

RACE COUNTS

HOW TO USE RACE COUNTS IN YOUR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

RACE COUNTS can be a useful tool in your organization's or coalition's strategy development and refinement. With a wealth of racial disparity data at state, county, and city levels, RACE COUNTS can help you better understand racial disparity in your community and to prioritize specific issue areas and indicators to take action on. Below is a step-by-step guide on how you can use the RACE COUNTS tool to develop and refine your strategy.

Step 1: Select the place (i.e., county or city) you would like to target.

First, navigate to the page on RACECOUNTS.org for the place that is the target of your advocacy -- California or one of its counties or largest cities. This page will show you racial disparity data across all seven issue areas, as well as key findings, and disparity data visualizations for your community.

Step 2: If your target place is a county, view the Heat Table to get an overview of the racial disparity and outcomes in your county.

The Heat Table shows your county's outcomes and racial disparity compared to other counties in the same region, which you can use to pinpoint a specific issue or set of issues to focus on. When looking at the Heat Table, you should check whether any of the issue areas for your county are red. Red boxes represent poorer outcomes and higher racial disparity. You may want to prioritize further exploration of these red issues as your next step. Depending on your strategy, you may also consider prioritizing additional exploration of issue areas that are orange – meaning better outcomes with higher disparity, or yellow issues – meaning lower disparity and poorer outcomes.

Step 3: Identify which indicators drive disparity and poorer outcomes in your priority issue(s).

Once you have identified priority issue(s) using RACE COUNTS and/or other methods, explore the indicators in those issues. Using the Disparity & Outcome Scatterplot, you can find out which indicators have the poorest outcomes and/or highest disparities in each priority issue area.

For example, the Heat Table has shown that your community has lower outcomes and higher disparity in Education (symbolized by a red box). To identify which indicators are driving the higher Education disparity, select your community and then view each Education indicator on the scatterplot. As you view each one, look for the indicator(s) where the bubble representing your

community is farthest to the right side of the plot. Disparity increases from left to right on the plot. Seeing that your place's bubble is quite far to the right side for high school graduation, you have identified that indicator as a key driver of higher Education disparity in your community.

Step 4: Identify which group(s) experiences the worst disparity on each indicator and the largest disparities for a particular group in your community.

Using the bar charts on the Issue or Place pages, you can identify which racial group(s) faces the largest disparities on each indicator. For example, to understand which group(s) faces the most inequities on graduation rates, navigate to high school graduation on the Education or Place page for your community. On each bar chart, the bars are ordered left to right, from best rate to worst rate. Looking at the chart, you will see which groups are the most and least likely to graduate.

Exploring the Race page for a group can help to identify the largest disparities experienced by that specific group. As you scroll down the page, take note of the charts where the selected group's bubble is farther to the right side (for indicators where the lowest rate is best, like Uninsured People) or to the left (for indicators where the highest rate is the best, like Internet Access). These charts represent the indicators where the selected group faces the worst disparities, in other words, where their rates are much worse compared to other groups.

Step 5: Engage community stakeholders

Engaging community stakeholders and those most impacted by racial inequity is a key component of developing any strategy for addressing racial disparities. Community engagement should occur early and often in the strategy development process and one key moment to engage community would be when you have gathered racial disparity and outcome data on your priority issue areas and indicators in your target place. Engaging community at this stage can help ground truth the data in the lived experiences of your target place's residents. It is also an opportunity for you to hear stories from those most impacted by the disparities measured in the data. Most importantly, this is an opportunity to hear the community's thoughts on the sources of racial disparity and their proposed solutions.

You can find resources on community engagement and hosting listening sessions and public forums below:

- [Community Tool Box Conducting Listening Sessions and Public Forums Toolkit](#) from the Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas
- [Community Tool Box Engaging People Most Affected by the Problem Toolkit](#) from the Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas

Step 6: Conduct research to identify potential policy & systems change solutions

Once you have selected a specific priority issue area, and ideally a specific indicator within the broader issue, you can start to do research to identify potential policy and systems change solutions. A few activities that you can do as part of your research include:

- Interview issue area and racial justice experts – including RACE COUNTS staff, local academics and policy experts, local community leaders, and people directly impacted by racial disparity;
- Investigate best practices related to your priority issue area or indicator from other counties or cities;
- Review the academic literature as well as reports and briefs from community-based organizations and policy and research oriented racial justice non-profits;
- Explore repositories of evidence-based policy solutions.

You can find a list of policy and research-oriented racial justice non-profits and academic institutions, as well as repositories of evidence-based policy solutions in the Appendix.

Any policy solutions that you consider should be vetted and approved by the residents of your target county or city, in particular by the people most directly impacted by racial disparity. Ideally, you should engage community to gain insight into what potential policy solutions they would like to pursue prior to the start of your research.

Rather than using a policy and systems change approach to address racial disparities, you may want to use a narrative change approach. Of course, you can also use both

approaches. You can find resources on the RACE COUNTS Put Data to Use page on how to use RACE COUNTS data in activities, like launching a social media campaign or writing an op-ed, that can help change hearts and minds.

Appendix

Policy and research oriented racial justice non-profits and academic institutes

- [Catalyst California](#)
- [Greenlining Institute](#)
- [PolicyLink](#)
- [Race Forward](#)
- [USC Equity Research Institute](#)
- [UC Berkeley Othering & Belonging Institute](#)

Evidence-based policy repositories

- [UC Berkeley Othering & Belonging Institute Structural Racism Remedies Repository](#)
- [County Health Rankings What Works For Health](#)