City of St. Louis Reparations Commission Report

THE COMMON SEAL OF THE CITY OF ST.LOUIS.

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Kayla Reed, Commission Chair

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Kimberly Franks, Esq.

David Cunningham, PhD

Jada Brooks*

*Reflects a commissioner stepping down

Reflections on Our Journey Toward Justice

Dear Residents of St. Louis,

As Chair and Vice Chair of the St. Louis Reparations Commission, we are honored to present this report—a culmination of 18 months of hard work, dedication, and community collaboration. This document reflects not just the input of experts and leaders but also the voices of St. Louis residents who participated in this important process of truth-telling, justice, and accountability.

Throughout this journey, we have engaged with you—our community—in honest conversations about the legacy of harm caused by racial injustice. We have listened to your stories, your hopes, and your concerns, and we are deeply grateful for the time and energy you dedicated to shaping this report.

St. Louis is a city with a deep history of racial trauma, but it is also one filled with perseverance. This report would be incomplete without recognizing and uplifting the contributions Black St. Louisans have made in their communities. Despite constant injustice, Black residents have tirelessly created, empowered, and uplifted one another through activism, entrepreneurship, art, and community-building. From grassroots organizations to Black-owned businesses, Black St. Louisans have continued to enrich the city, overcoming countless challenges along the way.

This work was driven by volunteers who have shown remarkable commitment to ensuring that this report accurately reflects the realities of our past and the possibilities for our future. Their passion and unwavering dedication to justice serve as a testament to the strength of our community. It is our hope that this report will not only contribute to addressing the wrongs of the past but also serve as a foundation for meaningful change that benefits future generations.

We believe this report marks the beginning of a new chapter for St. Louis—one rooted in equity, accountability, and a shared commitment to healing. Thank you to every individual who shared their perspective, to the families who supported our efforts, and to all those who remain steadfast in the pursuit of justice. This report is as much yours as it is ours, and together, we can build a future rooted in justice and empowerment.

With gratitude and respect,

Kayla Reed and Dr. Will Ross

Chair and Vice Chair, St. Louis Reparations Commission

Acknowledgements

The City of St. Louis Reparations Commission would like to sincerely thank the following writers, presenters, city staff and community organizations for their contributions to this report:

Reparations Meeting Presenters and Report Authors

Walter Johnson, PhD
Winthrop Professor of History and Professor of African and African American Studies
Department of History, Harvard University

Jerome E. Morris, PhD
E. Desmond Lee Endowed Professor of Urban Education
College of Education, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Alia Nahra, MA
Department of Sociology, Columbia University

Rosa Parks
Coro Fellow, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Michelle Purdy, PhD
Associate Professor of Education
Department of Education, Washington University in St. Louis

Kayla Reed
Executive Director, Action St. Louis

Jake Rosenfeld, PhD
Professor of Sociology
Department of Sociology, Washington University in St. Louis

Will Ross, MD, MPH
Alumni Endowed Professor of Medicine and Nephrolog
School of Medicine, Washington University in St. Louis

Kelly Schmidt, PhD
Reparative Public Historian, Washington University in St. Louis

Blake Strode, JD
Executive Director, ArchCity Defenders

Ifeanyichukwu Ukpabi, PhD
St. Louis Action Anchor Network, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Geoff Ward, PhD
Professor of African & African American Studies
Director, WashU & Slavery Project
Department of African & African American Studies, Washington University in St. Louis

Sidney D. Watson, JD
Jane and Bruce Robert Professor
Center of Health Studies, School of Law, St. Louis University

Adia Harvey-Wingfield, PhD
Mary Tileston Hemenway Professor of Arts & Sciences
Professor of Sociology
Department of Sociology, Washington University in St. Louis

Carol Camp Yeakey, PhD
Marshall Snow Professor of Education, Urban Studies, International and Area Studies, African and African American Studies, and American Culture Studies
Department of Education, Washington University in St. Louis

City of St. Louis Staff

Vernon C Mitchell Jr., PhD
Director, Civil Rights Enforcement Agency

Johnathan Strong
Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer

Organizations & Institutions

Action St. Louis

Missouri Historical Society

University of Missouri – St. Louis

Washington University in St. Louis

Land Acknowledgment for St. Louis City

St. Louis stands today on the ancestral home of many indigenous nations, including the Osage, Missouria, Illini, and Otoe peoples.

Land
Acknowledgment

We, the St. Louis Reparations Commission, acknowledge that the land on which St. Louis stands today is the ancestral home of many Native American nations, including the Osage, Missouria, Illini, and Otoe peoples. Before the arrival of European settlers, these communities lived, traded, and maintained complex societies along the banks of the Mississippi River.

The establishment of St. Louis in 1764 marked the beginning of the forced displacement of these Native populations. Over time, through a combination of treaties, coercion, and violent removal, Indigenous peoples were systematically pushed from their ancestral lands to make way for the expansion of European settlement. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 intensified this process, as tribes were forcibly relocated westward, erasing their presence from the region.

Today, we honor the ongoing contributions of Indigenous peoples to this land and acknowledge the deep and lasting impacts of colonization, displacement, and cultural erasure. This acknowledgment is a step toward recognizing the historical injustices that continue to affect Indigenous communities and a commitment to fostering justice and healing for all.

Executive Summary: St. Louis Reparations Commission Final Report

The City of St. Louis Reparations Commission presents this report following an 18-month process aimed at assessing the historical and ongoing racial injustices experienced by Black residents of St. Louis. Formed under Mayor Tishaura Jones' Executive Order No. 75 in December 2022, the Commission was established to "assess the history of slavery, segregation and other race-based harms in the City of St. Louis; explore the present-day manifestations of that history; and, ultimately, recommend a proposal to begin repairing the harms that have been inflicted." Through historical research, public input, and collaboration with experts, this report provides an in-depth analysis of the ways in which racialized harm continues to impact Black St. Louisans and offers a framework for reparations in key areas such as housing, education, public health, and economic justice.

