



*Easy Read Edition*

# **Crisis In Our Communities: Racial Disparities in Community Living**

## **Introduction**

# **Focus Group Editors**

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ASAN thanks all our focus group editors for their time and effort.

# Introduction

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## What is this toolkit?

It is important for people with disabilities to be able to live in our communities.



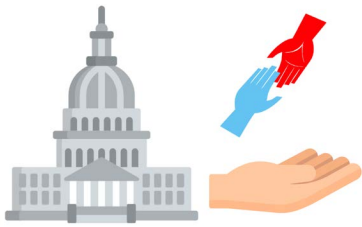
To live in our communities we need to be safe and healthy.



We need to have homes to live in.



We need to get the supports we need.



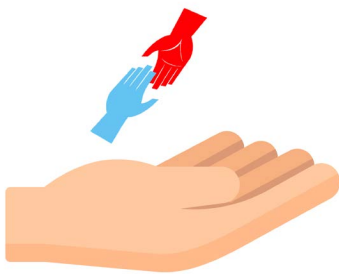
The government has some programs that are meant to help.



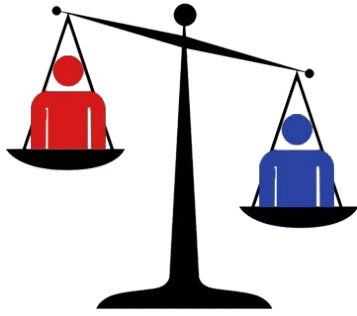
But some groups of people have a harder time than others.



People of color with disabilities have a harder time living in our communities.



Government programs don't help enough.



Sometimes these programs don't help all groups of people fairly.



Sometimes unfair differences mean that people of color with disabilities need extra help.



Sometimes unfair differences mean that people of color with disabilities need different help.



These unfair differences are called **racial disparities**.



Racial disparities are unfair differences between groups of people because of race.



For example, people of color are more likely to live in poverty than white people.



This is not fair.



This is a racial disparity.



Racial disparities are caused by **racism**.



Racism is when someone is treated unfairly because of their race.



A lot of racial disparities are caused by racism in the past.



A lot are also because of racism that is still happening.



Even if we stop racism, the unfair differences don't go away on their own.



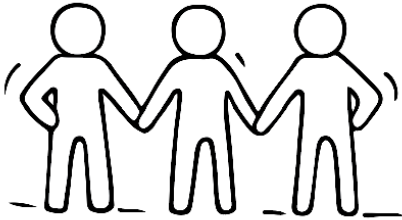
They still happened. They still hurt people.



If we don't fix them, racial disparities can keep growing.



A group of people might be called a **community**.



A community is a group of people who have something in common.



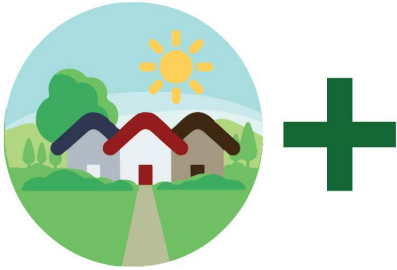
It is also the relationships these people have to each other.



People that are part of a community might live, work, and play in similar ways.



Sometimes a community is in a particular place.



But a community isn't just a place.



It's the people in the place.



It's the relationships those people have with each other and that place.



This toolkit will look at several topics important for community living. It will talk about:



- Dealing with Emergencies



- Working in the Community



- Supports in the Community



- The Criminal Legal System



- Housing



- Health Care

For each topic it will talk about:



- Why this topic is important for community living.



- What sorts of racial disparities there are in this topic.



- How racial disparities make it harder for people of color with disabilities to live in the community.



- What we can do to fix some of the racial disparities and make it easier for us to live in the community.



When we talk about problems and how to fix them, this toolkit will talk about **policy**.

