



COVID-19 Equitable Relief and Recovery Series

WEBINAR 3 SUMMARY:

Public-Private Partnerships:
Investing in Lives and Livelihoods

Urban America Forward: COVID-19 Equitable Relief and Recovery Series

The Urban America Forward: COVID-19 Equitable Relief and Recovery Series provides a learning exchange among practitioners and public-private partners who are advancing economic relief and equitable recovery in cities in response to the coronavirus pandemic. While no community has been spared by this public health crisis, COVID-19 has hit African American and Latinx communities most acutely. This unprecedented time demands that practitioners harness their collective power and share what is working to provide essential relief while envisioning and engineering tools to build a more inclusive economy and equitable future.

The Urban America Forward: COVID-19 Equitable Relief and Recovery Series offers a platform for practitioners to share promising practices, new collaborations, and emerging learnings to support our most vulnerable communities and ensure equitable recovery in places where the COVID-19 pandemic is causing disproportionate harm. The series highlights practitioner responses to the pandemic in eight U.S. cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, New Orleans, and Washington, DC.

The Urban America Forward: COVID-19 Equitable Relief and Recovery Series was made possible with the generous support of [New America Local](#), the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#), and the [Kresge Foundation](#).

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We need to think about how we rebuild ... how can we make our societies more just and more equitable? One of the benefits we have seen as a result of this social unrest across the United States is that corporate America is becoming more attuned to the impact of structural racism. They're asking what is our role in helping to dismantle [structural racism]?”

Karen Freeman-Wilson

President and CEO, Chicago Urban League

About Urban America Forward

Launched in 2015 by the University of Chicago Office of Civic Engagement, the Urban America Forward program convenes nonprofit, private, public, and philanthropic sector leaders as well as urban researchers and social scientists who are committed to furthering equity in urban America.

The Urban America Forward program is grounded in two fundamental principles: (1) racial equity is achievable through systems change, and (2) practitioners' efforts are bolstered by engaging in a space where they can share approaches taken to disrupting systems that create and reinforce segregation, economic oppression, and racially disparate life outcomes.

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We have put equity at the center of all our work going forward. We recognize that the reason that our communities are in the state that they are in is because of systemic racism and policies that have held our communities back. Unless we really focus our efforts on the root causes that created these issues, we will continue to talk about these [issues for the] next 30 years. Equity and justice have been at the center of our work.”

Ellis Carr

President and CEO, Capital Impact Partners

WEBINAR 3:

Public-Private Partnerships: Investing in Lives and Livelihoods

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a devastating toll on the economic stability and health of urban communities that were already grappling with uneven investment and legacies of structural racism. The differential impact of the pandemic on communities of color quickly manifested in higher percentages of unemployment, furloughs, reduced wages and hours, loss of insurance coverage, and dramatic increases in housing and food insecurity.¹ Federal relief efforts, such as the Paycheck Protection Program, were passed in an effort to enable businesses to keep employees on the payroll despite lost revenue. These federal relief efforts did not reach businesses of color. In fact, the emergency relief depended on traditional banks for distribution, which only further amplified the failure of traditional financial institutions to provide minority-owned businesses access to capital and to work closely with minority communities.²

Communities of color are shouldering an outsized burden on their lives and livelihoods as a result of the pandemic. A disproportionate number of minority-owned businesses have shuttered;³ Depression-level unemployment has disproportionately harmed Black and Latinx communities, particularly for those in the hospitality and tourism industries; and overrepresentation of people of color in essential services poses additional health risks and places the additional stress of child care on families. All of this is taking place against a backdrop of racial reckoning as the public and private sectors are reflecting on the ways in which their action or inaction furthers or dismantles systemic discrimination.

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We really built a strategy and we continued ... to effectively do four things: respond, recover, rebuild, and really reimagine. As we're focusing on rebuilding a longer-term strategy, how do we rethink the age-old practices in this novel environment?”

