



*Community-Developed Principles  
for Black Equity.*

## A Guide for Pursuing **Black Equity & Racial Justice** in *Philanthropic Initiatives and Government Systems*





## INTRODUCTION

Research, empirical data and anecdotal evidence are clear: *racial injustice* continues to serve as a destructive force in society, undermining our democratic values of liberty, justice and self-determination for all.

Progress on Black equity and racial justice must be part of any forward movement in the United States, and will only be achieved when philanthropic investments, public policies, and institutional practices boldly confront racial injustice.

These principles, which are grounded in the essence of Black joy, community and resilience, were co-created by the Black Equity Initiative grantee organizations to serve as a guide and call to action for any funder or government body seeking to disrupt racial injustice at scale.

The first principle of Black equity is grounded in **truth**. Liberation requires an intentional and on-going analysis of the issues Black people face in Los Angeles that have been and continue to be rooted in systematic racism, and, perpetuated through bias.

- ▶ Black women make up 3% of California's population, but 37% of women incarcerated in the state.
- ▶ Young people of color comprise 75% of California's juvenile justice population and make up 90% of cases transferred from juvenile to adult court. Once transferred, Black youth receive a sentence of life without parole, 18 times more often than white youth.
- ▶ 11% of Black full-time workers live under 150% of the federal poverty level.
- ▶ Black students in the county graduate high school at 14 and 15 percentage points lower than their White and Asian counterparts, respectively, and only 38% of Black students attending CSU San Bernardino attain a degree in six years.
- ▶ Over the past decade, San Bernardino has experienced a mass in-migration of Black families (42,000) based on 2011 census information).

“**Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.**

”

— Nelson Mandela, London's Trafalgar Square, 2005.

## TRUTH

Liberation begins with acknowledgement and honesty about the need to equitably shift the power relationship between black and white populations. This includes recognition of:

- ▶ Los Angeles, and indeed, the nation, have historical legacies rooted in institutional and systemic racism, both explicit and implicit, in intention and implementation.
- ▶ The lived experiences of oppressed people are real, serving as part of our collective consciousness and hard evidence of systemic harm.
- ▶ Political apathy and political neglect have created the socio-economic and socio-political conditions that perpetuate inadequate power dynamics.
- ▶ Current policies and practices within systems, including philanthropic institutions, have either severely limited or outright failed to advance the interests of Black people.
- ▶ The greatest gains in advancing a fully inclusive society have come from the success of community-led approaches to dismantling racism and oppression.
- ▶ We need to fundamentally re-imagine Southern California to be a region fully inclusive of Black people and Black communities.





We celebrate **strength** as a pillar that emerges from the capacity of Black people to mobilize our individual, collective and community assets. From medical advances to music, art, sports, dance, and social justice, the influence of Black culture is a pioneering force in our society. Harnessing our quantum intelligence is driven by institutions that facilitate Black people to hold space on our own behalf. Such institutions — the Black Church, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), social justice organizations and cultural hubs — have not only benefited Black people, but our entire society.

- ▶ By both race and gender, a higher percentage of black women (9.7 percent) are enrolled in college than any other group, topping Asian women (8.7 percent), white women (7.1 percent) and white men (6.1 percent).
- ▶ Black buying power is projected to reach \$1.4 trillion by 2020, according to a report from the University of Georgia's Selig Center for Economic Growth.

“It’s really important that we have this kind of safe intellectual space for young African-Americans. There’s a reason why Martin Luther King graduated from an HBCU. There’s a reason why Brown vs. Board of Ed came out of an HBCU. There’s a reason why the Sit-In Movement started at an HBCU and spread all over the South. So I think, you know, we need those institutions today just as much as we ever did.”

— Stanley Nelson, Filmmaker of the first documentary on the history of HBCUs, “Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities,” 2018.

## STRENGTH

For success to be sustained, the infrastructure for success must be strong. The history of institutional dis-investment in Black people must be undone if we are to pursue progress toward true equity at scale. This requires intentional public and philanthropic investment that supports:

- ▶ Building community and institutional infrastructure that builds power through people, money and policy.
- ▶ Developing individuals as leaders, capable of occupying seats at decision-making tables.
- ▶ Developing organizations as institutions situated within an eco-system of networks and partners.
- ▶ Harnessing community assets — the Quantum, or infinite, Intelligence that exists within individuals and becomes multiplied within the collective (social, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, political and cultural wisdom).



**Strategic disruption** requires us to boldly confront conditions that perpetuate inequity, from narratives that justify racial difference, indignity and oppression to policies that reinforce the same.

The courage to act begins with a recognition that Black people have been on the front lines of social justice for hundreds of years, risking and in many cases, giving our lives for the opportunity to be treated as human beings. From the tactics and strategies of the underground railroad, the civil rights movement, Black Lives Matter and #metoo, these disruptions have been intentionally uncomfortable and personally challenging not only to those who benefit from the status quo, but to Black people who have put themselves and their well-being on the line to advance justice for the greater good of society. It has also required non-Black allies to use their voices, positions of authority and influence, as well as their financial resources to champion justice, advance opportunity and fund Black leaders and institutions to both drive and sustain change.

- ▶ A 2016 survey by Pew Research Center found that nearly 40% of Blacks compared to 24% of Whites said that working to get more Black people elected to office would be a very effective tactic in advancing racial justice.
- ▶ A 2017 report by the Black Social Change Funders Network called out an inconvenient truth: despite historic civil rights laws 50 years ago, blacks fare worse than whites and, in many instances, other people of color on almost every indicator of well-being. While there has been progress over time, some gaps are persistent and worsening. — The same report called for an increase of at least 25% in giving by the nation's largest foundations to the Black community, with a particular emphasis on strengthening the infrastructure for Black-led social change.

