



# **Covid-19 Relief and Recovery Plan for Black America**

The devastating impact that Covid-19 is having on Black communities is at a tipping point. Black people represent just 13% of the country's population but nearly 30% of total Coronavirus cases and 16% of total deaths -- we are dying at higher rates than any other group in the country. With over 60,000 Black lives lost, nearly half of our small businesses permanently closed, and the daily burden of rising unemployment and insecure housing, our communities demand swift, sweeping, and aggressive action.

The rules of our economy, our democracy, and our society are rigged and as a result, Black communities are falling further behind. Covid-19 touches every part of our lives and has exposed the connection between rigged rules and their impacts on our families. It has shined a bright light on the disparities, inequities, and injustices that our people endure. Without a holistic approach to solving this crisis, our families will continue to suffer at disproportionate rates, bearing the brunt of this unrelenting pandemic for years to come. Our families, our communities, and our children, can not wait for relief.

We need a plan for all Black communities that protects us, provides access to the care we need, and that builds new infrastructure to address the crises facing us. To ensure that our families have what they need, the plan must be robust and take into account the full scale of this pandemic by including auto-stabilizers to guarantee that all monetary assistance, including but not limited to unemployment insurance, SNAP benefits, and canceled student loan payments are in place until the economy recovers. Finally, immigrants and ITIN-holders must be included in full relief efforts including direct cash payments and health care coverage. Any Covid relief package should include a pathway to citizenship for essential workers, immigrant youth, and TPS recipients.

We're changing the rules and making new ones that make us powerful in every aspect of our lives. To flatten the

curve and level the playing field, the next round of Covid relief and recovery must include the following priorities:

### **The Economy:**

- Put cash directly into the hands of people - \$2,000 monthly checks
- Cancel student loan debt — \$50,000 minimum per borrower
- Priority loans and support for all Black owned small businesses in the next round of PPP

### **HealthCare:**

- Free testing and coverage of Covid-19 treatments for everyone
- Ensure racial equity in Covid-19 vaccine distribution
- Expanded emergency health care coverage via a public plan
- Increase testing sites in underserved and rural communities
- Mandatory race, gender, and class specific data collection

### **Housing:**

- Cancel rent, mortgages, and evictions + public utilities and internet costs
- Safe housing options for victims of domestic violence and multi-generational families of essential workers

### **Democracy Rights:**

- Pass "[For the People Act of 2021](#)"
- Pass "[John Lewis Voting Rights Act](#)"
- Fund and protect the US Postal Service

# I The Economy

Decades of employment discrimination have led to Black workers being locked out of high-wage jobs that can be performed from home. We are overrepresented in the “service economy” — jobs that typically offer no health insurance or paid sick leave, require face-to-face contact, and have little or no access to personal protective equipment but are nonetheless deemed essential.

Without strong intervention to provide immediate relief while addressing racial disparities that were prevalent before the pandemic, Black communities are sure to face devastation that will be worse than the Great Depression. Full economic relief, recovery, and protection for impacted people and communities during the Covid-19 pandemic is needed.



1. Passage of retroactive hazard pay and the [Essential Workers Bill of Rights](#)
  - a. A broad and inclusive definition of essential workers to include “any worker who cannot telework and who the state or local government deems to be essential during the COVID19 pandemic”
2. Put cash directly into the hands of people via the [Emergency Money to the People](#) plan until the economy recovers
3. \$15 minimum wage
4. Restoration of supplemental unemployment insurance to \$600/wk
5. Expand and make permanent the child tax credit
6. Cancel student loan debt — \$50,000 minimum per borrower
7. Expand social security payments
8. Debt relief and deferred payments until the employment rate rebounds to pre-pandemic levels on loans, mortgages, and other debt payments
9. Penalties for price gouging essential items
10. Eliminate child support debt as a barrier to accessing relief and recovery funds
11. A guarantee of priority for all Black owned small businesses in the next round of PPP
12. Guarantee of relief for every person in America, despite immigration status
13. Release non-violent offenders; Guarantee care and prevention measures for violent offenders
14. Halt immigration enforcement

# Healthcare



Persistent bias across the healthcare industry, a lack of worker protections including medical insurance and paid sick leave, and inadequate access to quality medical care and fresh foods have left us uniquely vulnerable to Covid-19. Many of the high risk factors for the virus, including diabetes, asthma, and heart conditions, are overrepresented in our community due to years of neglect by the government.

Unless real, race-forward policy measures are taken, we are at risk of losing an entire generation to this pandemic. The following are paramount to protecting the health of the Black community.

1. Guaranteed free testing and 100% coverage of covid-19 treatments for all persons in America despite citizenship and incarceration status
2. Expanded emergency health care coverage via a public plan
3. Ensure racial equity in Covid-19 vaccine distribution:
  - a. Prioritize allocation in states whose distribution plans center racial equity, mitigating health inequities, and includes providers with a track record of reaching diverse populations
  - b. Address equitable allocation within priority groups, especially health care, nursing home, and essential workers, who are disproportionately Black and Latinx
  - c. Include pregnant people in the list of priority groups to prevent further maternal health inequities within Black and Brown communities
  - d. The vaccine must be offered 100% free of charge, including administrative fees
  - e. National database of free testing centers
  - f. National proactive messaging campaign that addresses our country's history of vaccine injustices towards communities of color and which counters misinformation while highlighting vaccine safety and efficacy
4. Permanent expansion of Paid Sick and Family Medical Leave
5. Implement culturally relevant and sensitive medical guidelines
6. Increased rapid testing sites in underserved and rural communities, prioritizing counties with 20%+ Black residents
7. Mandatory race, gender, and class specific data collection (local, state, and federal) to inform future relief and recovery efforts

# Housing



The lack of affordable, safe housing has been a major problem in the Black community for generations. Driven, in part, by the legal redlining and gentrification of our communities that have pushed us to the most geographically undesirable and unsafe places, we are likelier to live in areas and homes with more

environmental pollution, a higher susceptibility to natural disasters, and increased isolation from quality of life indicators. Systemic and institutional inequities in housing must be addressed head on to give Black communities the support needed to weather this pandemic.

1. Rent, mortgage, and eviction moratoriums for those who've lost their jobs due to covid-19 including accruing interest and taxes; incentivize landlords to keep people in their homes until the economy recovers
2. Moratorium on all public utilities and internet until the economy recovers
3. Safe housing options for victims of domestic violence and at-risk family members of essential workers

# Democracy



Democracy and voting rights have always been tenuous propositions for Black communities in America. There has never been a time in this country's history where those rights were not under attack and this pandemic is no different. There are people in government who will

seek to use this disaster as an opportunity to continue stripping those rights away from our community.

The right to vote must be protected at all costs and elections must be accessible, fair, and safe. Now is the time to expand and strengthen voting rights for all!

1. Guarantee needed funding for and protection against sabotage for the United State Postal Service
2. Pass "[For the People Act of 2021](#)" H.R. 1/ S. 1
3. Pass "[John Lewis Voting Rights Act](#)" H.R. 4



For more information on Black to the Future Action Fund's Covid-19 Relief and Recovery Plan for Black America, please contact Political Director, Keauna Gregory, at [keauna@black2thefuture.org](mailto:keauna@black2thefuture.org)