

Ohio's Approach to the Social Drivers of Infant Mortality (SDOIM): 5 Years Later

Draft policy goals and recommendations for eliminating racism

Health Policy Institute of Ohio – 1/18/2023

Eliminating racism

Potential goal 10. Acknowledge the effects of racism on infant mortality

Facilitate conversations about how racism has impacted birth outcomes for Black babies to open the door for creative, collaborative solutions.

Sample recommendations

- **10.1. Announce a commitment to equity.** Policymakers and community organizations can release equity statements and plans of action that affirm a commitment to end racism and improve health outcomes, including birth outcomes, in Black communities.
- **10.2. Share data and research.** Policymakers and community organizations can share evidence-based information about the connections between racism and infant mortality to increase understanding among their colleagues, stakeholders, constituents and clients.

Potential goal 11. Create and implement equitable policy agendas and plans that increase opportunities for healthy births

Enact plans that advance evidence-informed action steps to improve community conditions and increase opportunities for healthy births in Black communities.

Sample recommendations

- **11.1. Advance the Plan of Action to Advance Equity.** State policymakers can continue to implement and release status reports on [Ohio's Executive Response: A Plan of Action to Advance Equity](#) (released August 2020), Ohio's policy agenda to advance equity in Ohio's systems; promote diversity, equity and inclusion in state workplaces; embed equity in programs and policy; and provide tools for statewide partners to advance equity in public service.
- **11.2. Implement the State Health Improvement Plan.** State and local policymakers can continue to act on the priorities, strategies and equitable targets outlined in the [2020-2022 State Health Improvement Plan](#), including priorities on housing, poverty, K-12 student success, preterm births and infant mortality.

Potential goal 12. Advocate for and fund policies and programs that promote justice and fairness

Establish policies and contribute resources to dismantle racism and increase opportunities for healthy births.

Sample recommendations

- **12.1 Advocate for policy change.** Community organizations, businesses and other partners can develop relationships with state and local decisionmakers, join local coalitions, and engage in a variety of advocacy approaches (such as circulating

petitions, testifying before the state legislature and meeting directly with policymakers) to advance policies that would address racism and improve birth outcomes for Black Ohioans.

- **12.2. Assess the impact of proposed policies.** State and local policymakers can conduct assessments of proposed policies, such as [Racial Equity Impact Assessments](#) and [Health Impact Reviews](#), to ensure they do not create barriers to health for Ohioans.
- **12.3. Fund initiatives to eliminate racism.** Private organizations and philanthropic funders can dedicate financial support to initiatives focused on advancing opportunities for Black Ohioans, achieving long-last impact and creating institutional change for racial justice.

Potential goal 13. Recruit, support and train leaders and staff to serve communities of color more effectively

Ensure that the leadership and staff of government offices, businesses and community organizations, particularly those in the housing, transportation, education and employment sectors, reflect the communities that they serve and that all staff are trained to address racism through their work.

Sample recommendations

- **13.1. Recruit diverse staff.** Policymakers and community organizations can implement recruitment strategies, like internships, mentorship experiences and academic enrichment programs, that intentionally engage potential candidates of color.
- **13.2. Educate and train staff.** Policymakers and community organizations can engage in trainings to increase knowledge on topics such as implicit bias, historical injustices and trauma to deepen discussions on dismantling racial inequities and build capacity to advance equity in community conditions and birth outcomes.

Potential goal 14. Authentically partner with Ohioans of color and tailor policies and programs to meet their needs

Establish trust with members of Black communities across the state, share power and decision-making authority and customize policies and programs to ensure they meet the needs of Black Ohioans.

Sample recommendations

- **14.1. Build trust.** Policymakers and community organizations can establish relationships with members of Black communities early in the planning process and include those individuals in decision-making groups to select and advance policies and programs to improve community conditions and advance equitable birth outcomes.
- **14.2. Host accessible community meetings.** Policymakers and community organizations can resolve any barriers to engagement for Black Ohioans by providing accommodations such as child care and transportation services, and by using meeting spaces that are convenient and accessible.