



ICADV Equity and Inclusion Statement: COVID-19

We are in the midst of a global pandemic that has been referred to as a “great equalizer,” meaning, it can impact anyone at any time regardless of age, race, gender or socioeconomic status. But this virus is anything but a “great equalizer.” In fact, it has exacerbated disparities within the systems individuals depend on – healthcare, shelter, food security – and ignited racist and hateful attacks on communities of color, specifically the Asian Pacific Island community.

Violence of any kind is unacceptable, and as advocates for social and policy change to empower survivors of intimate partner violence, we have an obligation to call out racism, xenophobia and inequities that are disproportionately taking a toll on communities of color, low-income Americans and marginalized communities.

When confirmed cases of COVID-19 hit the U.S. in early February, we were told that social distancing and shelter in place practices would help to keep people safe and slow the spread of the virus. However, this is not possible or a choice for frontline workers, many of whom are Black and Brown people, who have faced generations of systemic and structural racism that affects their ability to stay healthy, safe and financially afloat. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, Black and Latino communities in Iowa are disproportionately testing positive for the virus. Latino Iowans make up 6.2% of the state’s population and account for 17% of positive cases while Black Iowans are 4% of the state's population with 9.2% total confirmed cases. These disparities are in line with what we are seeing across the U.S. and have put a spotlight on societal disparities that existed before the pandemic began, and without transformative change, will continue after it passes.

But we have an opportunity to change this.

Now is the time to enact common-sense solutions and fix systems that are inclusive and equitable for all. We need to move forward ensuring all communities have a voice when new policies are put in place and recognize how generations of oppression, racism and privilege have left these voices out. We believe that access to basic needs – healthcare, shelter, a livable minimum wage, paid sick leave and food security – are rights for all, and for far too long, these rights have been denied to many. This denial is a form of violence, and violence has no place in our society.

If there is one thing we have learned from this crisis, it is just how deeply we depend on one another. Now is the time to come together and emerge from this pandemic in a world that truly honors the value and dignity of all people and the freedom for all of us to thrive.

In solidarity,

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence Staff and Board of Directors