

AIDS Free Pittsburgh Collective Anti-Racism Statement

July 28, 2020

AIDS Free Pittsburgh affirms that Black Lives Matter. We join the [American Public Health Association \(APHA\)](#) in condemning law enforcement violence as a public health issue. We support those working to combat systemic racism and advocate for health equity in our community. As a collaborative public health movement to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Allegheny County, we recognize the ways that racism is a public health crisis and significantly impacts the HIV/AIDS epidemic at local, state, and national levels. For example, racism directly affects a person's ability to access quality healthcare, housing, education, and employment opportunities as well as their general safety and well-being. Therefore, we support the [City of Pittsburgh](#) and [Allegheny County's](#) calls for racism to be declared a public health crisis. Moreover, we call attention to the fact that HIV/AIDS disproportionately impacts Black people in our community. Epidemiological data published by the [Allegheny County Health Department](#) illustrates clear racial disparities in the rates of new HIV cases and new AIDS diagnoses in Allegheny County. We cannot end HIV/AIDS without addressing systemic racism in our society.

However, words alone are not enough to bring about the substantial changes that we need to address racial disparities of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In order to be accountable to Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) in our community, we commit to the following actions:

1. Incorporate an anti-racism lens to our planning process for the next phase of the project. We will continue to utilize racial and demographic data to inform our collective strategies to better address HIV-related health disparities among Black communities.
2. Offer a racial equity training for AFP partners to gain a better understanding of how systemic racism impacts physical and mental health outcomes of communities of color.
3. Develop a process to hold AFP partners accountable for actions that may be interpreted as racist or non-inclusive.
4. Actively recruit Black-led organizations to join AIDS Free Pittsburgh as partner organizations or Advisory Group members.
5. Prioritize the hiring of Black consultants and Black-owned local businesses for project work whenever possible.

In this spirit, we invite all Allegheny County residents to share your ideas with us so that we can be more inclusive and mindful of other community concerns that intersect with HIV/AIDS. Please take a few minutes to complete our community survey to let us know what priorities we should focus on as we continue working to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic over the next five years:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AFP2020survey>.

We will continue to execute efforts that address health disparities and inequities as it is our mission to serve the community and end the spread of HIV. We have zero tolerance for police brutality and the spectrum of other racial injustices that have happened for far too long. Witnessing this has made us ever more invested in the work we do and committed to serving populations who have long been mistreated. Although the public health field has a history of negatively impacting BIPOC communities, we believe that we can help change this through our collective actions in solidarity with abolitionist groups in our community and across the country.