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Private sector organizations

Ensuring Ohioans of color have a fair opportunity for good health

Why is action needed?

To ensure that Ohio is a healthy and economically vibrant state, Ohioans must work collaboratively across the public and private sectors to address the complex barriers facing communities experiencing worse health outcomes. Ohioans of color, in particular, continue to face barriers to good health and well-being that are rooted in racism and centuries of unjust practices.¹ However, improvement is possible and there are many actions private sector organizations can take to support the health of every Ohioan.

This fact sheet, the second in a series of three, outlines actions private sector partners can take to support the health and well-being of Ohioans of color and move Ohio toward a more economically vibrant and healthy future. The first fact sheet provided action steps for **state and local policymakers**, and the final fact sheet will focus on community groups and individuals.

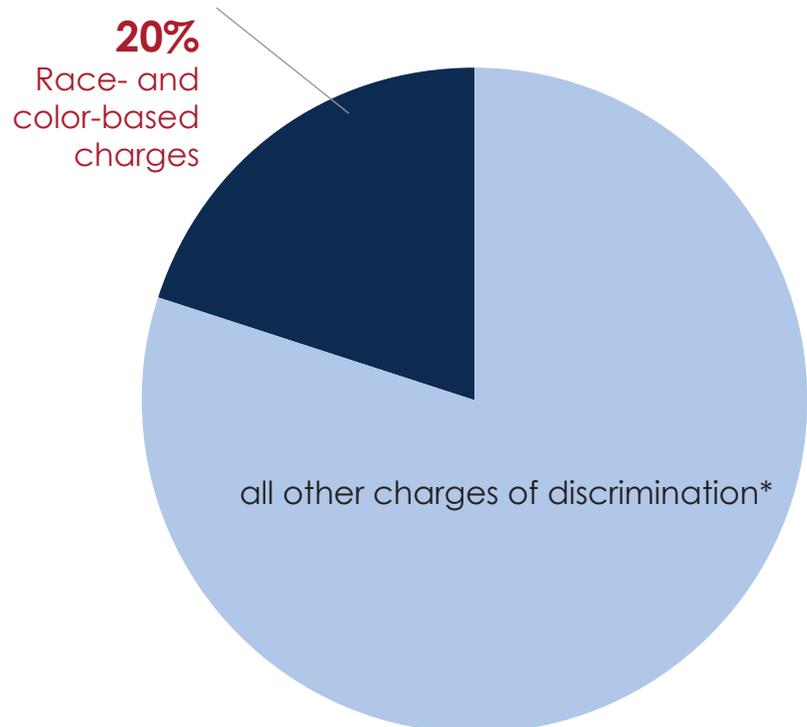
What barriers to health are experienced by Ohioans of color?

Ohio is a diverse state that is home to many people of color, including people who are Black, Hispanic or Latino, Asian-American, Native American and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Private sector policies and practices, stereotypes and beliefs rooted in racism, whether intentional or unintentional, can diminish the potential for Ohioans of color to thrive and successfully contribute to Ohio's economic vitality. An example of how racism within the workplace contributes to poor health and economic outcomes is highlighted below.

In the workplace

Workplace policies and practices are important for creating inclusive and productive environments that ensure every worker can thrive. However, without intentional action, workplace environments can negatively affect the health and career trajectories of employees of color.

Figure 1. **Charges of employment discrimination resolved in favor of the impacted employee (merit resolutions), U.S., 2020**



