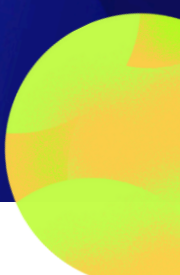


54th Annual Legislative Conference Take-Action Guide

PRODUCED BY THE CENTER FOR POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH



Thank you for attending the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's (CBCF) 54th Annual Legislative Conference. As an organization, we strive to translate the insights shared at our convenings into actionable change. Our policy and research team has crafted this Take-Action Guide for participants to follow up on the impactful conversations during our sessions. For more ways to get involved and take action in your communities, please view, save, and share our Annual Legislative Conference Take-Action Guide. Click the session title to watch each session's recording on YouTube.

RECLAIMING BELONGING: MOBILITY AND BLACK COMMUNITY SPACES

SESSION DESCRIPTION

In the pursuit of racial equity and mobility justice, transportation systems play a critical role in ensuring access to “third places” such as parks, barber shops, beauty salons, libraries, and churches—spaces that are foundational to Black cultural life, social cohesion, and well-being. This session focused on the intersection of transportation equity and social infrastructure, examining how policy decisions shape access to third places. The panelists explored the historical and contemporary factors that limit mobility for Black communities and outlined actionable strategies to ensure transportation systems support inclusive, culturally affirming infrastructure across neighborhoods.

PARTICIPANTS

Moderator

- Veronica O. Davis, Practice Director, Planning & Environment, AtkinsRéalis

Panelists

- Kenneth Bailey, Founder and Methodology & Strategy Director, Design Studio for Social Intervention
- Kristen E. Jeffers, Founder and Editor-in-Chief, The Black Urbanist
- Anita Cozart, Director, DC Office of Planning
- Delbert T. Foster, Associate Administrator, 1890 Research & Extension, South Carolina State University

QR CODE

Join the conversation by taking our short survey on third places [here](#) or scanning the QR code.



RECLAIMING BELONGING: MOBILITY AND BLACK COMMUNITY SPACES

INFORMATION

- In the 1930s, neighborhoods with Black residents were labeled **dangerous** by the federal government, depriving them of decades of investment and reinforcing segregation.
- There are **19 land-grant universities** across 18 states, each serving as a hub for community training and access.

RESOURCES

Articles

- [Health Disparities and Social Isolation in Majority-Black Cities](#) – Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
- [The Price of Belonging: Reclaiming Access to Community Organizations](#) – Congressional Black Caucus Foundation

Books

- [Defying Gentrification Playbook: A Memoir+Manifesto for Black Queer Feminist Disabled Urbanism](#) by Kristen E. Jeffers
- [Inclusive Transportation: A Manifesto for Repairing Divided Communities](#) by Veronica O. Davis

Organizations

- [Design Studio for Social Intervention](#)
- [South Carolina State University 1890 Research and Extension Program](#)

ACTION ITEMS

Policymakers

- Invest in equitable infrastructure (ex. sidewalks and ramps) and third places (ex. recreation centers).
- Pass legislation to improve the affordability and cleanliness of public transit systems.
- Promote inclusive narratives in public spaces (ex. murals and statues that honor a diverse array of leaders).

Practitioners

- Engage with communities and use storytelling to influence transportation and spatial justice planning.
- Leverage HBCUs and land grant universities to bring research to communities.
- Train community leaders to effectively engage in civic processes.

Everyone

- Collaborate with neighbors to map out solutions to transportation barriers.
- Journal and reflect on radical actions needed to restore connectivity.
- Reimagine cities as ecosystems where everyone has agency.

CREATING WEALTH AND WORK IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

SESSION DESCRIPTION

This session was the culmination of one year of collaborative work conducted by members of the CBCF President and CEO Leaders' Circle. Nonprofit leaders came together to identify areas for strategic collaboration to address issues of justice, equity, and democracy. In this session, the resulting working groups, focused on closing racial wealth gap and ending mass incarceration, provided briefings, while a panel of cross-sector experts discussed strategies for successful partnerships at the intersection of housing, work, and second chance opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals.