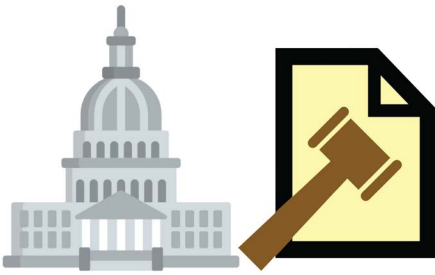
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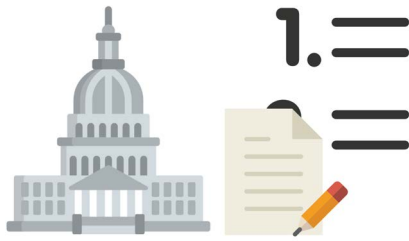
A policy is a rule that people or the government make about how they will do things.



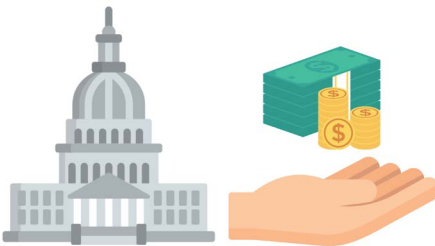
For example, a law about where people can build houses is a policy.



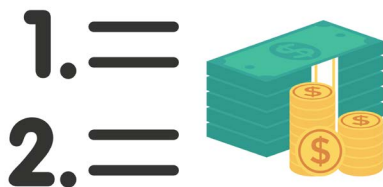
A lot of policies are made by the government.



The government makes laws about what people can and can't do.



The government also gives some people money to do things it wants.



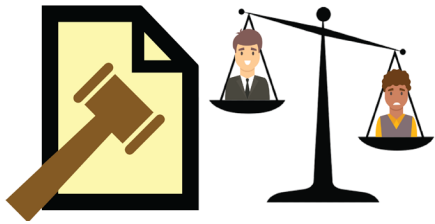
Then, it makes rules about how that money can be used.



All of these rules are examples of policy.



Sometimes policies in the past have been racist.



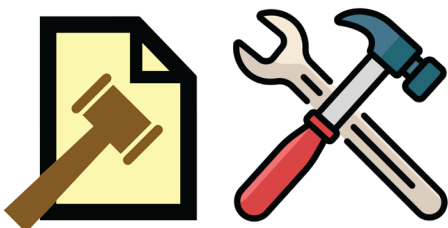
They have treated people unfairly because of their race.



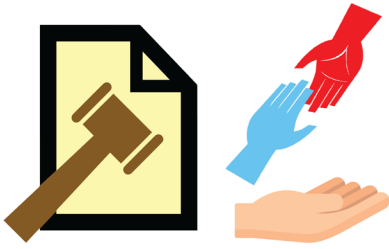
Sometimes this was by accident.



Sometimes this was on purpose.



But policies are also an important way we can fix that unfairness now.



If we use the right policies we can help people instead of treating them unfairly.

## Why is this toolkit important?

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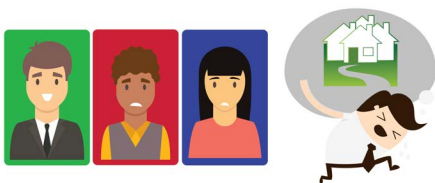
It is important for people with disabilities to be able to live in our communities.



We have a right to live in our communities.



We are better off when we live in our communities.



But racial disparities make it hard for everyone to live in the community.



People of color with disabilities have a harder time living in communities.



People of color are in more danger of being removed from our communities.



They are in more danger of being put in institutions or prison.



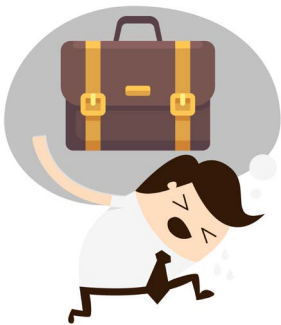
They have a harder time getting the support we need to live in the community.



They have a harder time staying safe and healthy in the community.



They have a harder time affording good places to live.