Background and Context

St. Louis, a city with a deep history of racial injustice, played a pivotal role in the institution of slavery in Missouri. The Commission traces this legacy through the state's history, focusing on how the city's location along the Mississippi River made it a hub for the domestic slave trade and set into motion centuries of exploitation, systemic discrimination, and state-sanctioned violence endured by Black residents of St. Louis, a reality that has left an indelible mark on the community overall. The Commission's findings show how chattel slavery, Jim Crow segregation, redlining, and other racially discriminatory policies created long-term barriers to wealth accumulation, health, and education for Black residents.

The report emphasizes the ongoing effects of these systems, which are seen in modern disparities in housing, employment, education, and life expectancy. Public health data, for example, shows that Black residents in certain zip codes experience significantly shorter life expectancies than their white counterparts just a few miles away. Generations of systemic neglect, underinvestment, and discriminatory policies, especially in predominately Black neighborhoods in north city, have contributed to high poverty rates, deteriorating infrastructure, and limited economic opportunities for Black residents.

Methodology

The Commission's approach was grounded in a combination of historical analysis, expert consultation, and community engagement. The Commission conducted 27 public meetings, allowing residents to share their personal stories and perspectives on the need for reparations. The Commission also consulted with experts in areas including economics, sociology, history, law, and public health. These efforts were supplemented by research into existing reparations frameworks, such as the United Nations' principles on reparations, and by reviewing the models adopted by other municipalities and states, including those in California and Illinois.

The Commission's recommendations were informed by six core areas identified as essential for reparative justice: housing and neighborhood development, education, public health, economic justice, criminal legal system reform, and cultural preservation.

Findings and Recommendations

1. Housing and Neighborhood Development: The legacy of redlining, discriminatory lending practices, and the destruction of Black neighborhoods through urban renewal projects has left many Black residents of St. Louis without access to affordable and safe housing. Public testimony and historical data show that Black families have been systematically denied opportunities to build generational wealth through homeownership. The report also highlights how Black communities were displaced by projects like the Mill Creek Valley urban renewal in the 1950s, which razed a thriving Black neighborhood. The report calls for robust investment in affordable housing, homeownership assistance, and the rebuilding of historically disinvested Black communities to address these long-standing disparities.

2. Education: The report identifies disparities in educational resources and outcomes as a critical issue. Black students in St. Louis continue to attend underfunded schools, where they are less likely to receive the same quality of education as their white peers. These educational disparities perpetuate the cycle of poverty and limit opportunities for economic mobility. The Commission calls for increased investment in K-12 education, with an emphasis on culturally relevant curricula, financial literacy, and expanded access to higher education for Black students.

3. Public Health: Public health data presented in the report reveals stark health inequities between Black and white residents of St. Louis. The report finds that Black residents face higher rates of chronic illnesses, maternal mortality, and infant mortality, often due to systemic medical racism and lack of access to quality healthcare. Neighborhoods that were historically redlined are also disproportionately affected by environmental hazards, contributing to these disparities. The Commission recommends investment in healthcare infrastructure and community-based health initiatives to address these inequities.

4. Economic Justice: The report underscores the economic barriers Black St. Louisans face, tracing them back to slavery and subsequent exclusion from wealth-building opportunities. The Commission argues that the racial wealth gap is one of the most significant legacies of slavery in St. Louis. Black residents were systematically excluded from New Deal programs and post-World War II housing benefits that helped many white families build wealth. The Commission calls for financial reparations, including direct cash payments, zero-interest loans, and grants for Black entrepreneurs.

5. Criminal Justice and Policing: The Commission highlights the role of state violence and policing in the oppression of Black St. Louisans, pointing to high rates of police violence, mass incarceration, and inhumane conditions in city jails. Data shows that Black residents are disproportionately subjected to police brutality and that the city's criminal justice system continues to perpetuate racial inequality. The report also discusses the deaths of Black individuals in custody, drawing attention to the need for jail oversight and systemic reform. The Commission recommends reforms aimed at reducing police violence and addressing the root

causes of mass incarceration.

6. Cultural Preservation and Memory: The final area of focus is preserving and uplifting Black cultural heritage in St. Louis. The report acknowledges the significant contributions Black St. Louisans have made to the city's cultural, economic, and social fabric. From the arts to activism, Black residents have played a key role in shaping St. Louis, despite centuries of marginalization and oppression. The Commission calls for a public apology from the City of St. Louis and investments in cultural preservation, including the creation of museums, memorials, and public spaces that celebrate Black history and contributions to the city.

The full list of recommendations can be found starting on page **115.**

Conclusion

The St. Louis Reparations Commission's final report provides a clear and detailed path toward addressing the racial injustices that have plagued the city for centuries. Through a combination of financial reparations, policy reforms, and community investment, the Commission's recommendations aim to start the reparative process caused by slavery and its legacies. This report is a call to action for the city to embrace its responsibility in fostering racial equity and healing, with the hope of building a more just and inclusive future for all St. Louis residents.

"This is not just a story about trauma and hurt and pain and oppression. It is an uplifting story about survival and how Black people in this city contributed to what it is."

— *Gwen Moore*

Creating the St. Louis Reparations Commission

The commission acknowledges the tremendous work that St. Louis organizations and organizers have done to push for reparations. For many decades, activists and organizations in St. Louis have sought out collaborative ways to create their views of reparations and justice for Black St. Louisans. Such foundational efforts will not be missed or ignored throughout the report, as organizations such as Action St. Louis, ArchCity Defenders, Faith for Justice, and the Organization for Black Struggle—to name only some of the many groups that have made this commission possible—have paved the way for this conversation to even begin. Without them, this commission and report would be nonexistent. The commission also wants to acknowledge community members' role in this process, as without community input and support, there would be no reason to enact this commission or create holistic recommendations in good faith.

Mayor Tishaura Jones is an advocate for reparations for Black St. Louisans and she became a founding member of Mayors Organized for Reparations and Equity in 2021. Mayor Jones signed Executive Order No. 75 in December 2022 to establish a City of St. Louis Reparations Commission. The Reparations Commission was given the task of assessing the impact of historical race-based harms and present-day manifestations of race-based oppression on Black people in the City of St. Louis, as well as provide a recommendation for repairing these harms. Through this deep dive into anti-Black structures within St. Louis, the Reparations Commission hopes to bring forward concrete, implementable recommendations.

