

TIME OF
RECKONING

TOR

REPORT:

POLICY ACTION ROADMAP

The final forum in the series strategically included policymakers with power and influence to implement the recommendations brought forth by the community through this process.

ABOUT THE TIME OF RECKONING

Time of Reckoning, Healing, Listening, and Action is a series of community engagement and healing justice sessions that culminate in a Black-led town hall and policy action roundtable focusing on the criminal justice system and its collateral consequences on Black people in Minnesota. The series strategically includes policymakers with power and influence to implement the recommendations brought forth by the community through this process.

Convened by the community and co-chaired by Dr. Brittany Lewis of Research in Action (RIA) and Dr. Joi Lewis of Joi Unlimited, this work was spurred by the murder of Mr. George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). This process is an opportunity for true radical re-imagining of what is possible within our collective efforts to advance racial justice. Community stewards include Lulete Mola, Marcus Owens, D.A. Bullock, Hani Ali, T. Mychael Rambo, Tish Jones, Hassan As-Sidiq, Pastor Brian Heron, Leslie Redmond, Sha Cage, Nyemadi Dunbar, and Alex Steinman.

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ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

Time of Reckoning consists of five critical community healing and policy action engagements that aim to illustrate to the nation what community-centered policy change can look like. The first three sessions were structured like congressional hearings with the goal of developing tangible actions and bold visions for community wellbeing. Forums focused on the experiences of Black women and girls; the experiences of Black men and boys; and the experiences of the Black extended and chosen family. The fourth forum was a Black Family Reunion that harnessed the Black family reunion structure to generate collective, intergenerational wisdom for policy recommendations.

We use healing justice as a framework for this project. In this context, healing is the process of making ourselves or becoming sound or whole again. In this work, we are healing from trauma through radical self-care. Healing justice is an evolving political framework shaped by economic and racial

justice that recenters the role of healing inside of liberation. It seeks to transform, intervene, and respond to generational trauma and violence in our movements, communities, and lives and to regenerate our traditions of liberatory and resiliency practices that have been lost (Page and Raffo, US Social Forum Detroit).

In June 2021, conveners invited the Black community to join key policymakers in centering Black-led solutions and accountability from government leaders in addressing the criminal justice system and its collateral consequences. Policymakers shared action plans and community members responded in small group discussions. This report of the policy action roundtable is a roadmap for policymakers to implement the changes called for by the Black community. .



PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY

Each roundtable began with a summary of policy recommendations from the first four Time of Reckoning forums.

