

DAY 5: Take Action in Washtenaw County

“The Circle of Human Concern should include everyone, including those with whom we disagree,” he said. “We are all a part of each other. We don’t like it, but we’re connected.” - [John a. Powell](#)

About this photo: Temporary public art installation by artist Kara Springer that on the campus of Temple University’s Tyler School of Art.

Congratulations on completing the United Way of Washtenaw County Equity Challenge: COVID-19 Edition. Over the past 4 days, we have learned how racial inequities permeate our community on individual, institutional and systemic levels, and how we’re seeing these inequities unfold during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are all impacted by the system of racism in our country and therefore all responsible for dismantling the structures that allow it to persist. We encourage you to explore [Racial Equity Tools](#), a comprehensive site of resources designed to support learning, planning, acting, and evaluating efforts to achieve racial equity.

We are incredibly thankful for your engagement with us and that you made time to learn and reflect on topics of equity within our county. We need you, now more than ever. We know these conversations and the feelings they evoke are not always easy but making more space for brave dialogue is one of many steps we can take towards achieving equity in our County.

We challenge each of you to share a reflection on your experience with a family member, friend or co-worker to continue the momentum from this challenge. Below we have compiled a list of opportunities for you to continue this conversation and take action to drive forward change in our community.

Sincerely,

*Pam Smith
President & CEO
United Way of Washtenaw County*

*Linda Koos
Board Chair, United Way
Managing Director, Burns + Wilcox*

Today’s Challenge:



Mural by @BlurStreetArt, Photo by @StreetsDept

Option 1: Use your voice. Our lived experiences are shaped by institutions and policies. Public policy advocacy is one way to shift the policies and institutional practices that keep problems in place. [Click here to sign up to receive future action alerts from us!](#)

Option 2: Become an ally. Seek to understand what it feels like for another person or group to be oppressed, and despite knowing you will never fully understand how it feels, is committed to valuing and supporting people who are marginalized. Read the [Do's and Don'ts](#) of Allyship and [Guidelines for Being a Strong White Ally](#) as you practice and evolve your role in supporting equity and inclusion.

Option 3: Join a movement like the [Racial & Economic Justice Task Force](#), [attend a workshop](#) like Poverty Simulation or Bystander Intervention, from our partners at the [Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice](#) (ICPJ) or take part in an event hosted by [Showing Up for Racial Justice-Washtenaw](#).



Mural by @LoveisWisellu, Photo by @StreetsDept

Option 4: Shift the way you talk about others. Creating equitable outcomes requires that we change the way we talk about members of our community, focusing on their aspirations rather than their challenges- this is called asset-framing. Learn more about how the [Skillman Foundation](#) is using asset-framing in their work with Detroit Children, and [watch videos from Trabian Shorters, founder and CEO of BMe Community, discuss how to put asset-framing into practice.](#)

Option 5: Engage in dialogue about race. Read Race Forward's [10 Ways to Start a Conversation About Race](#) to learn more about how to start a conversation with friends, at school, at work, and more. Then, sign up to **attend an 8-week R.A.C.E Dialogue series** to explore the topic of race with your neighbors and learn from each other's lived experiences.

Option 6: Lend a hand by volunteering in our community. Find an in-person or virtual volunteer opportunity or nonprofit service project that fits your schedule and interest at [VolunteerWashtenaw.org](#) and [washtenaw.catchafire.org](#).

Option 7: Engage in one or more of the actions published in [10 Ways to Fight for Social Justice During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#).

Option 8: Do better. Many white people do not get involved in the work of racial justice because they do not know where to begin or how to use their voice to promote equity. Please read and challenge yourself to take a few of the actions in this article from Medium, ["75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice"](#). It is going to take all of us to dismantle racism. Today, make the choice to use your voice in support of those who are rarely heard