

Black Los Angeles Demands in Light of COVID-19 and Rates of Black Death

Black people are dying at two-three times our population share from COVID-19. In Los Angeles County, the rate of Black death is twice our population share, with Black people constituting 9% of the County population, but 17% of the COVID-19 deaths. With nearly 900,000 Black residents in the County and 403,000 Black residents in the City (the eighth highest number of any city in the United States), what happens in Los Angeles has serious national implications. While several initiatives have been launched nationally, state-wide and locally, none speak to the particular needs of the Black community. The disproportionate and deadly impact of COVID-19 on the Black community magnifies what we have known, that “underlying conditions” result from an enduring system of racial apartheid and oppression. **Interlocking economic, political, and social injustices collide with long-standing patterns of medical racism to make COVID-19 a Black issue that demands a response specific to the needs of the Black community.**

The demands were developed by a coalition of more than 50 Black Los Angeles-based community leaders. Included are both immediate demands meant for emergency implementation during the Coronavirus crisis, and long-term demands, necessary to eradicate the underlying conditions that are at the root of the disproportionate impact of the public health crisis and economic fallout.

The drafted demands respond to the urgency of the moment in light of the COVID-19 crisis and related fallout. To address the demands, a significant share of stimulus and public funding must be earmarked as grants for the Black community and ongoing program funding should be redirected from police and law enforcement budgets to provide resources that bring real public safety. While the list is substantial, it was written under severe time-constraints and is not meant to be exhaustive or inclusive of the total set of Black community needs.

Immediate Demands:

Testing, Public Health, and Patient Rights-

1. Complete collection and release of Los Angeles County and California data on COVID-19 cases and deaths, with particular focus on areas with large Black populations.
2. Universal access to non-invasive testing in Black communities throughout the County, especially South Central Los Angeles, Watts, Skid Row, Compton, and Inglewood.
3. Any COVID-19-related testing or future vaccinations must be voluntary, not mandatory or conditional for employment, education, access to public resources, or any other economic, political, or social functioning.
4. Prohibit sharing non-COVID-19-related medical information and required destruction of COVID-19-related medical records held by entities other than direct healthcare providers, including government and private parties, to preserve patient privacy rights.
5. Collection of self-identified racial, gender, income, age, occupation, employment-status, geographic residency, and housing-status data at first point of medical contact.

6. No forced removal of people from their homes under the guise of quarantine, or for any other reason.
7. Allowance for a support partner and medical advocate of patient's choosing during any procedure or treatment, and, if needed at time of death.
8. On-demand, free medical care for Black residents of Los Angeles County during the COVID-19 crisis.

Education and Families-

9. Adoption of all Students Deserve education demands by Los Angeles Unified School District and all districts County-wide.
10. Continuance of visitation and reunification programs (in distance-learning format as necessary) for parents with children under the authority of the Department of Children and Family Services, and freezing of reunification timelines.

Support for Black Workers and Small Business Owners-

11. Public contracting with Black-owned restaurants and stores for healthy food and supply delivery during the pandemic and beyond.
12. Resources, not "enforcement," for Black-owned businesses that have not been able to shut down during the crisis.
13. Guaranteed, timely assistance filing for economic resources, including unemployment and small business loans and grants.
14. Support for Black essential workers, especially those who are underpaid (including gig economy workers), by providing hazard pay, protective equipment, hotel rooms to mitigate the possibility of passing the virus to family members, and an ongoing livable wage and paid sick leave.
15. Income supplement of \$2000 per month per adult and \$1000 per month per child for all Black residents for the duration of the pandemic and economic fallout.

Public Safety-

16. Employ properly-equipped, non-violent, community care workers as neighborhood resources, instead of expanding patrols by funding police and law enforcement.
17. Funding for neighborhood-based community care plans in Black communities throughout the County, especially South Central Los Angeles, Watts, Skid Row, Compton, and Inglewood.
18. Moratorium on all non-violent arrests.
19. Dismissal of all non-violent criminal warrants and citations.

Housing-

20. On-demand, safe housing and supportive resources for unsheltered people and those fleeing unsafe conditions in unused hotel and motel rooms and vacant housing units.
21. Cancellation of rents and mortgages, and replacement of rental income to non-corporate Black property owners until the pandemic and economic fallout subsides.

22. Stop all sweeps of houseless settlements and provide bathrooms, showers, hand washing stations, soap, water, laundry vouchers, dumpsters, vermin abatement, and cleaning supplies.