ROUNDTABLE 1

ROUNDTABLE 2

ROUNDTABLE 3

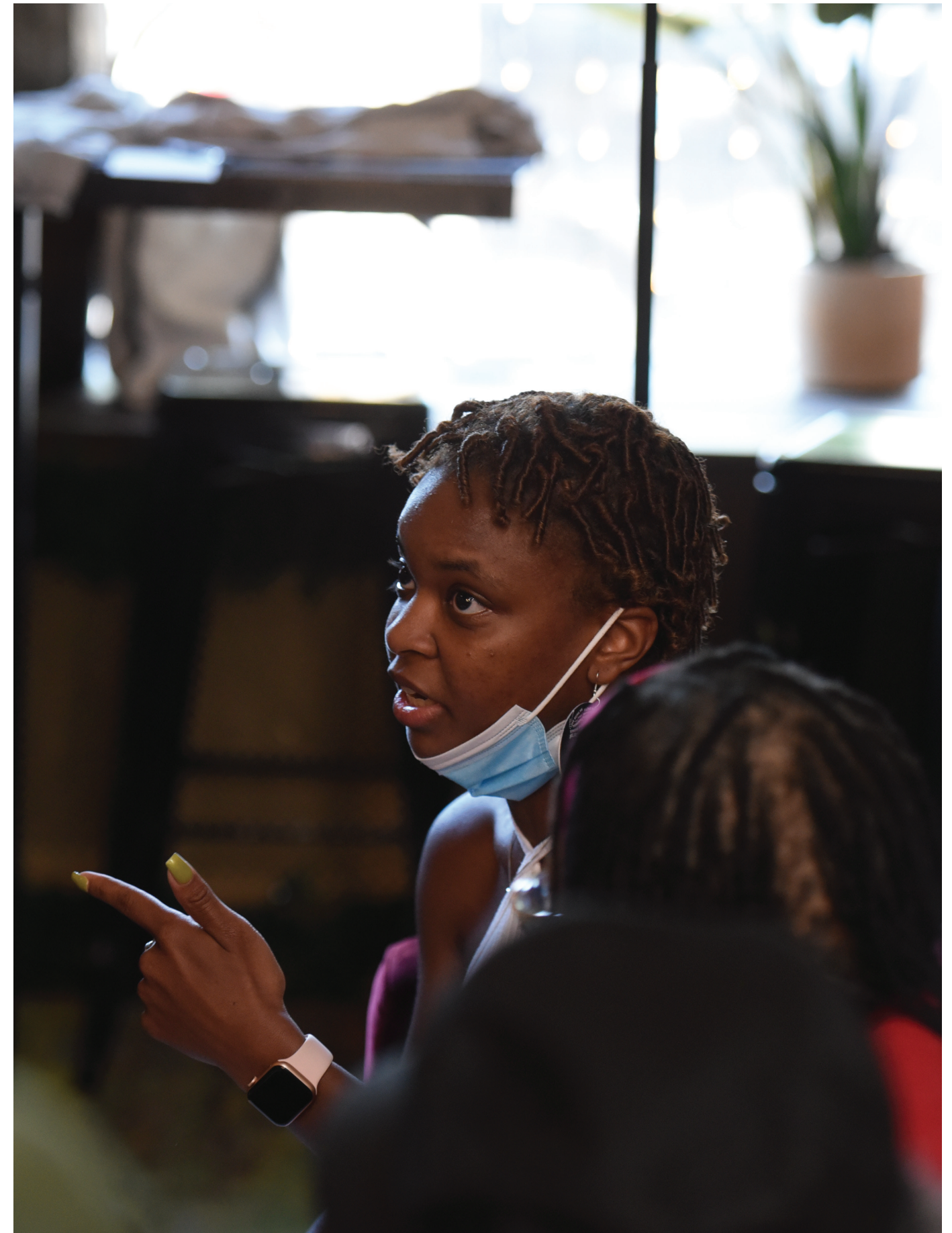
ROUNDTABLE

1

The peoples' justice and legal system

As policy presenter Anika Bowie said, “the criminal justice system in America is broken. From over-policing certain communities to high rates of incarceration, there are many tangible collateral consequences to the current system that disproportionately affect Black folks. Broken systems produce broken people and broken families.” Policy recommendations include:

- For the POST board to implement consequences for police who violate the first amendment rights of protestors, violate body camera policy, use deadly force unnecessarily, and violate people’s human and civil rights. Remove local immunity conditions, issue police liability insurance, and grant decision power to civilians.
- End systems of prosecution that break up families—like incarceration of caregivers, foster care, and child protective services.
- Expand partnerships with community-based diversion programs that offer direct services to families.
- Decriminalize addiction and legalize recreational cannabis in Minnesota, expunge records, and seek amnesty for those incarcerated for cannabis-related offenses.
- Support incarcerated individuals and their families by expanding access to visitations, phone calls, and organizations that offer social emotional counseling support for families experiencing grief several years into their re-entry experience.
- Sue landlords for discrimination and unsafe living conditions.





“George Floyd died with a diverse BIPOC police force paralyzed by the governances, culture, and structures of [a] police department. This same dynamic exists across other state and county agencies including those on this call.”

