



BLACK WOMEN AND FEMMES HEALTH PROJECT

Environmental Scan

Our team conducted an equity assessment and analyzed **8 health** and **philanthropic** entities and **3 policies** that impact Black women and femmes in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

Health Organizations & Funders

METHODS:

To assess health organizations and funding sources, we used publicly available documents found on the websites of these entities. These documents were available from December 2020 to August 2021. No interviews or surveys were conducted directly with these organizations.

Health organizations and funding sources received scores of either very poor, fair, average, above average, or excellent. Scores were based on each entity's efforts in indicators such as the use of endowments, centering the Black experience, board and staff composition, and prioritizing Black maternal and child health.

VERY POOR:
No evidence of meaningful action towards this goal

FAIR:
Acknowledgement of need, but no meaningful action has taken place

AVERAGE:
Institution provides active and continuing support toward increased efforts

ABOVE AVERAGE:
Actions to address factors have been fully developed in collaboration with community

EXCELLENT:
Organizational efforts are firmly institutionalized and influence or work with other entities in community

HEALTH ORGS

The majority of indicators received scores of



This suggests:

- No evidence of action concerning health equity
- Acknowledgment of need but no meaningful action taken place

While 3 of 4 organizations scored **average** on at least one indicator, no organizations scored **above average** or **excellent** on any indicator.

- This suggests some evidence of active and continuing support toward increased efforts but no evidence of fully developed or institutionalized efforts within communities.

These health organizations generally report engaging with local Black leaders and organizations; however they often fail to report actions that explicitly aim to improve inequities in health outcomes for Black birthing people.

Health Organizations Assessed:

- University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
- Allegheny County Department of Human Services
- Allegheny County Health Department
- Allegheny Health Network

FUNDERS

The majority of indicators received scores of



This suggests:

- No evidence of action concerning health equity
- Acknowledgment of need but no meaningful action taken place

2 of 4 funders scored **average** on at least 3 indicators. 2 of the 4 funders scored **above average** on at least one indicator.

- This suggests some evidence of active and continuing support toward increased efforts and some fully developed efforts within communities.

These funders display evidence of engaging with and funding local organizations that aim to improve the health of Black communities; however the number of these organizations funded, the amount of funding given, and engagement with these organizations past funding cycles are often limited.

Funding Organizations Assessed:

- The Pittsburgh Foundation
- Richard King Mellon Foundation
- University of Pittsburgh Clinical & Translational Science Institute (CTSI)
- Heinz Endowments

POLICIES

METHODS:

Our team used the Policy Equity Assessment (PEA) to evaluate three different policy areas that influence the health of Black Women and Femmes in Allegheny County. This framework evaluates whether a policy that addresses social determinants of health can improve racial/ethnic equity.

The three indicators of the PEA include 1) The Logic Stage, 2) The Capacity Stage, and 3) The Research Evidence Stage. These three stages seek to evaluate what the policy is designed to do, its ability to provide quality services to reduce racial inequities, and the effectiveness of the policy for the target population.

Child Blood Lead Level Testing

Logic: The policy is designed to promote the elimination of childhood lead poisoning and address gaps related to lead-based paint hazards in housing built prior to 1978.

Capacity: Access to testing and educational material is given to all pregnant people and children under 2 years old.

Research: Testing will increase, but there is a lack of acknowledgment of the need to target Black families who are disproportionately affected by childhood lead poisoning.

Conclusions:

- The Allegheny County universal child blood lead level testing policy prioritizes **Equality** (providing the same resources for all residents) over **Equity** (providing resources based on the specific needs of residents).
- Without addressing inequities in housing and access, there are limits to benefits for Black birthing people, their children, and their families.

Minimum Wage

Logic: The policy acknowledges that a minimum wage, which allows people to live in poverty, has a disproportionately adverse effect on people of color.

Capacity: Policy could assist in narrowing pay gaps for all women, including women of color.

Research Evidence: The policy will increase annual household income for all, but white women may benefit most of all.

Conclusions:

- A **WAGE** increase **does NOT equal** a **WEALTH** increase.
- A minimum wage is **NOT** a **living wage**.
- Wage is correlated with **gender pay gaps** but wealth is correlated with **racism**.
- **Reparations** can address wealth increases in Black communities.

Racism as a Public Health Crisis Resolutions

Nation Wide Policy Review

- We reviewed **125 resolutions** passed through September 2020 at the city, county, and state levels throughout the US.
- The majority of policies **name racism**.
- Proposed actions were generally **passive** in nature, failing to explicitly describe **how** each entity plans to make equitable decisions.
- **Active** action steps are needed to create meaningful changes that address racism.

Méndez et al. (2021). *Racism as Public Health Crisis: Assessment and Review of Municipal Declarations and Resolutions Across the United States*. *Frontiers in public health*, 9, 686807. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.686807>

Local Policy Review

- While both the city of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County passed racism as a public health crisis resolutions, we reviewed **Pittsburgh's resolution**.
- **The 2019 Pittsburgh Resolution:**
 - 1) **Names racism** while also describing the **historical context** of racism and discrimination in the city
 - 2) Proposes a **leadership forum** to address and coordinate action around this public health crisis
 - 3) Proposes an **investment fund** to reduce the harmful effects of racism on Black communities in the city

This work was done in partnership with the following organizations:

