

Dear legislator,

The COVID-19 crisis has brought unprecedented public health, social, racial, and economic challenges. As organizations serving Vermonters, we see the toll it's taking on our communities – particularly marginalized people who call this state home.

We know that you are working diligently to protect the immediate safety and health of our state. As you do, we ask that you take stock of our systems to ensure that no Vermonters are left behind.

To create a stronger and more resilient, inclusive, and diverse Vermont:

- Vermonters need to be able to meet their basic needs
- Vermonters need sustainable environmental and economic policies.
- Vermont children need to know that they're safe and supported so they can learn.
- Vermonters of all abilities and backgrounds need equitable opportunities to flourish.



As stated in our 2020 Vision, structural and intersectional barriers restrict marginalized people from getting ahead in Vermont. The influence of these systems of inequity have become even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 is severely exacerbating all of the known disparities across housing, education, employment, health services access and the justice system. The disparate effects of the COVID-19 crisis will continue to impact marginalized and vulnerable Vermonters for years to come.

Policies can widen the gap of inequity, keep it the same, or work to bridge that gap. We ask that as you make important decisions on how to spend federal funds, create a state budget, and make policy decisions related to COVID-19 response and recovery, you keep these issues at the forefront of your mind and take the following questions into consideration:

1. Am I unintentionally reinforcing systems of inequity?
2. Is this policy proportional to the threat, and no more intrusive on civil liberties than absolutely necessary?
3. Are there opportunities I haven't taken advantage of to further promote equity?
4. Did I get enough community input on this policy – are there other stakeholders I should engage?
5. Am I leaving anyone behind?

This crisis has renewed our commitment to promoting Vermonters' wellbeing and to supporting you in doing so. If there is anything we can do to contribute to your efforts, please reach out.

Contributing Organizations

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