Franklyn Baker,
*President and
CEO, United
Way of Central
Maryland*

¹ [The COVID-19 Crisis Continues to Have Uneven Economic Impact by Race and Ethnicity](#), The Urban Institute, 7/1/2020.

² Liu S., Parilla J., [New data shows small businesses in communities of color had unequal access to federal COVID-19 relief](#), The Brookings Institution, 9/17/20.

³ Fairlie, Robert W., [The impact of COVID-19 on small business owners: Evidence from the first 3 months after widespread social-distancing restrictions](#), Journal of Economics & Management Strategy, 8/27/20.

In the face of the disparate economic and public health impact of COVID-19, philanthropy, Community Development Financial Institutions, and private sector partners mobilized quickly to pool emergency relief funds and work with and through trusted community-based organizations to deploy targeted resources to areas with acute need. Inadequate federal support only made more pronounced the need for the private sector and philanthropy to step into the breach to help communities of color shoulder the burden of COVID-19.

New collaborations formed to address the immediate and long-term consequences of the pandemic on community health, the economic stability, and systems of inequality.

Participants in “Public-Private Partnerships: Investing in Lives and Livelihoods,” the third webinar in the Urban America Forward: COVID-19 Equitable Relief and Recovery Series, had the following goals:

- » **Share lessons learned** about the experience of partnership development to provide economic support in the COVID-19 environment.
- » **Equip practitioners** with policy approaches and practices that can create an enabling environment to ensure resources reach communities in need.
- » **Expand practitioner networks** for COVID-19 responses that prioritize racial equity.

Panel Discussion Themes

Public-private partnerships have played a key role in delivering resources, technical assistance, and funds directly to their local communities during the COVID-19 era. By leveraging existing infrastructure and relationships with trusted community organizations, the public and private collaborations have deployed much-needed relief quickly to meet acute needs. Participants in the webinar noted that a central aspect of equitable relief is to ensure the community has agency and meaningful decision-making power to determine the type of relief and the manner of its allocation that would best serve community interests.

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Community, particularly Black and Brown folks, have not always been at those tables. We are being intentional about—while leveraging existing tables—creating new tables and creating the capacity for the community to set those tables. ... I see it as my personal responsibility to constantly ask the questions: Who is making this decision? Who is setting this table and is the decision making actually connected to real people, particularly folks who've been harmed historically by systemic racism?”

Daniel Ash,
Associate Vice
President of
Community Impact,
The Chicago
Community Trust

Key Takeaways

- » **Utilize existing infrastructure and relationships** to deliver equitable relief. Practitioners are leveraging pre-pandemic partnerships with trusted community leaders to raise funds and deliver initial relief to their communities.
- » **Communities must be regularly engaged** and at the table from the beginning. Further, practitioners have the power to build new tables to ensure that Black and Brown communities set the agenda for equitable relief and determination of community needs.
- » **Information is capital** in times of crisis. Practitioners play a vital role in creating platforms and networks for sharing of information, resources, and technical assistance for accessing relief.
- » While immediate equitable relief is needed, it is critical that public-private partnerships **invest in long-term solutions** that address systemic racism.

City Models and Transferable Learnings

■ ATLANTA

United Way of Greater Atlanta. United Way of Greater Atlanta is dedicated to engaging and bringing together people and resources to drive sustainable improvements in the well-being of children, families, and individuals in the community. United Way of Greater Atlanta, in partnership with the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, successfully launched the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, which raised \$25 million from more than 50 corporations, foundations, and individual donors. The relief funds were funneled to frontline nonprofit human service organizations to provide emergency food and cash, eviction prevention aid, devices and internet connectivity for low-income families, and assistance to small businesses. The fund was overseen by three business leaders and a community volunteer who sought to target communities that were disproportionately affected by the pandemic and organizations led by those who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC). In addition, a partnership with Black Entertainment Television (BET) brought \$2.5 million to be invested in Black-led nonprofits on the front lines of the pandemic response. Finally, United Way of Greater Atlanta is managing a \$22 million CARES-funded effort launched by the city to help almost 7,000 renters avoid eviction.