PARTICIPANTS

- Dr. Rashawn Ray, Vice-President and Executive Director, AIR Opportunity Fund
- John Hope Bryant, Founder, Chairman, and CEO, Operation HOPE

Ending Mass Incarceration Speakers:

- Nicole D. Porter, Senior Director of Advocacy, The Sentencing Project
- Cynthia W. Roseberry, Former Director of Policy and Government Affairs, Justice Division, American Civil Liberties Union

Closing the Racial Wealth Gap Speakers:

- Dr. LaToya B. Parker, Director of Tax and Wealth, Office of the President, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
- Marshawn Wolley, President and CEO, Black Onyx Management
- Nikitra Bailey, Executive Vice President, National Fair Housing Alliance
- Victoria Kirby York, Director of Public Policy and Programs, National Black Justice Collective

Moderator:

- Dr. Terris Ross, Managing Director, AIR Opportunity Fund, American Institutes for Research

Panelists:

- Marcus Bullock, CEO, Flikshop
- Phyllis Dickerson, CEO, African American Mayors Association
- Alphonso David, CEO, Global Black Economic Forum

QR CODE

Join the conversation by taking our short survey on the economy [here](#) or scanning the QR code.



CREATING WEALTH AND WORK IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

INFORMATION

Mass Incarceration

- **Over 5 million people** are currently incarcerated in the US.
- **72%** of consequences other than jail time for people with criminal records impact employment.
- **45%** of those consequences occur immediately upon release from prison and **80%** last indefinitely.
- A 2017 study found that people with criminal records are **60% less likely** to get a callback for a job than people with criminal records.
- Maryland's new Second Look Law is expected to free **1,000 incarcerated individuals**, giving them a second chance.

Black Wealth & Homeownership

- From 2019-2024, **Black homeownership rose** from 40.6% to 46.4%, reversing post–Great Recession declines.
- Several states and localities, including Michigan and Newark, NJ, have launched down payment assistance programs that provide **up to \$25,000** for first-generation homebuyers.
- Raising Black Americans' credit scores by 100 points could increase collective wealth by **\$750 billion** in 10 years.
- Combining improved credit, homeownership, small business growth, and AI access could yield **\$3.5 trillion in new Black wealth**.
- Operation HOPE's 1 Million Black Business Initiative has helped create more than **435,000 Black businesses**, backed by a \$130 million partnership with Shopify.
- A study from Black Onyx Management found that 72% of surveyed Black-owned businesses in Indiana **did not receive PPP loans**.
- **Half of Black Americans** have credit scores **below 627**, locking them out of fair lending and financial opportunities.



CREATING WEALTH AND WORK IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

RESOURCES

Articles

- [Forward Together: The Black Policy Playbook for an Equitable America](#) - Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
- [Resources for First Time Homeowners](#) - National Fair Housing Alliance

Organizations and Programs

- [AIR Opportunity Fund](#)
- [Flikshop School of Business](#)
- [Gates Foundation Economic Mobility and Opportunity Program](#)
- [Goalsetter App](#)

ACTION ITEMS

Policymakers

- Pass legislation to boost Black homeownership, including funding down payment assistance and credit repair programs.
- Support clemency initiatives and advocate for living wages for incarcerated workers.

Private Sector Practitioners

- Build credit literacy and entrepreneurship programs.
- Expand private sector investment in Black entrepreneurship.
- Mobilize corporate leaders to view racial equity as a good business practice, not a philanthropic effort.

Everyone

- Parents should create custodial brokerage accounts to build generational wealth.
- Support [Know Your Rights trainings](#), local bail funds, and reentry programs.
- Use gamification to teach kids about investing and saving.

THE FUTURE OF WORK: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR BLACK WORKERS IN THE AGE OF AI

SESSION DESCRIPTION

As artificial intelligence (AI) rapidly reshapes industries and job markets, its impact on Black workers, and especially the Black middle class, remains to be seen. This panel discussion explored the unique challenges and opportunities AI presents for Black workers, delving into issues of occupational segregation, algorithmic bias in employment, access to tech education and training, and the policy levers needed to ensure an equitable and inclusive AI-driven economy for all. Featuring the voices of industry experts, worker advocates, and policymakers, the conversation centered on policy recommendations put forth in the recent policy agenda, *Forward Together: The Black Policy Playbook for an Equitable America*, co-produced by the CBCF and the Joint Center.