They have a harder time getting good jobs.



We need to make sure community living is fair.



We need to make sure it is available to everyone.



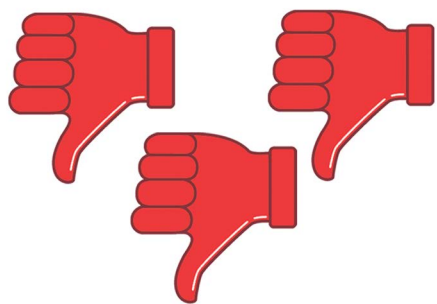
We need to fix racial disparities to make community living fair.

## How can I use this toolkit?

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You can read this toolkit from beginning to end. Or you can go straight to the parts you want to know more about.



This toolkit is big and discusses a lot of difficult problems.



This means you may want to pick one topic at a time to read about.



Each part of the toolkit describes a different way racial disparities make it hard to live in the community.



Each part will start by describing an important part of community living.



It will explain what sorts of racial disparity problems there are.



Then it will describe some things we can do about them.

## Words To Know

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You'll see some words in this toolkit that are **bolded**. At the start of each section, we will list all of these words in Words To Know.



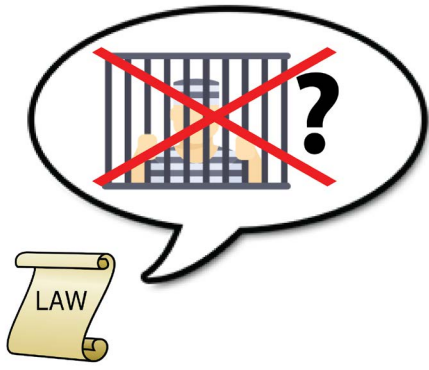
We will also explain what the words mean.



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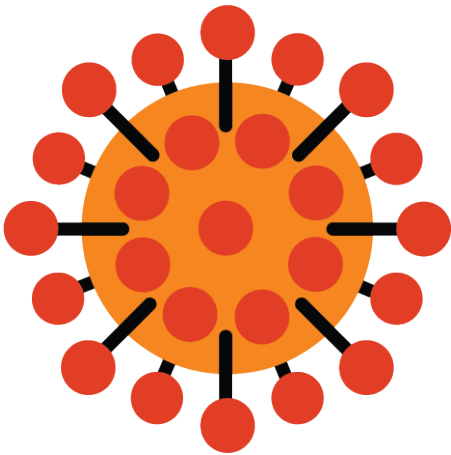
There is also a Words To Know section at the end of the toolkit with all of these words.

# Words to Know



## Ban the box

Ban the box is a name for a type of law. These laws say that employers and landlords can't ask if someone has been arrested or gone to jail.



## Covid-19

Covid-19 is a disease that makes a lot of people very sick. It passes through the air, and people who get very sick need a lot of help breathing.



## Chronic illness

Chronic illnesses are illnesses that last a long time and need attention from doctors. Some chronic illnesses cause disabilities.



## Community

A community is a group of people who have something in common. It is also the relationships these people have to each other.



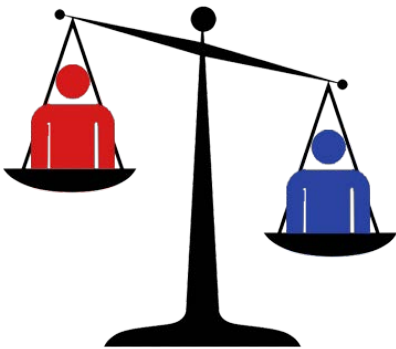
## The Criminal Legal System

The Criminal Legal System is the government system whose job it is to decide if someone broke the law. It decides whether someone who broke the law should be punished, and what those punishments should be.



## Crisis standards of care

Crisis standards of care are policies that doctors and hospitals use during emergencies. These policies are about how doctors and hospitals decide who to help when they can't help everyone.