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Here in Georgia, here in the Deep South, we're not ready to talk about recovery yet. We're not in a position to do any pivoting, other than to pivot to the next emergency need. We are still struggling with food insecurity and still struggling [to provide] access for K-12 students to hardware and internet access for their online education when the last school year ended. We are starting behind the eight ball.”

Milton Little,
President and
CEO, United Way
of Greater Atlanta

■ BALTIMORE

United Way of Central Maryland. United Way of Central Maryland focuses on advancing the basic building blocks of education, housing, employment, and health to help low-income families achieve self-sufficiency. United Way of Central Maryland raised more than \$8 million through its COVID-19 Community Fund, supported by 65 private companies and 1,046 individuals with the assistance of two collaboratives made up of 22 community and family foundations. The funds were used to assist with food insecurity, the digital divide, foreclosures, nonprofit sustainability, neighborhood empowerment, mental health, and unemployment. United Way of Central Maryland adopted an equity lens to determine how funds were distributed and which nonprofits received funding. As a result, 242 nonprofits were funded—52% of which are BIPOC-led and 47% of which generate less than \$1 million in revenue. In addition, United Way of Central Maryland established an Equity and Social Justice Fund that allowed contributors to designate funds to efforts in this important space.

■ CHICAGO

Chicago Community Trust. The Chicago Community Trust is committed to addressing the city of Chicago’s legacy of systemic inequity and closing the racial and ethnic wealth gap. The Chicago Community Trust responded quickly to the impacts of COVID-19 by activating existing infrastructure and partnerships. It created new nexus points among previously disconnected networks, such as community hubs working at the neighborhood level and large-scale regional organizations like the Greater Chicago Food Depository. The Trust also lifted up bold ideas like direct cash assistance to support economically vulnerable families in the region and citywide broadband access. It created a portfolio of funds organized by theme and/or sector, including journalism, technology, and the arts, to complement the large-scale relief efforts. Additionally, the Trust partnered at all public levels—city, county, and state—to support small businesses and communities impacted by social unrest in efforts that are directly aligned with its strategy to close the racial and ethnic wealth gap. Now, as its focus shifts from emergency response, the Trust is using its convening power to carry this momentum forward on the journey to equitable recovery.

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[A]bout three years ago we had put in place a disaster strategy that was grounded in racial equity and resiliency. We’re focused on building back stronger than before, ... the sustainability of the nonprofit sector, and ... making sure the people had a voice in the process of determining how their communities came back. Most of the needs come in the immediate days of a disaster, but we know that it often takes weeks, months, even years [for recovery].”

Carmen James Randolph,
Vice President for Programs, Greater New Orleans Foundation

■ DETROIT

New Economy Initiative. The New Economy Initiative (NEI) is committed to inclusive entrepreneurship and economic development through the growth of small businesses owned by underserved entrepreneurs in underserved communities. NEI sourced \$3.06 million in mitigation funds from foundations and private donors; the organization then reprogrammed \$2 million of its reserved philanthropic resources to supplement these funds and deliver relief to small businesses that needed immediate relief to keep their doors open. NEI's loan relief program relieved borrowers of loan payments for six months in order to free up cash, protect credit scores, and stabilize the balance sheets of nonprofit community lenders. A total of 260 borrowers received relief funds, at a total cost of \$1.1 million. Further, NEI's rent relief program provided funds to relieve tenant rent revenue to eligible landlords across 10 neighborhoods. Approximately 600 small businesses received this benefit, at a total cost of \$980,000. Additionally, NEI administered \$1.4 million in grants to lower-income micro-business owners. NEI launched a \$860,000 new program called 313Strong, designed to serve up to 700 small businesses by offering one-on-one coaching, a free QuickBooks license, and access to experts in finance, accounting, and other resources.