The Commissioners

In 2023, an open call was made to St. Louisans to nominate themselves or others to serve on the commission. All commissioners were required to be residents of the City of St. Louis.

The commission seats were assigned as follows:

Commissioner 1: Shall be a civil rights advocate

Commissioner 2: Shall be an attorney

Commissioner 3: Shall be a clergy member

Commissioner 4: Shall be an academic

Commissioner 5: Shall be a public health representative

Commissioner 6: Shall be a youth representative

All other Commissioners: The remaining commissioners shall be St. Louis City residents who have been impacted by systemic racism and/or racial trauma.

In March 2023, Mayor Jones appointed the following nine members to the commission:

Reverend Kevin D. Anthony

Reverend Anthony (he/him) is the Pastor of Pilgrim Congregational Church.

Jada Brooks

Jada Brooks (she/her) is an undergraduate student at Harris-Stowe State University.

David Cunningham, PhD

David Cunningham (he/him) is Professor and Chair of Sociology at Washington University.

Kimberly Franks, Esq.

Kimberly Franks (she/her) is the business owner of Liberated Roots Collection and a lawyer.

William Foster

William Foster (he/him) is an external auditor, acting in his own self-interest, and serves as a resident of the City of St. Louis.

Delesha George, Commission Secretary

Delesha George (she/her) is a founder and principal consultant for The Monday Partnership, a consulting group committed to supporting collaborative efforts among community organizations.

Gwen Moore

Gwen Moore (she/her) is a curator at the Missouri Historical Society and focuses her research on the St. Louis Black experience.

Kayla Reed, Commission Chair

Kayla Reed (she/her) is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Action St. Louis, a racial justice power-building organization.

Dr. Will Ross, MD, Commission Vice-Chair

Dr. Will Ross (he/him) is a Professor and the Associate Dean for Diversity and Principal Officer for Community Partnerships at Washington University School of Medicine.

> "Racism is not just slavery and Jim Crow. It is the daily violence that is enacted on our communities each and every day we live in this White supremacist society."
> —Representative Cori Bush

Foundations

The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA, n.d.), as one of the foremost organizations in the country advocating for financial compensation for the descendants of former slaves in the United States, defines reparations as: "A process of repairing, healing and restoring a people injured because of their group identity and in violation of their fundamental human rights by governments, corporations, institutions and families." N'COBRA notes that reparations can take as many forms as necessary to fully and equitably address the full scope of injury caused by chattel slavery and its continuing vestiges. Established material forms of reparations include cash payments, land, economic development, and repatriation resources, particularly to those who are descendants of enslaved Africans.

The Commission also sought to include discussion of competing views and conceptions of reparations initiatives. Perhaps most prominently, William A. Darity Jr. and Kirsten Mullen have called for a federal reparations plan, on the grounds that the federal government—a key culpable party for enabling many of the institutional atrocities addressed within reparations initiatives—is additionally the only institution with the means to enact a transfer at a large enough scale to close the racial wealth gap.

However, recognizing the urgent need for redress as well as the significant legislative barriers to passing H.R. 40 (a federal bill to establish the Commission to Study and Develop Reparations Proposals for African Americans), municipal-level calls for reparations for Black Americans have increased in urgency across the nation. To date, Chicago and Evanston, Illinois; Amherst, Massachusetts; Asheville, and Durham, North Carolina; Kansas City, Missouri; and San Francisco, California, are among the growing number of cities that have created reparations commissions or task forces for Black Americans.

In July 2024, California allocated $12 million out of its $297.8 billion state budget to roll out a reparations program (Blinder, 2024). These funds are not earmarked for direct cash payments, but rather toward efforts to develop the infrastructure for administering reparations. Related legislation may take years to enact. In 2021, Evanston, Illinois became the first city to offer Black Americans reparations for past housing discrimination, though their process has been beset by legal challenges (Yang & Young, 2024). In May 2024, the conservative nonprofit Judicial Watch filed a civil lawsuit against the city, claiming the reparations program is unconstitutional (Hill, 2024). Supporters of the program say the lawsuit is an attempt to undermine the fundamental purpose of reparations—i.e., addressing past harms against Black people.

New York and New Jersey also launched state-backed reparations task forces in 2024. The New Jersey Council took the position that all Black people in the state—i.e., descendants of enslaved people, as well as Black immigrants who are subjected to ongoing structural racism and segregation—should be eligible for reparations. Such efforts have recognized the value of direct cash payments as well as programs that address past harms, such as down payment assistance to purchase homes and small business grants, as important modes of redistribution and redress. In other cases, municipalities additionally have sought to address targeted historical harms. For instance, officials in Manhattan Beach, California, voted to employ eminent domain to dispossess Willa and Charles Bruce of their oceanfront property in 1924, blocking the presence of a Black-owned resort along the beach. In 2022, Bruce family descendants were awarded the land for "Bruce's Beach," which they later sold back to Los Angeles County for approximately $20 million (Bunn, 2022).

As part of this growing movement, the City of St. Louis Reparations Commission has been attuned to, and in dialogue with, existing municipal initiatives, to gain insight into frameworks and best practices. Perhaps the most central consideration along these lines is alignment with the United Nations Principles on Reparations, which assert that reparative efforts "must be adequate, effective, prompt, and . . . proportional to the gravity of the violations and the harm suffered," while incorporating principles of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and a guaranty of non-repetition (OHCHR, n.d.). Darity and Mullen (2020) offer likeminded criteria for an effective municipal reparations plan, emphasizing that such plans must include acknowledgement and apology for harms committed, provide material redress for that harm, and bring closure through a mutual understanding between the beneficiaries (white Americans) and victims (Black Americans) of the oppressive systems that were implemented. Crucially, they also emphasize that sub-federal reparations plans should not attempt to absolve the federal government of its responsibility to provide redress for its role in such harms (Moore, 2023).

