

Living in a global pandemic is a new experience for all of us and each one of us is experiencing it differently because of our employment status, familial status, race, ethnicity, and lots of other factors. We want to make it clear that Lane County hasn't stopped serving the community the way we did two months ago, we are simply doing business a little bit differently. These temporary changes in service delivery help us protect everyone in our communities.

Our values remain the same – we reaffirm our commitment to inclusion and respect for anyone who lives in, works in, or visits Lane County.

We know that on a national level African-American people disproportionately suffer from health risks such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes. American Indians and Alaska Natives also have higher rates of underlying medical conditions including heart disease, lung disease and asthma, diabetes, kidney and liver disease. While COVID-19 may not discriminate who it attacks, it does discriminate who it kills – and people with underlying health conditions such as those listed above are at a higher risk of death from COVID-19.

Here in Oregon, although Latinos make up 13% of the state's population, they represent at least 18% of all positive cases.

According to the 2017 Lane County Public Health Disparities Report, in Lane County people who are African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American, American Indian/Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, of multiple races or of another race/ethnicity all experience greater risk factors for poor health and poorer health outcomes compared to people who are White. Additionally, in Lane County 47 people per 100,000 people die as a result of Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases. This rate is particularly pronounced in American Indian/Alaska Natives who die at a rate nearly 50% greater than people who are White.

This moment is an opportunity for all of us in Lane County to better understand how we are all affected when some of us lack the protections of a safety net. We are committed to working to ensure that this crisis does not exacerbate existing inequities. In order to do this, we must recognize that risks and burdens are often borne disproportionately by communities of color and low-income people. Lane County remains committed to protecting our most vulnerable residents.

When we wash our hands and keep our distance, we protect everyone in our community. Let's come together by staying apart.