



Advancing Equity

As a nation, 2020 marked widespread mobilization to advance racial justice with a call to reckon with both historical race-based oppression and inequity as well as ongoing, persistent, and structural inequities in place today. In June, this led the Board of Supervisors to make San Bernardino County the first county in California to recognize racism as a public health crisis, leading to the addition of Equity as an eleventh element to the Countywide Vision and the creation of a Vision Equity Element Group. With acknowledgment, intention, and planning, the San Bernardino County community can take important steps to advance racial equity.

The first step is to document the inequities. The Community Indicators Report responds to this need by disaggregating and presenting data by race and ethnicity whenever possible. The 2020 report also introduces the Equity Gap Score, which provides an at-a-glance assessment of the scale of the racial and ethnic disparities.

The second step is to interpret these data accurately, recognizing the extrinsic factors contributing to the outcomes presented. For example, the impact of historically exclusionary housing policy can be seen today with multigenerational differentials in homeownership and wealth accumulation, by race. These outcomes, in turn, impact opportunity in other domains.

Looking at the data through this lens, it becomes clear that some people in our community enter life well behind – or ahead of – the starting line due to existing societal structures rather than individual actions. Recognition of these structural barriers and advantages can lead to meaningful change, equitable progress, and a vibrant, thriving community for all.



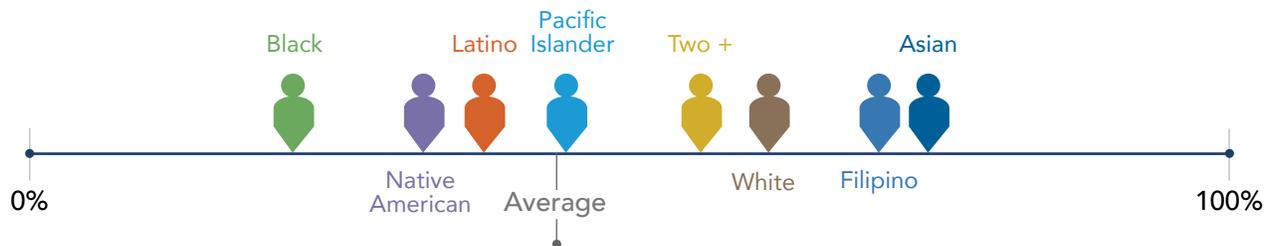
Equality vs. Equity

Equality is typically defined as all people getting the same thing, whereas equity is typically defined as all people getting what they need. Equity recognizes that everyone has different circumstances, whether they face greater barriers or greater ease, so their needs will vary.

DISAGGREGATED DATA

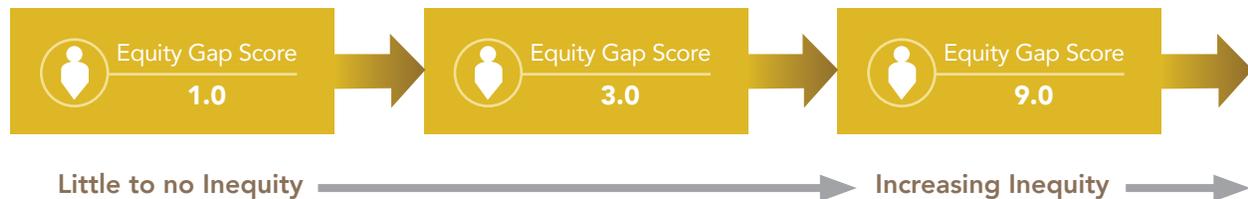
Where possible, the indicator data are disaggregated by race and/or ethnicity and shown along a number line. This visually demonstrates the disparities by race/ethnicity and provides consistency from indicator-to-indicator in how the data are displayed. Race/ethnicity data are shown this way when a rate per race or ethnic group can be calculated (e.g., the percentage of Latino residents with a given characteristic out of all Latino residents). When a denominator by race/ethnicity is not available, the data are shown as a distribution in a pie or bar chart (e.g., out of all residents with a given characteristic, the percentage who are Latino). The racial/ethnic categories shown are based on the definitions of the data source. Except when noted otherwise, White is non-Hispanic and Latino is of any race.

EXAMPLE



EQUITY GAP SCORE

The Equity Gap Score is a simple, straightforward statistic that documents the scale of the racial or ethnic disparity for a particular indicator.¹ It measures the factor of difference between the highest and lowest rates for a given indicator. For example, a score of 2.0 indicates that the rate of the highest performing group is twice as high as the lowest performing group, whereas a score of 3.0 suggests that the factor of difference is three times higher. A score of 1.0 implies that little-to-no racial or ethnic inequity is apparent in the data, while a score above 1.0 implies an increasing level of inequity as the number grows.



A few important notes about the Equity Gap Score:

- The Equity Gap Score does not assume that everyone should have the same outcome. Rather, it is based on the core value that different outcomes should not be associated with a group's racial or ethnic identity.
- Equity Gap Scores are calculated for each indicator that has a rate or value per race/ethnicity (that is, charted in the number line format shown in the example above); when only a distribution by race/ethnicity is available (that is, charted as a pie or bar chart), an Equity Gap Score is not appropriate and therefore not calculated.
- If the group with the lowest or highest rate is the "other" or "unknown" group, the gap score is calculated on the next lowest or highest rate. The rationale for not including other or unknown in the EGS calculation is that this category lacks meaning from a policy response perspective; it is not clear where to target interventions when the identity of the group is variable or unknown.