The City of St. Louis Reparations Commission has built its work on these foundations, rooting its methodology in historical insight, statistical patterns, expert knowledge, and lived experiences. We feel strongly that, when analyzing the impacts of racism, lived experiences provide vital and needed insight into the actual realities facing Black St. Louisans, and the many public meetings held by the commission have welcomed public testimony into the record. Those meetings also often featured a broad range of topic experts sharing their knowledge with community members and the commission. Topic experts included Gwen Moore, Dr. Will Ross, and Professors David Cunningham, Walter Johnson, Jerome E. Morris, and Geoff Ward. Each commissioner also contributed their experiences and knowledge to internal and public meetings. The commission treated this process as one of learning and unlearning, and highlighted the importance of an open mind to new perspectives, frameworks, and findings.

As noted above, the commission also based its findings on community insights. The commission held 27 public meetings, in which St. Louis residents were invited to share their opinions and experiences in a town hall format. Hearing directly from community members was one of the most impactful parts of this process; centering community and community members' needs is necessary for creating recommendations that meet the real concerns of residents. The commission thanks every community member who added their voice to this process.

Along with the internal and external meetings, two working groups were created to advance the commission's process. The first working group focused on facilitating the writing of the report, including mobilizing issue experts, writers, and researchers to help guide the key area sections that follow. The second working group focused on community engagement, including public outreach and the collection of oral historical narratives to bring a personalized lens to undergird the report's foci and conclusions.

Guided by public testimony and an initial analysis of historical and ongoing anti-Black injustice in St. Louis, the commission decided upon five key areas of focus in the report: Housing & Neighborhoods, Education, Public Health, Jobs & Economy, and Policing & State Violence. Our detailed discussions of each of these core areas incorporates historical context, personal narratives and testimony, issue-specific recommendations, and sources for further learning.

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Public Comment Overview & Themes

This summary of key issues associated with each of our core areas stems from discussions within the 27 meetings held between April 2023 and September 2024. All meetings were recorded and can be found on the city's website or the City of St. Louis YouTube page.

Housing and Neighborhoods
- Destruction of public housing
- Ownership of property
- Housing stipends/price reductions
- Role of housing programs in segregation
- Neglectful landlords and tenant rights
- Neglect of city infrastructure in maintaining public spaces and neighborhoods
- Need for community investment rather than downtown development
- Using vacancies for community development projects
- Need for equitable access to green space
- Improvement of public transportation
- Vacancy issues & generational lineage to houses
- Home repair and neighborhood rebuilding
- Loss and displacement
- Loss of community heritage and culture
- Urban decay and neglect

Education
- Financial literacy and economic empowerment
- Addressing social issues and oppressive history in the curriculum
- Investing more in quality education

Public Health
- Health of children
- Violence
- Medical racism
- Black mother mortality rate
- Food Access
- Access to free mental health services and therapy
- Access to free medical care
- Medical deserts and inaccessibility
- Environmental health concerns

Jobs & Economy

- Disparity in lending in mortgage loans
- Trust Fund
- Zero-interest loans
- Want for cash payment reparations
- Need more job opportunities
- Minority contractors should have tighter restrictions
- Living wage jobs with benefits

Policing & State Violence

- The connection between public health and state violence
- Police violence
- Jail oversight and deaths of incarcerated individuals
- Police don't show up in certain neighborhoods

Quotes from Public Testimony

"Historically in St. Louis, Black people on both the north and the west side have been impacted by systemic racism, gentrification at one point; even now we are dealing with the housing crisis. Historically, we've seen ourselves impacted by systemic racism and redlining, and that has stopped us from being able to build equity and being able to get property and develop our neighborhoods as we want it, and now with the way addiction has disproportionately impacted Black people, particularly Black women, Black people are still left without the ability to access property, access safe and affordable housing options and we're left under-resourced and in underdeveloped areas when historically we've continued to have to fight for just the scraps."
-Kennard Williams, Organizing Manager at Action St. Louis

"I really hope that we take a very capacious view of reparations here and that yes, we start thinking about enslavement and the vestiges of enslavement here in St. Louis, but there are so many permutations and manifestations of racism and anti-blackness in St. Louis. And I really hope we talk about housing, I hope we talk about jobs. I hope we talk about the criminal legal system. I hope we talk about homelessness."
-Blake Strode, Executive Director of Arch City Defenders

"The effects of slavery have trickled down even at this very moment, where I have to navigate this world differently due to the anti-Blackness that is unfortunately spreading worldwide. My skin causes some to cower and fear, and stereotypes have been set upon me such that some view me as vicious. Assumptions, stereotypes, and anti-Blackness have affected me greatly from slavery to today. In conclusion, the Black residents of thve City of St. Louis deserve reparations. It will never atone for the weakness and brutality that my ancestors went through and my family and I still experience. But it is a step in the right direction."
-Jayden Brooks, Nursing Policy Fellow at The Scholarship Foundation

"But I just want to make you aware that we have to repair. The root word for reparation is repair. We have to repair ourselves. And most importantly, repair the system. One thing about the civil rights movement is they changed policies and systems. If they wrote us all a check tomorrow and the system remains the way it is, then it's all for naught."
-Gene Gordon, Founder of Descendants of American Slaves for Economic and Social Justice

"I don't regret moving back here, but I do second guess myself because from the outside looking in, St. Louis looks like it's moving forward. But once you're here you understand that some of these things are just the same and it's a facade."
- Travis Cotton, Resident

"So whatever reparations that we have, it's not going to stop me from saying what has happened. It's not going to make me not want to hold people accountable because I just don't want us to receive reparations for us to shut us up."
-Ebony Stegel, Resident

Slavery in St. Louis

> "Slavery is thought, by some, to be mild in Missouri, when compared with the cotton, sugar and rice growing states, yet no part of our slave-holding country is more noted for the barbarity of its inhabitants than St. Louis."
>
> —William Wells Brown (1847, p. 28)

Introduction

William Wells Brown experienced the horrors of slavery in St. Louis firsthand. Born into enslavement near Lexington, Kentucky, he was sold to an enslaver in St. Louis as a young boy. He was sold multiple times to enslavers in St. Louis before he reached age 20; at one point, Brown's enslaver rented him to a Mr. Walker, a prominent trader of enslaved people in St. Louis. Brown was forced to participate in the exchange of enslaved people along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, which exposed him to slavery in the "Little Dixie" region of Missouri and several areas of the Deep South during the river journey to the slave-trading markets of New Orleans. Whether Brown was putting rhetorical emphasis on the brutality of slavery in St. Louis or spoke from experience, both his autobiography and several other accounts attest to the unique challenges of enslavement in St. Louis, where tensions over slavery and freedom escalated in slavery's borderlands.