-PARTICIPANT CHAT TO COMMISSIONERS

Black community members then met in breakout rooms and discussed what to prioritize, naming:

- More lawyers, including public defenders, to help people; the right to counsel for civil and housing court.
- Culturally appropriate mental health services.
- Addressing trauma that exists in the Black community.
- Holistic programs that include safety, economic opportunity, and health equity.
- Programs and institutions led by community members who know the community.
- Increased government funding to pay program providers better so that programs can be effective and efficient.
- An independent agency with executive authority to hold police officers accountable.
- Funding for increasing representation.
- Education on our own history that is not filtered through white supremacist propaganda and nationalism; knowledge of true self.
- Investigations into boards of nonprofits being funded; specific accountability measures and reports.
- Dismantling racist policy making and governing.
- Not conglomerating the experiences that are unique to African Descendants of Slaves (ADOS) with other ethnically diverse groups.
- Not leaning on single institutions to be the sole response to specific community needs.
- Increasing knowledge about how funding works, financial literacy, who holds police accountable, the legislative process, and self-care.

ROUNDTABLE

2

Support Black futures through transportation, jobs, and education

Black futures have been under attack since the inception of the United States. People need pathways of healing and hope into economic prosperity and stabilization. Policy recommendations include:

- Look beyond the “Strong Black Woman” or “Resilient Black Person” trope in the workspace and recognize the humanity and needs of Black women and girls.
- Create accountability measures to track Black people’s experiences and decrease racial profiling.
- Promote Black businesses that offer healing and wellness services to impacted individuals.

- Implement career pathway programs inside of schools to build a strong, healthy workforce of Black students prepared for the growing economy.
- Increase access to wraparound services that respond to the community’s trauma and ensure social and emotional well-being of families.
- Provide youth and families access to events and resources such as arts and crafts, sports, and other programming that creates environments where families can celebrate one another.



Black community members then met in breakout rooms and discussed what to prioritize, naming:

- Taking ownership of schools and occupying the hallways to underscore the community's support, concern, nurturing, and presence in the lives of our children and as a reminder to educators and administrators that Black families fervently believe our youth are both worthy and deserving of the best educational resources possible.
- Financial incentives for paid internships for youth (private and/or public sectors).
- Apprenticeships that go deeper than Urban Scholars.
- Funding business grants directly versus through Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), which fund larger companies and not street-level startups.
- Investing in a pipeline of children that learn how the government works.
- Learning from the Elders; for all ideas to be on the table and to be attentive to the whole community.
- Learning about capital liberation, which helps us learn how capital is disbursed from those who have and those who need.



***“COMMUNITY’ HAS BEEN STATED SEVERAL TIMES.
WE NEED TO BE CLEAR ON HOW YOU ALL ARE USING
‘COMMUNITY’ AND WHAT THAT TRULY MEANS, NOT
JUST IN POLICY, BUT ACTION.”***

