

# Disparity Reduction

HENNEPIN COUNTY  
MINNESOTA

## Improving outcomes for all

The work of our organization deeply focuses on the people of Hennepin County. It is our commitment to reduce the disparities that separate our residents who are thriving from those who are not.

While many of our residents enjoy the great quality of life this region gets recognized for, we cannot be blind to the fact that stark disparities exist – particularly for our residents of color. Hennepin County defines racial disparities as differences in areas of life that result in one group having a disproportionate burden of negative life outcomes.

Our approach to improving these outcomes focuses on seven interconnected domains. Reducing any individual disparity can leverage positive change and help reduce disparities in other areas. If one gear turns, they all move.



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### Disparity Reduction

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Hennepin County | Hennepin  
County](#)

## Website

[hennepin.us](http://hennepin.us)

## **Shifting our lens**

We see disparities every day in the places our critical support services serve people who are not faring well. We have an obligation to work toward eliminating disparities by whatever means we have. Here, in Hennepin County, inequities in education, employment, health, housing, income, justice and transportation are starkest between residents of color and their white counterparts. When we start our work from this shared perspective, shifting our guiding lens to one that is focused on eliminating disparities, we see the places, partnerships, programs and services where we have a responsibility to act.

## **Racism as a public health crisis**

On Tuesday, June 30, 2020, the county board voted to declare racism a public health crisis in Hennepin County. Due to racism, Black, Indigenous and People of Color in Hennepin County statistically have poorer educational outcomes, earn less, and are less likely to own homes or have access to quality health care and jobs than White people. These disparities have lifelong impacts, including higher disease rates, and, as we're seeing now, higher rates of COVID-19. Naming racism as a systemic cause of disparities is key to continue to move this work forward.

## **What applies in Hennepin County can apply across the state**

Disparities do not end at county borders. Strengthening partnerships will be integral to reducing inequities that exist in Hennepin County, the metro region and the entire state. We cannot solve this alone.

Hennepin County can lead by testing strategies that can work in every county. Our approach is inclusive and collaborative. We plan to organize across the region and invite partners. We will work together to provide rational and effective solutions and strategies that level the playing field for all Minnesotans.

## **2021 policy requests and ideas will be firmly rooted in disparity reduction**

All of our policy requests of the state Legislature will have disparity reduction as a core element. Each will seek to leverage resources and strengthen partnerships to reverse persistent disparities that drive poverty, poor health, involvement in the criminal justice system, transportation access and low achievement.