William Wells Brown. (1880), Courtesy of My Southern Home.

The general cultural and institutional history and legacy of slavery in the colonial territory that became Missouri, and in post-colonial St. Louis, Missouri, is relatively underdeveloped compared to the depth of research on slavery in the Deep South. Many studies of American slavery have paid less attention to border south states, and those studies addressing Missouri and St. Louis in greater depth typically focus on more specific issues, such as the Freedom Suits. A more comprehensive understanding is only beginning to come into view, aided by works of historians and projects including research and interpretive efforts at area parks, museums, and universities.

St. Louis emerged historically and geographically at a nexus which shaped a distinct culture and institution of slavery. Following Missouri statehood in 1821, white settlers from the Southeastern U.S.—Virginia and North Carolina, along with border south states Kentucky and Tennessee—rushed into the new slave state, establishing areas of extensive slaveholding in key areas of its fertile river valley (Trexler, 1914). The city arose in a region where rural enslavement intersected with slavery in a growing urban environment, where enslavers held large agrarian estates outside of the city-maintained townhomes where they conducted

business; invested in railroads, banking, and industry; and shaped local, state, and national government. Established near the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, St. Louis became a place where the small slaveholding households of most of Missouri and the larger-scale plantation slavery of "Little Dixie," the Bootheel, and other rural areas overlapped. This created a landscape of properties with enslavers holding a few people in slavery alongside a wealthy elite who held as many as 30 to 70 people in slavery at a given time, as well as networks of transportation, goods, and services connecting St. Louis to the culture and institution of slavery throughout Missouri and the Mississippi River valley.

St. Louis's position at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers also contributed to its emergence as a major slave-trading port. The domestic slave trade boomed following abolition of the transatlantic trade in 1808, and Missouri enslavers and intermediaries sought to reap high profits by supplying the increased demand for enslaved labor in the Deep South. St. Louis was key to this trafficking. Finally, St. Louis's existence within a slave state bordering the free state of Illinois made it a space where struggles over slavery and freedom were intensified. Enslavers, enslaved people, and pro- and anti-slavery advocates contested the expansion and continued existence of slavery through violent conflict, legal and political mobilization, escape, and other methods of resistance. St. Louis was one of many cities to establish an anti-abolition society led by prominent enslavers and city leaders, and the group successfully lobbied for state legislation prohibiting the education of free and enslaved African Americans, hoping this and other measures restricting freedom of movement and religion might stem the tide of abolition.

Historian Diane Mutti Burke (2010), in discussing the greater intimacy among small-slaveholding households in Missouri as compared to large plantation models of the Deep South has furthered the argument that this close proximity between enslaved people and enslaver produced more frequent encounters that often led to contempt and violent confrontations:

> The personal and work interactions of Missouri slavery were intimate, exposing both slaves and owners to a vast array of human exchanges ranging from empathy and cooperation to hatred and brutal violence. Although white Missourians long argued that slavery was more benign in their border location, the historical evidence suggests that this was not true in most cases. Slavery differed in significant ways in Missouri, but this never translated into an overall 'better' system of bondage. Missouri slavery was often just as cruel and exploitative as anywhere in the South, (p. 6)

Indeed, close proximity often begat violent confrontations, which St. Louis records regularly document. In her memoir, Lucy Berry Delaney (189_) recalls that because she was inexperienced at doing laundry as a young girl and spoke up to defend herself, her enslaver Martha Berry Mitchell attempted to beat her with "shovel, tongs, and broomstick" (p. 28). Because Delaney resisted the beatings, the Mitchells arranged to have her sold. In 1834, at his sister-in-law's St. Louis mansion, General William S. Harney whipped Hannah, an enslaved household servant and mother of a young child "with a twenty-five-cent piece of rawhide," beating her repeatedly on her "head, stomach, sides, back, arms, and legs," for purportedly losing his keys (Sandweiss, 2011, p. 185). Hannah died the next day (Adams, 2001). Even though the event caused national outrage, the jury in Harney's trial acquitted him (Adams, 2001). William Wells Brown observed Daniel D. Page chasing an enslaved person and striking at him

with a whip, and recounted how Page had tied up Delphia, whom he enslaved, and "whipped her nearly to death" (Brown, 1847, p. 40). In light of noted economic incentives to sell people enslaved in St. Louis and other parts of Missouri in more lucrative southern markets, such conflicts between enslavers and those they enslaved commonly resulted in the separation of families through sale—just one of many ways slavery in St. Louis became intertwined with wider regional and national histories and legacies of slavery.

In so far as reparations efforts intend to ameliorate cultural and institutional legacies of slavery in St. Louis, consistent with a transitional justice focus on ensuring "non-repetition," this complex and unique history poses several challenging yet important considerations (Curry, 2007). A large body of social science research indicates that area histories of slavery are predictive of a broad array of subsequent patterns of racialized conflict, violence, and inequality, continuing still today. These studies associate histories of slavery with incidence of lynching in the late 19th and early 20th century, and with homicide, hate crime, incarceration, capital punishment, heart disease, infant mortality, residential segregation, white political conservatism, and other outcomes today. Several studies associate legacies of slavery with persistent white population support of repressive criminal legal system policies and practices (e.g., incarceration and capital punishment).

In Missouri, such policies are more consistently supported in deeply conservative rural areas where slavery was more concentrated, yet disproportionately impact populations in the urban communities like St. Louis. Similarly, though the proportion of the population enslaved in St. Louis was small in comparison to places like the Mississippi Delta, black migration from the Lower Mississippi River Valley in the post-Civil War era likely intensifies legacies of slavery in St. Louis through inter-generational, cross-state transmission of harms originating elsewhere but accumulated here. Finally, several studies of the legacies of slavery and other historical racialized violence have suggested possible strategies for mitigating these intergenerational impacts, and these insights might inform reparations efforts.

