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# The Cost of Freedom

Truth & Reconciliation  
Guaranteed Income Program:  
Piloting paths to reparations

Prepared By:  
Fund for Guaranteed Income  
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# Executive Summary

## Truth & Reconciliation Guaranteed Income Program: Piloting paths to reparations

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American wealth and industry was built on the backs of enslaved people, a theft that continues to define economic opportunity and access in our country. The American carceral system mobilizes police violence to further extract profit, reproducing the nation's legacy of slavery in the disproportionate punishment of Black residents. To realize a just and fully productive economy, reparations must be paid to and investments must be made in the Black community. The ACLU of Louisiana's Truth & Reconciliation pilot shows that national reparations are needed and possible. For one year, the pilot used guaranteed income to transfer economic power from the descendants of enslavers to those impacted by the vestiges of slavery.

This report details the transformative impact that transfer had on the 12 participants who received payments, all survivors of police brutality in Louisiana, where police kill Black people 280% more often than white people and only 29 of 2990 police misconduct cases last year ruled in favor of civilians. Participants lived in Caddo or Jefferson Parish, routine abuser jurisdictions in Louisiana that are known for having high rates of police misconduct and civil rights violations. Using participant experiences and program data, this report demonstrates that the harms of slavery are manifest today in mass incarceration and over policing. The pilot provides actionable insights for the pursuit of economic equality. Without repair, there can be no real justice. Reparations include restoring people's money and possessions before the harm, support to heal, an apology, and a guarantee the harm won't happen again. We drew inspiration and lessons from previous reparation efforts. This pilot demonstrates that reparations are possible – and reparations are urgent.

- Part 1. The price of freedom identifies the harm experienced by Black people during and after slavery, demonstrating an intentional and ongoing system of extraction from Black communities to white communities reinforced through law enforcement and mass incarceration.
- Part 2. The call for reparations demonstrates that reparations are the only way to break these systems of extraction, using historical and contemporary reparations programs to illustrate where progress has been made and how limited compensation has prevented more. Through this analysis, the authors demonstrate why guaranteed income is a better vehicle for compensation.
- Part 3. The Truth & Reconciliation pilot describes the guaranteed income and reparations year-long program, where participants paid bills, gained access to self-care services, improved their housing stability, reasserted their sense of belonging, and gained a community.
- Part 4. Where do we go from here? discusses how we can use the insights and experiences from the program to fight for what's owed nationally, which consists of a larger movement for reparations, guaranteed income, and police reform.

Today, we need to act to stop the harms of policing and incarceration, harms that are rooted in chattel slavery. Pilot funder Gracie Close said, "We donated the gift that started the project, because we know the ignoble truth that the fiscal benefits slavery created for white people and this country have not ended. To be clear, this was not a handout. This was a debt owed." A participant shared, "I would feel safe and secure if I was able to be employed and compensated with a decent living wage."



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction: The State of Incarceration</b>	<b>4</b>
Report overview	8
<b>Part 1. The price of freedom</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 The legacy of slavery in Louisiana	11
1.2 Mass incarceration as modern day slavery	12
1.3 The costs of police violence	14
<b>Part 2. The call for reparations</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Government-led reparations efforts in America	21
2.2 Beyond commissions: the question of compensation	23
2.3 The significance of guaranteed income	25
<b>Part 3. Truth &amp; Reconciliation pilot</b>	<b>27</b>
3.1 Financial and physical wellbeing	29
3.2 Mental wellbeing and community resilience	31
<b>Part 4. Conclusion: Where do we go from here?</b>	<b>35</b>
4.1 The path to reparations: Immediate policy steps	36
4.2 The politics of Hope and Grace: Our call for a guaranteed income	38

# Introduction

Consider the difference between receiving "assistance" and receiving an ownership share, what I have called the "rightful" share. What would change? Framed as a rightful share, a transfer might bring with it not just some modest material resources but a new and powerful social identity: owner.

James Ferguson, Give a Man a Fish, p. 188

As a young girl, Hope noticed small shacks along the treeline of her great-grandmother's Louisiana home.

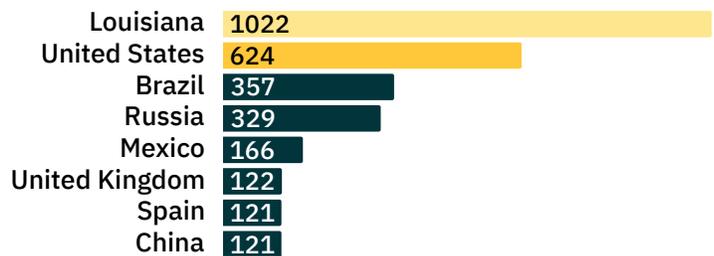
"No one ever said, [and] I don't know for sure, but my great-grandmother must have been a slave there," she said. The history of slavery was not discussed during Hope's childhood. But, in Louisiana, where the levees are built by slave labor and slave quarters persist on family properties, the legacy of this violence is unavoidable.

Though slavery was abolished with the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, an exemption allowed for its perpetuation "as a punishment for crime." Today, the country incarcerates 5 in 100 Black men who earn between \$0.02 and \$0.40 per hour behind bars.

## Louisiana is the incarceration capital of the world

It has the highest incarceration rate of any state in America

### Incarceration rate per 100,000 people



This report addresses the role of police violence and harassment in maintaining legal slavery in the United States under the modern guise of mass incarceration. Police forces originated as slave patrols established in the 1600s to control and produce desired slave labor through force. The brutality of police violence today can trace a lineage back to those patrols, in which the state exerts itself over the disenfranchised through extra judicial force. Over the past decade alone, 200 lives across the state of Louisiana were lost to police violence.

Instances of accountability for unconstitutional policing are few, leaving individuals with little hope for justice. Since 2013, over 3,000 residents of Louisiana have filed civilian complaints about police misconduct. Though these cases already undercount the number of people who have been violated by police, only 10% of findings have ruled in favor of civilians.

Hope experienced police brutality - the legacy of her great-grandmother's enslavement - while waiting in line at the municipal courthouse to resolve a traffic violation. Out of concern for her health and that of others', Hope asked court officials to enforce COVID-19 social distancing guidelines. Angered by her request, officials had her arrested on-site for a misdemeanor charge of "disturbing the peace."

Police officers violently twisted Hope’s arm into constrictive handcuffs, then threw her into a jail cell that reeked from raw sewage leaks.

Hope estimates that she has paid over \$100,000 into the criminal legal system following her experience with the police. When the courts discarded her civilian complaint, she was unable to leave her home. She said:

“The criminal legal system has permanently and drastically affected me mentally. I’m struggling to recover physically, and praying for a financial recovery.”

Hope’s struggle to recover is symptomatic of the deep, generational debt owed to Black communities. She was one of 12 survivors of racist and unconstitutional policing who received \$1,000 a month in guaranteed income as part of the ACLU of Louisiana’s Truth & Reconciliation pilot program – a step towards reparations.

**Beginning in December 2023, the one year program delivered:**

Guaranteed income of \$1000 monthly and a final \$5,000 payment	Administered by the Fund for Guaranteed Income, a public charity focused on redistributing wealth, power, and opportunity by building technical tools and political coalitions.
Trauma-informed mental health counseling	Administered by licensed professionals from We Help NOLA.
Expungement and legal counseling services	Justice and Accountability Center of Louisiana ensured participants understand and navigate the process to expunge their records, pay down court fines and fees, and restore licenses.

The Truth & Reconciliation pilot offers one response to the unanswered call for reparations that followed emancipation, and the promise of 40 acres of land and a mule to victims of slavery and its modern manifestations in a lawless and violent criminal legal system.

Reparations processes address contemporary inequalities through restitution (return of property, rights, and legal status) and compensation to a group for past harms. Under the United Nations’ framework, reparative justice encompasses rehabilitation, satisfaction (i.e. public acknowledgement), and the guarantee of non-repetition. The Truth & Reconciliation pilot was designed to apply these principles.

## Participants: Survivors of police brutality

All 12 participants in the pilot experienced violence at the hands of the police, and none received restitution through the courts. They joined the program through their engagement with the ACLU of Louisiana’s Justice Lab, a storytelling, lawsuit, and advocacy initiative challenging illegal and racist policing practices.



Participants lived in Caddo or Jefferson Parish, the places in Louisiana with the highest number of people killed by police, where residents' civil rights are consistently violated. The men and women represent a wide range of ages, income levels, educational attainment, and household sizes. All are Black, reflecting the disproportionate impact of mass incarceration on Black Louisianans.

Despite comprising 32% of the state's total population, Black people make up 67% of Louisiana's incarcerated population and are killed at a rate 280% higher than white people by police violence.

## Payments: Centering guaranteed income

Unlike previous efforts towards reparations for the harms of racist policing, this pilot valorizes true compensation through guaranteed income (GI). Guaranteed income is a simple but powerful concept: unconditional, direct, and continuous cash payments delivered to residents. Disbursed without work requirements or restrictive conditions, guaranteed income operates as an investment in the agency of individuals.

Guaranteed income is a policy that acknowledges people's rightful share to a nation's collectively produced and inherited wealth. This framing, argues scholar James Ferguson, is what makes it politically transformative. Rather than grateful beneficiaries of charity or welfare, the payments can be connected to a new social identity for recipients – owner. As deserving shareholders of a nation's resources, people are empowered to demand better investments from the government.

Participants of the program reported spending between \$2,500 and \$150,000 in attempts to fight the charges against them, pay court debts, and clear their names. During the twelve-month pilot, they received a total of \$204,000 and were provided with support services they requested to repair the harm they suffered at the hands of police. The pilot created a safe and supportive space for participants to process their experiences and address trauma.

For Hope, the guaranteed income payments helped her heal after her arrest. In addition to her own home needs, Hope used the monthly income to stabilize her housing and build a community garden in her yard.

## Funders: Acknowledging a debt owed

The program was funded by siblings Gracie and Buck Close as a result of their desire to participate in a restorative justice movement that would help reconcile past harms from their family's participation in the institution of slavery, tied to the legacy of institutionalized police violence of today.

The program helped me grow to understand that, while society isn't perfect, and perhaps I can't change the world... I can team up with people who are trying. After the pilot, I started researching the history of policing. I want to be a part of the community that helps.

HOPE, PILOT PARTICIPANT



Prior to learning of their ancestor John Springs III, Buck Close reported “We [had] two family plantations... We knew that there were slave quarters there, but I didn’t learn any of the details growing up.”

John Springs III (1782–1853) became one of the most prominent slave traders in South Carolina, laying the foundation for Buck and Gracie’s family influence and wealth in Fort Mill and the surrounding areas in the South. The plantation owner purchased an estimated 750 enslaved people in his lifetime, and resold nearly 700 people at a profit. In addition to being a slave trader, John Hope Springs III was a major partner for a general store in North Carolina, and invested heavily in banks, railroad projects, and a cotton mill.



John Hope Spring’s family inherited over a hundred enslaved people and an estate valued at \$20M today. Their textile manufacturing business expanded over generations, becoming South Carolina’s largest employer and the world’s largest producer of bedding fabric.

The Truth & Reparations pilot, funded by private donors, offers a direct reparations model that does not substitute settlement or reparations from the state. As of this report’s publication, the U.S. spends more than twice as much on law and order (police, prisons, and the court system) as it does on cash welfare programs. Remedying past harms requires reparations by the United States and the state of Louisiana.

Though only the government can force wealth or land redistribution, the responsibilities of the state do not absolve us of *our collective obligations* to build a more equitable society.

The pilot is guided by this belief. It builds on a historically-informed sense of existing harms to propose a new and more hopeful future of repair.

We donated to start the Truth & Reconciliation project because we know the ignorable truth that the fiscal benefits slavery created for white people and this country have not ended.

To be clear, this was not a handout.  
This was a debt owed.

