FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MITCH LANDRIEU OPENS UNUM FELLOWS PROGRAM APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SOUTHERN ELECTED LEADERS LOOKING TO ADDRESS RACIAL EQUITY

Application period ends July 31, 2020

NEW ORLEANS -- Today, former New Orleans Mayor and E Pluribus Unum Founder & President Mitch Landrieu announced the opening of the application process of UNUM Fellows, a signature initiative aimed at equipping local elected leaders in the South with resources, training and technical expertise to advance racial and economic equity in their communities. The UNUM Fellows program and application period was initially launched on March 2, 2020, but was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

E Pluribus Unum Founder & President Mitch Landrieu said, “It has been clear that barriers that separate us along racial and class lines were put up intentionally to keep us apart. We are divided by design. The COVID-19 pandemic and recent police violence has only underscored existing systemic racism and bias, and made it clear that support for local elected officials is more critical than ever. This moment calls for courageous leadership. Our hope is to equip leaders with the skills and resources needed to ensure greater equity and resilience in their communities moving forward. We need our leaders, particularly at the local level, to prioritize creating more equitable communities, exchanging ideas on what works by listening to the people in their communities most affected by these barriers, and creating actionable plans to get it done. While many elected officials are already prioritizing equity-focused work, and we are not the first to address this problem, we know it is vital to support local elected officials at this moment. Our UNUM Fellows program will do exactly that.”

In October 2019, Landrieu unveiled E Pluribus Unum, an organization aimed at advancing racial and economic equity in the South. One of the key findings of E Pluribus Unum’s initial year-long research & planning year was that where local political, community and philanthropic leaders openly prioritize racial diversity and inclusion, there is more hope and optimism in their community’s future among residents, as well as more awareness and openness to equity-driven programs and policies. Residents across the South consistently cited political leadership and effective government as critical avenues for creating lasting systemic change.
The UNUM Fellows program is a unique, non-partisan fellowship that aims to ensure local elected leaders in the South can act on the issues of racial and economic equity – driving sustainable change in their communities. The program will push leaders towards these issues and support them in generating an ambitious project with the tools to effectively work towards equity in their communities through sustainable change and collaboration.

UNUM Fellows will:

- Build skills for creating equitable organizations;
- Design racial equity-driven policy;
- Use data and research to affect change;
- Develop strategies to build public will for transformative change; and,
- Learn to talk about race in a way that moves people forward.

The core elements of the program include skill-building to support the development of a project that will identify a concrete opportunity in a cohort member’s community that specifically addresses racial and/or economic disparities and to develop a responsive initiative for implementation (e.g., policy reform, organizational change, public art project) at the conclusion of the fellowship. UNUM Fellows will receive up to $75,000 in project funding, along with ongoing technical support, to implement their resulting projects.

E Pluribus Unum welcomes applications for projects that speak to the impacts of COVID-19 in their communities, and also welcomes applications that seek to address racial and economic equity issues unrelated to the pandemic.

UNUM Fellows participants will gain access to a wide range of nationally recognized partner organizations and individuals that will provide valuable and actionable skill-building around racial and economic equity.

Program partners include:

- Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings;
- Center for American Progress (CAP);
- Hope Policy Institute;
- National League of Cities (NLC) University;
- PolicyLink;
- The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP); and,
- What Works Cities.

Over the course of the year-long program, cohort members must be available to participate in monthly activities, including the UNUM Fellows Convenings, webinars, cohort calls and on-site technical assistance visits.
The application period opened today, June 15, 2020 and closes on July 31, 2020 at 11:59pm EST.

To learn more about the UNUM Fellows program, visit unumfund.org/fellows.

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**E Pluribus Unum** is an initiative created to fulfill America’s promise of justice and opportunity for all by breaking down the barriers that divide us by race and class. In its first year, the E Pluribus Unum team traveled extensively across the American South to uncover and confront the challenges we face, to learn from people about what separates us and what can bring us together, and to find bold and effective solutions to tackle the modern legacy of Jim Crow so that an inclusive new South may be born. Incubated at Emerson Collective and led by former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, the E Pluribus Unum team is building a series of programs and initiatives to cultivate courageous leaders who are committed to realizing an inclusive vision for a new South, champion transformative policies to reverse the enduring harms of America’s Jim Crow era past for those who continue to experience them today, and change narratives that perpetuate systemic and interpersonal racism in order to shift people’s attitudes and behaviors. To learn more, visit www.unumfund.org.