



*Plain Language Edition*

**Crisis in our  
Communities:  
Racial Disparities in  
Community Living**

**Discussion Guide**

# “Crisis in our Communities: Racial Disparities in Community Living” Discussion Guide

## About the whole toolkit

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- What did you learn from this toolkit that you didn't know before? What did you already know?
- Is there anything in the toolkit that you still don't understand? What do you want to learn more about?
- This toolkit is about racial disparities in community living. What is an example of a racial disparity? What are some reasons why racial disparities exist?

## Dealing with Emergencies

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- In the toolkit we discussed how people can have different problems from emergencies because of where they live. What are some examples of how emergencies can be more dangerous for people because of where they live?
- If you feel comfortable sharing, think about a time you had to prepare for an emergency. What sorts of things did you do to stay safe? Were there things you wanted to do but couldn't?
- What sorts of things can we do before emergencies to help people stay safe when emergencies happen?
- What sorts of things can we do after emergencies happen to help people stay in their communities?
- What sorts of things can we do to help communities be safe and healthy for everyone, so emergencies are easier?

- In this toolkit, we talked about environmental justice communities. Do you think people with disabilities should be counted as an environmental justice community? Do you think it would help protect people with disabilities better? Why or why not?
- Think of an example of a policy related to emergencies that is unfair to people of color with disabilities. It can be an example from this toolkit, or another one you can think of from your own experience.
  - Who made this policy? Why?
  - Who is in charge of this policy?
  - How does this policy make it harder for people of color to live in the community?
  - How could this policy be changed to be more fair?
  - Who can make those changes?
  - What would you want to ask them to do to fix this problem?

For more information on how you can work to change unfair policies, you can check out our guide to civic engagement [here](#). You can also find more resources for different policies and what you can do about them at our action center [here](#).

## Getting Employment

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- What are some things that make a job a good job? Which of those things matter the most to you? If you work or are looking for work, which ones do you care the most about?
- What are some reasons why people of color with disabilities aren't working when they want to? What are some reasons why people of color with disabilities don't have jobs that are good? Are any of these reasons the same? Are any different?
- Sometimes employers discriminate against people applying for

jobs. What are some ways employers might discriminate against people if they didn't want to get caught? What are some ways we can make it harder for them to discriminate?

- Think of an example of a policy related to employment that is unfair to people of color with disabilities. It can be an example from this toolkit, or another one you can think of from your own experience.
  - Who made this policy? Why?
  - Who is in charge of this policy?
  - How does this policy make it harder for people of color to live in the community?
  - How could this policy be changed to be more fair?
  - Who can make those changes?
  - What would you want to ask them to do to fix this problem?

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## Supports in the Community

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- What are some problems with institutions?
- What are some reasons that people of color are more likely to be in institutions?
- What are some things that make it hard to get HCBS?
- How do long wait lists make HCBS less fair for people of color?
- What are some differences between paid and unpaid support workers? Are there ways that paid and unpaid support workers are the same?

- How can the work conditions of support workers affect people with disabilities?
- In this toolkit, we talked about what health inequity means for people of color who get HCBS. What are some examples of health inequities?
- How can fixing health inequities make HCBS better for people of color?
- Think of an example of a policy related to supports that is unfair to people of color with disabilities. It can be an example from this toolkit, or another one you can think of from your own experience.
  - Who made this policy? Why?
  - Who is in charge of this policy?
  - How does this policy make it harder for people of color to live in the community?
  - How could this policy be changed to be more fair?
  - Who can make those changes?
  - What would you want to ask them to do to fix this problem?

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# The Criminal Legal System

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- What helps you feel safe in your community?
- What are some ways police make people of color or people with disabilities less safe?
- What are some things we can do when police are unsafe?
- Why is it important to make sure police follow the law?
- What are some things besides police that can help our communities be safe?
- What are some things we can do to make it easier for people to come back to their communities after they have been arrested or sent to prison?
- One thing we talk about in the toolkit is ways to have a justice system that doesn't only use prison when people break the law. What are some things we can do to help people do better without taking them out of the community?
- Think of an example of a criminal legal policy that is unfair to people of color with disabilities. It can be an example from this toolkit, or another one you can think of from your own experience.
  - Who made this policy? Why?
  - Who is in charge of this policy?
  - How does this policy make it harder for people of color to live in the community?
  - How could this policy be changed to be more fair?
  - Who can make those changes?
  - What would you want to ask them to do to fix this problem?

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# Safe and Affordable Housing

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- What are some ways that not having good housing can be unsafe for us?
- What are some reasons communities of color often have less good housing than other communities?
- In this toolkit we talked about some ways that landlords might try to discriminate against people with disabilities or people of color. What were some examples of this? Can you think of other ways landlords might try to discriminate?
- In this toolkit we described some of the ways policies have been used to discriminate against people with disabilities or people of color. Some of these policies were rules about what homes people could build and where they can build them. What are some ways that rules about how homes are built might discriminate?
- Think of an example of a policy related to housing that is unfair to people of color with disabilities. It can be an example from this toolkit, or another one you can think of from your own experience.
  - Who made this policy? Why?
  - Who is in charge of this policy?
  - How does this policy make it harder for people of color to live in the community?
  - How could this policy be changed to be more fair?
  - Who can make those changes?
  - What would you want to ask them to do to fix this problem?

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# Getting Good Health Care

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- People of color often have worse health and get worse health care than other communities. What are some of the reasons for this?
- In this toolkit we talked about medically underserved communities. Do you think people with disabilities should be counted as a medically underserved community? Do you think it would help protect people with disabilities better? Why or why not?
- Do you think it is important to have doctors who have had experiences like yours? Do you think this would change the sort of health care you get? How?
- Think of an example of a policy related to health care that is unfair to people of color with disabilities. It can be an example from this toolkit, or another one you can think of from your own experience.
  - Who made this policy? Why?
  - Who is in charge of this policy?
  - How does this policy make it harder for people of color to live in the community?
  - How could this policy be changed to be more fair?
  - Who can make those changes?
  - What would you want to ask them to do to fix this problem?

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