## Discrimination

Discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of who they are.



## Disparate impact

Disparate impact is a way of figuring out if a policy is causing discrimination. Disparate impact means we don't care about the reasons people give. What matters is that the policy results in people being treated unfairly.



## Domestic work

Domestic work is a group of jobs that are usually done in the home. These can include jobs related to cleaning, cooking, and providing supports. Providing home- and community-based services is one kind of job that is called domestic work.



## Emergency

An emergency is a big problem that needs to be fixed right away.



## Employment

Employment is when you have a job that you are paid for.



## Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is a way of thinking about how racism and unfair policies make some communities have more environmental problems.



## Environmental Justice Populations

Groups that have been hurt more by problems in the environment are called environmental justice populations. The government tries to do more to help environmental justice populations stay healthy and safe. It does this because it knows they are hurt more by environmental problems.



## Eviction

Eviction is when someone who rents their home is kicked out early.



## Expungement

Expungement means erasing a record. In the criminal legal system it is when a judge erases some or all of someone's criminal record after the punishment.



## Federal housing choice program (Section 8)

The Federal housing choice program is a public benefits program. It helps people without much money pay rent. It makes sure people in the program only pay a third of their money for rent. The federal housing choice program pays the rest. The federal housing choice program is also called Section 8.



## Federal qualified health centers

Federal qualified health centers are health clinics that provide preventive care to underserved communities. They follow rules from the government. In exchange the government helps pay for them. One of those rules is that they help everyone in the community even if they can't pay.



## Health inequity

Health inequity is when some groups of people are less healthy than others because of unfair differences in where and how they live.



## Home and Community Based Services

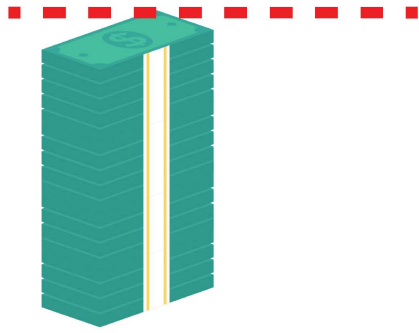
Home and Community Based Services are a type of LTSS where people get the services they need at home instead of from institutions. For example, help with cooking or cleaning at home. The law says we have a right to get the supports we need as HCBS.



## Homelessness

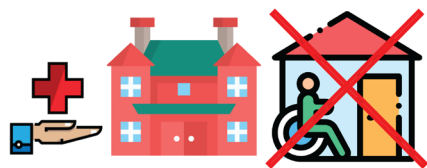
Homelessness means someone doesn't have a safe place to live. Sometimes people are homeless and have a place they live sometimes, but that place isn't safe. They can't rely on it.

## Income limits



Income limits are requirements on many public benefits. Income limits say if you have too much money you can't get help. If you start making too much money you lose your help. Income limits are different for different programs

## Institutional bias



Institutional bias is a problem caused by the way Medicaid pays for LTSS. Medicaid pays for LTSS from institutions as a mandatory service. But it pays for HCBS as an optional one. This means Medicaid makes it much harder to get supports as HCBS.



## Lease

An agreement to live in a home someone else own.



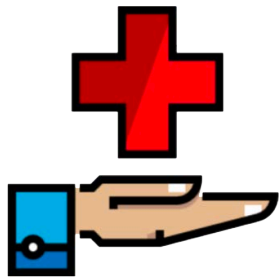
## Long-Term Support Services

Long-Term Support Services are services that can help people with disabilities do the things we need to do every day. Some types of long-term support services are job coaches or in-home helpers. Long-term support services are sometimes called LTSS for short.



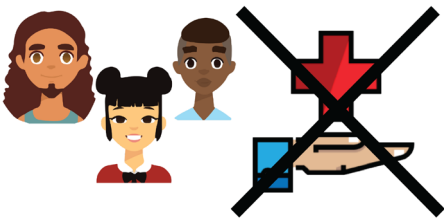
## Mandatory services

Mandatory services are services that the law that made Medicaid says Medicaid has to pay for.