PARTICIPANTS

Introductory Remarks:

- Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke (NY-09), Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

Moderator:

- Danielle A. Davis, Esq., Director, Technology Policy, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Panelists:

- Darrell Booker, Tech Visionary & Impact Storyteller
- Dr. Nicol Turner Lee, Senior Fellow; Director of the Center for Technology Innovation; Founder of the AI Equity Lab, Brookings Institution
- Ijeoma Mbamalu, Chief Technology Officer, ACLU

QR CODE

How do you think AI will shape the future of work in the US? Take our short survey [here](#) or scan the QR code.



THE FUTURE OF WORK: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR BLACK WORKERS IN THE AGE OF AI

INFORMATION

- Automated hiring tools often reject applicants with “ethnic-sounding” names.
- **Black women report the lowest trust levels in AI** due to institutional biases.
- For each kilowatt hour of energy a data center powering AI models consumes, it would need **two liters of water** for cooling, raising equity issues in energy and pollution.
- **More than 300,000 Black women** have been removed from the workforce amid automation shifts and cuts to DEI.

RESOURCES

Articles

- [Forward Together: The Black Policy Playbook for an Equitable America](#) - Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Organizations and Programs

- [ACLU AI Summit: Civil Rights in a Digital Age](#)
- [The AI Equity Lab at the Brookings Institution](#)
- [The Knowledge House](#)

Podcasts

- [TechTank](#) – Brookings Institution
- [The Miseducation of Technology](#) – Danielle A. Davis

ACTION ITEMS

Federal Policymakers

- Pass the [Algorithmic Accountability Act](#).
- Strengthen compliance enforcement by agencies like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
- Tighten regulations for AI to ensure racial equity, transparency, and accountability.

Practitioners

- Avoid relying solely on AI-based grantmaking tools that exclude underrepresented communities.
- Encourage Black entrepreneurs to create AI companies through free open-source platforms.
- Explore the integration of renewable energy to offset AI’s environmental footprint.
- Include racial impact assessments in tech development funding.
- Partner with HBCUs to expand AI programs, internships, and ethical AI education.

Everyone

- Demand community reinvestment (ex. upgrading local grids, water systems, and green infrastructure) when data centers are built.

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL: ADVANCING ACCESS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN THE HEALTH WORKFORCE

SESSION DESCRIPTION

This session explored strategies to strengthen the healthcare workforce, focusing on supporting healthcare professionals across the full scope of their careers, including mental health and well-being. The panelists outlined how supporting healthcare workers can improve health outcomes, increase trust, and drive long-term resilience, particularly in Black and other underserved communities. This discussion also centered on the role of policy, including the importance of healthcare coverage and community-based providers, to enable access.

QR CODE

Have you experienced a delay in accessing medical care? Take our short health survey [here](#) or scan the QR code below.



PARTICIPANTS

Remarks

- Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan, U.S. House of Representatives
- Erica Jeffries Purdo, Vice President of Strategy, Transformation, and Analytics for Global Corporate Affairs, Johnson & Johnson

Fireside Chat

Moderator:

- Dr. Jonathan M. Cox, Vice President, Center for Policy Analysis and Research, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation

Panelists:

- Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, U.S. House of Representatives
- Congressman Herb Conaway, U.S. House of Representatives

Panel Discussion

Moderator:

- Dr. Ashley Stewart, Research Fellow, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and American Institutes for Research

Panelists:

- Dr. Jasmine R. Marcelin, FIDSA, FACP, Director, IDSA Foundation
- Rev. Kimberly L. Williams, President & CEO, Choose Healthy Life
- Isha Williams, Global Lead, Healthcare Workforce Strategy & Programs, Johnson & Johnson

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL: ADVANCING ACCESS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN THE HEALTH WORKFORCE

INFORMATION

- Black women are **three to four times more likely to die** from pregnancy-related causes than White women.
- Black Americans' average life expectancy is **five years shorter** than White Americans.
- Only **one in three** Black adults who need mental health care receive it.
- Black physicians make up just **5.7%** of the U.S. physician workforce.
- Black Americans are 60% more likely to be **diagnosed with diabetes** and 40% more likely to experience **hypertension-related deaths**.
- **Up to 80%** of health outcomes are driven by factors outside clinical care, including housing, food, and access to transportation.
- Researchers are expecting a shortage of **more than 100,000 critical healthcare workers** by 2028.

