



COVID-19 Grantee Spotlight: Action Communication and Education Reform



Action Communication and Education Reform (ACER) continues to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic, so much so it's become a daily routine to keep our community informed.

As the outbreak has progressed, we have fully realized first hand that the COVID-19 pandemic does not affect all communities in the same way.

We began to closely monitor statistics and guidance from the MS Department of Health, the COVID Tracking Project, the CDC, and other media outlets.

"Our communities are only as strong as our weakest link. Therefore, ACER is working to break through the racial, educational, economic, and health barriers to provide a more equitable and sustainable present and future."

Al White,
Executive Director, ACER

Our black and brown communities are disproportionately affected by COVID:

<u>Mississippi</u>	<u>% Population</u>	<u>% Positive Cases</u>	<u>% of Deaths</u>
African American	37.80%	56.29%	51.93%
Latino	3.40%	5.70%	1.40%
White	56.50%	31.72%	43.68%

ACER's response has been to share information with the community by holding weekly phone conferences with other community leaders to ensure that everyone is aware of COVID-19 consequences and the need for collaborative efforts to keep slowing its spread.

During the weekly phone conferences, ACER have been providing the following:

- COVID-19 updates

- Guest professional to provide additional health and mental health information
- Educational updates from MS Department of Education and local school district
- Collaboration opportunities with other entities throughout the county
- Strategy updates to increase Census return rates in Montgomery County
- Resources for food access, testing sites, state grants and loans, and healthcare

ACER is also assisting in identifying households without internet access to determine the technological needs for students' continued education while sheltering in place. Our community is rural and there is a lack of infrastructure to provide internet access for all households. Another issue is the lack of devices for students to access online resources. ACER is also providing homeless individuals in the county with additional resources, information, and masks.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare societal inequities that Southern Partners Fund has fought since it's incorporation. SPF's capacity for enabling its grantee partners to build coordinated rapid response teams in their communities is well documented. SPF's grantee organizations rely on Justice Fund for Disaster Relief and Renewal grants to identify their most vulnerable populations and connect them to agencies and services that can help. In turn, vulnerable populations in these communities trust SPF grantee organizations to provide them with the best support available. In many communities, our grantee partners are their first responders.

COVID-19 is currently the primary focus for the Justice Fund for Disaster Relief and Renewal while SPF aggressively seeks new funding partners. To date, SPF has raised over **\$4M out of a \$10M funding goal** and is already issuing its first round of grants to partner organizations throughout the rural Southeast.

For more information on ACER or on contributing to SPF's Justice Fund for Disaster Relief and Renewal, please click More Info below to visit our dedicated COVID-19 page or contact us by phone with the contact details provided below.

[More Info](#)

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