-PARTICIPANT CHAT TO COMMISSIONERS

ROUNDTABLE

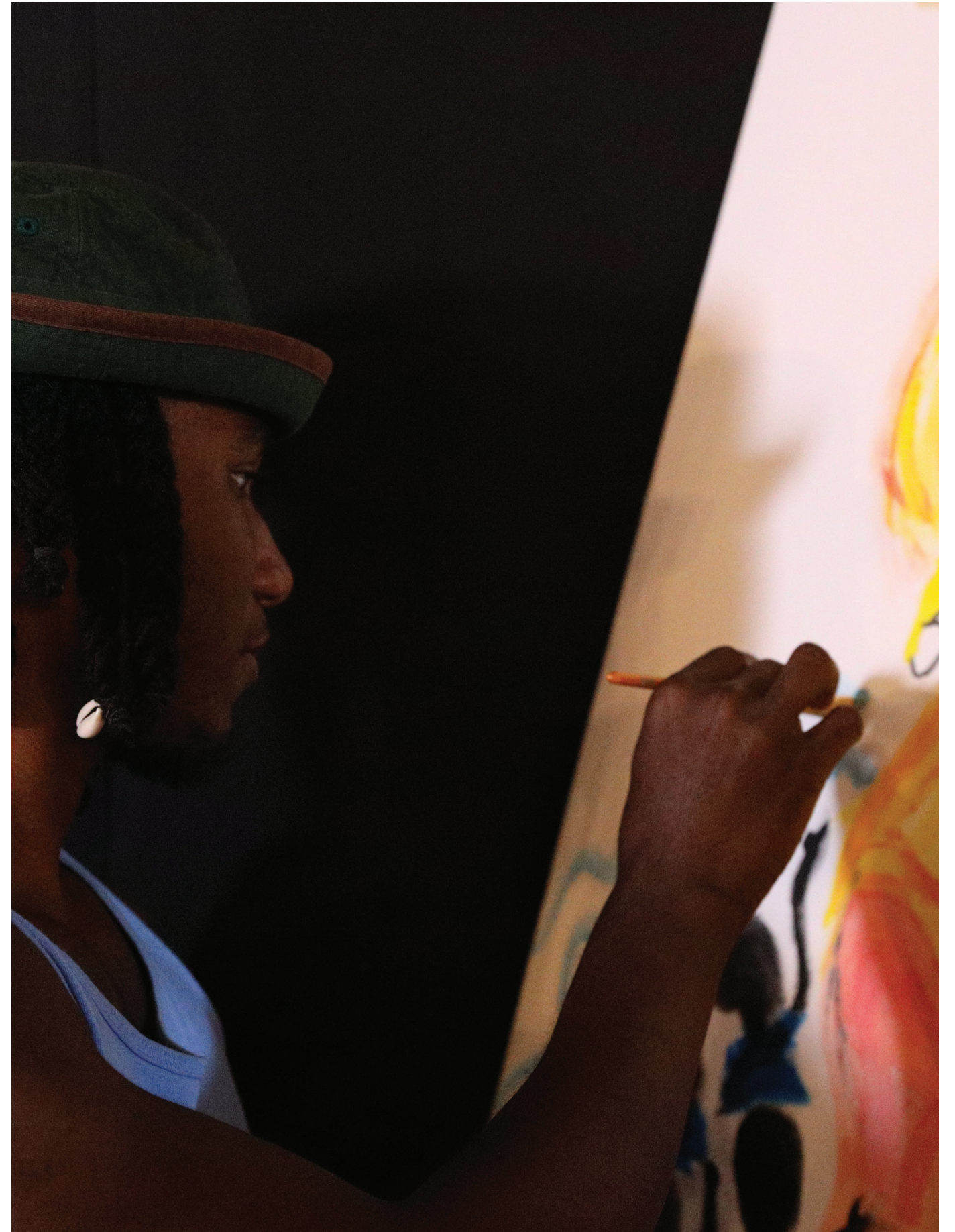
3

Invest in the stabilization of Black families, youth, and community

The Black family is the foundation and infrastructure of all Black people; it's building or destruction determines whether the community is well or unwell. Policy recommendations are:

- Adapt reparations as a legal framework in systems; this may include direct payments (lump sum and/or installments) or tax credits.
- Adopt a community engagement model that moves beyond an awareness process and implements a community benefits program that invests and improves people's living conditions and offsets the increase in cost of living.

- Implement services that approach the holistic family, including incarcerated family members.
- Address the racial issues in foster care and child protection and their traumatic impact on family wellness.
- Redefine on the county level what family is and implement a Black family framework.
- Expand state health insurance to include healers like massage therapists, Reiki workers, pastors, and ministers.





“THERE’S A COLLECTIVE DESIRE TO SEE REPARATIONS ADDRESSED ON A STATE LEVEL, ESPECIALLY FOR DESCENDANTS OF ENSLAVED PEOPLE.”