Criminal Justice Reform-

23. Immediate release of all people who are pretrial, bail-eligible, elderly, youth, pregnant, infirmed, immuno-compromised and those held on parole/probation violations or infractions/non-serious misdemeanors from jails or detention.
24. Immediate release of all people who are parole-eligible, parole-suitable, elderly, youth, pregnant, infirmed, immuno-compromised and those held on parole violations or non-violent felonies from prisons.
25. Provision of free housing, healthcare, food resources, and community reintegration support (including help acquiring documents like legal identification) for all people returning from prison, jail, or detention.
26. Continuance of rehabilitative programs offered by community-based organizations to incarcerated people who will not be released through distance-learning to allow them to continue to earn time off their sentences.
27. Mandatory usage of personal protective equipment (PPE) by all correctional staff in jails and prisons and provision of PPE to all incarcerated people.

Transportation -

28. Free public transportation for all for the duration of the pandemic and economic fallout.
29. Cancellation of fare evasion citations on public transportation.

Other Resources-

30. Funding to provide free, culturally-competent funeral and burial/cremation services for COVID-19 deaths.
31. Resources for culturally-competent community education on safer-at-home practices led by Black organizers and educators, with a corresponding prohibition of arrests, fines, and citations in response to safer-at-home violations.
32. Provision of free face-coverings and gloves at all COVID-19 testing sites, food distribution centers, open public facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, and essential businesses.

Long Term Demands:

Reparations-

33. Reparations for all Black victims of COVID-19 (or their families in cases of death), who were unable to get support due to the lack of testing, access to healthcare, and/or overall medical racism.

Healthcare-

34. Universal, quality, accessible healthcare.
35. Funding for Black-led, culturally-competent, free exercise and wellness classes in Black communities throughout the County, especially South Central Los Angeles, Watts, Skid Row, Compton, and Inglewood.
36. Funding for free culturally-competent counseling and mental health resources for Black residents of Los Angeles County.
37. Medical education that centers cultural-competency, and interrogates implicit bias and anti-Black racism and ongoing retraining of medical professionals in these areas.

Environment-

38. Funding for organizations that address and work to remedy overarching environmental racism in Black communities.

Food Security-

39. Weekly farmers markets in Black communities throughout the County, especially South Central Los Angeles, Watts, Skid Row, Compton, and Inglewood.
40. Vouchers for fresh produce for Black residents of Los Angeles County that are universally accepted at all places that sell food.
41. Funding for culturally-competent healthy eating and food preparation classes run by Black-led organizations.
42. Creation and maintenance of urban farmland and urban farming education in Black communities throughout the County, especially South Central Los Angeles, Watts, Skid Row, Compton, and Inglewood.
43. Funding for Black organizations to start and support maintenance of home-based gardens in Black communities throughout the County, especially South Central Los Angeles, Watts, Skid Row, Compton, and Inglewood.

Education-

44. Recruitment of and scholarships for Black students to pursue careers in healthcare, including naturopathy and holistic medicinal practices.
45. Funding for Black scholarships, student recruitment, retention, and graduation initiatives at Charles Drew University.
46. Guaranteed admission, scholarship, and support programming for Black students to all public colleges and universities.

Housing-

47. Declare housing as a human right and provide universal permanent housing for all.

Criminal Justice Reform-

48. Automatic diversion services for all arrests of those under age 25, covering all offenses
49. Funding for and prioritization of alternatives to incarceration.

Public Safety-

- 50. Prioritization of culturally-competent community solutions and resources to address public safety, including livable wage jobs, mental health services, after school programs, and community care workers, instead of police and law enforcement.

Transportation

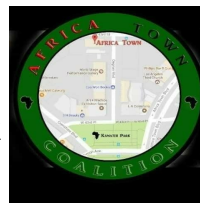
- 51. Free public transportation for all, beginning with K-12 youth and seniors.
- 52. Double MTA schedule and make service available 24-hours-per-day and 7-days-per-week.

Other Resources-

- 53. Free, quality, universal childcare.
- 54. Provide ample high quality, safe, accessible recreational spaces and cultural services including: parks, facilities, programs, and special events.
- 55. Financial incentives to create and maintain worker-controlled cooperatives.



AFRIKAN BLACK COALITION



BLACK WOMEN FOR WELLNESS