Foundations

Slavery existed in what became St. Louis among Indigenous people, but took on different forms than the economic chattel systems that Europeans introduced; it was French colonizers who began transforming Indigenous enslavement customs as they introduced race-based chattel slavery into what is now St. Louis (Schmidt, 2022). After Jesuit missionaries had first settled along the River des Peres in St. Louis and then relocated to Kaskaskia, Illinois, they established the earliest plantation in the region, where they initially enslaved Indigenous people. But by 1719, they began acquiring enslaved Africans shipped to New Orleans and up the Mississippi River. By 1720, they were the largest enslavers in what was then known as Illinois Country (Schmidt, 2022).

After large-scale slavery had become established in the Louisiana colony, in 1724 the French metropole and colonial leaders revised the Code Noir ("Black Codes"), first implemented in 1685 in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, to more specifically apply to controlling the growing enslaved population in French-controlled Louisiana (which at the time encompassed Missouri) (Missouri State Archives, n.d.a). All were required to practice Catholicism; enslaved people could not gather without permission and supervision from their enslavers, nor could

they conduct business with a free person without their enslaver's consent; attempts at escape were punished by branding with the fleur-de-lys, now the symbol of St. Louis. Free people of color could be enslaved for harboring a person attempting to escape enslavement and barred from holding possessions. The Codes outlined detailed punishments for enslaved people for a myriad of infractions. As several historians have demonstrated, "Enforcement of the Code Noir proved difficult throughout French colonial Louisiana, resulting in the cultivation of a brutal system of enslavement that nonetheless failed to control all forms of close contact between people legally identified as Black and white" (Pasquier, 2024). For instance, while the code forbade enslavers from torturing, mutilating, or killing enslaved people, those who did were rarely punished (Le Code Noir, 1724; Missouri State Archives, n.d.a).

Revisions within the Louisiana Code made it harsher, less flexible, and more racially codified than the 1685 Code established for Saint-Domingue. While the 1685 Code prohibited concubinage (out-of-wedlock relationships) between white and Black people, it permitted interracial marriages. The 1724 code, however, forbade all interracial relationships. In the 1685 code, enslavers were permitted to free enslaved people at their own discretion; in the 1724 code, they had to have the approval of the Superior Council to manumit enslaved people. More restrictive measures regulating the lives of free Black people and preventing the organization of maroon communities composed of people who ran away reveal white colonists' fears of revolt or rebellion and of losing power to a growing Black population, especially as a number of free creoles of color began amassing property and influence in places such as St. Louis.

Thus, by the time Pierre Laclede and Auguste Chouteau established St. Louis as a settlement and fur trading post in 1765, slavery was already well-established. Enslaved Africans and Indigenous people were central to the founding of St. Louis. Both Laclede and Chouteau held Indigenous and African people in slavery, as did other colonial settlers (Piernas; 1770; Wright, 2002; Greene, 2024). In the 1760s, St. Louis briefly became part of Spanish territory before returning to French control. The Spanish colonial regime implemented its own laws over the Louisiana colony in 1769, which included outlawing the enslavement of Indigenous people, but largely tolerated the continued practice of the Code Noir (Missouri State Archives, n.d.a). The Louisiana Purchase in 1804 brought U.S. territorial law to Missouri, which included a section entitled "Slaves" based largely on Virginia slave codes while retaining many of the Code Noir's provisions (Missouri State Archives, n.d.a).

American Slavery in St. Louis

When Missouri became part of U.S. territory and eventually a state, elements of the Code Noir were incorporated into existing U.S. laws surrounding slavery, and the Code Noir continued to be practiced culturally. When he heard rumors that Missouri's transition to United States territory might put the continuation of slavery in the region at risk, Auguste Chouteau, as an enslaver of many people and a "staunch defender" of slavery, "spearheaded the formation of a committee to petition incoming American officials to continue in effect the previous regime's slave code" (State Historical Society of Missouri, n.d.). As George Lipsitz has argued, for enslaved people, the transfer of Louisiana from Spain to the United States territory had a great irony: "instead of living under the ambiguous and weak slave codes of Spain, they found themselves living in a country whose Constitution clearly protected slavery and expressly reduced them to the status of property" (Lipsitz, 1991, p. 92). Enslaved people of African descent

reasonably assumed they might become free when Missouri became part of the United States because of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787; however, French settlers and others migrating from eastern slaveholding states fought hard to protect their status and prevent manumission through the Code Noir and new laws intended to further restrict enslaved and free Black lives in Missouri.

After Missouri became U.S. territory, enslavers from the Upper South, seeking to enhance their prospects, began migrating from places such as Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, bringing enslaved people and plantation-slavery economic practices and attitudes with them. Missouri's application for statehood in 1819 sparked a national crisis over slavery. Members of Congress battled over the expansion of slavery into new U.S. territories and states west of the Mississippi River and maintaining the balance between slave and free states. Soon-to-be Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton promoted the argument that slavery was a "positive good" during "Missouri Crisis" of 1818-1820 (Johnson, 2020, p. 82). Walter Johnson (2020) writes that, according to Benton, "Slavery was good for Black people . . . because it channeled their feral energies into productive labor and introduced their heathen hearts to the gospel truths of Christianity. Slavery was good for white slaveholders . . . because it allowed them to convert savage wilderness into staple crops that could be sold on the open market. Finally, slavery was good for non-slaveholding white people because it alleviated class differences among whites by providing the South with a racially distinct working class—Black slavery, he noted, was the foundation of white equality" (p. 82).

Missouri Compromise Map. (n.d.), Courtesy of History GCP

The Missouri Compromise of 1820 ultimately determined that Missouri would enter the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state. Missouri's constitution, ratified by delegates who met in St. Louis's Mansion House Hotel, legalized slavery in the state and granted the General Assembly power to pass laws preventing the entry of free people of color into the State. Johnson details how "[r]esidents of St. Louis celebrated the Missouri Compromise by creating a giant illuminated display of a happy slave, grateful for the opportunity to follow his owner to Missouri" (Johnson, 2020, p. 82).

