

 Education Leaders of Color

Policy Agenda

Who We Are

Education Leaders of Color (EdLoC) is a membership network that harnesses the power of values-aligned changemakers to catalyze the cross-sector collaboration needed to ensure young people of color have the opportunities to build generational wealth and thrive.



What We Do

Determined to disrupt the status quo, EdLoC drives systemic change through cross-sector collaboration. Many individuals and organizations are committed to the cause of economic advancement, but few are approaching it as a multi-faceted, multi-racial, intersectional, and cross-sector challenge in the way that EdLoC is.

Coming from broad leadership backgrounds in education and beyond, our membership network is committed to:

- **Growing Together as Leaders:** Fostering a deep sense of belonging, EdLoC is a community where members feel safe to express their authentic selves, share their own experiences, and find support from others. We listen and learn from each other and bring a unique perspective to share with policymakers, civic leaders, researchers, philanthropic leaders, and others.
- **Collaborating as Problem Solvers:** EdLoC provides members with the opportunity to collaborate with others online and at curated in-person events, leveraging collective strengths to drive long-term impact and advance multiple solutions to ensure young people of color achieve their vision of success.
- **Advocating for Policy Change:** EdLoC enables our members to take informed actions and expand our collective influence by keeping members up-to-date and informed on policy developments at all levels.
- **Investing in Each Other's Work:** We invest in each other by highlighting member achievements and elevating their leadership beyond our network, hosting several curated networking events where values-aligned leaders connect and explore potential collaboration, and facilitating regional affinity groups.

OUR MEMBERS

Coming from diverse and influential leadership backgrounds in education and beyond, our membership network is the driving force behind the structural and systemic change we seek. Aligned by values and fueled by passion, our membership continues to thrive and expand across communities, attracting passionate leaders who are hungry for change and committed to driving progress. Our membership comprises over 1,000 leaders across the country, and we continue to expand.

EDLOC POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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THE PROBLEM

Money can mean many things, like power and influence. But above all else, it's a tool for self-determination in America. Yet people of color continue to battle systemic inequities that deny them the opportunity to generate the wealth they need to thrive.

These inequities cut across every facet of life, stifling access to academic and employment opportunities, quality health care, housing, banking services, childcare, and more—all of which impact success in life. According to research conducted by the Federal Reserve¹, the average Black and Latinx household earns approximately half as much as the average white household and has only fifteen to twenty percent as much net wealth. A Pew Research Center study found that more than 2.3 million Asian Americans—about one-in-ten—lived in poverty that same year.²

THE SOLUTION

High-quality education is key to ending generational poverty, but its impact is only possible when sectors recognize the profound overlaps in inequity that shape our collective progress.

Policymakers and civic leaders must pursue cross-sector solutions to dismantle the racist structures stifling the economic success of communities of color.

Ensuring children and youth success should be a top priority, as research shows that many children who grow up in poverty will remain trapped in poverty as adults.³ Well-being is a key component for success—policies aimed at fostering children and youths' growth and development need to ensure their caregivers have access to the resources and support systems needed to create a stable and nurturing home environment. By addressing the needs of both children and their caregivers, we can create a strong foundation for the overall well-being and future success of our nation's young people.

EDUCATION LEADERS OF COLOR (EdLoC)

EdLoC was founded to disrupt our nation's approach to catalyzing economic and academic advancement for young people of color. In a society that has historically taken intentional steps to deny children of color the opportunities needed to build generational wealth and thrive, EdLoC recognizes that solutions must be multi-faceted, multi-racial, intersectional, and cross-sector.

We've pursued our north star by mobilizing a growing network of values-aligned leaders of color, united by a collective understanding that there is not a singular approach to building generational wealth for communities of color. Economic advancement is not only about education, but also health care, immigration, housing, and more.

We work collaboratively to ensure young people of color have the support they need to capitalize on opportunities, build generational wealth, and thrive.

1. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/disparities-in-wealth-by-race-and-ethnicity-in-the-2019-survey-of-consumer-finances-20200928.html>

2. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/>

3. <https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/children-intergenerational-transmission-poverty-0>

In order to achieve our vision, families need to

EARN MORE

Expand Access to High-Quality Early Learning

Research shows that children from low-income backgrounds with 24 months or more of high-quality early childhood education in their first five years are more likely to graduate from college and have higher salaries at age 26.⁴ Too often, access to high-quality early learning programs is low and unequal, and the cost of high-quality childcare is simply out of reach for too many families—only one percent of Latinx children and four percent of Black children are enrolled in high-quality state preschool⁵ programs. EdLoC supports greater investment in making quality childcare more accessible and affordable for working families and legislation that would expand access to preschool programs⁶ for three- and four-year-olds, improve the quality of care for all children, and increase the training and compensation of childcare workers. Moreover, EdLoC believes that there should be a more intentional focus on ensuring early care and education providers have cultural awareness and linguistic competencies to better meet children and their families' needs.

