



COMMUNITY

Mapping Black California report reveals inequities faced by Inland Empire's Black population

by *Breanna Reeves*

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Black Equity Fund Co-Founders Felicia Jones, Dina Walker and Pastor Samuel Casey pose for a picture. The organization's recently released Black Equity Fund Report examines socioeconomic factors impacting the Inland Empire's 350,000 Black residents. (Photo courtesy of IECF)

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Nestled in Riverside County is Moreno Valley, the Inland Empire's **Blackest city**. With the second largest population in the county, Moreno Valley is just one example of the growing communities in the Inland Empire, home to the third largest Black population in the state — soon to be the second.

Mapping Black California (MBC), *Black Voice News*' data unit, recently published the “**Black Equity Fund Report**,” which examines the socioeconomic factors that impact the lives of the Inland Empire's 350,000 Black residents.

Despite the region's history of discriminatory practices such as **redlining**, inequitable access to quality housing and overall lack of resources and investments in programs and priorities important to Black residents, Black populations throughout the region have continued to grow and thrive in the face of adversity.

“For decades, Black residents have shown incredible resilience and determination to drive positive change in the Inland Empire, even in the face of complex challenges,” said Dina Walker, co-founder of the Black Equity Fund and CEO of **BLU Educational Foundation**, in a press release.

“This report underscores the urgency of continuing that fight, while charting a course toward greater equity and empowerment for the Black community.”

MBC was tasked with developing this data report by the IE Black Equity Fund under the stewardship of Inland Empire Community Foundation (IECF). The IE Black Equity Fund was created in 2020 to provide financial resources to Black-led organizations. The Fund has **raised** more than \$6 million to support these organizations.



Black Equity Fund grantees, BLU Educational Foundation, African American Health Coalition, San Bernardino Fatherhood and IE Black Worker Center representatives, talk with Cheryl Brown (center), current California State Commissioner on Aging, former Assemblywoman and Black Voice News emeritus publisher. (Photo courtesy of IECF)

Using data, the report analyzes how Black residents experience barriers to access across health, education, housing and wealth, and how these factors impact their wellbeing.

According to the data, there is a sizable disparity in life expectancy among different demographic groups in the IE. Black men have a life expectancy of 72 years — eight years shorter than the regional average (77 years) and 12 years less than Asian men (90 years).

“This report provides data-driven insights that reveal how anti-Black racism continues to profoundly shape life outcomes and opportunities for Black IE residents today,” said MBC Project Director Candice Mays in a press release. “We hope it serves to expand awareness and galvanize collaborative efforts to build a more just, equitable and inclusive future for the region.”

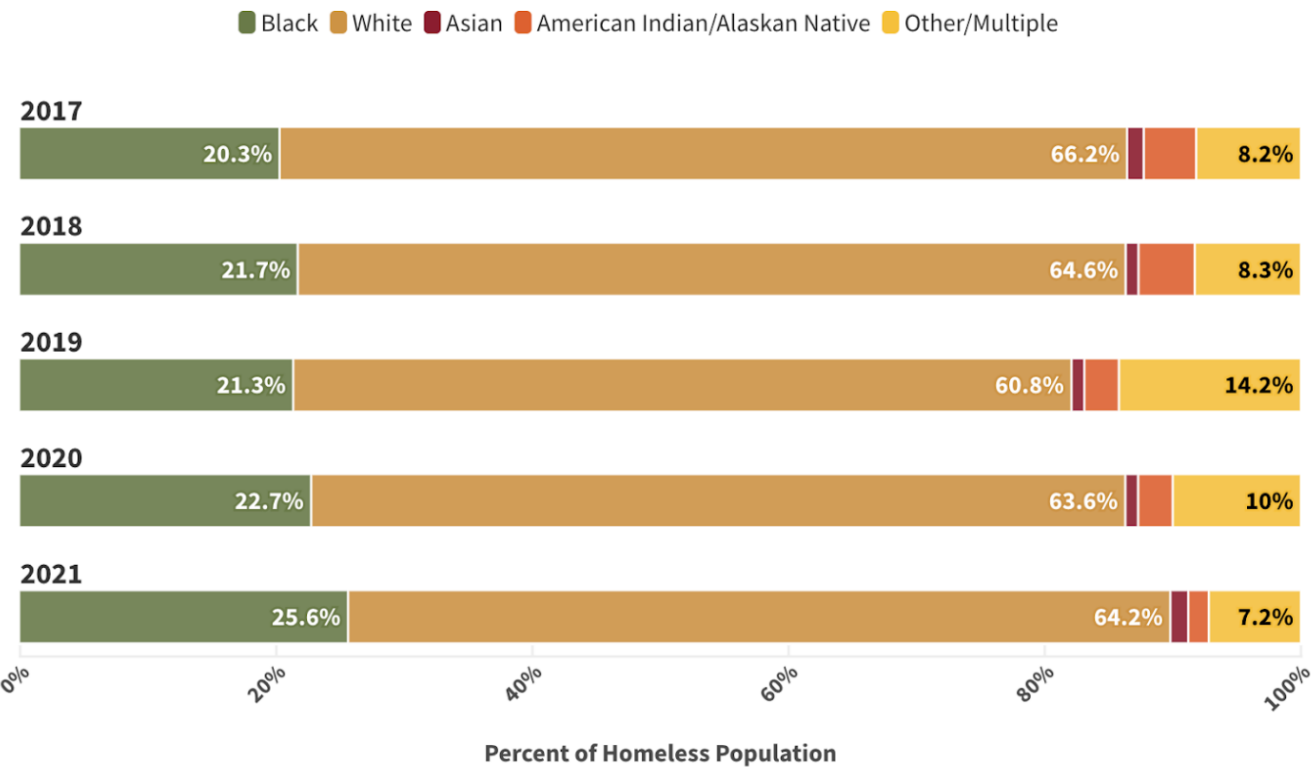
The Black Equity Fund was launched during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing racial protests. Health disparities among Black populations became more prevalent during the pandemic as data showed disparate **outcomes** in COVID-19 cases, deaths and vaccination access.

