

# YWCA IS ON A MISSION

December 1, 2020

**Re: Resolution Declaring Racial and Ethnic Health Inequities and Income inequality a Public Health Crisis**

Dear Pima County Board of Supervisors,

As CEO of the YWCA of Southern Arizona, and on behalf of the over 4,000 low-income women and families of color we serve annually living throughout Pima County, I wholeheartedly support the "Resolution Declaring Racial and Ethnic Health Inequities and Income inequality a Public Health Crisis" that is being presented as part of the Pima County Board of Supervisors agenda on December 1, 2020, and respectfully request you vote in favor of the declaration.

This resolution is the start of acknowledging the role of race in our society, an essential step in improving health outcomes, unifying the country, and bringing people out of poverty. While we know COVID-19 pandemic did not cause inequities in Pima County, it has made the greater public more aware of the severe disparities that have long been present in our society. For the YWCA of Southern Arizona, the resolution is closely aligned with our mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. We strongly agree that COVID-19 and the associated socio-economic challenges that the pandemic have produced are disproportionately affecting our local immigrant and Latino communities, in particular, and are severely limiting the ability of Latina women and children, representing 80% of our client base, to thrive.

Indeed, racial and ethnic minorities are bearing the brunt of the infections and related economic distress. Consider recent APM Research Lab that demonstrates from April to November 2020, African Americans, Native Americans and Latinos all experienced a COVID-19 death rate of triple or more than white Americans. Further, while the overall poverty rate in the County is 16.1% (U.S. Census 2015-2018 American Community Survey), Native Americans (38.5%), African Americans (28.1%) and Latinos (23.6%) are overwhelmingly more likely to face financial instability and poverty. Particularly distressing for the YWCA is the inequity among Latina workers compared to their colleagues. Not only are Latinas more often employed in high-risk, and essential service positions also places them at risk of COVID infection, they are paid significantly less for their efforts. On average, Latina workers are paid 46% less than white men and 31% less than white women for the same position. When combined with the fact that Latinas are three times less likely to have healthcare insurance, it creates a nightmare scenario of weighing health and the health of your family against the ability to put food on the table and a roof over your head.

As alluded to above, research is clear that systemic racism and poverty negatively impact the social and economic factors that determine a person's health. But it doesn't have to be this way. I applaud you for considering this resolution to examine the institutions and structures that govern daily life and to eliminate structural racism policies and ensure a more just and inclusive Pima County.

Sincerely,



Magdalena Verdugo, M.Ed.  
CEO, YWCA of Southern Arizona

**eliminating racism  
empowering women**



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