that prioritize public safety, common-sense justice reforms, cost-savings, and public health long after the virus has stopped wreaking its havoc.*”

JUSTICE



Benjamin Crump, Founder, Ben Crump Law; Civil Rights & Personal Injury Attorney

The Pandemic, Police & Protests: Marking a New Chapter in the Story of American Life

“*It is highly likely that 2020 will not be remembered as the year America fixed its deep-rooted racial inequalities and turned the hearts of all Americans to love their brothers and sisters of all colors. But it may well be remembered as the year of a great awakening, when long overdue conversations happened and when “Black Lives Matter” became a call to action for more than just Black people.*”

JUSTICE



A'shanti F. Gholar,
President, Emerge; Founder,
Brown Girls Guide to Politics

America Will Have Its First Woman President Sooner Than We Think

“*We have been laying the foundation for a woman president for years; and today, we are closer than ever to realizing our dashed hopes. I am confident that one day soon we will be able to tell the Black women and girls in our lives that they can be anything they want to be—including the occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue—and mean it.*”

JUSTICE



Lawrence Norden, Director,
Brennan Center for Justice
Election Reform Program



Gowri Ramachandran,
Counsel, Brennan Center
for Justice

Pandemic Precautions: How to Protect the 2020 Election Inside and Outside Polling Places

“*The COVID-19 pandemic presents new challenges, especially for Black people, who are testing positive and dying from the virus at higher rates than other groups. Increasing access to vote-by-mail is one piece of what must be done to ensure voters can exercise their rights to vote without risking their health. Making it simple to vote by mail not only ensures that voters can cast ballots without risking infection, it also provides a voting method that is resistant to many forms of cyberattack.*”

JUSTICE



John Stankey,
Chief Executive Officer,
AT&T Inc.

Changing America: Why 2020 Can Be a Turning Point for Police Reform and Social Justice

“*Systemic racial injustice is an enormously complex problem. Our nation has a difficult and lengthy task ahead of us. But we can look to the future with optimism, thanks to the work of the National Urban League and the growing awareness of the need for change within the American population. And I promise this organization and all its supporters that the AT&T family is standing with you to help.*”

JUSTICE



David Levine, Elections
Integrity Fellow, Alliance
for Securing Democracy



Bret Schafer, Media &
Digital Disinformation
Fellow, Alliance for
Securing Democracy

The Vote and the Virus: Inoculating the Election From Disease and Disinformation

“*Any change to standard voting procedures, however reasonable, necessary, or life-saving, will create a potentially nightmarish scenario where the increased demand for up-to-date information is met with a manipulated supply meant to misinform parts of the electorate.*”

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NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

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Akron Community Service Center & Urban League

Alexandria, Virginia

Northern Virginia Urban League

Alton, Illinois

Madison County Urban League

Atlanta, Georgia

Urban League of Greater Atlanta

Aurora, Illinois

Quad County Urban League

Austin, Texas

Austin Area Urban League

Baltimore, Maryland

Greater Baltimore Urban League

Battle Creek, Michigan

Southwestern Michigan Urban League

Binghamton, New York

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Birmingham Urban League

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Buffalo Urban League

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Charleston Trident Urban League

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Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, Inc.

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Urban League of Lexington-Fayette County

Little Rock, Arkansas

The Urban League of the State of Arkansas

Long Island, New York

Urban League of Long Island, Inc.

Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles Urban League

Louisville, Kentucky

Louisville Urban League

Madison, Wisconsin

Urban League of Greater Madison

Memphis, Tennessee

Memphis Urban League

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Milwaukee Urban League

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Minneapolis Urban League

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Norfolk, Virginia

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Greater Sacramento Urban League

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Urban League of San Diego County

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Urban League of Southern Connecticut

Tacoma, Washington

Tacoma Urban League

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Tallahassee Urban League

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Greater Washington Urban League

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White Plains, New York

Urban League of Westchester County

Wichita, Kansas

Urban League of Kansas, Inc.

Wilmington, Delaware

Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Winston-Salem Urban League

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