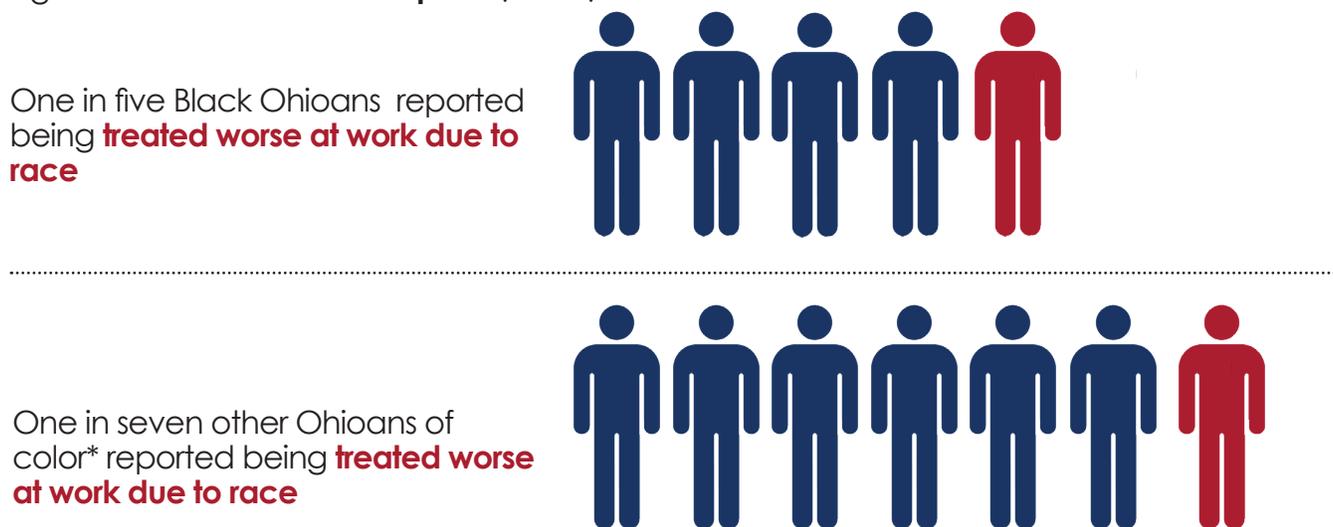
*Other charges include discrimination based on sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, pregnancy and unequal pay.

Source: HPIO analysis of U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Enforcement and Litigation Statistics.

For example, employees of color are more likely to experience racism in the workplace, such as being viewed as less professional or competent than white coworkers.² This often results in barriers to career advancement, including fewer promotion opportunities. Missed opportunities for career advancement contribute to the underrepresentation of employees of color in leadership, limiting the diversity of talent and experiences in many institutions' executive teams.³ Experiencing racism in the workplace can also contribute to long-term chronic stress.⁴ Over time discrimination and chronic stress can lead to wear and tear on the body and increase the risk for poor health outcomes such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and mental illness.⁵

Although state and federal laws prohibit discrimination against employees of color, thousands of workers bring charges of unfair workplace treatment based on attributes like race and color in front of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) each year. Of all discrimination charges successfully resolved in favor of the impacted employee (merit resolutions) through the EEOC in 2020, one fifth were race- and color-based (see figure 1). In Ohio, Black employees and other employees of color also frequently report being treated worse at work due to race (see figure 2).

Figure 2. **Racism in the workplace, Ohio, 2020**



*Other communities of color include: Ohioans who are Hispanic, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders, American Indians and other races. These categories could not be reported individually due to small sample size
Source: HPIO analysis of data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Data provided by the Ohio Department of Health upon request.

What can private sector partners do?

Private sector organizations, such as businesses, nonprofits, hospitals, philanthropy and places of worship, can take action to dismantle racism and advance equity. There are many opportunities to promote health, for example, by eliminating racism and discrimination in the workplace and in education. Examples of action steps that can be taken by private sector organizations are outlined below.

Action steps	Examples of private sector organizations taking action in Ohio
<p>1. Acknowledge the effects of racism. This means starting the conversation about how racism has impacted employees, stakeholders and communities to open the door for creative, collaborative solutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89 members of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce came together around a statement declaring racism a public health crisis and committed to address racism within their own organizations. • Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams drafted a letter, co-signed by over 1,000 Columbus-area businesses, supporting the declaration of racism as a public health crisis.