BUCK AND GRACIE CLOSE, PILOT FUNDERS



## Report Overview

To frame the stories of Hope and her fellow pilot participants, this report primarily uses results from a baseline and endline survey, as well as short monthly surveys. Participants were each compensated \$50 per survey. They also shared their experiences in focus groups and semi-structured interviews led by the Fund for Guaranteed Income team. Interviews were recorded – with participants’ full knowledge and informed consent – by the ACLU of Louisiana.

In four parts, this report explains the logic underlying this reparations program, the need for a reparations program that addresses the harms emanating from chattel slavery, and its usefulness as a model for future initiatives across the country.

### PART ONE

## The price of freedom

The price of freedom describes how the contemporary criminal legal system has operated in Louisiana as an extension of slavery since the 18th century and made money by means such as selling freedom from incarceration, forcing people to build and maintain public infrastructure, and subjecting incarcerated people to work on the Angola plantation. The racial and economic parameters of this oppression are illustrated through participants’ testimonies.

### PART THREE

## The Truth & Reconciliation pilot

The truth & reconciliation pilot examines the program’s impact and instructs a new model to restore justice. This report argues that reparations are possible and that reparations are necessary. Given the tremendous sense of urgency, direct, recurring cash transfers are a viable way to implement reparations immediately.

### PART TWO

## The call for reparations

The call for reparations advances the imperative to invest in the financial and personal recovery of people brutalized by the police. Readers will learn about the reparations framework, how previous governmental efforts have fallen short of reparations, and why this leaves victims of harm susceptible to permanent punishments and collateral consequences.

### PART FOUR

## Where do we go from here?

The conclusion offers immediate, practical steps to address the harms of the legal system and begin repair. We lay out a policy roadmap to stop harmful policies, invest more in people, and reconcile our present inequalities to the truth of their racist and violent founding logic.

**12**

Participants from  
ACLU’s Justice Lab

**\$1000**

USD per month for one  
year plus a \$5000 USD  
final payment

**15**

Community events to  
support recovery and  
add services

**13**

Surveys to measure  
participant outcomes  
with 99% response rate

## Part One

# The price of freedom

They appear to glory in their chains; now, more than ever, they appear to measure their safety in chains and corpses.

James Baldwin, in a letter to Angela Davis (1970)



Nathasia is a mother to daughters she talks with every day, and a grandmother to grandchildren she adores. She described the moment when five white police officers showed up at her door in plain clothes. The officers interrogated her, intimidated her, confiscated her cell phone, handcuffed her, and searched her apartment—all without a warrant, without her consent, and without valid legal basis.

“I grabbed my phone and looked at the camera and I saw five white officers. I’ve watched George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. Sandra Bland. The guy falling asleep in his car, dying in the Wendy’s parking lot. I just thought to myself, I’m gon’ die...

It made me think about the Emmett Till story, snatched out my front door by some big old white man,” Natashia said.

Nathasia’s experience evokes a long history of tactics used to control Black communities through fear and violence. The 1955 murder of 14-year old Emmett Till remains the most famous historical case of lynching, a tactic then widely used by white elites in the South to terrorize and exclude people from participation in public life. Lynchings were extensively documented by participating mobs, as people posed for photos next to victims and circulated commemorative postcards.

Mainstream press coverage in the North and South blamed the victims, especially in cases where Black men were accused of assaulting white women. Journalist Ida B. Wells proved that many of the accusations were false, warranting no response let alone the death penalty. In remarking on the labeling of victims as criminals in official records, Wells wrote: “**The murderers write the reports.**”

A similar dynamic arises in the disjuncture between official police documents, which establish the truth in court, and people’s reality. As with lynching through the 1900s, the victim and the offender are commonly reversed.

Nathasia filed a lawsuit against the police for violating her right to freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures under the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution. Despite advocating for herself and finding the ACLU, she learned that her case would not advance due to legal technicalities designed to stop people from receiving reparations. For example, victims of police brutality in Louisiana only have one year to file a lawsuit against the police before their complaints are deemed null and void.

In the Truth & Reconciliation pilot, participants consistently spoke of pain and disorientation from not being believed – and from tirelessly fighting to prove their status as victims of violence. None of the other pilot participants who launched cases against the police for harassment and violence received money from the courts.

Instead, they lived with a persisting fear that a knock on the door could reveal armed white men like those Nathasia encountered, ready to take a life.

Other participants shared:

“I sleep on the sofa and peek outside all night, and then I go get in my bed for a few hours and then before I wake my children up I take a look all around. To me, it's just no way to live.”

“I thought - they gon' kill me.”

This report shines a light on the constant harms of police brutality and its connection to state-sponsored racial terror in Louisiana –the police abuse capital of the world. In 2023, the Department of Justice investigated the state police, finding a pattern of violence and misconduct that places the public at “serious risk of harm.”

## Part 1. The Price of Freedom

The Price of Freedom places this harm in the long history of slavery that is perpetuated by economic exploitation in the criminal legal system. The following sections contextualize the pilot participants' experiences of police violence in a long history of white supremacy and racial terror.

**1.1 The legacy of slavery in Louisiana** lays out the role of racialized terror and policing in excluding Black people from public life in Louisiana. It explains the mechanisms by which terror facilitates economic exploitation through unpaid slave labor, and the emergence of mass incarceration as a direct extension of slavery. The section delineates the tangible impact of these legacies on the participants of our pilot.

**1.2 Mass incarceration as modern day slavery** explains the economic extraction participants endure in the criminal legal system because of their interactions with police. The report describes the broader context within which the pilot exists, and broaches the cost that they have paid for their own freedom.

**1.3 The cost of police violence** explains the financial and emotional toll of racist police violence. Amid permanent punishments and collateral consequences of a criminal conviction, the pilot delivered further impact through record expungement – the legal process to remove arrests and low-level charges from a person's record.

## 1.1 The Legacy of Slavery in Louisiana

The transatlantic slave trade established a brutal system that forcibly brought millions of Africans to the Americas, fueling economic growth in the American South. New Orleans emerged as the largest slave port in the United States during the antebellum period –where 135,000 men, women and children were bought and sold.

### 1805 ● The establishment of the New Orleans police

In the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution, where a majority enslaved population successfully overthrew French colonizers, abolished slavery, and instituted a system of democratic self-governance, political leaders sought to pre-empt uprisings in Louisiana. Fearing a similar armed uprising, New Orleans Mayor John Watkins justified the need for a police force by explaining “We are in a country of slaves.”

The New Orleans police force was established in 1805 with the primary task of capturing people escaping enslavement and enforcing the slave codes: laws enacted to control the city’s large population of enslaved people by criminalizing activities such as learning to read or congregating without permission.

### 1844 ● The establishment of convict leasing

Originally implemented in the Caribbean, convict leasing was adopted in Louisiana in 1844. The convict leasing system of the American South facilitated the extraction of labor from populations of largely Black, incarcerated and enslaved people who had been accused of crimes. These incarcerated individuals were no longer considered owned property, as they were under chattel slavery. Thus, their "leased labor" provided individuals, corporations and governments with few incentives to provide for humane conditions.

By 1860, slave labor accounted for 22% of America's workforce and was responsible for up to 50% of the Gross National Product. Police themselves used prison labor to perform public service work by creating “chain gangs” from the convict leasing system. Enslaved people accused of a crime worked on municipal projects, such as building and maintaining the city’s levees, while bound together by chains.

### 1865 ● The abolition of slavery except as punishment for “crime”

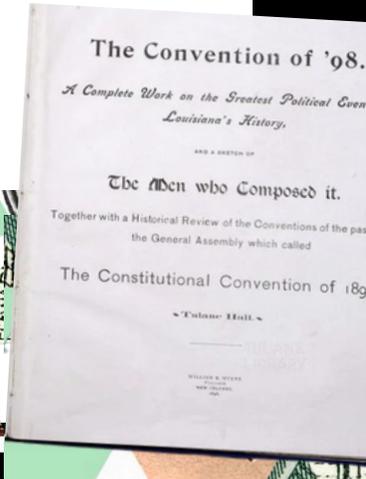
On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation declaring all persons held as slaves “henceforward shall be free.” June 19, 1865 or “Juneteenth,” marks the formal end of chattel slavery in practice, the day when the last slave was freed.

Passed in 1865, the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution abolished slavery, declaring “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude” shall exist within the US. However, the 13th Amendment included an exception clause allowing for slavery “as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.” This protected the profitable convict leasing system, and the ability for public and private interests to weaponize the criminal legal system against accused and suspected criminals with tacit federal support.



**“Our mission was, in the first place, to establish the supremacy of the white race in this State,”** stated Thomas J. Semmes, a chairman in the 1898 Louisiana Constitutional Convention. The new Louisiana Constitution was a direct effort to repress Black political power. In 1868, Black and white elected Louisianans passed a constitution that abolished slavery, gave Black and white people equal protection under the law, and gave all men the right to vote.

The 1898 Constitutional Convention was designed to reverse that progress. It codified Jim Crow laws that disenfranchised Black voters and perpetuated the mass incarceration of Black Louisianans to, as the Constitution itself states, “establish the supremacy of the white race”. Vestiges of this explicitly racist document remain today in the Constitution of Louisiana under the “probation poll tax” – a modern version of the 1898 Louisiana Constitution’s poll taxes and grandfather clauses that once limited freed slaves’ right to vote. The “probation poll tax” grants voting rights to people released from prison only once they have paid all of their fines and fees, or else after a period of five years.



The southern economy recovered from the Civil War by re-enslaving significant populations of Americans under its convict lease policy, under which states such as Louisiana imprisoned and leased people for a fixed amount of time. Local law enforcement grew to “[depend] on the leasing system for a substantial part of their income (they pocketed the fines and fees associated with these ‘convictions’).”

Black people were targeted through Jim Crow laws and discriminatory policing, incarcerated at a rate 15 times higher than White people. By 1876, 40% of workers in the convict leasing system died in custody. Local law enforcement grew to “[depend] on the leasing system for a substantial part of their income (they pocketed the fines and fees associated with these ‘convictions’).” Mounting public opposition led to the prohibition of convict leasing in Louisiana in 1898 - the year a new state constitution turned leases under prisons under state control, including Angola.

## 1.2 Mass incarceration as modern day slavery

In 1880, a former Confederate officer in Louisiana recognized an economic opportunity through the 13th Amendment exception. He bought several slave plantations, then consolidated them into a single property he called Angola. After devising a convict leasing contract with the state of Louisiana, he transported prisoners from the state penitentiary in Baton Rouge to Angola, where they labored on farms and built levees and railroads.

In 1901, the state of Louisiana took custody of the prisoners at Angola and purchased the plantation. Angola thus became a state-operated prison farm and profited directly from the labor of its prisoners, selling food from the former plantation. For example, prisoner-raised cattle are to this day sold to companies including McDonalds, Walmart, and Cargill.

The Angola plantation prison vividly illustrates how mass incarceration is a form of modern day slavery, wherein under or uncompensated prison labor is used to extract revenue from the poor on behalf of high-income capital holders. Angola is now an 18,000 acre maximum security prison the size of Manhattan, New York. Three quarters of prisoners are Black.

Given a 1979 law that eliminated possibilities for release and its deeply inadequate healthcare services, 88% of the population at Angola is expected to die within its walls.

Every person incarcerated at Angola must work in its fields by picking cotton and apples, cultivating soybean or corn to produce ethanol, or harvesting crawfish in its sea farms.

The ACLU of Louisiana reports that field laborers “work with limited access to water, minimal rest, and no restroom facilities, under the supervision of armed correctional officers on horseback. Workers report being placed in solitary confinement if they are unwilling or unable to perform work in the fields, or if they do not work fast enough.”

As during slavery, the exploitation of Black labor is enforced with violence – and in the name of law and order.

