

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has released tools and resources to help communities plan for and implement a coordinated rehousing strategy. For additional details, [view a 90-minute webinar on rehousing strategies](#) or a [90-minute webinar on prevention strategies](#) in the midst of COVID-19. This document offers specific and actionable tips on building racial equity into your rehousing strategy.

## Tip #1: Understanding Contributing Factors to Racial Disparities

Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness and severe impact from COVID-19.<sup>1</sup> [Use your data](#) to identify the greatest racial, ethnic, and other local disparities in access, services, and housing, and use a [Root Cause Analysis](#) framework to contextualize and better understand what needs to be done to advance equity.

### *Immediate Actions:*

- Disaggregate Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data by race and ethnicity, gender, household size, and the intersection of those demographics.
- Identify where there are the [greatest inequities](#) in race, gender identity, and sexual orientation, or where underserved populations are located, and target resources to those areas.
- Discuss the causes of the disparities.<sup>2</sup> This may include historical and continued racial discrimination through human trafficking and bondage of people of African descent, Black Codes and Jim Crow laws, redlining, segregation, and punitive policing. Use this information as a roadmap to create goals and strategies that drive toward equity.

### *Ongoing Actions:*

- On a routine basis (monthly or quarterly, for example), compare new entries into the homeless system and housing placement data to the general homeless population.<sup>3</sup> Where do disparities continue to occur? What trends can you identify in access? Are those most impacted by racism being served proportionately? Be vigilant about assessing who is unable to access housing because of new coordinated entry system [prioritization policies](#).
- Develop and document adjustments to [organizational policies](#), outreach strategies, [prevention](#), access points, [coordinated entry assessments and policies](#), etc. to address specific and negative impacts identified based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or age.<sup>4</sup>
- Evaluate the impact of [procurement decisions](#) regarding access and culturally responsive services.

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<sup>1</sup> [Rehousing Activation and Racial Equity Part 1: Equity as the Foundation](#)

<sup>2</sup> Urban Institute, 2020: [How We Should Talk about Racial Disparities](#)

<sup>3</sup> C4 Innovations, 2019: [Racial Equity Analysis of Assessment Data](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Rehousing Activation and Racial Equity Part 1: Equity as the Foundation.](#)

## Tip #2: Co-Design your Rehousing Strategy with BIPOC and People with Lived Expertise

To create an equitable system response to homelessness, build coalitions with people with lived experience (PWLE), BIPOC-led organizations, and racially and ethnically representative stakeholders, including culturally specific organizations. Reimagine the system response using their experiences as the guide. This includes understanding historical and current discrimination and racism within the homeless response system and within other systems that contribute to the disproportionate number of people of color experiencing homelessness.

### *Immediate Actions:*

- Bring together a representative group of PWLE, BIPOC, and the intersections of those populations with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) identities.
- Review outcomes of local equity analysis together to understand where access, services, and housing inequities and gaps are taking place and develop rehousing strategies that address those inequities and gaps.
- Fund culturally responsive organizations with an established presence that are trusted by BIPOC, the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, and people from other marginalized populations to implement housing assistance and services. See [Increasing Equity in the Homeless Response System Through Expanding Procurement](#) for tips. Offer first-time-funded organizations technical assistance as needed and provide feedback on the procurement process.

### *Ongoing Actions:*

- Invest in paid and supported positions for BIPOC with lived experience of homelessness to increase representation and decision-making power within system planning and implementation processes.
- Implement transparent accountability structures that include publicly sharing progress on equity outcomes.
- Continuously review the procurement process and newly funded organizations.

## Tip #3: Continuously Evaluate Data—Expand What Creates Equitable Outcomes and Change What Does Not

Review data regularly to monitor progress toward equity goals and pivot from practices that result in disparate outcomes.

### *Immediate Actions:*

- Set measurable goals that address the causes of disparities.
- Identify the data needed for evaluation. Include housing placement rates and what populations are and are not getting housed during a determined period (e.g., 100 days).
- Track how long it takes for BIPOC population groups who experience the greatest disparities to be rehoused compared to other population groups.

### *Ongoing Actions:*

- Regularly bring the data forward to different stakeholder groups to solicit feedback at different levels and backgrounds.
- Evaluate progress toward established goals, identify new areas for adjustment to improve outcomes, and adjust as needed to ensure you are addressing disparities.
- Regularly evaluate the team responsible for evaluation to ensure it is representative of the populations you serve.