RESOURCES

Articles

- [National Mental Health Equity Framework](#)- The Equity Braintrust and Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
- [Ring the Alarm: The Crisis of Black Youth Suicide in America](#) - CBC Emergency Task Force on Black Youth Suicide and Mental Health

Organizations and Programs

- [Choose Healthy Life Blueprint for Wellness](#)
- [Infectious Diseases Society of America Foundation Healthcare Bio-Preparedness Workforce Pilot Program](#)
- [Johnson & Johnson My Health Can't Wait Campaign](#)
- [Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program](#)



ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL: ADVANCING ACCESS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN THE HEALTH WORKFORCE

ACTION ITEMS

Federal Policymakers

- Expand Medicaid coverage for postpartum mothers to 12 months.
- Pass the Pursuing Equity in Mental Health Act and the Black Maternal Health Momnibus.

Healthcare Practitioners

- Attend culturally competent care and implicit bias trainings to develop tools to treat diverse patients.
- Equip community centers, religious institutions, and barbershops with mental health resources.

Private Sector Professionals

- Establish mobile health clinics and telehealth access points in low-income neighborhoods.
- Fund loan repayment and mentorship programs for Black medical students and practitioners in underserved areas.
- Support pipeline programs for Black doctors, nurses, and mental health professionals, including HBCU-based initiatives.

Everyone

- Participate in community-owned health data cooperatives to strengthen research representation.
- Promote peer support networks for chronic disease management and caregiving.
- Support Black-led health startups focused on digital access, nutrition, and preventive care.

NATIONAL RACIAL EQUITY INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (NREI) - FROM MARGINS TO MANDATES: TOWARD ENFORCEABLE PROTECTIONS FOR BLACK WOMEN & GIRLS

SESSION DESCRIPTION

This session explored strategies to strengthen the healthcare workforce, focusing on supporting healthcare professionals across the full scope of their careers, including mental health and well-being. The panelists outlined how supporting healthcare workers can improve health outcomes, increase trust, and drive long-term resilience, particularly in Black and other underserved communities. This discussion also centered on the role of policy, including the importance of healthcare coverage and community-based providers, to enable access.

PARTICIPANTS

Moderator:

- Dr. Ashley Stone, Senior Director, National Racial Equity Initiative for Social Justice, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation

Panelists:

- Scheherazade Tillet, Co-Founder & Executive Director, A Long Walk Home, Inc.
- Victoria Kirby York, Director of Public Policy and Programs, National Black Justice Collective
- Tarana Burke, Founder and Chief Vision Officer, me too. International
- Dr. Chanda Reynolds, Clinical Licensed Psychologist, Minds of the Culture, Inc.

QR CODE

Join the conversation by taking our short survey on policies affecting Black women and girls [here](#) or scanning the QR code below.



NATIONAL RACIAL EQUITY INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (NREI) - FROM MARGINS TO MANDATES: TOWARD ENFORCEABLE PROTECTIONS FOR BLACK WOMEN & GIRLS

INFORMATION

- **Almost 40% of missing cases** in the U.S. are Black children.
- **66% of mass shooters** have a documented history of sexual or gender-based violence.

RESOURCES

Articles

- [Black Facts](#) – National Black Justice Collective

Organizations and Programs

- [A Long Walk Home](#)
- [Black Girl Freedom Fund](#)
- [me too. International](#)
- [Minds of The Culture](#)

ACTION ITEMS

Policymakers

- Pass legislation that explicitly names and protects Black women and girls.

Practitioners

- Build coalitions that connect issues like sexual violence, reproductive justice, LGBTQ+ rights, and environmental justice under shared liberation frameworks.
- Develop training pipelines for Black women in government, nonprofit, and corporate roles.
- Integrate arts into justice movements as tools for healing, truth-telling, and sustained visibility.

Everyone

- Advocate for ethical media representation of missing and murdered Black women and girls.
- Hold legislators accountable to resource, not just pass, protections for Black women and girls.
- Normalize mental health conversations in Black spaces.
- Pressure newsrooms and social media platforms to elevate stories equitably.
- Support community journalism and Black women producers/editors in storytelling roles.