Minimize Student Debt

The existing racial wealth gap is significantly exacerbated by the student debt crisis. While there have been strides under the Biden Administration to cancel outstanding loan balances for many borrowers, legal challenges to these efforts have limited their impact.⁶ Approximately 43 million student loan borrowers still owe more than \$1.6 trillion, and longstanding racial and economic inequities disproportionately leave borrowers of color with greater student debt, more difficulty repaying student loans, and greater rates of default.⁷ Pursuing higher education is meant to open doors and opportunities, not shut them—this inequity prohibits borrowers' ability to fully thrive and attain the life that higher education was supposed to allow for. To tackle this inequity head on, EdLoC advocates for the following:

- **Boosting the Purchasing Power of Pell Grants:** Double the Pell Grant, index the maximum Pell award amount to inflation, and ensure funding for the program is fully mandatory
- **Ensuring Fairness:** Enact provisions that would make DACA and Temporary Protected Status recipients eligible for Pell Grants, student loans, TRIO, GEAR-UP assistance, and other federal student aid
- **Protecting Student Loan Borrowers, including by:**
 - **Supporting the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)**
 - **Enacting Consumer Protections**
 - **Funding Consumer Assistance Programs**
- **Providing Financial Stability When Emergencies Arise:** Establish grant programs for institutions of higher education to provide emergency grants to help students navigate unforeseen financial obstacles.

4. <https://edtrust.org/early-childhood-tool/#:~:text=In%20a%20first%2Dof%2Dits,high%2Dquality%20state%20preschool%20programs>

5. <https://givingcompass.org/article/the-long-term-impacts-of-high-quality-early-childhood-education#:~:text=Remarkably%2C%20children%20from%20low%2Dincome,higher%20salaries%20at%20age%2026>

6. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/06/30/supreme-court-decision-student-loan-forgiveness/>

7. <https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/fsawg/datacenter/library/PortfolioSummary.xls>

BUILD WEALTH

Invest in Baby Bonds

Wealth inequality in the U.S. continues to grow, fueled by federal policies that disproportionately benefit white families. Baby bonds would help level the playing field.

Building on the momentum of recently enacted state and local baby bond initiatives, EdLoC calls for legislation that would provide every American child, at birth, with an account seeded with \$1,000 at minimum⁸. Each year, children would receive an additional deposit into their account, based on their family's income. These funds would remain in a federally insured account managed by the Treasury Department until the child turns 18, when they can access the funds for allowable uses, like buying a home, financing higher education, or pursuing entrepreneurship.

Achieve Permanence for Child Tax Credits (CTCs)

The expansion of the CTC in the American Rescue Plan reached 65 million children and kept 3.7 million children out of poverty, with Black and Latinx families seeing the largest declines in child poverty. Prior to the passage of this law, an estimated 27 million children received less than the full CTC amount because their families' incomes were too low, including roughly half of Black children, half of Latinx children, 20 percent of white children, 20 percent of Asian children, and roughly half of children living in rural areas.

Unfortunately, the expansion and full refundability expired at the end of 2021.

Economic assistance in childhood improves low-income children's health and educational outcomes and leads to higher earnings in adulthood. EdLoC will continue working with its members and national partners to urge Congress to make the expansive changes to CTC permanent.

8.https://racepowerpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/A-Bright-Future-for-Baby-Bonds-2024_Final_021324.pdf

BE CARED FOR

Expand Access to Healthy, Sustainable Food for Children

Too many low-income households and households of color do not have reliable access to nutritious food. In 2020, the prevalence of food insecurity was 17.2 percent among Latinx households compared to the national average of 10.5 percent.⁹ In 2022, Latinx households with children reached a peak child food insufficiency rate of 29.7 percent, while Black non-Latinx households experienced similarly high rates.¹⁰

Research shows that children living in food-insecure households are at greater odds of fair or poor health, are more likely to be hospitalized in early childhood, may experience behavioral issues that interfere with schooling, and are at higher risk of certain chronic diseases, such as asthma. Among adolescents, food insecurity is associated with depression and suicidal ideation. EdLoC advocates for legislation that would ensure young people have access to healthier, more sustainable food so they can learn and thrive.

Provide Youth a Pathway to Citizenship

For more than ten years, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program has granted more than 835,000 undocumented youth temporary protection from deportation and the opportunity to go to school in our country's PreK-12 schools, attend college, and work lawfully!¹¹ Currently, 20,000 DACA recipients are classroom teachers.¹² Additionally, 408,000 undocumented students are enrolled in higher education and an estimated 100,000 undocumented youth graduate high school each year.¹³

Due to litigation challenging the DACA program, no new applicants are being processed, and processing delays of DACA renewals¹⁴ leave recipients in a state of constant instability.¹⁵ If DACA is terminated, the danger presented to DACA recipients and the impact on our schools, economy, and communities will be grave. An average of 1,000 DACA recipients will lose their protection each week for the next two years if renewals are halted.

EdLoC calls for legislation that provides a pathway to citizenship for undocumented youth.¹⁶

9. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/food-insecurity>

10. [https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=106257#:~:text=The%20prevalence%20of%20child%20food,\(30.0%20percent\)%20of%202022.](https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=106257#:~:text=The%20prevalence%20of%20child%20food,(30.0%20percent)%20of%202022.)

11. https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/DACA_performancedata_fy2023_qtr2.pdf

12. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/15/the-biden-harris-administration-celebrates-the-contributions-of-dreamers-on-ten-year-anniversary-of-daca/>

13. <https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/research/undocumented-students-in-higher-education-updated-march-2021/>

14. <https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/colorado-dreamers-joining-states-fighting-attempts-end-daca/>

15. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/government/2023/09/22/daca-faces-another-setback>

16. <https://www.fwd.us/news/daca-court-case/>

