

# Get Involved

Your opinion counts!  
Please join us in our efforts to  
make African Americans in San  
Mateo County a more united and  
healthy community!

*“Change will not come if we wait  
for some other person or some  
other time. We are the ones we've  
been waiting for. We are the  
change that we seek.”*

- President Barack Obama

# African American Community Initiative

## Join Us!

### AACI Monthly Meetings:

Meetings are held the 2nd  
Tuesday of every month from  
10:30 am - 12:00 pm

### Location:

2000 Alameda de las Pulgas  
Room 209  
San Mateo, CA

## Contact Us!

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Behavioral Health & Recovery Services  
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SAN MATEO COUNTY  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH &  
RECOVERY SERVICES

# African American Community Initiative



The African American Community Initiative (AACI) is committed to helping African Americans become more empowered to advocate for equality and access to mental health services. We also support African-American community members in their road to recovery and mental wellness within our community.

The AACI members include community members, providers and clients, who work together to support the African American community in San Mateo County.

AACI celebrates the heritage and pride of the African American community by hosting an annual Black History Month Summit.

## Our Mission & Vision

Our mission is to become a known resource for African American community members facing challenges with finding and utilizing mental health services, while addressing inequalities faced by African Americans in our county.

Our vision is to build a community driven support system for reducing mental health and substance use treatment disparities, and the stigma of mental illness by:

- Bridging the gap between the health system and our community.
- Recognizing the strengths and resilience of our community and increasing cultural humility and acceptance among providers.
- Increasing awareness to mental health & substance use issues, while promoting wellness.

## How We Support You

- Refer you to trainings (Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health First Aid) on how to identify early warning signs of mental illness and how to help youth and adults who may be experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Offer support to parents by connecting them to free parenting classes (Parent Project).
- Provide resources on where to find affordable housing, food, and other services that promote wellness.
- Assist you in addressing grievances or challenges you may be experiencing when seeking/receiving services at San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services.
- Provide an opportunity to collaborate on and address mental health inequalities within the African American community.

## Why Should I Care?

Because of stigma...

- Even if they have symptoms of depression, African Americans may delay or never access care.
- A mental health impairment is not recognized as an illness which one can recover from within the African American community.
- Many African Americans suffer from stressors related to low income and lack of opportunities. (Source: *We Ain't Crazy...*[Woods, D.] 2011.)