“ If I had to make another sign after the Alabama election, it would say this: **'Bet on black women. Follow black women. Give power to black women. We don't just vote; we lead as well by mobilizing our communities to vote.** ”

— Angela Peoples, Consultant and Political Strategist, 2018.

## STRATEGIC DISRUPTION

Pursuit of Black equity is not for the shy or faint-of-heart. It requires taking immediate bold action, stepping outside of familiar and traditional comfort zones, and committing to the long haul through the ebbs and flows of change. Funders and system changers who pursue Black equity recognize the struggle is:

- ▶ Simultaneously urgent and timeless. Disrupting systemic oppression cannot wait. Its calcification in our democratic and economic systems is deeply entrenched and must be ubiquitously dismantled. Anti-Black racism is not a “funding trend”.
- ▶ Large in scale. Resources should match the significance of the cause. Ongoing investment is required and should be sustained until we see the full eradication of indignity.
- ▶ Rooted in liberation and the full restoration of human dignity for all.
- ▶ Grounded in legacy, one that is intergenerational and community-sustaining.
- ▶ Intentionally uncomfortable and personally challenging to those who benefit from white privilege. The goal of strategic disruption is not to reform systems, but to transform them.





Lastly, Black equity must be grounded in **love** — the universal force that binds our shared humanity, that connects us to a purpose beyond ourselves, and respects the fundamental right of all people to pursue a self-determined life.

As a matter of social and racial justice, love means trusting our wisdom, giving us credit for our ideas and contributions, and, facilitating avenues by which Black people can pursue self-and-community care to heal from the trauma of systemic racism.

- ▶ A 2018 study published in the Lancet Medical Journal found that police killings of unarmed Black Americans have adverse effects on mental health in the general population of Black people. Each additional killing is associated with a 0.14-day increase of additional poor mental health days in the 30-60 days following police shootings. Police kill an average of 300 Black people per year.
- ▶ African-American donors say they give an average of 13 percent of their income to their place of worship, compared with 9 percent of donors overall.
- ▶ African-American donors are nearly twice as likely to say they support anti-racism or anti-hate groups (12 percent of African-American donors compared with 7 percent overall).
- ▶ Mainstream Black America is heavily involved in sharing their time as volunteers in a variety of activities with their sisters and brothers: youth mentoring programs, support of domestic violence services and support of church-related service activities like subsidized day care or substance abuse treatment.

## LOVE

Black equity must be grounded in love — honoring the inextricability of our shared humanity. Love in the pursuit of Black equity includes:

- ▶ Acknowledging that relationships are based in trust, cultivated by mutual respect and sustained through time.
- ▶ Facilitating avenues by which people can pursue self-and-community care.
- ▶ Healing that transforms the conditions of mind, body and soul within people and communities; and invites consciousness of self and society.
- ▶ Preserving the richness of Black culture and honoring the history of Black people as pioneers of consciousness, culture and social justice for all people.

“ **At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love.**

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project  
Anti-Recidivism Coalition  
Black Women for Wellness  
BLU Educational Foundation  
The Brotherhood Crusade  
Centinela Youth Services  
Collective REMAKE  
Community Coalition  
Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (COPE)  
LA Black Worker Center  
LA Community Action Network  
Leaders Up  
Special Needs Network  
St. Joseph Center (year 1)  
Strategic Concepts in Organizing Policy and Education (SCOPE)  
Youth Action Project  
Youth Justice Coalition (year 1)

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For further information on the Black Equity Initiative, please contact *JMC Philanthropic Advisors* at (310) 829-4771 or *Kaci Patterson* of *Social Good Solutions* at [kaci@socialgoodsolutions.com](mailto:kaci@socialgoodsolutions.com).

## DATA SOURCES

### TRUTH

- ▶ Data provided by Black Equity Initiative grantee organizations.

### STRENGTH

- ▶ Report by the National Center for Education Statistics, *The Root*, "Black Women Now the Most Educated Group in US," 2016.
- ▶ Report by Nielsen, *The Atlantic*, "Black Consumers Have 'Unprecedented Impact' in 2015," 2016.

### STRATEGIC DISRUPTION

- ▶ Report by Pew Research Center: *Social & Demographic Trends*, "Achieving Racial Equality," 2016.
- ▶ Black Social Change Funders Network, ABFE and Hill-Snowdon Foundation Case Study, "The Case for Funding Black-Led Social Change" by Susan Taylor Batten and Nat Chioke Williams, 2017.

### LOVE

- ▶ *The Lancet Journal of Medicine*, "Police killings and their spillover effects on the mental health of black Americans: a population-based, quasi-experimental study," by Jacob Bor, MD; Atheendar S Venkataramani MD; Prof. David R Williams, PhD and Alexander C Tsai, MD, 2018.
- ▶ Blackbaud, "Diversity in Giving: The Changing Landscape of American Philanthropy," 2015.
- ▶ The Liberty Hill Foundation, "Giving Black in Los Angeles: Donor Profiles and Opportunities for the Future," by Ange-Marie Hancock-Alfaro PhD., 2012.

“Two hundred fifty years of slavery. Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of separate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy. Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole.”

— Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," 2017.

## WHAT FUNDERS CAN DO

- ▶ Invest in Black-led organizations and organizations with a history of cultivating Black leaders.
- ▶ Examine whether your current grant-making portfolios embody the Principles for Black Equity.
- ▶ Commit to learning more about 2-3 organizations whose work embodies Black equity and racial justice with an intent to explore funding them.
- ▶ Commit to deepening your commitment to existing grantees whose work focuses on Black equity and racial justice, either through increased funding or additional years of funding.
- ▶ Share what you've learned with your peers and invite them to learn more about the Black Equity Initiative.
- ▶ Partner with The JIB Fund to support the Black leadership development pipeline.



