

#BLACKLIVESMATTER
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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN
SOLIDARITY

RACISM IS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

ISSUE BRIEFING

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Racism is a longstanding systemic structure in this country that must be dismantled, through brutally honest conversations, policy changes and practices.

— American Public Health Association, Executive Director Georges Benjamin, MD¹

Racism is a Public Health Crisis

Public health issues are broad and encompass situations that affect the health and well-being of populations from different socioeconomic statuses. In the United States, exposure to racism is a social determinant in health. Racism is so embedded into American culture that conscious and subconscious biases permeate the systems where we live, work, learn, and play.

In 2019, 13.4% of the United States (US) population identified as Black, 18.3% as Hispanic, and 76.5% as white.² Within the same year, Hispanic and white Americans, accounted for 16% and 40% of people shot and killed by the police within the US, respectively.³ Furthermore, Black Americans accounted for 25% of people shot and killed by the police, while only representing 13.4% of the US population in 2019.⁴ Out of these racial groups, Black Americans were disproportionately shot and killed by the police compared to the racial demographics of the nation. Racism is a public health issue because systemic and institutional racism are deeply rooted in many systems, including our police, justice, education,

¹ <https://www.apha.org/news-and-media/news-releases/apha-news-releases/2020/racism-is-a-public-health-crisis>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/national/police-shootings-2019/>

³ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/IPE120218>

⁴ Ibid.

and health systems, disproportionately affecting the livelihoods of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). Racism is a disease.

To fight this disease, we must work together in a social ecological approach to ensure justice. Equality is good and equity is better, but to fix the root cause of the ailment there must be justice. To carve the path for justice, we need to take a public health approach to address issues at the population level through concrete policy, system, and environmental (PSE) changes. Everyone has a key role in the ecosystem to end police brutality, systemic racism, and fight for social justice.

Policy, System, and Environmental Changes

We support concrete policy, system, and environmental (PSE) changes already proposed by activists from [Campaign Zero](#). Below are additional projects that create policy, system, and environmental changes.

Policy Changes

Policy change must occur at the legislative and/or organizational level to end police brutality and systemic racism.

Examples:

- Hold law enforcement legally accountable for misconduct, improve transparency through and in data collection, and reform police training and policies. ([Justice in Policing Act of 2020](#))
- Require police departments to pay misconduct settlements out of their budgets or retirement funding streams. ([Campaign Zero](#))

System Changes

System changes must occur within the infrastructure or rules of organizations to end police brutality and systemic racism.

Examples:

- Require independent investigations and prosecutions of police officers. ("[An Act Concerning Excessive Use of Force,](#)" [Connecticut law](#))
- Demand equitable funding for education by changing the current practice of local taxes being utilized for their own jurisdictions to an equitable practice of a one-system tax pot divided equally amongst all jurisdictions. ([The Aspen Institute](#))
- Increase education standards and set concrete continuing education requirements for police officers. ([Campaign Zero](#))

Environmental Changes

Environmental changes must occur in the physical, social, and/or economic factors that influence police brutality and systemic racism.

Examples:

- Physical: Reduce the number of police officers in communities by establishing a mental health response team for situations that are outside of the scope of practice for police officers. ([Eugene Oregon "Cahoots" First Responder Program](#))
- Social: Establish community oversight structures of police departments, policies, and procedures. ([Campaign Zero](#))
- Economic: Terminate relationships with police departments that are not aligned with your organization's values. The University of Minnesota publicly announced after the death of George Floyd and through pressure from their Student Body President to discontinue contracts with the Minneapolis Police Department for additional law enforcement support. (["University of Minnesota Ending Contracts With Minneapolis Police Department After George Floyd's Death," TIME](#))

The Social Ecological Approach

The social ecological approach targets the multiple and complex interplays between ecosystem levels and public health crises. The ecosystem consists of individual, interpersonal, community, organization, government allies. These allies can work independently and collaboratively to assess, develop, implement, and evaluate public health strategies. This model helps illustrate where different allies are in the ecosystem that can work and influence each other to take actionable steps to end police brutality and systemic racism.

The Ecosystem

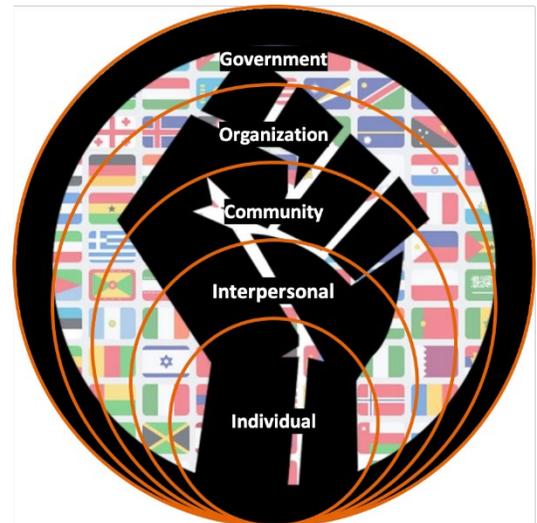
The following are broad examples of different systems that can work independently and collaboratively to promote concrete policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes to end police brutality and systemic racism.

- Individuals: You
- Interpersonal: Family, friends, and social networks
- Communities: Neighborhoods, local grassroots activists, workplaces, coalitions, social and religious organizations
- Organizations: Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), businesses, colleges, and universities
- Governments: Local, state, and federal bodies

The World Is Watching Ecosystem

[The World Is Watching](#) includes the following allies in the social ecological ecosystem to end police brutality and systemic racism.

- Individuals: Everyone who has signed [The World Is Watching petition](#)
- Interpersonal: Family and friends of signatories
- Communities: The World Is Watching social media network, Black Lives Matter Global Network
- Organizations: International and domestic Declaration endorsers and event partners
- Governments: Elected officials who respond to our [International Declaration](#) and the demands of Black Lives Matter activists



ABOUT THE WORLD IS WATCHING

[The World Is Watching](#) is a global coalition demanding concrete actions to end police brutality and systemic racism in the US.

We are leaders, foreign and domestic professionals, organizations, grassroots activists, and allies. We are creating a unified international front calling for policy, system, and environmental changes. Our inspiration stems from the critical role that international pressure had in advancing the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. We are now in the largest civil rights movement in history and we are strategically mobilizing the global community in the fight for justice.

www.theworldiswatchingBLM.org

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