



# Health Equity and Mobility Justice

## Frequently Asked Questions



### What is health equity?

Health equity is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. The concept of health equity recognizes that historical and contemporary injustices, such as redlining, mass incarceration, and inequitable access to care must be addressed to achieve full health potential for all people. Health equity cannot be realized without the elimination of health disparities, which are differences in the incidence and prevalence of health conditions and health status between groups that occur as a result of unjust or unfair exposure to detrimental health and social factors.

**Health equity is achieved when all people in a community have access to affordable, inclusive, and quality infrastructure and services that, despite historical and contemporary injustices, allows them to reach their full health potential.**

Source: Ohio Department of Health (2017).

### Related Resources: Active Living FAQs

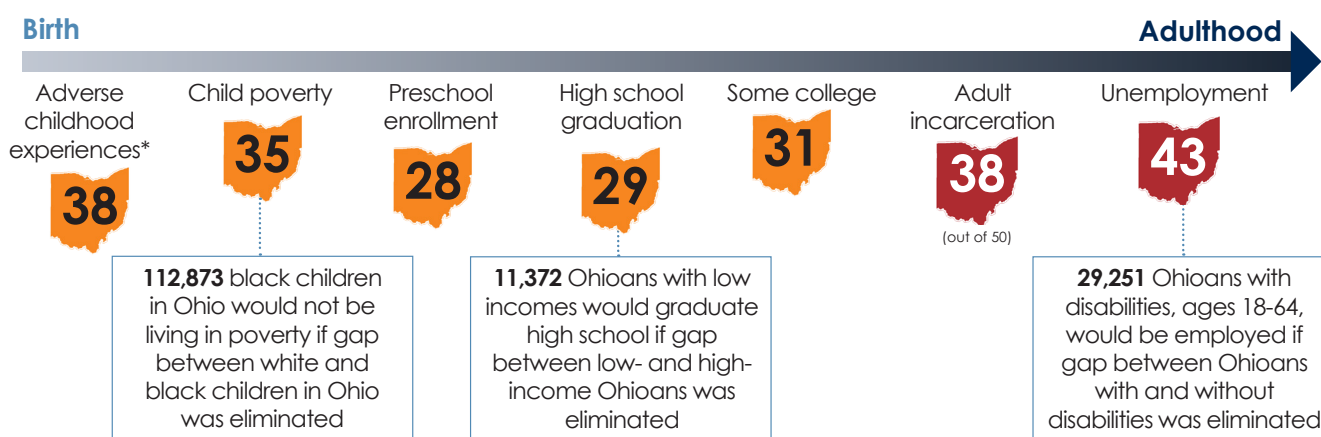
### What are Ohio's health disparity statistics?

Ohioans face health disparities related to race, income, education, ability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and geography across a number of health measures. For example, infant mortality rates are three times higher for Black people than white people in Ohio; access to healthcare is also worse for Black Ohioans, as are premature death, physical activity rates,<sup>1</sup> chronic disease rates, and overall health status.<sup>2</sup> Low-income people and those without a high school education also struggle with many disparities, from poverty and housing quality to overall health status and access to care.<sup>3</sup>

1 United Health Foundation. (2019). *America's Health Rankings Annual Report*. Retrieved from: <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Sedentary/state/OH>

2 Aly, R., & Stevens, A. (2019). *2019 Health Value Dashboard*. Health Policy Institute of Ohio. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019-HealthValueDashboard.pdf>

3 Aly, R., & Stevens, A. (2019).



\*Adverse childhood experiences include a child's exposure to family dysfunction, addiction in the home, domestic or neighborhood violence and living in a family with financial hardship.

Ohio's rankings compared to other states in various health disparities, and the adverse consequences for underserved groups.

Source: Health Policy Institute of Ohio

## What are the benefits of achieving health equity?

A culture of health equity ensures that everyone has access and opportunity to make healthy choices and enjoy a healthy lifestyle regardless of their race, income, or other factors listed above. By acknowledging the historic and contemporary injustices that have isolated many communities from opportunity, a health equity approach can begin to level the playing field, distribute resources to areas of greatest need, and concentrate on improving access to healthy choices and healthy lifestyles. When everyone has the opportunity to attain their desired health status, society as a whole is better off both economically and socially.

## How can I advance health equity in communities that don't appear to have health disparities?

Many rural and suburban communities are predominantly white, and while they may not experience health disparities by race, disparities by income and education are still widespread. People who live in rural areas or Appalachian counties are more likely to face multiple barriers to health.<sup>4</sup> Opioid addiction, underemployment, and incarceration

disproportionately affect low-income people and exacerbate health disparities. In addition, auto-oriented rural transportation networks with few pedestrian or bicycle amenities discourage active transportation. This reduces physical activity and is one reason why death by chronic disease is more prevalent in rural areas.

State government and local agencies in such communities should invest in drug prevention and addiction treatment programs, strengthen behavioral health services, and increase investment in public transit to connect low-income workers to jobs and education. Concentrated improvements in active transportation infrastructure can increase mobility and improve safe travel for underserved populations.

## What types of institutional and social changes are necessary to tackle health inequities?

The American Public Health Association identifies seven key principles for advancing health equity:<sup>5</sup>

- » **Be explicit!** Name the groups suffering from health disparities and specific strategies to help them.
- » **Identify and effectively address racism and implicit racial biases.** Racism and discrimination are deeply embedded in American society, both

<sup>4</sup> Aly, R., & Stevens, A. (2019).

