



THE MONTANA RACIAL EQUITY PROJECT

We are in a pandemic. COVID19 is ravishing our communities. Particularly, communities of color are affected at a much higher rate. Native Americans make up 6.7% while Black Americans make up 0.9% of Montana's population (<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/MT>). Flathead, Big Horn, and Rosebud counties have also been the location of "hot-spots" in Montana with Indian reservations located in each one. It is clear that this disease is hitting the most underserved and vulnerable populations – by ratios – the hardest. Racial and ethnic information is only available for about 35% of the TOTAL DEATHS in the United States (<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/racial-data-transparency>). MTREP supports protecting communities of color and urges parents to have their children stay home and learn virtually, with their families.

Compared to white Americans the mortality rate among:

- Black Americans 3.4 times as high
- Indigenous Americans 3.3 times as high
- Latinos 3.3 times as high
- Pacific Islanders 2.9 times as high
- Asian Americans 1.3 times as high

(<https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race#indigenous>)

In conclusion people of color are more likely to die as opposed to white Americans. We choose life. Stay home. Keep our families safe. Keep our communities safe. Close public school classrooms until science shows us that we are successfully managing a united front against COVID-19.

NOTE: I am a two-spirit Apsáalooke woman and I come from 5 generations of powerful Apsáalooke women. From those women, families were built, tree limbs extended, and we all exist on this tree floating leaf to leaf, crawling on every branch, growing, branching off, and growing more. We all come from the same tree. Our roots are connected. How can you ask us to send our children, our seeds, to engage in a fun learning environment and expect them to protect themselves from their friends? All for an invisible thing that could take your kaala. What happened when we took the blankets that were infected with disease? Do we want to lose loved ones? We have to stay home. Our communities are far more important than public, large, and school gatherings no matter how masked-up everyone is.

By the way, one can double check the facts on race and Covid-19 at this link: <https://covidtracking.com/race/dashboard>

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