FORWARD TOGETHER: THE BLACK POLICY PLAYBOOK FOR AN EQUITABLE AMERICA

SESSION DESCRIPTION

In 2025, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies released a co-developed policy agenda, *Forward Together: The Black Policy Playbook for an Equitable America*. This policy agenda provides a framework for addressing the most pressing challenges facing Black communities in the United States, highlighting seven key policy areas that are critical to Black advancement. During this session, panelists discussed *The Playbook*, highlighted its importance and relevance in this moment, and outlined how it can be utilized to move forward in unity and purpose to improve life for Black communities and better realize a truly equitable America.

PARTICIPANTS

Remarks:

- Dr. Jonathan M. Cox, Vice President, Center for Policy Analysis and Research, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
- Jessica Fulton, Senior Fellow, The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Moderator:

- Dr. Andre Perry, Senior Fellow & Director of The Center for Community Uplift, Brookings Institution

Panelists:

- Demetria McCain, Director of Policy, Legal Defense Fund
- Damon Hewitt, President and Executive Director, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
- Vincent Evans, Executive Director, Congressional Black Caucus
- Ebonie C. Riley, Senior Vice President of Policy and Strategic Partnerships, National Action Network

FORWARD TOGETHER: THE BLACK POLICY PLAYBOOK FOR AN EQUITABLE AMERICA

INFORMATION

- The median wealth of a white family in the United States is **six times** the median wealth of a Black family.
- Black homeownership rates **remain the same** as in 1968.

RESOURCES

Articles

- [Forward Together: The Black Policy Playbook for an Equitable America](#) - Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
- [Civil Rights Groups Sue Trump Administration to Challenge Anti-DEI Executive Orders on Behalf of Nonprofit Serving Diverse Group of Women in the Skilled Trades](#) - Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Organizations and Programs

- [Election Protection Coalition](#)

ACTION ITEMS

Federal Policymakers

- Pass the [John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#).

Practitioners

- Cite Black institutions and data sources in research, journalism, and academic work to strengthen representation.
- Collaborate with other organizations to advance key policy issues and mobilize the public.

Everyone

- Check your voter registration and the nearest polling place before every election.
- Contact your Congressional representatives to advocate for equity policies: 202-224-3121.
- Form peer networks to share state-level policy information and organize for social justice.

NATIONAL TOWN HALL - ADDRESSING THE MOMENT: HOW WE GOT HERE

SESSION DESCRIPTION

The 2025 National Town Hall was a large-scale, two-part convening centered on solutions to face the challenges of our current socio-political moment. This panel addressed the historical factors that paved the way for this administration's rollbacks of civil rights. Panelists also identified major concerns that are on the horizon; outlined a bold, proactive strategy to fight back; and issued a call for all who believe in racial equity and justice to stand together, build momentum, and push forward lasting change.

PARTICIPANTS

Remarks:

- Nicole Austin-Hillery, President and CEO, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
- Congresswoman Terri A. Sewell, U.S. House of Representatives
- Senator Angela Alsobrooks, U.S. Senate
- Dr. Camille Busette, Executive Vice President, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Congressman Hakeem Jeffries, US House of Representatives

Moderator:

- Ed Gordon, Journalist and TV Host

Panelists:

- Congresswoman Maxine Waters, US House of Representatives
- Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan, US House of Representatives
- Rev. Shavon Arline-Bradley, President and CEO, National Council of Negro Women
- Marc Morial, President and CEO, National Urban League

QR CODE

Join the conversation by taking our short survey on the current political landscape [here](#) or by scanning the QR code.



NATIONAL TOWN HALL - ADDRESSING THE MOMENT: HOW WE GOT HERE

INFORMATION

- **Twenty-six states** have banned, restricted, or attempted to criminalize reproductive care since the *Dobbs* decision in 2021.
- **Black Americans are nearly three times more likely** to die from gun violence than white Americans.
- Black borrowers hold **disproportionately high student loan debt**, with Black women being the highest debt holders.
- **Black women earn 64 cents** to every dollar earned by non-Hispanic white men.
- **One in ten Black Americans** is an immigrant or child of an immigrant.

RESOURCES

Articles

- [2025 State of Black America](#) – National Urban League
- [How to Vote in Your State](#) - When We All Vote

Organizations and Programs

- [NAACP Legal Defense Fund](#)
- [National Coalition of Black Civic Participation](#)
- [National Council of Negro Women](#)
- [Sister Song](#)

ACTION ITEMS

Federal Policymakers

- Fund community violence intervention programs and pass comprehensive police reform legislation.
- Pass the [John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#).

