



Statement on Racial Equity and COVID-19

Vision: All North Dakotans have the economic freedom to live their best lives.

Mission: To inform, develop, and advance public policy that secures economic security and financial freedom for all North Dakotans.

The North Dakota Economic Security and Prosperity Alliance (NDESPA), consisting of more than 30 organizations operating within North Dakota, stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, Indigenous people, and other peoples of color who condemn systemic racism and economic exploitation.

The disproportionate impacts of the new coronavirus on those most at risk of being disenfranchised and exploited – specifically people of color, people with low income and people with disabilities – are compounded by unjust systems in which people have unequal access to necessities that determine basic health and are excluded from access to healthcare services. For example, Native and Black Americans are dying from COVID-19 at 5- and 3-times the rate of white Americans, respectively. These disproportionate impacts severely limit opportunities to establish economic freedom.

We also condemn the militarized police and government response to Americans, primarily people of color, exercising their inalienable rights to assemble and speak against injustices, first against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) at Standing Rock, and current protests in support of Black Lives Matter across the nation.

NDESPA's partner organizations acknowledge their complacency in the systems that have caused such stark differences between a middle-/upper-class white majority and people of lower incomes as well as people of color. We participate in systems that have not provided a meaningful space at the table for the disenfranchised, and that put profits and protecting current power structures ahead of what is best for the community and all its diverse members.

NDESPA commits to righting these imbalances in North Dakota by first addressing them at our tables by:

- Elevating the interconnectedness of these issues and the need for more dedicated inclusion of disenfranchised groups by
 - building the partner organizations' awareness and capacity to change their behaviors to ensure disenfranchised people are well represented in all discussions and policy decisions to better address racial, income, and other systemic inequities and biases;
- Tackling the issues of income inequality, the systemic obstructions to building assets, economic exploitation, unequal access to financial services, and unequal ability to vote by
 - Amplifying the voices of people who are currently ignored or excluded by providing them a place and mechanisms to help shape policy;
 - Speaking truth to racism and social inequities, supporting and enabling the partners to recognize their own and North Dakota's systemic flaws, and working together to fix them.