

Racial Equity Rapid Response

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community to specifically address the impact of COVID-19 on the black community. For more information, visit AustinComingTogether.org.

GREATER AUBURN GRESHAM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation has worked for nearly 20 years to improve the quality of life of the residents that we serve using comprehensive community development strategies including Education & Youth Development; Housing & Senior Services; Economic Development; Health & Wellness; and Community Engagement. We have directed all services to focus on COVID-19 crisis responses here in Auburn Gresham.

“Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation has been fighting for years to address the lack of equitable access to health care even while promoting healthy living, healthy lifestyles and wellness in our under-resourced community,” said Carlos Nelson, CEO. “Unfortunately, it has taken a crisis like the coronavirus pandemic to shine a light on the apartheid-like structures that have kept African Americans most at risk. This and every other epidemic that we have suffered from has caused great pain in our community. We, as a nation, must do better! If not now, then when?”

THE WORK

Over the last six weeks, the Racial Equity Rapid Response team has

- Established an Operations Team integrated into the City’s Emergency Operations Center to enable coordination and resourcing of strategies developed through local partnerships and collaboration to identify gaps and solve problems faster.
- Formed an Education/Communication Working Group, which is tailoring messaging to speak directly to the realities that people in these communities face, including protecting loved ones, and guidance for essential workers and multigenerational households. This information is being delivered to people in their homes, including 80,000 door hangers placed over the last week, and 150,000 mailed postcards.

- Created a Providers Working Group that is developing strategies to proactively reach patients with underlying health conditions that increase the risk of contracting COVID-19.
- Engaged with community leadership networks to coordinate the distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) to local residents in their communities, including over 60,000 masks
- Conducted three virtual town halls with more than 6,000 viewers tuning in.

The Racial Equity Rapid Response team will be giving away 750,000 reusable cloth masks over the coming weeks. The cloth masks are being made by four local businesses, Barbara Bates Designs, G.A.I.A.U. Product Design & Development Ltd., Silk Screen Express and The Will Group.

The Racial Equity Rapid Response Team is also working with the Greater Chicago Food Depository to expand food access with new food distributions in African American and Latino communities in Chicago that have been devastated by the combination of COVID-19 and food insecurity. These eight new pop-up pantries will be available through mid-June. They’re open to the public but intended for people in need who live in or near these respective communities:

- New Life Centers of Chicagoland, Brighton Park, South Lawndale and Humboldt Park
- Apostolic Church of God and the Network of Woodlawn, Woodlawn
- South Shore Works and Real Men Charities, Inc., South Shore
- Trinity United Church of Christ, Washington Heights and Roseland
- Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corp., Auburn Gresham
- Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, Fuller Park
- Austin Coming Together, Austin

TESTING

In partnership with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and the Racial Equity Rapid Response (RERR) team, the City has identified seven new testing sites throughout Chicago, that will open by the end of May. That will bring testing to communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

One of the seven new testing sites, in the parking lot at Guaranteed Rate Field, will specifically serve asymptomatic first re-

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