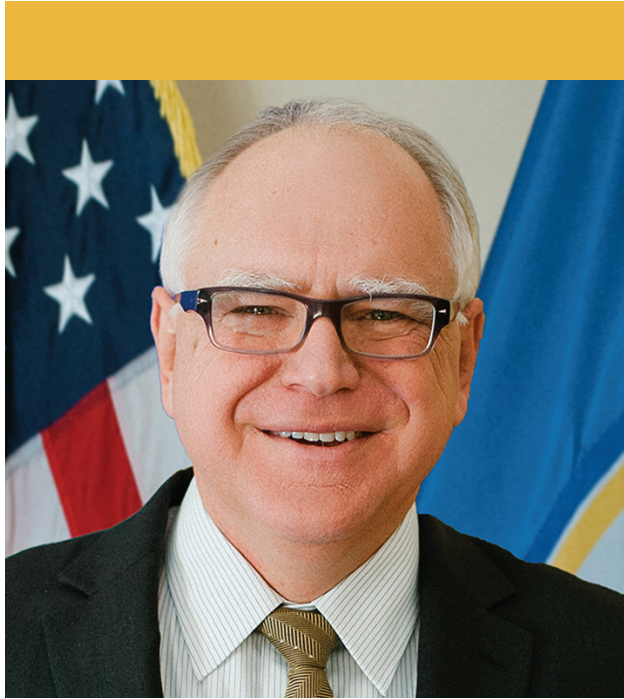
-PARTICIPANT CHAT TO COMMISSIONERS

Black community members then met in breakout rooms and discussed what to prioritize, naming:

- Addressing out of home placement and child protection services.
- Encouraging more Black families to become licensed for foster care/adoption to ensure our children who are NOT safe at home stay within our culture and values.
- Focusing on family-centered programs—not those that focus on women, children, or men specifically.
- Learning about the African American Family Preservation Act.
- Breaking that cradle to prison pipeline that starts in foster care/schooling

WHAT POLICY MAKERS COMMITTED TO AND BY WHEN

To begin the event, Governor Tim Walz, Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan, and Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) Commissioner Rebecca Lucero responded to the Time of Reckoning series.



GOV. TIM WALZ



**LT. GOV. PEGGY
FLANAGAN**



**MDHR COMMISSIONER
REBECCA LUCERO**

GOV. TIM WALZ discussed proposing Minnesota Heals in this year's budget. It would create and support community healing networks and apply culturally aware trauma responses and practices. He also said the State needs to do a better job at supporting young people, such as when it used federal COVID-19 relief funding for summer programming, meals, and mental health for youth.

LT. GOV. PEGGY FLANAGAN discussed strengthening the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), which is responsible for setting regulations and controlling the training and licensing of police officers in Minnesota. For example, the board is working on a model policy around First Amendment rights and police interactions and is prohibiting police officers from being in white supremacist or other extremist groups. Flanagan also referenced the 2020 Police Accountability Act, while saying it has not done enough. She also discussed economic prosperity as a violence prevention strategy and said the State has expanded workforce goals and pay certifications for major state bonding. She said the State needs to make sure it is creating opportunities for BIPOC-owned businesses when it makes large investments into construction. Finally, she said the State is working to make grantmaking more equity-focused and community-informed.

MDHR COMMISSIONER REBECCA LUCERO discussed how she has been working to shift her agency away from being a claims processing and compliance agency to a civil rights agency. As an example, she described announcing three workplace harassment cases at once to show a shift away from focusing on single actors to focusing on systems. MDHR also has a role in changing the culture of policing, specifically de-escalation and enhanced transparency, Lucero said. She cited the agency's decision to launch a 10-year pattern and practice investigation into MPD. She committed to working hard to make the findings public and transparent. Finally, she called on community to advocate for legislators to rewrite the 50-year-old Minnesota Human Rights Act to make it more proactive and to allow an equity and systems approach. MDHR is also supporting a bill to end pay discrimination. She said if the bill is not passed in 2021, MDHR commits to bringing it forward in the future and hopes for the community's support.



“The fact that we continue to fund everything but ADOS/Black social economic infrastructure and hide behind BIPOC and other holding frames of our condition is a barrier to change. Daunte Wright and Winston were both AFTER George Floyd! The ADOS community needs a standalone fund and state department for ADOS reparative justice affairs.”

-PARTICIPANT CHAT TO COMMISSIONERS

ROUNDTABLE 1

THE PEOPLES' JUSTICE AND LEGAL SYSTEM



Policymakers shared action plans related to criminal justice and the legal system.

Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) Commissioner Paul Schnell acknowledged the role DOC has played in advancing racial disparities and reinforcing oppression. He committed to:

Listening to those entering the system, and their families, to ensure the right types of programming and services are available.

- ✓ Mobilizing services and agencies to resource human needs, as opposed to punishing people.
- ✓ Being person-centered versus system-focused, where people DOC serves are equal and critical partners in meeting their needs.
- ✓ Changing DOC's culture away from a paradigm of punishment and dehumanization.
- ✓ Building better internal systems of measurement and accountability.
- ✓ Lifting up stories of transformation and redemption.