■ MINNEAPOLIS

The Minneapolis Foundation. The Minneapolis Foundation seeks to reduce the need for social services by transforming systems and policies to empower more residents to be self-sufficient. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minneapolis Foundation leveraged existing relationships to provide relief. The foundation activated the OneMPLS Fund to address the urgent and basic needs of vulnerable populations and provide support to businesses and nonprofits across its seven-county area. Between April and May 2020, the foundation distributed \$1,975,300 to 147 organizations with one- to three-month grants ranging from \$11,000 to \$35,000. In early June, staff directed \$500,000 from the OneMPLS Fund's Rebuild effort to support BIPOC-led businesses in Minneapolis that were economically impacted by the pandemic and the protests following the murder of George Floyd. Funds supported five organizations that were on the ground working with BIPOC-led businesses in the impacted cultural corridors. Furthermore, the Minneapolis Foundation, in partnership with the Greater Twin Cities United Way and the Saint Paul & Minnesota Community Foundation, raised \$2.5 million, given by 200 individuals and 22 companies and foundations, to provide grants to BIPOC-owned businesses.

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In a moment where there's great need, sometimes there's this tendency to step back and say, 'Oh, we have to create something new.' We were intentional about making sure to build on the assets that we'd invested in over many, many decades. And then we ... used this moment ... [to] lift up bold ideas. This is an opportunity to not test an idea, not to research an idea, but go to market with ideas that we've been ... toying with for years.”

Daniel Ash,
Associate Vice
President of
Community
Impact, The
Chicago
Community Trust

■ NEW ORLEANS

Greater New Orleans Foundation. The Greater New Orleans Foundation is dedicated to driving positive impact through philanthropy, leadership, and action. The foundation has responded to COVID-19 in the context of disaster relief. Three years ago, the foundation put in place a disaster strategy grounded in racial equity, resiliency, sustainability, and civic engagement. Through that strategy, the foundation determined that 60% of the funds would be allocated to address the immediate aftermath of the disaster and 40% would be reserved for long-term support. In response to COVID-19, the foundation provided grants to nonprofits within 24-36 hours to disperse resources to the community. The foundation also leveraged existing private sector relationships to work with corporate partners, including the New Orleans Saints and other locally prominent brands, to establish an employee assistance fund for hospitality workers. Through that fund, the foundation distributed approximately \$1,000 each to 2,000 families. Further, to aid people who lost their health insurance, the foundation worked with four Federally Qualified Health Centers to help 125,000 people get care and facilitate access to telemedicine. It also partnered with the mayor's office to provide rapid testing to students and teachers.

■ WASHINGTON, DC

Capital Impact Partners. Capital Impact Partners is a Community Development Financial Institution that provides access to capital for projects in underinvested areas that are often overlooked by traditional banks. In the aftermath of the pandemic, Capital Impact Partners used its existing infrastructure and network to disperse financial assistance. Through its Entrepreneurs of Color Fund, Capital Impact Partners channeled relief funds to small businesses across Washington, DC, provided \$100,000 in awards through its DMV Good Food Fund Innovative Response Fund to stabilize good food enterprises, and contributed to the Cooperative Development Foundation Disaster Recovery Fund to support home care co-ops.

Lastly, it announced a new alliance with CDC Small Business Finance, which will focus on supporting recovery and relief needs of community members, small businesses, and organizations, delivering key social services that have been devastated by the pandemic.

Conclusion

Practitioners and community leaders can leverage existing relationships and infrastructure to effectively construct and deliver targeted equitable relief. We would like to thank our speakers, Carmen James Randolph, Vice President for Programs at the Greater New Orleans Foundation; Daniel Ash, Associate Vice President of Community Impact, The Chicago Community Trust; Ellis Carr, President and CEO of Capital Impact Partners; Franklyn Baker, President and CEO of the United Way of Central Maryland; Jo-Anne Stately, Director of Impact Strategy-Economic Vitality, The Minneapolis Foundation; Milton J. Little, Jr., President and CEO of the United Way of Greater Atlanta; and Pam Lewis, Director of the New Economy Initiative; our partners, New America Indianapolis and the National Urban League; and our sponsors, the Kresge Foundation and Annie E. Casey Foundation, for allowing us to share learnings from across the country in this timely webinar series.