“Caddo Parish is stuck in the rut of tradition...very divided. You’re pretty much told to stay in your place, or the good ol’ boys are going to be on you,” said Sandra, a Truth & Reconciliation pilot participant who experienced these dynamics personally.

Sandra did not have her labor stolen through legal means as an incarcerated person. Instead, she was a victim of illegal wage theft. After her employer refused to fully pay Sandra for her work, effectively stealing her wages, police reinforced traditions by protecting industry and created a false criminal case *against Sandra*.

The Caddo Parish Police Department charged *Sandra* for a low-level crime in 2018. After two and a half years, the prosecutor dropped all charges against her. Sandra has not been paid the wages she is owed, or for the subsequent money that she used to fight the case.

The similarity between statements below made by the Sheriff in Caddo Parish in 2017, that prisoners are used “every day to wash cars,” doesn’t stray far from the Louisiana police commissioner’s statement during the era of slavery.

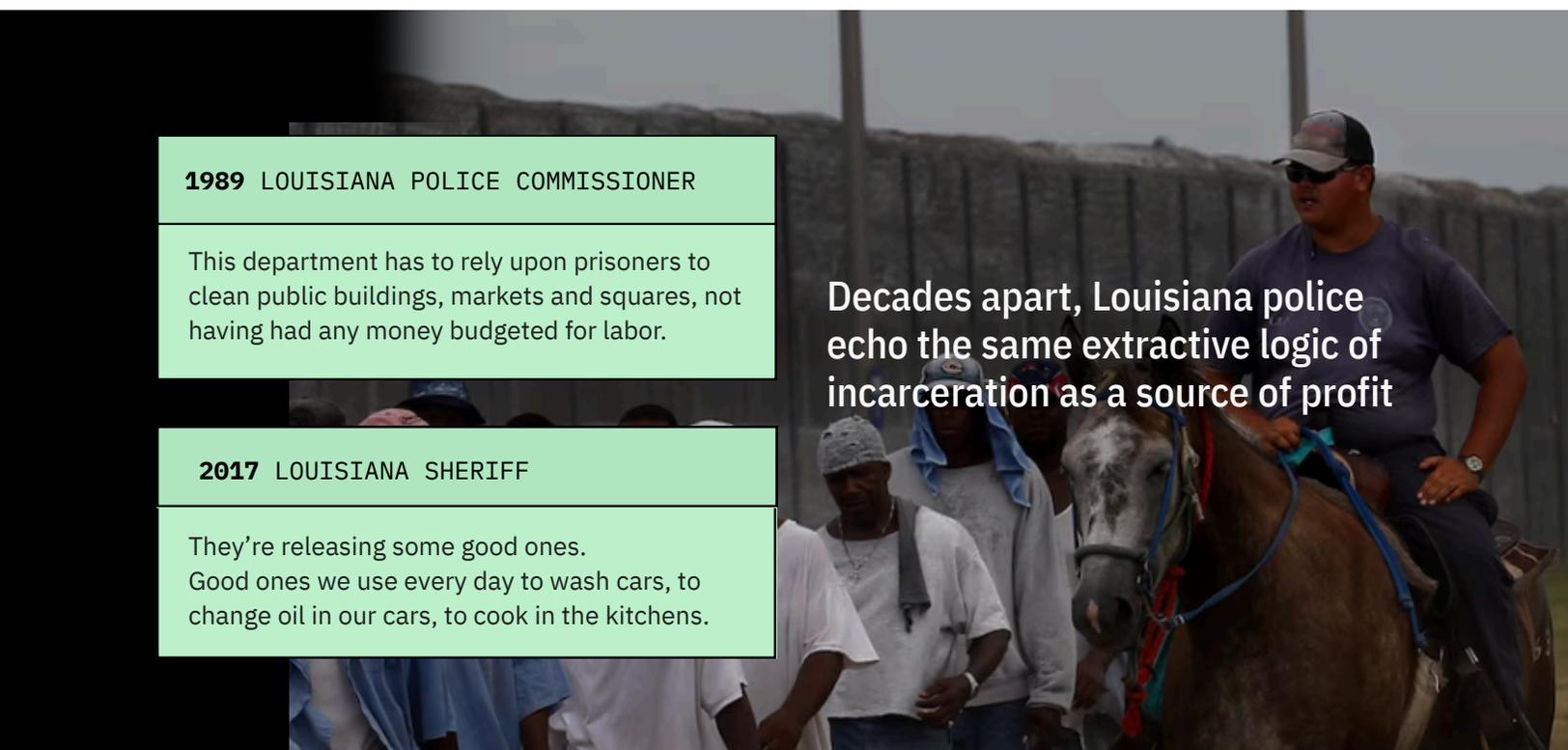
Louisiana police, and their tactics, are stuck in the “rut of tradition” – a tradition of violence.

#### 1989 LOUISIANA POLICE COMMISSIONER

This department has to rely upon prisoners to clean public buildings, markets and squares, not having had any money budgeted for labor.

#### 2017 LOUISIANA SHERIFF

They’re releasing some good ones.  
Good ones we use every day to wash cars, to change oil in our cars, to cook in the kitchens.



Decades apart, Louisiana police echo the same extractive logic of incarceration as a source of profit

Police taught Dean to be afraid as a boy. “[They] start lining you up around 11 or 12 years old, take pictures and stuff like that.... One said ‘The day I get tired of seeing your monkey ass, I’m gonna shoot you.’ I was 13,” he said.

Dean witnessed first-hand how police, backed by the authority of the state, have the legal authority to break into homes, and steal property without pretense. Through a process called “civil forfeiture” or “asset forfeiture,” police can legally take money, property, and possessions from suspected criminals. He recounted officers breaking into his roommate’s bedroom.

The police spent almost four hours with sledge hammers, chisels, trying to get into this safe. My roommate had his life savings in that safe. They took every single bit.

DEAN, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



In some cases, law enforcement agencies rely on asset forfeiture for 20% of their budgets. Once in the hands of the police, these assets are expensive, difficult, and at times impossible to retrieve. In order to reclaim their items, individuals are required to defend their property in a legal case and must often hire a lawyer. Given these obstacles, only one in five people go through the trouble.

Since his childhood in Detroit, Dean has repeatedly weathered loss, setbacks, and financial insecurity. During the one year pilot, he relocated to Albuquerque, New Mexico to look for work and rebuild once more.

Dean yearns for more than just physical freedom from the constant threat of police harassment. He is unable to achieve economic stability and autonomy.

I keep asking myself, when will I not have to start over? *When will I be free?*

DEAN, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Participants in the pilot reported spending between \$2,500 and \$150,000 to reclaim their freedom and pay off court debt after they experienced police violence. One participant paid \$20,000 in legal fees, not to mention the income they lost to court dates and jail time. Charges then appear on background checks during job applications, severely limiting people’s employment opportunities even if there is no conviction.

On average, criminal convictions among people who spend no time in prison result in a lifetime earning loss of \$98,980. Among people who spend time in prison, the loss in earnings climbs to \$484,000. The following section describes how program participants pay the direct costs for their freedom and the indirect costs of ongoing court debt.

## 1.3 The cost of police violence

Janelle was in jail for ten days before her mother bought her freedom with \$15,000 in money bail and \$1,600 to a lawyer. The charges against Janelle were eventually dropped, and the police even wrote Janelle a letter apologizing for the false arrest.

Still, the experience threatened Janelle’s dream of becoming an entrepreneur and opening an event planning business. Charges for arrests do not need to lead to convictions in order to appear on background checks during job applications, severely limiting people’s employment opportunities. Janelle described her ambition to open a venue for community events, with the ambition to host birthday parties and other gatherings for her neighbors.

I have a passion for helping people, and that played a role in becoming an entrepreneur. You meet so many different people, talking to new people, and helping them out as well.

JANELLE, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



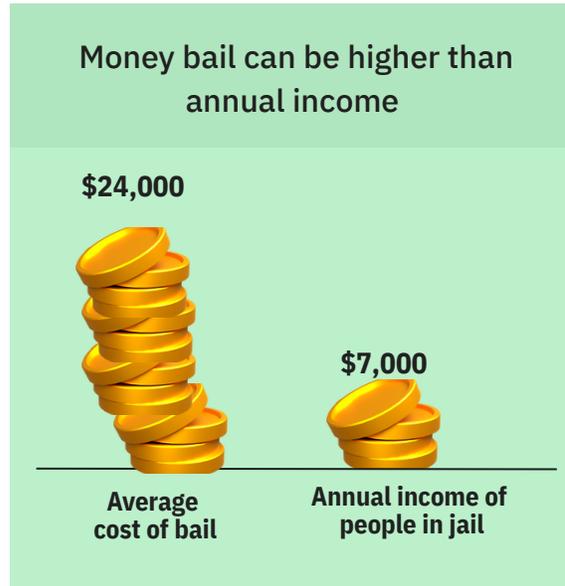
### Jail and lawyer fees ~\$24,000

After an arrest, legally innocent people in Louisiana must pay an average of \$24,000 in cash bail or else remain in jail without having been convicted of a crime. The violation of constitutional rights puts a price on human freedom, benefiting a private industry of bail bondsmen who impose a *non-refundable* 10% fee on those who are unable to afford bail payments themselves.

Despite her innocence, Janelle will not be refunded the \$15,000 her family paid for money bail or \$1,600 in legal fees. And, with the arrest on her record, Janelle’s business license applications were delayed by months, threatening her ability to open the venue.

“I had to give [the state licensing agency] something showing the case was dismissed. But, if it’s on your record – they’re not going to want to hear it was a mistake or they falsely accused you,” she said.

Over 27,000 rules bar people with convictions from holding professional licenses. Employers severely discriminate against people with a criminal record. For example, applying for jobs, White people without a criminal record get twice as many calls back as white people with a criminal record and seven times more call backs than Black people with a criminal record.



### Record expungement ~\$500

The process to clear Janelle’s record of arrests costs \$250 per criminal charge. Though she is legally entitled to this diligence, the necessary legal paperwork often requires paid professional support.

Expungement, that’s extra money. You have to go to Baton Rouge as well. It definitely was costly, and it definitely was time consuming.

JANELLE, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

A participant shared “I’m trying to move forward but my bank account wasn’t letting me. The charges may not even be true, but they mess your whole life up. Now I got this on my record, even though I got it dismissed. I could’ve been making good money, but now, with prejudice and stuff... I can’t really do nothing.”

To repair the permanent punishment and financial handicap of a criminal record, the pilot provided legal support for participants to expunge the record of an arrest or low-level charge and begin working at jobs for which they are qualified. By the end of the program, every participant had their records expunged. For many, the indirect costs of freedom continued to accrue.

### Court fines and fees ~\$1,800

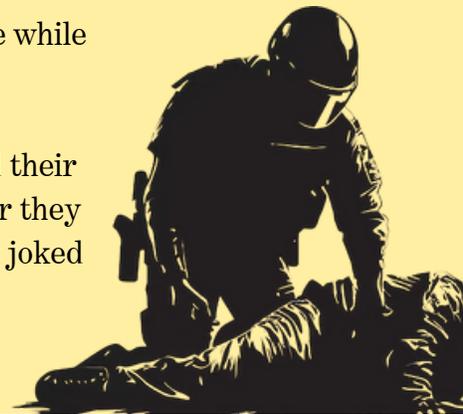
Cooley, took six years to pay off fees after one arrest in 2018, when he was pulled over by plainclothes officers. He went to the court every month to make payments on the \$1,000 in court fines and fees from the 2018 arrest, missing work and income from his full time job.

Louisiana has the second largest share of revenue from court fines and fees in the country. In Louisiana, \$1 in \$250 collected by the government is through fines and fees – double the national average. The money goes to the courts and police, and often sends the accused into a years-long struggle with debt. In Caddo Parish, 28% of courts’ revenue is from fines and fees. In Jefferson Parrish, it’s 12% of courts’ revenue.

They had my face on the ground and began excessively kicking and hitting me while yelling ‘Stop resisting arrest’. I tried screaming.