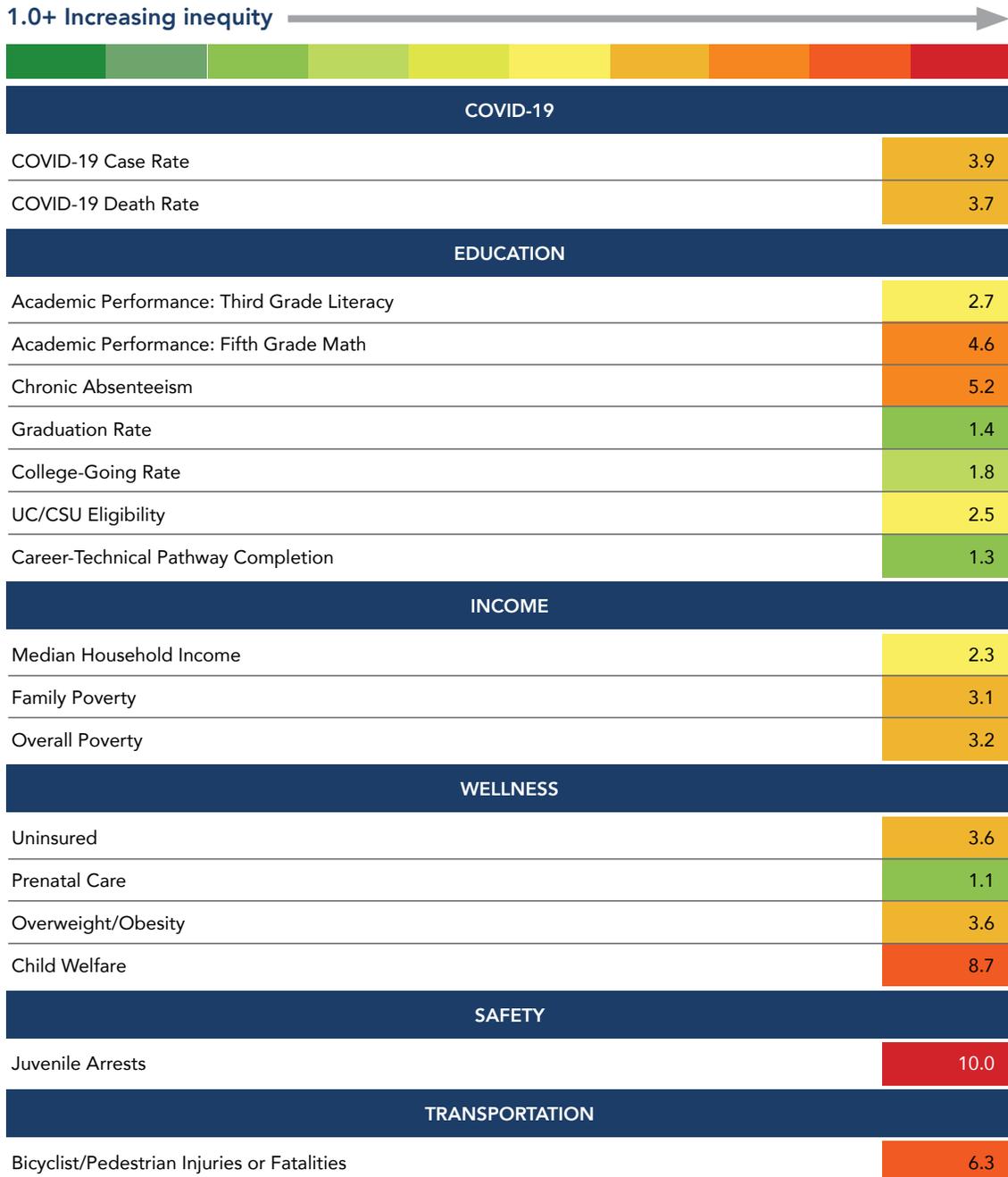
MEASURING PROGRESS

Over time, the Equity Gap Score will enable an overall measure of progress. Shrinking Equity Gap Scores will show equity is improving; growing Equity Gap Scores will indicate the opposite. Within the body of the report, the Equity Gap Scores are all shaded gold; however, future reports may color code the Equity Gap Score to show the direction of the trend, such as green for progress and red for worsening. Tracking trends for each race/ethnicity group will also be increasingly possible in future reports.

¹ We would like to acknowledge We All Count (weallcount.com) for the methodology behind the Equity Gap Score and their contributions to data equity more broadly.

2020 EQUITY GAP SCORES

Equity Gap Scores were possible to calculate for 17 measures in the 2020 Community Indicators Report. With fairly high rates of early prenatal care for most race/ethnic groups, this indicator showed the lowest Equity Gap Score in the 2020 report. Lower inequity was also documented in some key education metrics, including graduation rates and Career-Technical Education Pathway completions. However, chronic absenteeism and fifth grade math performance showed substantial inequity. The highest rates of inequity were documented for child welfare and juvenile arrests.



LIMITATIONS

Data by race/ethnicity are not available for all measures, with particular gaps in the sections related to the Economy and Environment. Opportunities to expand the assessment of equity in these and other sectors will continue to be a priority for San Bernardino County. It is also important to acknowledge that race or ethnicity may not always be the salient variable for assessing inequities in the data. Other factors, such as income, geography, or gender, may be contributing to inequitable outcomes in certain circumstances.