These outcomes, coupled with ongoing and heightened racial tensions, resulted in the need for more resources from Black-led organizations whose mission is centered on advancing the health, wealth and wellbeing of Black communities.

“When it comes to providing financial resources to our Black-led and serving organizations, the stark disparities revealed by the data cannot be overlooked,” said Michelle Decker, president and CEO of IECF, in a press release. “To tackle these disparities, we will continue raising dollars with the support of our donors who want to see a region that works for everyone.”

Financial **support** from the Black Equity Fund has allowed Black-led organizations to increase their capacity, fund new initiatives and expand others, and pour back into the community. Last year, 71 Black-led and serving community organizations were awarded grants from the Fund.

Share of PIT Homeless Population Recorded by Race (2016-2021)



Source: [US Department of Housing and Urban Development; Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations 2016-2021](#)

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Data from the Black Equity Fund Report demonstrates how Black residents in the Inland Empire face disparate outcomes across health, housing, education and even life expectancy. The chart above demonstrates how Black homeless individuals are overrepresented in the IE, making up 22% of unhoused individuals counted in the 2020 Inland Empire Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, despite only accounting for roughly 7% of the population.

Across the IE, there are dozens of Black-led organizations working to support Black residents facing disparate outcomes and impacts. According to the report, Black communities across the Inland Empire

are overrepresented among the houseless population, making up 22% unhoused individuals counted in the 2020 Inland Empire Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, despite only accounting for roughly 7% of the population.

Black Equity Fund grantees like the **Time for Change Foundation** are supporting the most vulnerable houseless individuals. Since 2001, the organization has been helping homeless women and children “achieve self-sufficiency” by providing housing and services.

“This report underscores the urgency of continuing the fight for greater empowerment and opportunities that match the strength, contributions and potential of the Inland Empire’s Black community,” said Dr. Paulette Brown-Hinds, publisher of *Black Voice News*, founder of MBC and past chair of the IECF board, in a press release.

As the Inland Empire’s Black population continues to grow, addressing these ongoing socioeconomic challenges will require a “multi-pronged approach,” according to the report. This approach includes addressing the origins of past discriminatory policies, the legacy of those policies and “proactively charting a course for future interventions.” To do so will require the collaboration of community leaders, policymakers, businesses and community members.

With the upcoming **primary election** on March 5 and later general election, Black residents of the Inland Empire have the opportunity to engage with their leaders and ignite change through civic action. While civic engagement among Black communities has been noted as robust with high voter turnout (71%), especially in presidential elections, Black voter turnout remains lower during midterm elections. Black residents have the ability to create change by electing leaders who will prioritize their needs and who will work to create equitable policies.

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