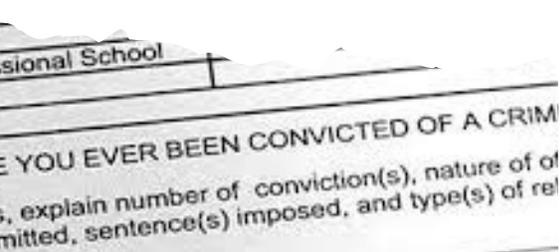
The officer who pulled me over stuck his fingers in my eyes while another had their foot on the back of my neck. I kept telling the officers I couldn’t breathe. After they put me in handcuffs and shackled me, they repeatedly punched my face. They joked with each other, saying ‘let’s put his head in a puddle’.

COOLEY, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



Cooley paid the courts a total of \$1,800 dollars, almost double the original debt he owed for being late due to a court error. He paid \$25 for each late payment.

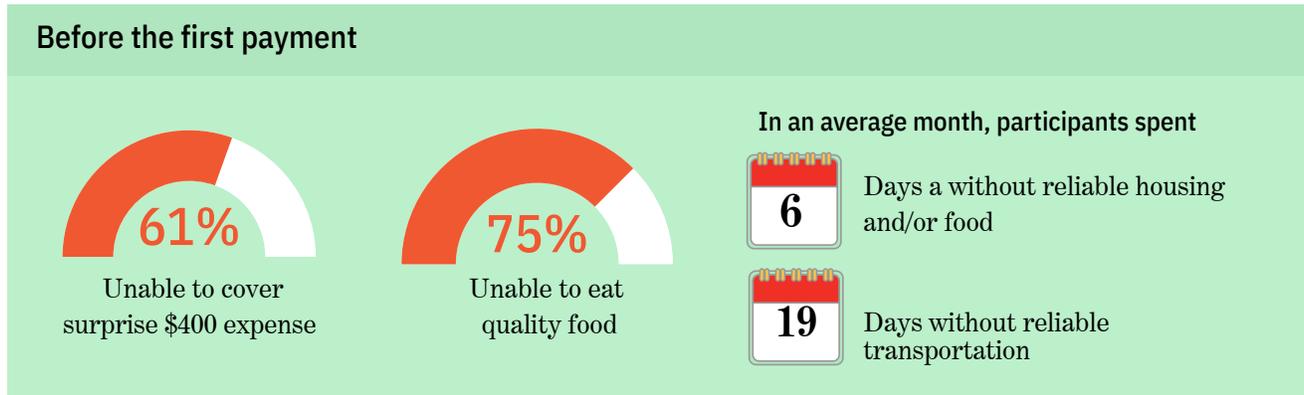
“During COVID, the courts shut everything down and I didn’t know how to pay. They didn’t have it online, they were out of the office, but they still charged me for being late... it was just ridiculous,” Cooley said.



COSTS OF FREEDOM	
Asset forfeiture	\$28,000
Money bail	\$19,110
Legal fees	\$47,700
Record expungement	\$95,550
Court fines and fees	\$19,110

## Ongoing debt, permanent punishment, and collateral consequences

A single arrest can prompt a cycle of poverty and incarceration. Legal, medical, and physical therapy bills can also leave survivors in significant debt. Almost a third of participants indicated that a \$400 emergency expense would require them to overdraw their accounts or take out a high-interest predatory loan (which often costs more than the initial amount owed). The national average is 2%.



The pilot offered participants an opportunity to get out from the system of economic exploitation that haunted them for years after experiencing police brutality.



I plan to use the money to get what is left of my life back on track.

COOLEY



I plan on paying for housing and transportation needs.

JANELLE



I'm looking forward to being able to pay bills on time and avoid late fees.

DEAN

Beyond the direct income loss due to asset forfeiture or employer discrimination, the far reaching physical and mental traumas of police violence impact people's ability to work. Participants described, in great detail and insight, a pervasive fear of police and police violence. They often made explicit comparisons to lynching in the Jim Crow era.

"This last event has left me in constant pain and discomfort, unable to walk distances, unable to run, climb or swim, which makes it hard to find or perform work in my chosen fields of employment. It has also made me not want to leave the house unless I'm wearing a body camera, and has caused me to put up cameras all around my house after having the police come at all hours of the day and night."

"I call it being stuck in Jim Crow. That makes people mad. The truth makes people mad."

Dean's question, "When will I be free?" remains as relevant as it would have 200 years ago. It also inspires a new question, "When will there be repair?"

## Part Two

# The call for reparations

It is for those who have the means to contribute to the efforts to repair the damage wrought by the past. It is for those who have suffered losses of different kinds and magnitudes to be afforded reparation, proceeding from the premise that freedom and dignity are the real prize that our sacrifices were meant to attain.

Nelson Mandela, 1998, upon receiving South Africa's Truth & Reconciliation Commission Final Report



“Reparations” refers to efforts to repair past harms, particularly substantial human rights violations: slavery, mass incarceration, and police violence.

While direct restitution is often not possible on a local level, proactive redistribution is critical, namely in the form of direct financial compensation and services.

According to the [United Nations](#) framework, the reparations process is one that meets all five of the following conditions:

### 01 Restitution

The state must provide restitution such that, whenever possible, the victim is restored to the original situation preceding the violation of their human rights.

### 02 Compensation

Often, restitution comes in the form of economic compensation for damage done to others, particularly when re-establishing the original situation is not possible;

### 03 Rehabilitation

The harmed party should be provided with medical and psychological care, as well as legal and social services;

### 04 Satisfaction

The state must provide satisfaction to the victims for the moral damage caused by the action: an accurate and publicly acknowledged account, official declarations that restore the dignity of the harmed parties, and public apologies that accept responsibility for the violations;

### 05 Guarantee of non-repetition

The state must provide a guarantee of non-repetition or cessation of the exploitation that created the need for reparations.

While direct restitution that returns the local environment to its pre-violation state is often not possible, proactive redistribution is critical, namely in the form of direct financial compensation and services.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1995-2003) is perhaps the most famous documented effort for reparations. It is also the namesake of our Truth & Reconciliation guaranteed income pilot in Louisiana.

The South African Commission provided over 21,000 survivors of Apartheid with the opportunity to make public testimonies of their experiences. The Commission requested approximately \$1,100 in direct annual payments to victims for six years, and the collection of a “wealth tax” on industries that benefited from Apartheid. Neither of these goals has been achieved. Instead of \$6,600 over six years, each person got a one-time payment of \$4,000.

After seven years listening to the testimonies, South Africa established a Reparations Fund with money collected from taxes under the Apartheid regime (instead of a wealth tax on companies that profited from Apartheid). The reparations fund balance was \$123.4 million as of 2022, but its disbursements do not match its rate of growth in what remains one of the most unequal countries in the world. Over a five year period of \$30.2 million in growth, the fund disbursed only \$5.5 million. All the while, systemic racism and the economic discrimination against Black South Africans drove a growing wealth gap.

In fact, as indicated by the graph below, no state has ever led a substantive reparations effort in the form of a wealth transfer to its own citizens.

### The most significant state-ratified reparations processes in the 20th century (ordered in terms of compensation amount)

NATIONAL REPARATIONS EFFORTS		AMOUNT	RECIPIENT
 <b>Germany</b> 1952-now	Payments to compensate victims of the Holocaust, managed by a New York-based NGO. Unique instance of an agreement between two countries.	\$89 Billion	State of Israel
 <b>Canada</b> 2006	Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement acknowledging the damages the residential school system inflicted on indigenous peoples.	\$1.9 Billion	80,000 victims \$23,750/victim
 <b>America</b> 1946-1978; 1988	Payments to compensate victims of Japanese internment camps during WWII	\$1.6 Billion	82,000 victims \$20,000/victim
	Indian Claims Commission to hear claims made by indigenous groups.	\$818 Million	170 tribes \$0.50/acre stolen
 <b>South Africa</b> 1995-2003	Truth and Reconciliation Commission formed to understand and devise recommendations to repair the harms of Apartheid.	\$68 Million	17,000 victims \$4,000/victim

One of the earliest calls for reparations in America came from Callie House (1861–1928), a formerly enslaved woman. House co-founded the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association, which grew to number hundreds of thousands of formerly enslaved people, seventy years before the civil rights movement. In 1915, House demanded that \$1.2 billion in taxes on seized rebel cotton land be collected as reparations for centuries of unpaid labor. The federal case, *Johnson v. McAdoo*, was the first of its kind. The Justice Department banned House from organizing and falsely accused her of mail fraud, for which she was convicted by an all-male, all-white jury to a year of incarceration.

As detailed in Part 1 of this report, Black Americans have been violently subjected to work without pay under the legal regimes of slavery, convict leasing, and mass incarceration in the years since House's case. The United States' rates of incarceration are five times higher than South Africa at the height of Apartheid. Currently, in Louisiana, around 2.3 in 100 Black men are incarcerated, compared to 1 in 100 Black men in South Africa at the height of Apartheid.

The US government has continuously failed to provide compensation for harm resulting from the enslavement, incarceration, and police brutality enacted in the criminal legal system. Instead, law enforcement and court budgets grow larger, extracting funding through police theft, incarcerated labor, or accruing fees and debts.

In the past 50 years, the average number of officers per Louisiana law enforcement agency has grown more than 60%, twice the rate of the state's population. Nationally, the police take more property (\$5 billion in 2018) than is stolen in so-called crimes they seek to protect the public from (\$3.5 billion in 2018). In Louisiana, people have lost \$2.85 billion to civil asset forfeiture or court fines from 2010-2020. This money goes to grow the police budget.

## Part 2. The Call for Reparations

The call for reparations contextualizes the Truth & Reconciliation pilot as a model for using guaranteed income to address unanswered calls for compensation, an essential component of a reparations process. Reparations processes that do not provide compensation, or use compensation as a weapon against liability, fail to take their victims' well being seriously and risk furthering the very harm they claim to repair.

**2.1 Government-led reparations efforts** provides a brief history of reparations efforts in America that have varied in degrees of authenticity, impact, and success.

**2.2 From commissions to compensation** details how these government-led efforts have fallen short.

**2.3 The significance of guaranteed income** uplifts the policy as a modern call for reparations for the persisting harms of the criminal legal system. In light of past reparations efforts' failure to provide financial compensation, the Truth & Reconciliation pilot centers guaranteed income in our program design.

## 2.1 Government-led reparations efforts in America

The following section outlines how efforts at reparations have failed on their own terms. The very existence of these commissions and the connections between these harms reflect the failure to guarantee non-repetition, a principle of any reparations process.

### Reparations for chattel slavery

In the 1865 Special Field Order No. 15, Union General Sherman promised “40 Acres of land and a mule” to formerly enslaved people, and over 400,000 acres of land in the South for redistribution to freedmen. His efforts were reversed months later by President Andrew Johnson, who returned the land to white planters and former enslavers.

The fate of the Freedmen's Bureau, established by President Lincoln in 1865, mirrored the false promises of “40 acres and a mule.” The Bureau was intended to build schools, supervise contracts, and peacefully enforce laws between employers and workers in Southern states, where slavery was newly abolished. The Bureau's efforts revealed that peace building efforts geared towards building power in the Black community would require financial sector reforms in order to facilitate the freedom and wealth building apparatus of Black families. While the Freedmen's Bureau may have signaled federal interest in repairing the immediate harms of slavery, it was not adequately resourced to reach this goal.