Practitioners

- Advocate for mental health–centered crisis responses.
- Educate communities about misinformation and digital voter suppression.
- Fight voter suppression laws through litigation and grassroots action.
- Help local communities understand their abortion rights post-Dobbs.
- Mobilize voters for the 2026 elections.
- Push for student debt relief expansion and equitable lending practices.

Everyone

- Build collective economic power through credit unions and community funds.
- Invest in youth leadership and civic engagement initiatives.

NATIONAL TOWN HALL - MOVING FORWARD IN UNITY AND POWER

SESSION DESCRIPTION

The 2025 National Town Hall was a large-scale two-part convening centered on solutions to face the challenges of our current socio-political moment. This panel centered on the efforts needed from lawmakers and Black communities to prevent further dismantling of democracy and ensure momentum and progress toward racial equity. Panelists provided tools to fight back against the weakening of federal agencies, the withholding of critical funding, and the federal takeovers of cities.

PARTICIPANTS

Moderator:

- Joy-Ann Reid, Host, The Joy Reid Show

Panelists:

- Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke, US House of Representatives
- Damon Hewitt, President and Executive Director, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
- Judith Browne Dianis, Executive Director, Advancement Project

QR CODE

Join the conversation by taking our short survey on the current political landscape [here](#) or by scanning the QR code below.



NATIONAL TOWN HALL - ADDRESSING THE MOMENT: HOW WE GOT HERE

INFORMATION

- Nearly **one-third** of Americans **did not participate** in the 2024 election.
- The mid-decade redistricting efforts could **eliminate up to ten seats** currently occupied by Congressional Black Caucus members.

RESOURCES

Organizations and Programs

- [Advancement Project](#)
- [Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law](#)

ACTION ITEMS

Federal Policymakers

- Engage directly with communities outside of election cycles.

Practitioners

- Build intergenerational coalitions to advocate for racial justice.
- Collaborate with other organizations to build new civil rights infrastructure and innovative policy frameworks.
- Teach Black history curricula in schools.

Everyone

- Educate your community on how to spot misinformation.
 - Invest in nonprofits and civil rights organizations.
 - Reject propaganda aimed at dividing Black Americans and Black immigrants.
 - Treat democracy as a 365-day responsibility.
-

LOCAL STRENGTH, NATIONAL PROMISE: THE POWER OF BLACK MAYORS

SESSION DESCRIPTION

In light of the recent political challenges to progressive momentum at the federal level, local leaders have stepped up and demonstrated that they have the power to positively impact their communities. This session convened Black mayors from across the country to share how they are driving meaningful change through community engagement and data-driven policy initiatives. From public safety to economic opportunity, the leaders offered an inclusive, equitable blueprint for local governance that benefits all Americans and inspires national progress.

PARTICIPANTS

Remarks:

- LaShawn Warren, Chief Policy Officer, Southern Poverty Law Center

Moderator:

- Angela Rye, CEO, IMPACT Strategies

Fireside Chat:

- Mayor Muriel Bowser, Washington, DC

Panelists:

- Mayor Barbara Lee, Oakland, CA
- Mayor Andre Dickens, Atlanta, GA
- Mayor Brandon Johnson, Chicago, IL
- Mayor Van Johnson, Savannah, GA
- Mayor Brandon Scott, Baltimore, MD

QR CODE

Do you approve of the federal takeover of US cities in the interest of public safety? Take our short survey on local leadership [here](#) or scan the QR code below.

RESOURCES

Organizations and Programs

- [African American Mayors Association](#)
- [Southern Poverty Law Center](#)



LOCAL STRENGTH, NATIONAL PROMISE: THE POWER OF BLACK MAYORS

INFORMATION

Public Safety

- Violent crime in Washington, DC has decreased over the last two years.
- In 2024, Atlanta's **homicide rates decreased** by 44%.

Economic Development

- Atlanta has **12,000 units of affordable housing** under development.
- Chicago has an investment bond valued at more than **\$1 billion** for housing and economic development.
- Atlanta's Hartsfield Jackson Airport is currently undergoing a \$1.3 billion renovation, where at least **37% of all contracts** were allocated to **minority and women-owned businesses**.
- Savannah, GA is home to the **third busiest port** in the nation.