As Diane Mutti Burke's (2010) research has shown, much of enslavement in Missouri consisted of "small slaveholdings," with close to 90 percent of all Missouri enslavers holding less than ten people in bondage, rather than large-scale plantations extracting labor from large numbers of enslaved people. But St. Louis, existing where the Missouri river meets the Mississippi, was on the edge of "Little Dixie," which consisted of the counties bordering the Missouri river. There, the fertile soil attracted white Southerners who replicated the plantation systems and racial hierarchies of the Deep South, creating slave societies with enslaved people numbering 20 to 30 percent, or greater, of the counties' populations.

The number of enslaved people in Missouri doubled from 57,891 in 1840 to 114,509 in 1860 (U.S. Federal Census, 1840, 1860). In St. Louis City and County, the population of enslaved people grew to a height of close to 6,000 by 1850, but began to decrease to 4,346 by 1860 (U.S. Federal Census, 1850, 1860). A major contributing factor to this decrease was the increasing demand for enslaved labor in the Deep South, coupled with the flooding of primarily Irish and German immigrants into the city together with migrants from east of the Mississippi, which provided another widely available and cheap wage labor force. At the same time, enslavers were finding it increasingly less profitable to hold people in slavery as antislavery agitation challenged the institution and a growing number of enslaved people and their allies were resisting enslavement through escape and other means. These factors contributed to enslavers increasingly turning to an immigrant wage labor force which they could hire and fire at will without paying for their upkeep in food, clothing, and shelter, and for whom they did not need to provide care in infancy or old age when they were not reliable sources of labor (Burke, 2010).

One of the horrors of borderlands slavery in St. Louis was the high numbers of families it tore apart (Burke, 2010, p. 3). The pattern of small-scale slaveholding in St. Louis and the frequency with which enslaved people were rented out or sold posed a major threat to the integrity of enslaved families and communities. Small-scale slaveholding meant that most enslaved families did not reside on the same property for generations as was the case in larger and more economically stable plantations of the Deep South, but instead were separated across multiple enslavers' properties. With restrictions on when they could take a break from their labor and travel to other properties to visit friends and family members, several were infrequently able to be with their families. The hiring system was further disruptive to families, as a family member could be hired off the property for as much as several years at a time.

Many enslaved people also faced the threat of separation through sale. This economy, based on the frequent exchange of enslaved people and St. Louis's access to major waterways, made the city a key locale for trading people within St. Louis and Missouri but also for selling people downriver to meet demands for enslaved labor in the Deep South, and in the nineteenth century it soon became the home to the largest slave market in Missouri. Several traders of enslaved people owned properties in St. Louis where they held enslaved people in pens and sold people at auction. Bounty hunter and slave trader Bernard Lynch notoriously ran a few pens in St. Louis where he imprisoned people to be sold as well as people who had been hunted, captured, and punished for seeking their freedom. Enslaved people sold to settle estates were also regularly auctioned off on the Old Courthouse steps.

Throughout early St. Louis's history, state policies and community actions introduced increasingly harsher measures of violence, policing, and incarceration of enslaved and free Black people in the city. In the 1820s, the Missouri General Assembly directed each county to establish slave patrols for the purpose of monitoring and suppressing plots among enslaved people to rise up against their enslavers and the local white population (Missouri State Archives, n.d.b). These patrols were authorized to "visit negro quarters, and other places suspected of unlawful assemblages of slaves;" either the patrol or the justice of the peace was authorized to administer up to ten or thirty-nine lashes, respectively, upon any enslaved person "found at such assembly, or who shall be found strolling about from one plantation to another without a

pass. . ." (Missouri Revised Statutes 1825). An 1845 revision of the law provided the patrols pay of twenty-five cents an hour for their efforts to use force to instill fear among enslaved people and to control the enslaved population to quell white fears of rebellion (Missouri Revised Statutes, 1845).

Enslaved people in St. Louis faced the possibility of incarceration and state punishment for a wide range of reasons, including attempted escape or uprising, breaking one of the state's slave codes or retaliating against their enslaver, or suing for their freedom. When Sarah escaped enslavement to Henry Shaw with her four-year-old son in 1854, Shaw advertised a $400 reward for their capture and return, and paid bounty hunter Bernard Lynch $20 to arrest or obtain information about Sarah and her son (Missouri Botanical Garden Archives, 1854; Shaw, 1854).

Broadside advertisement. (1847), Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society

Again in 1855, Shaw sent bounty hunters after Jim Kennerly, Esther, and Esther's two children when they escaped Shaw's Tower Grove property, joining a group of other enslaved St. Louisans seeking freedom across the Mississippi River. While Kennerly escaped, Esther and her children were captured. Shaw paid Lynch $100 for apprehending Esther in Illinois and returning her to him (Missouri Botanical Garden Archives, 1855). Two months later, Shawpaid Lynch for imprisoning Sarah for 41 days and Esther for 71 days in his "slave pen" as punishment, and authorized Lynch to sell Esther south to Mississippi, severing her from her children and cashing in on the Deep South domestic trade (Brown, 1847).

Enslavers who did not wish to administer beatings themselves or did not have an overseer to authorize to do so were permitted to send enslavers to St. Louis's prison to be whipped for a small fee. William Wells Brown (1847) describes how his enslaver dispatched him to the jail to punish him for overfilling the wine glasses of his guests, leading them to spill the wine on their clothing. "The next morning he gave me a note to carry to the jailer, and a dollar in money to give to him," Brown wrote (p. 54). Because he did not yet know how to read, Brown asked a sailor to read the note to him, and found out he was being sent to the jail to be whipped. Though he ultimately regretted it, to avoid the beating, Brown deceived another man, giving him the note and money to bring to the jail. The man was stripped, tied down, and beaten with twenty lashes. Brown retrieved the note the jailer dispatched to be returned to his enslaver, which read, "By your direction, I have given your boy twenty lashes. He is a very saucy boy, and tried to make me believe that he did not belong to you, and I put it on to him well for lying to me" (Brown, 1847, pp. 57–58).