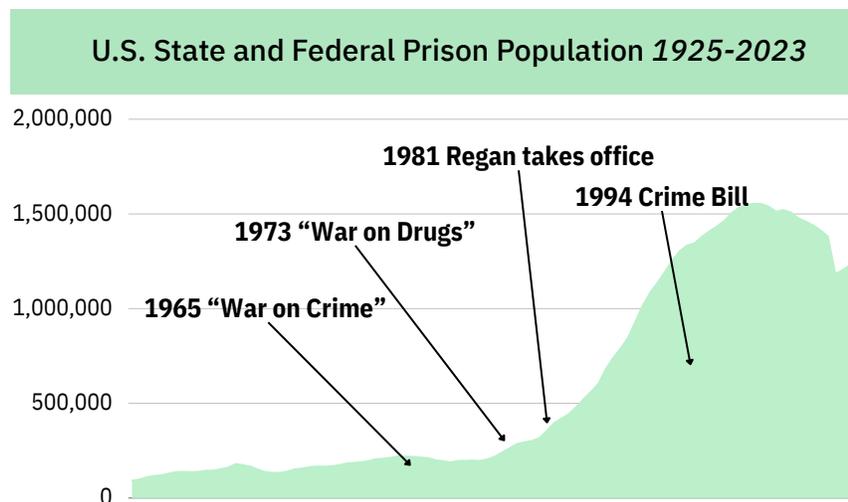
Prior to its dissolution in 1872, white Southern politicians and the KKK successfully mobilized to reverse the Bureau's efforts. The Freedmen's Bureau embodies many of the broken promises of the emancipation era, and illustrates that reparatory language without real compensation or funding is meaningless.

In 1989, Congressman John Conyers introduced H.R. 40 to “establish a commission to examine the institution of slavery and subsequent racial and economic discrimination against African Americans.” Named in recognition of the unfulfilled promise of “40 acres and a mule,” the Bill failed. Conyers reintroduced the Bill every year from 1989 until his retirement in 2017. It has since been reintroduced by Texas Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and Massachusetts Congresswoman Ayanna Presley.

### Reparations for mass incarceration

In 1988, Congressman Norman Mineta, who was himself forced into Japanese Internment Camps as a child, sponsored the federal Civil Liberties Act. The legislation acknowledges and provides redress for the US government's forced internment of 120,000 people during World War II. Families were removed from their homes with less than 48 hours' notice, culminating in an estimated total property loss of \$1.3 billion and net income loss of \$2.7 billion.

The most substantial reparations for survivors of Japanese internment camps amounted to \$20,000 per individual. At a total cost to the United States of \$1.6 billion, this effort fell far short of the repair due to the victims.



## Reparations for police violence

### *Chicago Reparations for Police Torture of Black People*

In 2016, the City of Chicago approved reparations of \$5.5 million to victims of police torture. Fifty-seven victims were coerced into false confessions that led to prison sentences – 10 of which were death row sentences. The true scope of the harm remains unknown, as Chicago has not investigated or released information on people believed to have been tortured. The city allocated funds to a memorial site in 2012, yet the structure has still not been built.

The City's decision to pay \$5.5 million to survivors of police torture in Chicago paled in comparison to the \$210 million it was required to compensate in judge-ordered payments from civil rights lawsuits brought by individual torture survivors. Today, Illinois continues to imprison at least 20 victims of police torture based on coerced confessions.

### *California Reparations Commission*

In 2022, a California Reparations Commission was launched to examine the atrocities of slavery and the suite of strategies employed for the intentional advancement of mass incarceration and policing. A 500 page report concluded that California owed Black residents more than \$800 billion for discrimination in policing alone. It has projected a three to seven year timeframe to pass legislation comprising over 100 recommendations. The California Reparations Commission represents the largest state effort to investigate reparations thus far.

Governor Newsom (who was notably absent from the presentation of the report), has not passed any legislation to pay reparations as of 2025. Additionally, The Reparations Commission has not delivered any material support or compensation for the \$800 billion in damages determined to have resulted from police discrimination.



### **1865-1874 Freedman's Bank: Financial tools to build wealth for emancipated slaves were used to cut them out of wealth building apparatuses**

The Freedman's Bank became the first bank to serve newly emancipated people, giving them unprecedented access to the financial sector. It was wholly owned by white elites who engaged in fraudulent practices amid racist advertisements that implied Black people could not be trusted to manage their money.

Over 90% of the bank's deposits were made by freed Black Americans. 80% of loans were to white politicians in DC – who never repaid the money; borrowers repaid only 5% of loan face value. The Bank ultimately failed in 1872. Most depositors lost every cent, amounting to \$3 million (equivalent to \$68.2 million today). Freedman's Bank marked the beginning of long, predatory relationships within the financial sector that continues to be a key driver in the US system of mass incarceration.

## 2.2 Beyond commissions: the question of compensation

Recent, government-led reparation efforts have spent considerable resources on devising commissions (in California) and planning memorials (in Chicago) that offer symbolic acknowledgments of past harms, all while formulating inadequate sums and burdensome requirements to compensate survivors.

When compensation programs are conceived as part of a reparations process, they inevitably provoke concerns around who is "deserving" of investment. Severely limited compensation and tight requirements whitewash atrocities, resulting in ineffective reparations that systematically undercount the number of victims and the value of the harm done. Often, as with the experience of sexual violence survivors, those most exploited and abused are the least recognized.

### The use of narrow and burdensome eligibility restrictions

As with the means-testing bureaucracies of public welfare programs, which spend millions of dollars to detect "welfare fraud," extremely narrow definitions of "eligibility" limit impactful reparations outcomes.

Those who experience the most harm are often retraumatized by the process of proving that they are deserving of reparations. Stringent eligibility requirements, short application windows, and other burdensome bureaucratic hurdles preclude many from seeking compensation.

For example, South Africa's Truth & Reconciliation Commission required individual claims to meet a high burden of proof before issuing payments. Only 14 victims of sexual violence were considered eligible for reparations, although the real number of victims was much higher.

Shabangu is one of many South Africans who line up in front of the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg everyday as a protest because he has not received compensation through TRC. Like a third of all South Africans, he is unemployed and money is scarce.



I am so very, very disappointed. We are the revolutionaries. We are the people that formed this democracy. It is us that fought for the reparations that today we are not eating the fruit of. We thought the TRC would bring us justice.

SHABANGU, SOUTH AFRICAN TESTIMONIAL DURING T&R

In California, \$15,000 in compensation was allocated to victims of forcible sterilization. The first sterilization laws in California were passed in 1909. Leading members of the Nazi party modeled their own sterilization program after California's, and rates in the state peaked between 1921 and 1950. The practice remained largely unopposed until 1979 and was finally discontinued in 2013. Yet the reparations were poorly implemented, and officials approved only 101 applicants while denying 339.

## Permanent punishments and collateral consequences

Louisiana’s high incarceration rate is part of a broader system that disproportionately targets and criminalizes its already disadvantaged communities. Louisiana struggles with the highest rate of food insecurity in the South: one in four families lack stable access to food and one in five families rely on food stamps. People involved in the justice system are punished further when they are removed from assistance programs and forced to face deeper levels of scarcity.

If an individual is in jail for 12 months, regardless of whether they are convicted of a crime, they lose social security benefits that include Social Security Insurance/Disability Insurance. Incarcerated individuals are also barred from receiving food assistance for a year after their release. People in public housing who are involved in the legal system suffer from still more punitive outcomes: among recipients of Section 8 rental assistance, a criminal conviction means an eviction from public housing for their entire household, or a permanent ban from visits with family members.

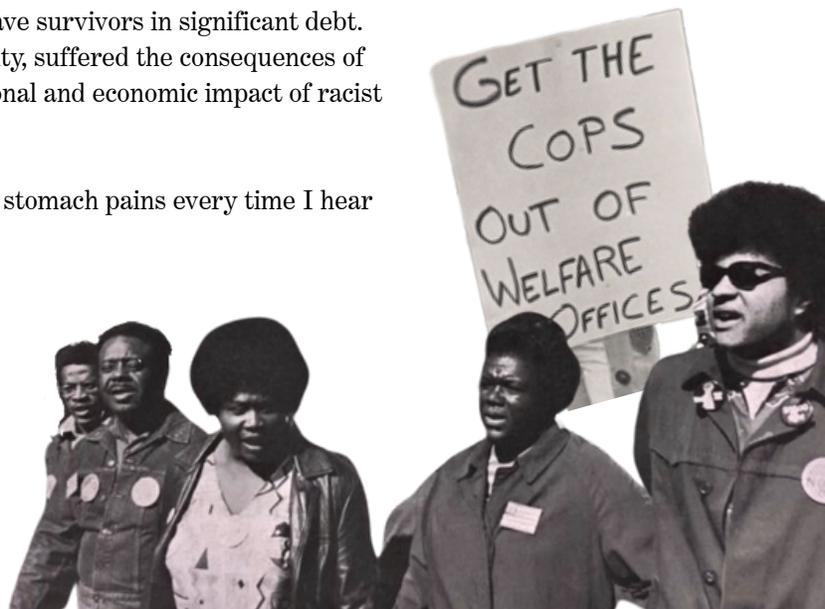
	<p><b>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</b> In 39 of 50 states, people with a criminal record are excluded from SNAP.</p>
	<p><b>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).</b> In 39 of 50 states, people with a criminal record are excluded from TANF, as are all of their dependents.</p>
	<p><b>Public Housing and Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV aka Section 8)</b> Most housing authorities exclude people with a criminal record from Section 8. In cases where a Section 8 landlord is convicted of a crime, everyone in their unit can be evicted.</p>
	<p><b>Social Security and Disability Insurance (SSI, SSDI)</b> People jailed for 12 months lose SSI eligibility regardless of whether they are convicted of a crime.</p>

Three of the twelve participants of the pilot program received Section 8 rental assistance. All participants spent seven days a month, on average, without stable housing.

Legal, medical, and physical therapy bills can also leave survivors in significant debt. Participants of the pilot, 12 survivors of police brutality, suffered the consequences of a punitive welfare system. They described the emotional and economic impact of racist police violence.

“Look, the police just took everything from me. I get stomach pains every time I hear a police siren.”

“I can’t imagine my future right now, I’m just living day to day”



## 2.3 The significance of guaranteed income

### The ethos behind guaranteed income: a policy vehicle for reparations

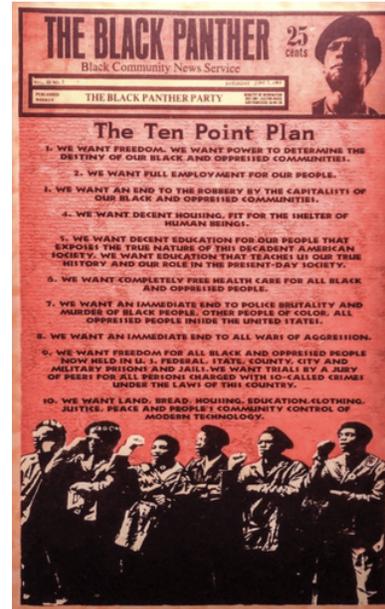
In the spirit of Callie House’s National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association, civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King called for a “Bill of Rights for the Disadvantaged” to redress the historical and continued economic exploitation of Black people.

In his 1967 speech, “Where Do We Go From Here?”, Dr. King articulated guaranteed income as a policy intervention that rejects the punitive assumptions - and resulting inefficiencies - behind reparations efforts and discriminatory welfare programs.

Dr. King said: “I am now convinced that the simplest approach will prove to be the most effective — the solution to poverty is to abolish it directly.”

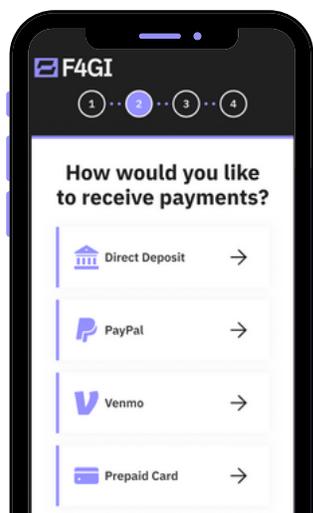
The Black Panthers’ 1966 10 Point Plan also included a call to action around guaranteed income.