He also highlighted recently signed laws that mandate DOC maintains incarcerated new moms' connections with their babies, provide medical resources to people in DOC facilities, and develop homelessness mitigation plans for people leaving DOC facilities. Later during the roundtable, Schnell commented, "Culture in our systems—policing and correctional services—must change. Systems of measurement and accountability must be established in order to assess and hold ourselves to account for a lack of cultural health and the needed progress toward cultural change."



“Who are these community partners that you’ve funneled \$8M to for community engagement and violence prevention boots on the ground work? What are their missions and who’s providing proactive development opportunities? Who are you backing with building permits and bonding dollars for infrastructure development to provide these transformative services?”

-PARTICIPANT CHAT RESPONDING TO DPS' GRANTMAKING

RAMSEY COUNTY
ATTORNEY JOHN CHOI



Ramsey County Attorney John Choi similarly acknowledged the harm that current systems have caused to communities of color, especially Black and brown communities. He committed his office to:

- ✓ Making youth justice prosecution decisions as part of a collaborative review team with community members and the defense, effective July 6, 2021.
- ✓ No longer prosecuting cases submitted to his office that are a result of a pretextual traffic stop, instead directing police to change their proactive policing strategies. The policy will be announced this summer.



“MANY DO NOT WANT TO BEIN POSITIONS WHERE THEY ARE A PART OF THE PROBLEM AND CAN ALSO BE SUBJECTED TO HARM FROM THEIR EMPLOYER WHO HAD HIRED MANY OF THOSE WHO DO HARM TO OUR VERY COMMUNITY.”

-PARTICIPANT CHAT RESPONDING TO DPS' CALL FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN POLICE OFFICERS

**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC
SAFETY DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
CASSANDRA O'HERN**



Minnesota Department of Public Safety Deputy Commissioner Cassandra O'Hern discussed recent efforts by DPS, including distributing \$8 million in funds to local organizations providing educational victim and crime prevention services to underserved communities during COVID-19. She said DPS is also committed to:

- ✓ Facilitating a workgroup on deadly force encounters with law enforcement and implementing recommendations.
- ✓ Applying character-based hiring practices that came out of focus groups to hear what community members want to see in Minnesota State Patrol, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, and Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement law enforcement officers.
- ✓ Recruiting and hiring candidates from underrepresented communities. She called on people to pursue careers in law enforcement.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL
KEITH ELLISON**



Attorney General Keith Ellison said his office is committed to helping people afford their lives and to live with safety, dignity, and respect. He said his office would continue to:

- ✓ Sue companies whose actions disparately harm communities of color, as with a vaping company and companies contributing to climate change.
- ✓ Use its criminal prosecution division to vindicate and uphold lives and dignity of all people, such as through its prosecution of the four officers involved in the murder of George Floyd.
- ✓ Operate its wage theft unit, which sues people who pay people less than they deserve. Most of the people for whom the unit has recovered money so far are Black, Latino, and Asian.
- ✓ Implement a statewide expungement program—the office has worked through about 450 files out of 2,000.

In a breakout room, policymakers discussed how they can work across levels of government; what their role is in making change; and the need for more time to have these kinds of conversations.

ROUNDTABLE 2

SUPPORT BLACK FUTURES THROUGH TRANSPORTATION, JOBS, AND EDUCATION



In the second roundtable, policymakers shared action plans and commitments related to transportation, jobs, and education.

Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner Heather Mueller framed her remarks around the idea of moving beyond access, to participation and representation. She committed her agency to:

- ✓ Working to end discipline disparities, including through programs and practices like multi-tiered systems of supports that are restorative, social-emotional learning, and mental health supports.
- ✓ She also said the agency would be more purposeful in its approach to discipline so that it is not centered on punishment.
- ✓ Diversifying teacher and support staff makeup in Minnesota schools.
- ✓ Ensuring students learn historically accurate depictions of the past and see their different identities represented.
- ✓ Expanding pathways to rigorous coursework options.
- ✓ Using its new equity, diversity, and inclusion center to provide training, culturally relevant practices, trauma-informed resources, and anti-bias resources to staff.