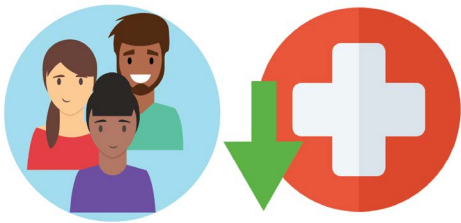
## Medicaid

Medicaid is a program run by the government to help people pay for health care. It is meant to help people without much money and also people with disabilities. A lot of people with disabilities rely on Medicaid to pay for the services we need.



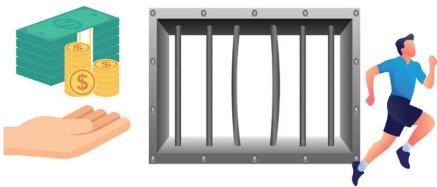
## Medicaid coverage gap

The Medicaid coverage gap is a problem with Medicaid that means a lot of people don't get health care. A law passed in 2010 said that states should give Medicaid to more people. A lot of states decided they didn't want to. They sued, and the courts said they didn't have to. This meant that a lot of people should be getting Medicaid but can't. These people are in the Medicaid coverage gap.



## Medically underserved communities

Medically underserved communities are communities that do not have enough health care. Sometimes there aren't enough doctors and nurses in a community. Sometimes a lot of the community is older and has more health needs. Sometimes a community doesn't have a lot of money.



## Money bail

Money bail is a system where people who are arrested need to give money to the court to be let out of jail. Money bail is sometimes called cash bail



## Optional services

Optional services are services that the law says Medicaid can pay for, but doesn't have to.



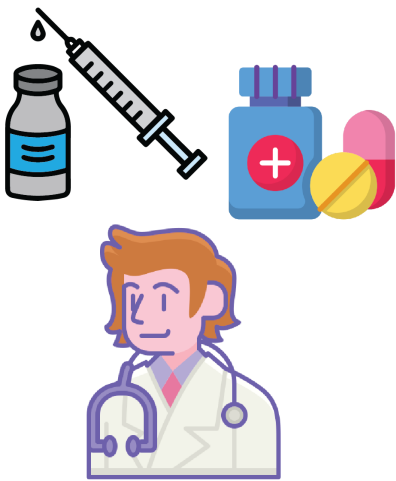
## Pardon

Pardon means forgiveness. In the criminal legal system, someone in charge of a government can use pardons to forgive a crime. Usually this person is a president or governor. Getting a pardon basically means the government says the crime didn't happen. If someone is still being punished and they get a pardon, that punishment ends.



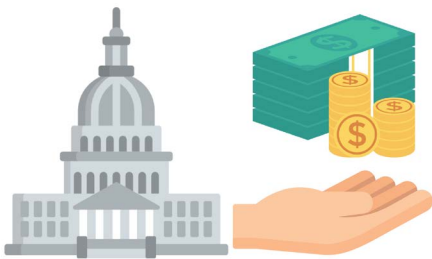
## Policy

A policy is a rule that people or the government make about how they will do things.



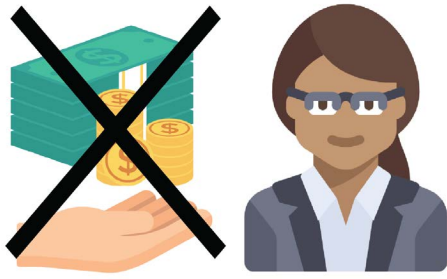
## Preventive care

Preventive care is health care that keeps us from getting sick. It helps us avoid getting chronic illnesses and helps people who have chronic illnesses stay healthy.



## Public Benefits

Public Benefits are when the government helps us pay for something that we need. People usually get public benefits if they don't have enough money to afford these things on their own.