- Point 2 reads: “We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every man employment or a guaranteed income.”
- Point 3 tied this call with one for reparations: “We want an end to the robbery by the Capitalists of our Black community. We believe that this racist government has robbed us, and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules... the American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people; therefore, we feel that this is a modest demand that we make.”



Participants rated the Fund for Guaranteed Income’s program administration a 5 out of 5. This approval was critical as we believe the manner in which we served participants was part of the recovery process.

“We’ve got to be clear that we’re deserving of the resources,” said ACLU Director Alanah Odoms to program participants. “You’re worthy of all these things just by virtue of having been born, by the inherent value that you were given when you were placed on this earth. You didn’t lose it. That’s the purpose of this program: to be reminded of who you really are. As Dr. MLK Jr said: “The dignity of the individual will flourish when the decisions concerning his life are in his own hands, when he has the assurance that his income is stable and certain, and when he knows that he has the means to seek self-improvement.”



### The experience of compensation

What do you rate the program 1-5?



How easy was it to receive payment?



The F4GI Program has been indeed very helpful. There are still some financial challenges, but I am overall extremely grateful for the donors and the program coordinators for their continuous efforts of support ❤️ and kindness..Thank you..these acts of selfless kindness will never be forgotten 😊

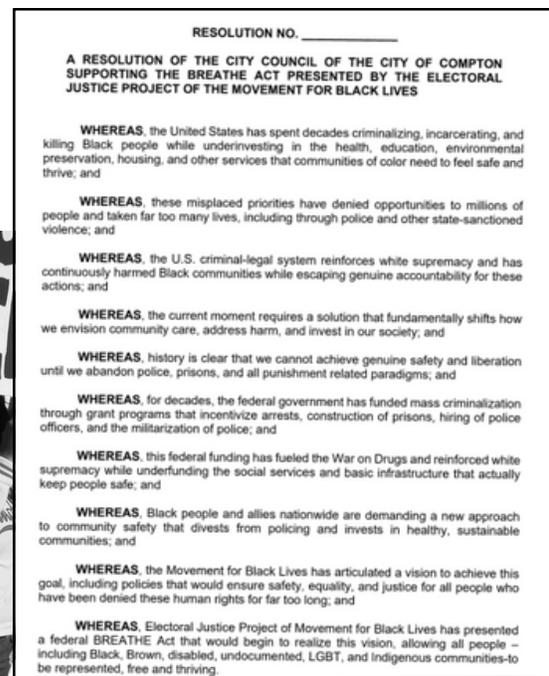
One way I used the payments that made me feel particularly special was ... to provide for my family on those special days when it counts. Even though the last policing action I went through left me permanently disabled and unable to work and provide for my family, this gave me a little bit of dignity back.

## The case for reparations today

Today, the call for guaranteed income as a form of reparations is bolstered by a body of evidence supporting guaranteed income's unique ability to narrow the persistent racial wealth gap. Where state-led efforts have fallen short, survivors of economic exploitation have advanced the economic case for moving past from commissions to concrete re-investments. Scholars, advocates, and movements have affirmed racial and economic justice as part of an entwined struggle for freedom.

In 2020, the year George Floyd killing in Minneapolis sparked an international movement to protect Black lives from police violence, the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) articulated a policy platform for radical community transformation by divesting from mass incarceration and investing in communities of color. The M4BL's federal BREATHE Act, often considered the modern day civil rights act, calls on the government to "pilot programs for universal basic income" (Section 3). Local resolutions of the BREATHE Act from cities such as Compton center new universal basic income pilots as a path to economic self-determination.

Former Compton Mayor Aja Brown's advocacy for guaranteed income is part of a larger set of bold, anti-poverty policies she pursued during her two terms in office. Alongside local civil rights activists, Mayor Brown took a stand against racial injustice, linking the public health crisis of COVID-19 to pervasive PTSD following decades of police violence. As she challenged the role of deputy gangs, famously the Compton Executioners, she launched the Compton Pledge guaranteed income program. The Compton Pledge was passed as a local resolution of the BREATHE ACT – the modern-day Civil Rights Act of the Movement for Black Lives.



The Truth & Reconciliation Program not only addresses the immediate injustices of welfare and policing, but it also responds to historical calls for compensation by building a model for how guaranteed income can be paid today, advancing the possibilities towards a nationwide reparations movement. The Truth & Reconciliation Program responds to these calls by building a model for how reparations and guaranteed income can be paid today, advancing the possibilities towards a nationwide reparations movement.

As Gracie Close, the program's funder, reflected, "Reparations, where could you possibly start? Start with trust that recipients know what to do with their money, no strings attached."

## Part Three

# Truth & Reconciliation Pilot

We know the ignoble truth that the fiscal benefits slavery created for white people and this country have not ended. To be clear, this gift was not a handout. This gift was a debt owed.

Gracie Close, 2023, pilot funder



Javon experienced discrimination and extreme financial setbacks as a result of a wrongful arrest. He has since been unable to utilize his Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) training, which earns a median income of \$57,000 a year, nor can he supplement his current annual salary of \$12,600, which he earns by driving for Uber or DoorDash.

With his first payment, Javon caught up on “disconnected lights, rent, cell phone bill, gas bill.” These debts accumulated after his wrongful arrest left him unable to utilize his training to earn the income he would otherwise have been qualified to receive. Paying his balance “eased [his] worrying” and allowed him “to think with a clear mind.”

The pilot team focused its efforts on compensating and repaying survivors of police brutality. The historical harm section reflects on the role policing has played in the exploitation of Black communities. Examples from Callie House to the Chicago Torture Justice Center illustrate how policing has served to cement power in the hands of a White supremacist status quo and violate the rights of millions of Americans.

## At the beginning of the program...

Almost a third of participants indicated that a \$400 emergency expense would require them to overdraw their accounts or take out a high-interest predatory loan (which often costs more than the initial amount owed). The national average is 2%.

Only 27% of participants reported being able to pay all their bills, a figure similar to the national average for families with formerly incarcerated members. Among those with stable homes, most were unable to pay for basic household needs like groceries, clothing, and home appliances like microwaves or refrigerators.

Participants reported spending 13 days of the month without high quality food. Most participants reported being unable to afford necessary dental care or prescriptions.

## The first payments arrived at Christmas

They allowed one third of participants to buy gifts for their children and grandchildren. The impact of the payment was immediate: one father helped his daughter and three kids maintain housing through the holidays by contributing to their rent bill. “I was able to send money to my daughter and get her Christmas gifts,” said a participant, who shared the picture of their Christmas tree to the right.

Over the course of a year, the Fund for Guaranteed Income, in partnership with the ACLU of Louisiana, issued \$1,000 unrestricted monthly cash payments.

## Applying the logic of guaranteed income

The Truth & Reconciliation pilot team sought to apply the logic of guaranteed income, which puts people's autonomy and choices first, to all stages of the program in an effort to restore dignity to participants who suffered from police victimization. This included a low-lift and quick enrollment process that could be completed in a few minutes from participants' phones, as well as a commitment to a service mindset. No burdensome or invasive enrollment requirements were implemented, and money was disbursed directly and reliably.

Mitigating the potential "benefits cliff," wherein an income increase could jeopardize participants' eligibility for essential means-tested public benefits, was critical to the program's design. To address this, a benefits consultant analyzed the state's benefits landscape, requested or negotiated benefit protections from government administrators, and provided recommendations to minimize adverse outcomes. Participants were provided with educational materials to help them navigate changes and make informed decisions.

The pilot team also provided expungement support, counseling, and connection with other program participants as measures to repair the harm of police brutality. Once participants identified barriers to employment resulting from criminal records, the Truth & Reconciliation Pilot provided legal support to encourage and advise participants going through the expungement process. These proactive measures were vital to ensuring that the guaranteed income complemented, rather than compromised, participants' overall support systems.



## Part 3. The Truth & Reconciliation Pilot results

The T&R pilot results evaluates the impact of the program, which moved a total of \$204,000 and offered support services requested by participants to repair the harm suffered.

**3.1 Financial and Physical Wellbeing** describes how a \$1,000 monthly guaranteed income increased the economic security, health, and safety that was essential for participants and their loved ones to thrive.

**3.2 Mental Wellbeing and Community Resilience** describes participants' empowering experiences of being heard and believed, both in mental health counseling and by fellow participants.

# 3.1 Financial and physical wellbeing

## Financial stability

After 1 year of guaranteed income...

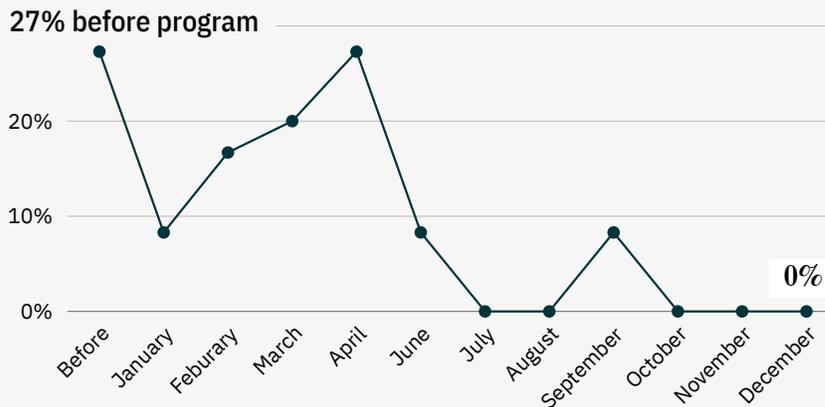
**2x**

The number of participants could pay all household bills in full

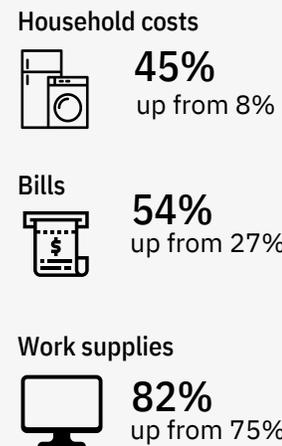
Participants experienced greater financial stability with the \$1,000 monthly payment. Their ability to pay all of their bills doubled over the course of the pilot. By the end of the program, the majority of participants were able to stay up to date on all bills – the percentage of participants who reported being able to cover household costs, such as appliances and phone bills, rose from 8% to 45%.

With regular guaranteed income support, participants avoided the expensive and predatory lending agencies and debt collection agencies. Participants reported that they were able to pay down debt more often over the course of the program. After a year, none of the participants reported relying on “a payday loan, informal loan, loan shark, deposit advance, or overdraft.”

**% of participants who would cover a \$400 emergency**  
Using a payday loan, loan shark, deposit advance, or overdraft



**% of participants**  
Who can afford



## Employment

5x more participants could afford their basic productivity and enrichment needs, like work supplies and laptops for school, at the end of the program compared to baseline. (8.3% to 45.4%). They also reported investing in transportation to get to job interviews. Participants reported spending an additional week per month, on average, with reliable transportation. The program also helped expunge all 12 people’s records to help secure employment.

## Housing security

# 33%

Easier to meet housing needs after one year of guaranteed income

Reliable monthly payments enabled participants to build a stable foundation to grow their wealth and regain a sense of safety in place. When asked how they were spending the funds, participants repeatedly put their money toward rent, mortgage payments, or basic household expenses.

By the end of the program, the average number of days without stable housing fell by 85%, an average decrease of half a day per month. Researchers have recently begun exploring the impact of guaranteed income on housing; initial studies suggest guaranteed income enables people to find and remain in stable homes.

# of days without stable housing

Before



After 1 year of GI



Income from this program meant that Cooley, who unexpectedly lost his job and fell into a cycle of debt to pay his court fees, could pay the mortgage on his first home. A new home and yard allowed Cooley and his wife to take in dogs.