Youth and Education

- Atlanta pays teens an average of **\$17.50/hour** in its citywide youth employment program.
- In 2024, the Atlanta Public School System achieved the **highest graduation rate** in its history.

ACTION ITEMS

Local Leaders

Community Care and Equity

- Deliver direct relief (ex. fresh produce, essential supplies) to underserved wards.
- Maintain and protect minority and women-owned businesses and programs from anti-DEI attacks.

Democratic Protections

- Create city "kitchen cabinets" within the African American Mayors Association (AAMA) for rapid peer-to-peer problem solving and crisis support.
- Fight state and federal efforts that strip cities of authority, particularly in majority-minority districts.
- Push for DC statehood to ensure national representation and strengthen federal protections for all cities.
- Use all available tools: Legislative, executive, legal, organizing, and public communications strategies.

Economic Stability & Jobs

- Continue building large-scale affordable housing projects.
- Expand economic inclusion efforts, including procurement, contracting, workforce pipelines, and vendor access.
- Invest in youth employment programs to expand economic mobility for young residents.
- Shift local economies away from dependence on the federal government and attract stable, good-paying jobs.

Public Safety

- Ensure local police departments, not federal agencies, lead operations to rebuild trust.
- Prioritize decreasing violent crime, especially in hardest-hit wards and neighborhoods.
- Use executive authority to protect the right to protest and ensure residents know their rights.

NATIONAL RACIAL EQUITY INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (NREI) - GENERATION NOW: REIMAGINING BLACK POLICY FUTURES

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Young people are not only the emerging leaders of tomorrow—they are change agents today. This session placed young people in the forefront to articulate the policy futures they envision across areas like climate justice, education, technology, racial equity, and democratic governance. The session explored how intergenerational collaboration can move beyond tokenism to genuine collaboration to build a better future.

PARTICIPANTS

Moderator:

- Samantha Davis, Founder, The Black Swan Academy

Panelists:

- Kelsey Parker, Founder, ThinkBlack
- Ollie Henry, Pauli Murray Fellow, ACLU
- Nia Jones, President & CEO, The Energy Queen, LLC.

QR CODE

How familiar are you with the perspectives of young leaders on policy issues? Take our short survey on youth and social change [here](#) or scan the QR code below.



INFORMATION

- **Over 40% of Black-owned businesses** closed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.
- The Inflation Reduction Act allocated **\$27 billion** for clean energy upgrades in disadvantaged communities, which was halted by the Trump Administration.

RESOURCES

Organizations and Programs

- [ACLU People Power Training](#)
- [Black Swan Academy](#)
- [The Energy Queen, LLC](#)
- [Free DC](#)
- [Think Black](#)

Policy

- [Reparations Now Resolution](#) – Congresswoman Summer Lee (PA-12)

NATIONAL RACIAL EQUITY INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (NREI) - GENERATION NOW: REIMAGINING BLACK POLICY FUTURES

ACTION ITEMS

Federal Policymakers

- Advance climate and energy justice policies that prioritize low-income and disadvantaged communities (ex. weatherization, solar access).
- Integrate youth voices directly into policymaking through town halls, advisory boards, and co-governance models.
- Pass reparations legislation.

Young Leaders

- Build intergenerational relationships and networks.
- Gain knowledge and pursue training opportunities, then use your voice, and be audacious in your advocacy.
- Preserve intersectionality in all racial justice work and center Black trans, queer, and disabled voices.
- Run for office, even in districts resistant to change, and prioritize community connection and values-based leadership.
- Show up physically to local government meetings (ex. hearings, town halls) to influence policy directly.

Practitioners

- Encourage Black youth to run for office and support with mentorship, resources, and removal of gatekeeping structures.
- Engage Black youth consistently, not only during election cycles, and show up in their spaces (ex. HBCUs, community events, youth organizations).
- Protect Black communities in AI policy by ensuring data protection and ethical use and eliminating algorithmic harm.
- Support youth-led businesses with microgrants, guaranteed vendor slots, and access to government contracts.

Everyone

- Create environments where young people can lead through intergenerational collaboration.
- Leverage digital tools like social media to uplift Black businesses and social causes.
- Seek joy, avoid burnout, and pursue work that excites you.