## Public defenders

Public defenders are lawyers who help people who have been accused of crimes and can't afford to pay a lawyer on their own. Everyone has a right to defend themselves if they are accused of a crime. Public defenders are meant to help make sure we have that right.



## Qualified immunity

Qualified immunity is a special rule made by the courts for when people accuse police of breaking the law. These rules make it harder to prove that the police break the law. The rules make the person who got hurt prove that the police knew the law. They have to prove the police broke the law on purpose.



## Racial Disparities

Racial disparities are unfair differences between groups of people because of race. A lot of racial disparities are caused by policies. A lot of policies that cause racial disparities are done on purpose, because of racism.



## Racism

Racism is when people are treated unfairly because of their race. Sometimes people can be racist, and treat people unfairly because of racism. Sometimes policies can be racist, if they treat people unfairly. Sometimes racist policies get made on purpose. This can be because the people making the policies are racist.



## Redlining

Redlining was a policy that was part of segregation. Redlining was a way banks decided who could get some types of loans. One thing they used to decide this was how many people of color lived in these communities.



## Relief sites

Relief sites are places where people can go during emergencies to stay safe. Sometimes we need relief sites during emergencies because it isn't safe to stay home. Sometimes relief sites will also give us things we need to stay safe, like water or blankets.



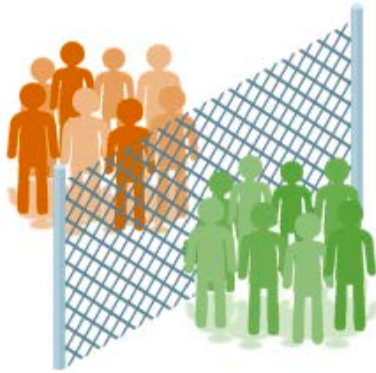
## Restorative justice

Restorative justice is a name for a different approach to justice than the criminal legal system. Restorative justice is a group of ideas about how we can help the person who broke the law and anyone they hurt, instead of removing them from the community.



## Safety net health systems

Safety net health systems are hospitals that serve a lot of patients from underserved communities. These also rely on government payment. Usually this payment comes from Medicaid.



## Segregation

Segregation is when people use policy to separate people based on who they are. In America, a lot of segregation has been because of race.



## Social determinants of health

Social determinants of health are the conditions in our lives that affect our health. These conditions are part of every place we live, learn, work, play, and age. They affect our health, ability, and quality of life.



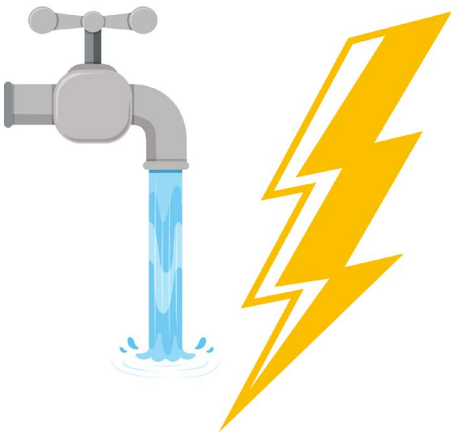
## Substance Use Disorder

When someone takes a lot of drugs. Their body feels like it needs the drugs to stay alive. So they keep taking the drugs, even if they want to stop. Substance use disorder is a disability. A lot of people who don't get support for substance use disorder have trouble in the criminal legal system.



## Unemployment

Unemployment is when someone wants to have employment, but isn't working.



## Utilities

Utilities are very important services that we pay to get. They are important for keeping us safe and healthy. Some



examples of utilities are electricity and running water.

## Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation is a support provided by the state government to help people with disabilities get jobs. It is sometimes called VR for short. The supports VR gives depends on what each person needs.



## Worst case needs

Worst case needs means that someone's housing is very unsafe. It can mean that someone pays more than half of their money for housing. It can also mean that the place they live is very unsafe.



# Zoning

Zoning is rules that the government makes that say what types of buildings a place can have