<sup>5</sup> American Public Health Association. (2019). *Creating The Healthiest Nation: Advancing Health Equity*. Retrieved from: [https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/factsheets/advancing\\_health\\_equity.ashx?la=en&hash=9144021FDA33B4E7E02447CB28CA3F9D4BE5EF18](https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/factsheets/advancing_health_equity.ashx?la=en&hash=9144021FDA33B4E7E02447CB28CA3F9D4BE5EF18)





past and present. Accepting this fact is the first step in dismantling the racist policies that created many health disparities in the first place and that continue to perpetuate them.

» **Adopt a “health in all policies” approach.**

Incorporating health into all policies acknowledges the many factors that go into creating healthy communities: housing, transportation, employment, education, food access, and more.

» **Create an internal organization-wide culture of equity.** Diversity, inclusion, and equity work must be intentional, and it must have strong support from organizational leadership. A diverse staff is critical to successfully engaging in equity work. Leadership or decision-making power must also be equitable and inclusive; if staff diversity is not reflected in leadership, a genuine culture of equity is impossible to attain.

» **Respect and involve communities in health equity initiatives.** Organizations should prioritize the participation of vulnerable communities in all stages of a planning process. Valuing community expertise builds meaningful partnerships and results in better policy decisions.

» **Measure and evaluate progress in reducing health disparities.** Organizations must track progress on health equity work by collecting and analyzing data on indicators of health disparities.

## What is mobility justice?

Adopting a mobility justice framework can move communities and organizations closer to achieving health equity by providing safer streets for walking and bicycling that people of all backgrounds may enjoy. People of color and low-income people are exposed to more traffic violence than white and high-income people.<sup>6</sup> They are more likely to be killed specifically while using active transportation, due in part to road design and lack of infrastructure in underserved areas, but also aggressive policing that criminalizes the acts of walking and bicycling for people of color.<sup>7</sup> Mobility justice acknowledges these disparities and the historic and ongoing oppression of communities of color through the use of repressive policing tactics and other systemic injustices, which continue to negatively impact these communities' collective health, wealth, mobility, and security.<sup>8</sup>

- 6 Lieberman, M., Kramer, K., & Sadler, B. (2015). *At the Intersection of Active Transportation and Equity*. Safe Routes to School National Partnership. Retrieved from: <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/resources/report/intersection-active-transportation-equity%20>
- 7 Zimmerman, S., et al. (2015).
- 8 People for Mobility Justice. (2018). What is Mobility Justice? Retrieved from: <https://www.peopleformobilityjustice.org/>; Untokening. (2016). *Principles of Mobility Justice*. Retrieved from: <http://www.untokening.org/updates/2017/11/11/untokening-10-principles-of-mobility-justice>



Mobility justice recognizes that the transportation system treats people differently based on socioeconomic, cultural, and racial identities, and resist a one-size-fits-all approach to safety solutions.



Mobility justice advocates have created their own frameworks to rectify our unjust transportation network, which prioritizes wealthy and white users over low-income people and communities of color. Rather than focusing on the Five E's of conventional bicycle and pedestrian planning (refer to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans FAQ for more information), mobility justice is centered around Five Ds:<sup>9</sup>

1. Decolonize
2. Decongest
3. Decriminalize
4. Dignify
5. Determine

This framework centers on ending discrimination in how travel is regulated and accommodated based on race, class, legal status or perceived immigration status, ability, gender, gender identity, or age. Mobility justice brings the lived experiences of these groups to the fore to build lasting, community-oriented, and inclusive solutions.

## How can I incorporate mobility justice principles into my work?

Mobility justice advocates seek to hold government agencies accountable in their treatment of people of

color and other oppressed or marginalized groups. Government and public sector employees can also adopt a mobility justice framework to build a more just and equitable transportation system for the communities they serve. Strategies include:

- » Offering scholarships and stipends to help pay community members to get certified in the transportation and planning fields.
- » Partnering with LGBTQ, disability rights, racial justice, and other advocacy groups that acknowledge the intersectionality of mobility injustices.
- » Working with law enforcement to combat racial bias and police harassment of low-income individuals and people of color.
- » De-emphasizing practices that idealize Eurocentric designs and ideas in favor of local expertise and peer information exchange between similar communities.
- » Valuing the lived experiences of marginalized communities as essential data in assessing infrastructure and investment needs.
- » Promoting grassroots, community-led decision-making. Oppressed communities should have autonomy in decisions that affect their wellbeing.

<sup>9</sup> People for Mobility Justice. (2018). Vision Incomplete. Retrieved from: <https://www.peopleformobilityjustice.org/news/2018/11/8/vision-incomplete>

## Where can I find out more?

- » American Public Health Association. (2019). *Creating The Healthiest Nation: Environmental Justice for All*. [https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/factsheets/environmental\\_justice.ashx?la=en&hash=BF2694E6A2FC-6707C373F1E1DC60243BF333CACE](https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/factsheets/environmental_justice.ashx?la=en&hash=BF2694E6A2FC-6707C373F1E1DC60243BF333CACE)
- » American Public Health Association. (2019). The Impact of Racism on the Health and Well-Being of the Nation. <https://www.apha.org/events-and-meetings/webinars/racism-and-health>
- » Ohio Department of Transportation. (2019). Active Transportation Academy: Health and Equity in Transportation Training. [http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/LocalPrograms/LTAP/ATA\\_Flyers/ATA\\_Health\\_and\\_Equity\\_in\\_Transportation.pdf](http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/LocalPrograms/LTAP/ATA_Flyers/ATA_Health_and_Equity_in_Transportation.pdf)
- » People for Mobility Justice. (2019). About Us. <https://www.peopleformobilityjustice.org/about-us>
- » Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2018). Achieving Health Equity. <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/features/achieving-health-equity.html#why-equity-matters>
- » The Untokening. (2019). Untokening. <http://www.untokening.org/>