Action steps (cont.)	Examples of private sector organizations taking action in Ohio
<p>2. Recruit, support and promote diverse staff, leadership and boards. This means fostering a diverse and inclusive environment that reflects the communities in your footprint.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IGS Energy created a Diversity, Equity, Belonging and Inclusion (DEBI) action plan detailing actions, outcomes and measurements to build a more inclusive, equitable and diverse workplace. • Cardinal Health designed a comprehensive talent strategy to increase representation of diverse employees at the manager level and above by 2030.
<p>3. Educate, train and support leadership, staff and clients. This means educating your staff on racism and other barriers to health as well as opportunities to level the playing field for all Ohioans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kroger's Framework for Action outlines a commitment to provide unconscious bias trainings to leaders and diversity and inclusion trainings to all associates. • The Raymond John Wean Foundation in the Mahoning Valley hosts Race, Equity and Inclusion training sessions that help participants better understand institutional and structural racism.
<p>4. Advocate for, implement and fund policies and programs that promote justice and fairness. This means establishing policies and contributing resources to dismantle racism and advance equity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ohio State Bar Foundation is providing up to \$500,000 in grant funding to support initiatives focused on long-lasting impact and institutional change for racial justice. • Procter & Gamble launched a \$5 million "Take on Race" Fund to support organizations that fight for justice, advance economic opportunity, enable greater access to education and health care, and make communities more equitable.
<p>5. Authentically engage and tailor policies and practices to support Ohioans of color. This means partnering with communities and customizing your approach to make sure that it fits the needs of diverse groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Miller launched the Judicial Release Coalition to provide legal counsel to persons of color for judicial release where Ohio law provides no right to counsel. • The Improve Your Health (Caafimaadkaaga Wanaaji) Program at The James Cancer Hospital partners with Somali and Nepali communities to provide the tools needed for new immigrants and refugees to navigate the healthcare system and lead healthier lives.
<p>6. Collect and report disaggregated data for performance management and outcome evaluation. This means collecting and using data broken out by categories like race, ethnicity, age and disability status to track progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive Insurance tracks and reports employee representation, promotion, and pay equity by race, ethnicity and gender. • The Greater Cleveland Partnership conducts an annual Equity and Inclusion Organization Assessment that includes member data on workforce and leadership diversity, industry diversity, supplier diversity and the extent to which employers achieve diversity and inclusion best practices.



Building opportunities for health for every Ohioan

To ensure that every Ohioan can reach their full health potential, all forms of racism and discrimination must be eliminated. This includes individual actions and beliefs, but also encompasses discriminatory policies, practices and structures. Each action step outlined above can be implemented or adapted by private sector entities to address other forms of discrimination, such as ableism, ageism, sexism, xenophobia, and homophobia. HPIO's [Action Steps to Eliminate Racism resource page](#) includes additional resources to address racism and other forms of discrimination.

Additional resources

Private sector organizations in Ohio and across the country have taken the lead on developing workplace policies, programs and environments that contribute to good health for all employees. Continued focus, effort and investment are necessary from all sectors, public and private, to ensure that every Ohioan has the opportunity to reach their full health potential. The following resources provide guidance, tools and recommendations to support further action:

- **Race Matters: Organizational self-assessment, The Annie E. Casey Foundation**
This assessment provides a tool for organizations to increase awareness of and develop action plans to address racism and discrimination.
- **Innovation, diversity, and market growth, Center for Talent Innovation**
This report describes research findings which quantify the benefits of inclusive leadership and a diverse workforce to drive positive innovation and create a healthy workplace.
- **U.S. Businesses Must Take Meaningful Action Against Racism, Harvard Business Review**
This article provides a framework for action and missteps to avoid for workplaces to provide safe and inclusive environments.
- **Women's Business Enterprise Loan Program and Ohio Micro-Enterprise Loan Program, State of Ohio**
These new loan programs, administered by the Ohio Department of Development, support minority- and women-owned business enterprises.
- **Create a Health Literacy Plan, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
This tool includes resources to help organizations create a health literacy plan, enabling employees and clients to make informed health decisions.
- **The Principles of Trustworthiness, Association of American Medical Colleges, Center for Health Justice**
This resource provides a framework to build community trust and integrate local perspectives with principles of community engagement for health care, public health and other organizations.

Learn more about the relationship between racism and health in HPIO's brief
Connections between racism and health



Notes

1. Health Policy Institute of Ohio. "Connections between racism and health: Taking action to elimination racism and advance equity," September 2021.
2. McCluney, Courtney L., et al. "Structural racism in the workplace: Does perception matter for health inequalities?" *Social Science & Medicine* 199 (2018): 106-114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.05.039>
3. Holder, Aisha M.B., Margo A. Jackson, and Joseph G. Ponterotto. "Racial Microaggression Experiences and Coping Strategies of Black Women in Corporate Leadership." *Qualitative Psychology* 2, no. 2 (2015): 164-180. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qp0000024>
4. McCluney, Courtney L., et al. "Structural racism in the workplace: Does perception matter for health inequalities?" *Social Science & Medicine* 199 (2018): 106-114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.05.039>
5. Pascoe, Elizabeth A. and Laura Smart Richman. "Perceived Discrimination and Health: A Meta-Analytic Review." *Psychological Bulletin* 135, no. 4 (2009): 531-554. doi: 10.1037/a0016059