For Cooley, the Truth & Reconciliation pilot represented a new start and a path to economic recovery. He and his wife have stable housing and puppies, all supported by the payments he chose to meet his mortgage bill while searching for a job. He could stay at work until the end of his shift instead of having to leave early to pay a \$25 court fee in order to recoup the debt he owed after being pulled over, violently beaten, and arrested by plainclothes officers. His wife was able to afford to travel and pay her last visits to her ill mother.

*Image: Cooley's puppies*

Participants' newfound stability at the end of the Truth & Reconciliation pilot corroborates the existing literature on guaranteed income programs. Over 165 pilots conducted nationwide have consistently recognized that monthly investments in people produce a positive impact on economic well being and greater odds of attaining financial freedom. The largest study of guaranteed income found that participants

 *Cooley's puppies play at home*



We came out here with nothing, not \$1 to our name. We used it on our mortgage the whole time and everything, man, we were able to get everything set right.

I always wanted a dog [and now because we have a house] I got four puppies. They watch, they listen, and their love is wonderful

COOLEY, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

spent \$67 more on food and \$52 more on rent than people who did not receive any money, enabling them to better meet their basic needs.

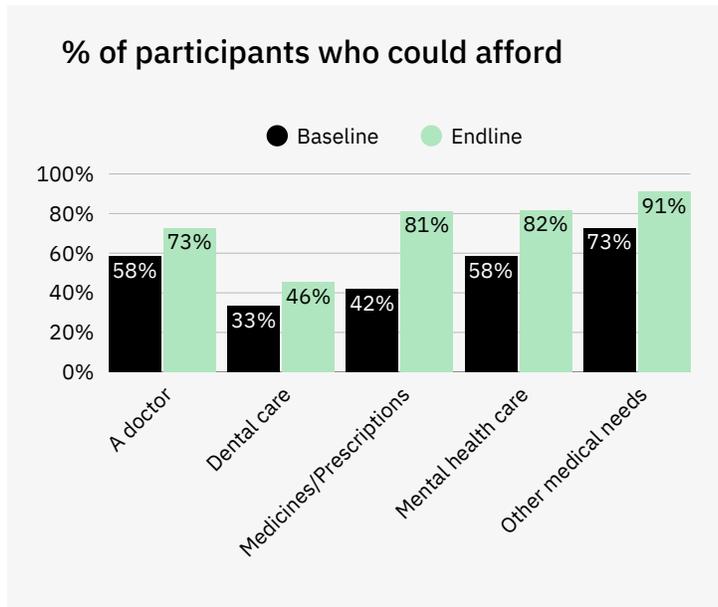
## Physical health outcomes

**2x**

The number of participants who could afford healthcare after one year of guaranteed income

As a result of being supported by \$1,000 per month, by the end of the program most participants had the financial freedom to improve their physical wellness. Before the program, only 16% of participants could afford healthcare. This more than doubled. After the program, 36% of participants could afford healthcare.

Each month, participants reported on their ability to buy food and improve their health outcomes. The ability to meet their medical needs – including prescriptions, refills and doctors’ visits – increased fourfold.



**Additional days a month with reliable food**

**96% increased ability to afford medicines**

**56% increased ability to afford a doctor’s visit**

The number of participants who could afford to meet all of their physical and wellness needs, including prescriptions and appointments, increased twofold. Accessing better physical and dental services facilitated their long-term financial security, as findings indicate regular preventative healthcare helps avoid expensive emergency room visits.

## 3.2 Mental wellbeing and community resilience

Despite providing measurable financial relief to participants, the guaranteed income pilot’s monthly payments represented a fraction of income lost to the legal system. Participants expressed that they persistently suffered from fear and anxiety caused by police brutality, affirming the need for stabilizing structures that could not be quantified in terms of financial outcomes. The Truth & Reconciliation pilot responded with free counseling support and opportunities to connect with the pilot community.

## At the beginning of the program...

Participants reported feelings of isolation, helplessness, and hopelessness stemming from their experiences with law enforcement. These violent altercations often occurred in spaces that participants once considered safe. As a result, participants' mental and physical health were more severely impacted, leaving them economically destabilized and deprived of a sense of shared community.

Because “the murderers write the reports,” as anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells wrote, victims of police brutality face an uphill battle in convincing the courts of their accounts. Sandra, who was arrested after suing her employer for wage theft, fought her case for 31 months before it was dismissed. Her grandchild pointed out what the detective missed: the evidence in her case was contradictory, proving that she could not have been guilty of the crime for which she was accused. She said:

At the time I was going back and forth to court, I was so depressed. I couldn't even think. I mean, it was like walking in a bubble. I was dealing with physical limitations along with divorce and joblessness.

My experience with the criminal justice system caused an emotional toll which also took a financial toll on me. There's just not enough money to compensate for wrongful characterization.

SANDRA, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



Symptoms of isolation and helplessness may grow more pronounced when victims of police aggression are not believed. Five police officers stormed into Nathasia's apartment, yet the courts did not believe her. Before the program, Nathasia shared:

It's so hard to get rid of that anger. I'm so angry. You don't want to be angry... I got to cheer up because I don't want my kids to see me cry, I'm trying to stay strong... I stay away from anything that could bring me a reminder of a trigger, of the peace that I'm trying to find... Where you see cops, where you have to deal with certain fears.

NATHASIA, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

## Significance of the program community

The Truth & Reconciliation program brought together survivors of police brutality who had firsthand knowledge of the gap between real events and their representation in legal documents. Sandra believed the other participants' stories of violence as truth, and was believed in turn.

Hearing everyone share their story again, about their experiences, their emotions that they felt – I'll treasure that. I'll treasure the experience of coming together. It has the power to restore faith and hope in humanity,

SANDRA

The program is a beacon of light and hope that hopefully one day we will all be treated as human beings equally

NATHASIA

Believed by the ACLU of Louisiana and a new, loving community, participants testified to greater personal healing and resilience in the face of ongoing oppression. Participants shared:

“Talking to other participants, it promotes hope and inspiration. It has the power to restore faith and hope in humanity. Everyone appreciates the opportunity to identify having the same experience as others being unjustly screwed by the system.”

“It was nice to know you aren't alone in being wronged by the legal system.”

In the safety of the Truth & Reconciliation community, participants expressed an enduring fear of racist police violence both at their home and in public. Mothers shared a fear of being killed by police and leaving their children behind. These experiences reflect growing research that shows narrative therapy, relational factors and critical consciousness development are particularly effective in supporting the healing process, especially minority groups who have felt that society controls and shapes their life story.

In providing legal services, mental health counseling, and additional resources, The Truth & Reconciliation pilot recognizes the importance of addressing the long-term emotional and psychological consequences of systemic racism and the criminal legal system.

## After one year of the program

Participants reported a 25% improvement in their mental health and life satisfaction by the end of the program.

Participants also expressed an appreciation for additional program services, including expungement clinics and mental health counseling.

How would you rate your mental health (1-5)



How satisfied are you with your life as a whole? (1-5)



“During the expungement clinic I not only gained knowledge of some resources available to remove arrests from my record but I also learned techniques that I can use to overcome the emotional stress associated with being a victim of police brutality.”

“I really appreciate the concern. Having someone to talk to and someone who actually cares about me. It gives me hope that I hadn't had, and that's beyond the money.”

“The program lessened my depression, stress and anxiety, and some of the negativity I've been experiencing. To be truthful it's helped to keep me alive because it's given me hope.”

In response to participants' feedback, mental health counseling was extended for a second year following the last payment. The program aims to sustain participants' healing journey by ensuring continued access to trauma-informed care.



By providing compensation and addressing the true causes of mass incarceration, we can end cycles of systemic harm. Another participant recounted, “it gives me hope that I hadn't had, and that's beyond the money... And maybe that can change the way they run things in Shreveport because it's not just draconian, it's plantation days.”

Guaranteed income is a policy with the potential to reach ambitious, societal-level effects. It is an effective public safety intervention that can break the cycle of poverty and incarceration. Providing direct, recurring cash support to formerly incarcerated people aids in preventing future arrests.

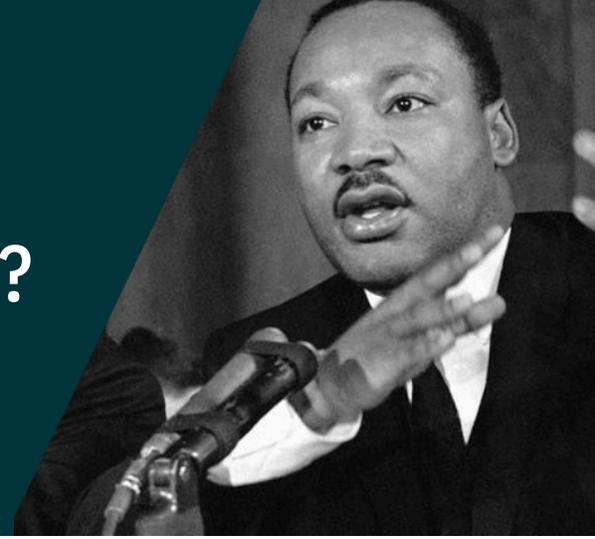
The Chicago Future Fund, a \$500 monthly payment to formerly incarcerated people as reparations for their exploitation and exclusion during the War on Drugs, offers supporting evidence. The cash payments reduced recidivism to 3% as compared to a 43% average in the state of Illinois. Payments bolstered participants' resilience: 48% of participants applied to at least six jobs per month and 28% applied to more than ten jobs per month. Still, more than 1,300 statutes in Illinois continue to restrict the rights of formerly incarcerated individuals.

While the Truth & Reconciliation program cannot by itself guarantee non-repetition, pairing guaranteed income payments with improved mental well being can help to break generational cycles for individuals who have borne the economic burden of their own punishment. It is now time to build on the findings from this pilot. The final section of our report offers recommendations for the nationwide expansion of guaranteed income.

## Part Four

# Where do we go from here?

Love is contraband in hell  
Assata Shakur



The American carceral system mobilizes police violence to extract profit from Black people, reproducing/replicating the nation's legacy of slavery. Over a century has passed without reparations for slavery, and the debt owed continues to grow.

In 2020, approximately 850,000 Black men were imprisoned (out of 2.3 million incarcerated people) – more than the number of Black men that were enslaved in 1850. Black men make up 14% of all US residents, but 40% of the prison and jail population in 2024. Black women represent the fastest growing population in prisons and jails.

Compensation helps individuals harmed by police violence reclaim their freedom to live without fear. In the absence of intentional, transformative interventions, the specter of slavery will continue to harm the criminal legal system in Louisiana and the United States at large. Government investment in punishment comes at the expense of public assistance that can stabilize children's lives and create real, day-to-day material safety. Among those in state prisons, only 42% lived in a household that received welfare as a child.

The larger movement for restorative justice consists of reparations, guaranteed income, and an end to unconstitutional policing. The ACLU of Louisiana's Truth & Reconciliation pilot is one piece of this much broader proposal.

Where do we go from here?

## Part 4. The Conclusion

The conclusion of our report offers policy solutions to, at minimum, undo the economic impact of wrongful arrests.

**4.1 The Path to Reparations** identifies policies governments can implement immediately to respond to the pilot's call for reparations.

**4.2 The Politics of Hope and Grace** discusses the transformative potential in advocating for guaranteed income rooted in a movement rooted in a broad vision for reparations– now.

## 4.1 The path to reparations: Immediate policy steps

### 01 Automatically expunge arrest and criminal records

**Part 1. The Price of Freedom** reconstructed how the criminal legal system in Louisiana came to operate as an extension of slavery and identified the economic impact of ongoing police violence. As things stand, victims of police violence pay steep costs for their own punishment. In recounting their experiences, participants in the program shared common stories detailing lost income and benefits due to forced labor, excessive court fees, and asset forfeiture by the police.

Until all records are expunged automatically, we must not deprive those with arrest or criminal records of welfare. The existing barriers to social resources are not only cruel to the individual and their dependents, but also antithetical to public safety interests as they contribute significantly to recidivism.