## Tip #4: Build and Budget Programs That Account for Structural Employment Barriers

BIPOC individuals experience disparate access to employment and are more likely to have lost employment during COVID-19, resulting in deep inequities illustrated by high unemployment rates, particularly for Black and Latinx workers: 12.1 percent and 10.3 percent respectively in September 2020, compared to White workers at 7 percent.<sup>5</sup> In addition, BIPOC workers face [hiring discrimination](#) that results in longer job searches. To combat these challenges, housing providers—especially for rapid rehousing (RRH) programs—should ensure the scope of services and assistance proposed are designed to give everyone the ability to be successful with the assistance offered.

### *Immediate Actions:*

- Recognize that the supportive services needed to achieve housing stability may need to be increased due to the impact of COVID-19. Build in the programmatic flexibility to regularly assess housing stability needs for each household.
- Be prepared to deploy a significant amount of resources and supportive services to ensure they can maintain stable housing, including rental assistance.

### *Ongoing Actions:*

- Build case manager capacity to provide and deliver supportive services around employment and job training, facilitating access to mainstream programs for clients, etc.
- Establish partnerships with employers to develop pipelines into living-wage employment opportunities for participants.
- Evaluate and update existing policies and procedures related to the available amount and length of rental assistance that achieve equitable housing stability outcomes for BIPOC households. Update documents to allow for flexibility.

## Tip #5: Expand Your Landlord Reach and Diversify Housing Options

When building up the landlord and property management relationships, conduct outreach and engagement with local community-based resource lists and contacts. See [Landlord Engagement](#) for more detailed resources on strategies for launching or enhancing local landlord engagement efforts.

### *Immediate Actions:*

- Connect with individuals and entities not traditionally thought of as housing providers in your community (e.g., churches, small businesses) to identify landlords who have not previously housed households with experiences of homelessness.
- Promote opportunities for landlords to partner with your Continuum of Care (CoC) and housing providers. Consider if there are opportunities to expand promotion to media outlets most frequently used by communities of color if these are not already among the media outlets that you have traditionally used to promote opportunities for partnership with the CoC.
- Work with the public housing authority and local housing associations to reduce institutional barriers (e.g., remove local laws that require criminal background screening thresholds for apartments, credit requirements, etc.).

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<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics: [Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, sex, and age, seasonally adjusted](#).

### **Ongoing Actions:**

- Continue to reenergize [landlord engagement strategies](#). Include celebratory acknowledgments of existing landlords who have rehoused households experiencing homelessness.
- Track information on landlords with reports of exploitation and harm toward BIPOC tenants and ensure programs are not referring to or utilizing those properties.
- [File a complaint with HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity](#) against landlords that have discriminated against tenants in violation of fair housing laws.
- Take the time to understand the positive and negative impacts of housing all clients in certain neighborhoods. Are those neighborhoods where BIPOC feel comfortable and have support systems? Are there businesses reflecting their culture and communities of faith? Are there high rates of COVID-19?
- Remove barriers to housing where possible, especially in terms of client experience with the justice system.

### **Key Resources**

To support building equitable strategies in your planning and implementation process, here are a few of the equity-specific tools and resources available on the HUD Exchange [Disease Risks and Homelessness](#) page:

- [Staff Orientation to Racial Equity](#)—Reviews key concepts including racial equity, the difference between equity and equality, and key drivers of inequity.
- [Rehousing Activation and Racial Equity Part 1: Equity as the Foundation](#)—Reviews equity concepts and how to conduct a Racial Equity Impact Assessment to guide planning and decision-making.
- [Advancing Racial Equity through Assessments and Prioritization](#)—Provides suggestions and considerations for how to change CE planning processes, policies and procedures, and assessments to advance equity.
- [Strategies for Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement when Developing your Coordinated Investment Plan](#)—Provides suggestions for building an inclusive team that embeds considerations of equity into local planning processes.
- [Increasing Equity in the Homeless Response System Through Expanding Procurement](#)—Shares how to expand your pool of service providers to include culturally specific organizations and organizations targeting underserved communities in order to advance equity. It also highlights how to reduce barriers to selection and how to select and build the capacity of new partners.