“We need to establish an ADOS Reparative Justice Fund and Department. One of the common challenges cited by every commissioner and department is the challenge of diversionary and proactive policies across the board. The establishment of a department would create permanent accountability for real change. Agency OVER the ADOS/ Black community is the bottleneck.”

-PARTICIPANT CHAT TO COMMISSIONERS



Department of Employment and Economic Development Commissioner Steve Grove

discussed how his agency works to make the economy work for everyone. He said DEED has committed to:

- ✓ Rethinking how its Office of Economic Opportunity does community review processes so grant distribution is based on where community says needs are.
- ✓ Targeting supports toward communities of color throughout the pandemic, as well as doing proactive outreach so it is not just the usual applicants hearing about opportunities.
- ✓ Increasing its focus on culture, talent, and education to make sure staff understand whom they are trying to serve.
- ✓ Meeting goals related to racial equality, including shrinking unemployment disparities between Black and white people by 50 percent by the end of 2022, and achieving pre-pandemic levels of people in family-sustaining jobs.



Hennepin County Commissioner Irene Fernando

said the county must fundamentally reframe how it works so that it is not relying on people's failure to function. She said the county has:

- ✓ Expanded the definition of youth into mid-20s.
- ✓ Increased education supports for youth experiencing homelessness or who are at risk for or are being sexually exploited.
- ✓ Increased the county minimum wage to \$20, increased childcare supports, and made Juneteenth a paid holiday. Continually measured and analyzed who gets county business as vendors and how they can better reach people not getting county business.
- ✓ Worked across the state to support dislocated workers, including by partnering with cultural and community organizations.
- ✓ Funded efforts to address racism and equity as directly as possible



“Our opposition in this area is NOT neutral, so we shouldn’t be either. I am hopeful we can be materially more aggressive, in ways that can gain traction in a governance structure that is relying on failure from us.”

-HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMISSIONER IRENE FERNANDO, CHAT



IN A BREAKOUT ROOM,

commissioners discussed how to establish an independent agency with power that can represent the interest of Black people; the influence of the human rights statute that is 50 years old and does not allow for culturally specific programming; barriers other statutes present; and challenging language.

***“LISTEN TO THE LIVING
BLACK MEN TOO.”***

-PARTICIPANT CHAT TO COMMISSIONERS



ROUNDTABLES

INVEST IN THE STABILIZATION OF BLACK FAMILIES, YOUTH, AND COMMUNITY



Policymakers next shared action plans and commitments related to Black family and youth stabilization.

Metropolitan Council Chair Charlie Zelle shared how the Council is working toward more equitable outcomes. He committed to:

- ✓ Setting a more equitable regional policy through a 30-year comprehensive regional plan for the 5-county metropolitan area.
- ✓ Recognizing the need for healing and justice and not acting in ways that deepen pain and trauma.
- ✓ Recognizing strengths and assets in our communities and investing in those strengths, instead of using deficit-based language and frameworks.
- ✓ Pushing beyond its comfort zone in how the Council purchases, hires, and invests. For example, in May 2021 the Council voted to dedicate \$3.9 million in discretionary funding to initiatives that will embed different business methods into its work—from contracting to training to new workforce practices.
- ✓ Continue engaging community in evaluating police department policies and practices.
- ✓ Investing differently to decrease disparities in park use.
- ✓ Placing a clearer focus on equity, including by setting measurable goals to achieve outcomes.
- ✓ Being an active partner to the Center for Economic Inclusion’s Anti-Racism and Economic Justice Trust.
- ✓ Thinking beyond compliance to shift how it invests in built environment and human-focused systems. For example, he committed to community co-creation and a community-led process in the Blue Line LRT project.

HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMISSIONER
ANGELA CONLEY



Hennepin County Commissioner
Angela Conley emphasized the importance of making space for people with lived experience to inform systems change. She committed to:

- ✓ Being as intentional as possible in engaging with state leadership, such as in supporting the African American Family Preservation Act and piloting it in the county.
- ✓ Continuing to tap the voices of families and youth as critical perspectives in meaningful policy change.
- ✓ Leading, with community, the establishment of a Hennepin County Commission on Reparations.

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSIONER
JODI HARPSTEAD



Minnesota Department of Human Services Commissioner

Jodi Harpstead discussed ways DHS works to promote equity through internal staff activities; supporting legislation; and evaluating its policies and procedures. She said DHS:

Wants to learn more about the recommendation to expand state health insurance to include healers like massage therapists, Reiki workers, pastors, and ministers.

- ✓ Is committed to being an antiracist, multicultural organization, following the model of the Crossroads Ministry Anti-Racism Continuum. DHS has staffed an equity office; is administering the Intercultural Development Inventory with 7,500 employees; and has a hiring and retention plan to diversify every level of the agency.
- ✓ Is exploring policies and procedures at every level to ensure they reflect a commitment to multiculturalism and are not bound in white supremacy thinking.
- ✓ Used this year's state budget to advance money for children. Worked hard to pass legislation to improve funding and effectiveness of

- ✓ the Minnesota Family Investment Program, childcare assistance program, coverage for postpartum women, and coverage to improve Black maternal and infant health.
- ✓ Elevated family preservation efforts to the deputy assistant commissioner level.
- ✓ Is exploring aspects of kinship care and adoption in light of the expansive definition of the Black family shared in Time of Reckoning reports.
- ✓ Supports the goals of the African American Family Preservation Act.
- ✓ Is committed to co-creating work on the service enrollment and modernization plan.
- ✓ Will connect with communities across the state beginning this summer to hear challenges they specify; this information will then go to relevant program areas, who will address concerns and loop back to communities.

In their breakout room, commissioners discussed using reparations as a legal framework. Leading, with community, the establishment of a Hennepin County Commission on Reparations.



TIME OF RECKONING POLICY ACTIONS FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS:

The goal is to examine the needs in each policy change and take the necessary steps to work with the commissioners and community to get shared commitments completed through either direct hiring/consultation, policy/practice/procedure change, or strategic partnership.

Government Investment in Healing Justice:

- Actualize the Governor's Minnesota Heals program by hiring Joi Unlimited and Healing Justice Foundation to do direct investment in community healing. (The Healing Justice Foundation)
- The Department of Human Services adopting Healing Justice framework and OM Method training to expand services providers to include healers like massage therapists, Reiki workers, faith-based leaders.

Transforming Systems:

- Change the culture of the Department of Corrections and its staff from an ideology of punishment to restorative through a strategic partnership with community organizations and impacted individuals who serve returning citizens to promote stories of transformation and redemption. Allocate funds to transformative justice initiatives. (Identify a community partner to consult with Department of Corrections to orchestrate this program initiative.) (Until We Are All Free/Ujammah Place)
- The Minnesota Department of Education adopt an alternative to punishment model through community-led programs and practices that are multi-tiered systems of supports that are restorative, social-emotional learning, and decriminalize mental health. Partner directly with the Healing Justice Foundation, Joi Unlimited and other cultural and community healers to source support for alternative to punishment with OMies in schools.
- Fund Hennepin County to establish a Commission on Reparations in Hennepin County. Partner with Research In Action and Black Civic Network to develop the county's first reparations commission.
- Fund Hennepin County to pilot African American Family Preservation Act program in Hennepin County with Department of Human Services. Partner with Research In Action and Black Civic Network.

Philanthropy Investment In Advocacy & Policy Power

- More community representation on the POST Board. Engage with civil rights organization leaders and strengthen their participation on the POST Board's model policy working group. Increase the advocacy organization's capacity to partner long-term with the Department of Public Safety and other law enforcement agencies on police reform. (Minneapolis NAACP)
- Connect Commissioners with Equity Leaders/consultants to produce racial equity with measurable goals. The Metropolitan Council and many other commissioners stated a need for placing a clearer focus on equity, by setting measurable goals to achieve outcomes.

OUR TEAM

(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)

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OUR PARTNERS

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