Currently, expungement fees in Louisiana exceed \$250. As an intermediary measure, Louisiana can eliminate all expungement fees, thus removing a significant barrier to people's ability to resume work and support their households.

### 02 Pass H.R. 40 to implement reparations and establish a Truth & Reconciliation Commission

**Part 2. The Call for Reparations** highlights the five conditions of a reparations process: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantee of non-repetition. It details previous government-led reparations processes that have failed to adequately address the harms of state-sponsored violence.

In Louisiana, victims of police brutality pay the cost of their own freedom because, as Ida B. Wells argued when documenting lynchings during slavery, "The murderers write the reports." The participants' experiences reflect the frequency with which routine interactions with the police result in misleading and factually inaccurate arrest records written at the discretion of police. A single officer's judgment can lead to adverse employment and housing outcomes, particularly for low income individuals.

Creating a Truth & Reconciliation Commission, as called for in Senate Bill H.R. 40, for the enslavement of Black Americans will contribute significantly to debate and implement concrete repair in the United States.

### 03 Implement a national, guaranteed income policy

**Part 3. The Truth & Reconciliation Pilot** examines the positive impact of a year of guaranteed income payments to participants. The pilot was designed to build on the accomplishments of - and learn from mistakes made in - previous reparations efforts.

The results corroborate evidence from 165 guaranteed income pilots initiated as of 2025: additional income support has a ripple effect, improving access to essential services like healthcare, education, and jobs. The evaluation contributes to a body of research demonstrating that disrupting the cycle of poverty, violence, and incarceration with direct service provision is what actually works to keep society safe. In the words of a pilot participant, "I would feel safe and secure if I was able to be employed and compensated with a decent living wage."

We also highlight the impact that the Truth & Reconciliation community had on participants whose stories of violence were believed as the truth. The program aims to model a template for larger reparations processes to come. The path forward we hope to pave is informed by both historical calls for reparations by Black community and an engagement with the local community in Louisiana.

Instead of using money, and thus poverty, to restrict, control, and constrain lives, guaranteed income invests in people as a means to economic and broader freedoms. Unrestricted cash disbursements reflect a reversal of racist welfare policies and stereotypes, in favor of the belief that individuals are experts at spending their own money and meeting their own needs.

As an intervention, guaranteed income seeks to improve the lives of those suffering under the legacies of slavery, and to empower them to make choices about their lives and money. Given the systematic nature of harm done to the Black community, reparations must be made to the entire community. Little is gained from expending time and resources on who is “deserving” or eligible for compensation.

It provides another avenue to address some of the malfeasance of the police and legal system as a whole. Helps financially and provides relief, adds stability to living conditions. Mainly, it helps to have someone listen and try to correct some of the wrongs.

ANTHONY MORGAN, PARTICIPANT

The programs that the ACLU invited me to has helped me grow as an individual person helped me to understand that society is not perfect and help me to learn more about myself. I cannot change the world but I can team up with people who are trying.

HOPE DAVIS, PARTICIPANT



## 4.2 The politics of Hope and Grace: Our call for a guaranteed income

The pilot team focused its efforts on compensating and repaying survivors of police brutality. The historical harm section reflects on the role policing has played in the exploitation of Black communities. Examples from Callie House to the Chicago Torture Justice Center illustrate how policing has served to cement power in the hands of a White supremacist status quo and violate the rights of millions of Americans.

### Towards Hope

Once afraid to leave her room after experiencing police brutality, Hope recalled the slave quarters in her grandparents' garden. The small shacks scattered along the treeline, and levees built by prison labor all serve as enduring markers of a violent history that has not fully faded with time.

On New Orleans's West Bank, Hope now tends to her community garden. She enjoys watching from her porch as teenagers come to pick fresh vegetables. She grows okra, watermelon, corn, zucchini, peppers and tomatoes in the garden.

This is the home she moved into after sleeping under a bridge in her car for 18 months. It is the home where she organizes residents of her former housing project to fight against the local housing authority, which boarded up and displaced the residents of 200 units, rather than pay to take care of life threatening mold. Now Hope is expanding her backyard garden, investing in her neighbors and growing a safer world

“What does my future look like?” Hope asked. “I started doing some research on history and policing. I want to be a part of the community that helps.”

To our knowledge, no other pilot has been funded through a process of voluntary reparations. The Truth & Reconciliation pilot examined the history that created a wealthy family, documenting its members' effort to transfer some of the economic and political power borne by beneficiaries of oppression to victims of slavery and its legacy of injustice.

### Towards Grace

The Close siblings's actions emphasize responsibility, not guilt, and their belief that justice today requires confronting and addressing historical truths. Buck and Gracie committed to funding the Truth & Reconciliation program as a form of redress and repair for those unconstitutionally impacted by the criminal legal system. This debt demands real, sustained action and not symbolic gestures.

 *Hope in the community garden in New Orleans*



 *Grace Close with ACLU of Louisiana*



## **This program is one, \$204,000 step towards settling this debt owed.**

The guaranteed income payments amount to a small repayment from those that profited most from slavery, and the government that empowered this theft. There are new private and public sector interests in maintaining the system of mass caging and the violence that upholds it – from private debt collectors, bail bondsmen, police contractors, Smart Policing strategists, risk-assessment algorithm providers, and the corporations and public agencies that exploit incarcerated labor. The money was given because substantially more is due to those who have been denied equity for generations.

The question is not whether to establish an income floor, but how. By examining the sources of their own wealth and their inexorable link to slavery and the ongoing exploitation of people on the basis of race, people can act to build a more equitable future.

Those able to take the same brave and important steps toward accountability as the Close siblings may draw from this model to redistribute money directly to people. In telling the truth about how wealth was amassed in this country, these imperfect steps can provide immediate relief to some while demonstrating that true reparations are possible and transformative.

By the end of the one year program, Sandra believed more is owed, in addition to what the 12 month pilot provided. She became motivated to help others on their own journey through advocacy.

She said: “I imagine being involved [as] an advocate for change. You know, 40 acres and a mule ain't happened. Not even a tax break, not even a tuition break. I mean, tuition, healthcare, you have to pay for that too.”

The movement for reparations is a generations-long struggle, one that Sandra sees through the eyes of her grandsons who are growing up Black in Shreveport, Louisiana.

“They were promised reparations, too.”

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**ACLU**  
Louisiana

**FUND FOR  
GUARANTEED  
INCOME**

## Annex. Additional information

### Methodology

- **Quantitative:** Fund for Guaranteed Income aggregated survey responses to analyze participant outcomes over time. This study did not include a comparison group.
- **Qualitative:** Fund for Guaranteed Income took an inductive approach to the varied qualitative data participants shared. First, we created transcripts. Second, we combined transcripts and qualitative survey responses into themes. We validated these themes with a second reader editing and discussing the original analysts' choices. Finally, we added literature including historical context and ongoing discussions of reparation to the themes that emerged from participant's testimony.

### Data Sources

Before the program, participants were connected with the ACLU Justice Lab. 11 participants chose to share their experiences of police brutality with Justice Lab support. In researching this report, we relied on these existing interviews for narratives of police violence and the harm participants experienced before the program.

- 155 participant surveys. Participants completed a baseline and 12 monthly surveys. Participants were compensated \$50 for completing each survey. Over the course of the program, all but one survey was completed, making surveys a comprehensive picture of participants' experience. Surveys measured material, physical, and psychological well-being, but also gave space for participants to provide context through 6 open-ended questions.
- Three participant interviews. Fund for Guaranteed Income Performed three semi-structured interviews with participants to better understand the participant experience on a granular level.
- Three participant focus groups. Participants, ACLU of Louisiana support staff, and the funders engaged in a series of focus groups which were filmed and audio recorded.

### Anonymity

Participant's experience told through their own voice is the foundation for this report. Fund for Guaranteed Income led the evaluation; administering surveys, transcribing focus groups and interviewing participants on site and in their homes. Participants consented both to research and to have their stories shared as part of our storytelling effort.

Participants were given the option to be referred to by their name or a pseudonym discussed in the report. All participant engagement was voluntary. Participants expressed that being seen and understood by others in the Truth & Reconciliation pilot was meaningful. We hope to extend this validation, and honor their stories, by writing a report that is true to their experiences.

## Note on program budget

The program's \$532,287 budget was primarily allocated toward direct support for participants, with \$213,150 disbursed directly to participants. Additional expenditures supported staffing (\$186,679), partner contracts to provide wraparound services (\$5,471 for expungement services, \$10,339 for mental health counseling and mindfulness training, and \$90,259 for additional contractors including benefits consulting, disbursement and research, and content editing services). The remainder related to travel, meals, events, and community meetings.

# Summary of Report Findings

## Part 1. The Price of Freedom

### Slavery and mass incarceration.

- In 1860, slave labor accounted for 39% of America's workforce, responsible for up to 50% of GDP
- Louisiana began participating in the convict leasing system in 1844, selling the labor of enslaved people accused of a crime to individuals, corporations, and governments. By 1876, 40% of workers died in custody.
- The state purchased the Angola plantation in 1901, turning it into a state-operated prison farm and profiting directly from the prison labor that cultivated cotton, sugarcane, corn, peas, cattle, and hogs.
- Louisiana today is the prison capital of the world, with an incarceration rate twice the national average. Despite comprising 32% of the state's total population, Black people make up 67% of Louisiana's incarcerated population
- The average cost of bail in Louisiana \$27,000 is higher than the average income of those jailed (\$7,000)

### Police violence.

- Louisiana is the police abuse capital of the world. The DOJ found “statewide pattern of misconduct that places the public at serious risk of harm.”
- Black people are killed by police violence 280% more often than white people.
- Police violence is expensive. Spending between \$2,500 and \$150,000 in legal costs, years of legal proceedings to fight their cases and clear their names, and no relief or money from legal cases against police brutality. Participants are “innocent” of a crime
- Leads into debt. All participants indicated that they could not survive a \$400 emergency without relying on exploitative loans; a quarter of participants indicated they would need to rely on a high interest loan.

## Part 2. The Call for Reparations

- “40 acres and a mule” were promised to formerly enslaved Americans, in 1765 Special Field Order No. 15. No land or mules were redistributed.
- Chicago reparations for police torture and California reparations for forced sterilization are local, current US reparation efforts. These programs are crucial efforts but also include burdensome processes that limit people's ability to claim their rightful compensation.
- Guaranteed income prioritizes people's autonomy. As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said in 1967, “I am now convinced that the simplest approach will prove to be the most effective — the solution to poverty is to abolish it directly by a now widely discussed measure: the guaranteed income.”

# Part 3. The Truth & Reconciliation Pilot

## Financial and physical wellness

- Bills: The number of participants who indicated they could pay all their monthly bills doubled (27.3% to 54.6%).
- Physical health: Number of participants who could afford all of the physical and wellness needs, like prescriptions and appointments, doubled. (16.7% to 36.4%)
- Housing: Participants found it 32% easier to meet their housing needs and the number of days they spent per month without reliable housing decreased by 85%.
- Employment: 5x more participants could afford their basic productivity and enrichment needs, like work supplies and laptops for school. The program also helped expunge all 12 people's records
- Transportation: The number of days participants had reliable transportation each month increased by 50%.

## Mental wellness and community resilience

- The number of participants who could afford all physical / wellness needs doubled (16.7% to 36.4%)
- But, participants reported feeling depressed for 14 days a month (the same as baseline) and their overall physical health decreased by program end.

# Part 4. Conclusion: Where Do We Go From Here?

## Policy recommendations.

- Automatically expunge arrest and criminal records. Immediately, we can automatically expunge arrest and criminal records and pass H.R. 40 to implement reparations to establish a Truth & Reconciliation Commission.
- Pass H.R. 40 to implement reparations and establish a Truth & Reconciliation Commission
- Implement a national, guaranteed income policy.