As Kelly Kennington (2017) and others have detailed, enslaved people could also be imprisoned if they pursued freedom in court. The court, or even the enslavers against whom they were suing, could order the plaintiffs to be jailed supposedly for their "safekeeping" to protect the litigant from possible retaliation, harm, deprivation of food and clothing, control, or influence from their enslaver, and to keep their enslaver from removing them from the court's

jurisdiction. Enslavers, however, also put bondspeople who sued them in jail for their own convenience: as punishment for filing suit, to avoid providing for the basic needs of the plaintiff, to prevent the person from escaping, or to avoid paying a bond to guarantee the litigant's safekeeping and support during the suit.

Thus, enslavers shifted responsibility for using their means to provide food, clothing, and shelter to people whom they might soon no longer be able to claim to the county officials where the plaintiff sued. Imprisoned plaintiffs were regularly ordered by sheriffs and jailers to be hired out during their imprisonment to pay for their keeping in jail. This imprisonment could last several years as freedom suits dragged out, and often became a space where freedom-seekers suffered abuses, unsanitary conditions, and cramped cells—more so than white prisoners— even when their confinement was intended to protect them from violence by their enslaver. Lucy Delaney was imprisoned as a young girl for seventeen months during her freedom suit, and her mother, Polly Wash, filed motions in the court complaining of her daughter's suffering in a cold, damp cell. One man whose 1842 freedom suit dragged on for ten years brought a motion that he had been locked up in a cell of St. Louis's jail where he was "whipped violently on account of his claim for freedom" and "retrained of the reasonable liberty of attending his counsel and the court" (Kennington, 2017, pp. 50, 58–60; Delaney, 189).

As enslaved people and their allies increasingly challenged slavery in Missouri, white enslavers sought greater measures to suppress resistance, anti-slavery activity, and escape. Missouri's slaveholding elite sought to restrict free people of color from migrating into the state for fear that free Black Americans would encourage or aid enslaved people in liberating themselves, or even foment rebellion among the enslaved population.

The Missouri Constitution included provisions for restricting free Black immigration into the state, and in 1835, the General Assembly of the State of Missouri passed an "Act concerning free negroes and mulattoes," declaring that no free Black person could migrate to the state and that free people of color already living in Missouri must apply for licenses to continue residing in the state, providing evidence to the court that they were born in Missouri or lived there prior to the passage of this act, that they were "of good character and behavior," and that they could support themselves through "lawful employment" (Missouri Revised Statues, 1835). And in 1837, Missouri's General Assembly passed a law prohibiting "the publication, circulation, and promulgation of the abolition doctrines." Those convicted faced a two-year imprisonment in the state penitentiary and a fine of up to $1,000. Second-time offenders were imprisoned for twenty years, and a third offence brought a life sentence (Missouri State Archives, n.d.a). In the early 1840s, Missouri began imposing even more restrictive laws controlling free Black people. One of these was "An Act more effectually to prevent free persons of color from entering into the State, and for other purposes," which required people seeking freedom licenses to "enter into a bond to the State, with one or more securities, for his or her good behavior, in a penalty not exceeding one thousand dollars" on the condition of continued "good behavior" (Missouri Revised Statues, 1843).

Such legal measures had wide-ranging repressive effects. When, for instance, in 1844 John and Lucy, together with two people enslaved by Ralph Clayton, made it safely to Chicago with the aid of abolitionists after escaping the plantation of James Russell Bissell, a member of St. Louis's anti-abolition society, Bissell sought to root out the network of people who aided

them, sending an agent out after them and, when unsuccessful at capturing them, advertising in papers for information on the Underground Railroad in attempt to undermine it (Gordon, 2018).

White members of the St. Louis community often took enforcement of control over St. Louis's Black population into their own hands extralegally as well. Enslavers felt especially threatened by the prospect of free and enslaved Black Missourians knowing how to read and write, which they feared would expose them to antislavery ideologies and methods for resistance. While some schools existed for (primarily free) Black St. Louisans early in St. Louis's history, they were eventually suppressed. In 1846, a violent mob of white men threatened the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet, who at the Catholic bishop's direction the year before had established St. Joseph's School for the Colored, teaching elementary school to free Black girls and catechism to enslaved children. The mob's threats to remove the sisters and students by force succeeding in ensuring the school was short-lived, leading the mayor to recommend its closure.

This mob effort to violently suppress Black education led several white members of the St. Louis community to organize more formally to combat abolition and increase control over the Black population. In November of the same year, a large gathering of enslavers met at the Rotunda of the St. Louis Courthouse. According to the Missouri Republican, their purpose was to "aid in the execution of the laws of this state" and "devise some plan for the protection of Slave Property against the evil designs of Abolitionists and others." A "Committee of One Hundred" announced the writing of a preamble and Constitution that would become known as the "St. Louis Anti-Abolitionist Society" (Scharf, 1883). The group's constitution included the establishment of an executive leadership, headed by John O'Fallon as President and twelve Vice Presidents comprising all areas of St. Louis County. They supported the city's Board of Alderman creating ordinances "to prevent all negroes from leaving the home of their masters after dark, whether with or without the permission of their owner or employer," and to prevent "all 'negro preaching' and 'negro teaching'" as those practices were "dangerous to the happiness, quiet and safety of our slave population" (Scharf, 1883, p. 586).

The St. Louis Anti-Abolition Society unanimously approved a petition to the Missouri State Legislature, complaining that state laws on slavery were too lenient and led many enslaved people to disappear with the assistance of "free negroes and mulattoes residing here" and "evil disposed white persons" aiding them in seeking freedom in free states or Canada, "and have set at defiance all attempts of slave owners to recover their property." The petitioners claimed that within the past year, the number of people who had sought freedom had "increased to an extent so alarming, involving the loss of this kind of property to so large an amount" that it had compelled them to petition the legislature: "To provide for the mischief [of] negroes and mulattoes [who] reside among us . . . nearly all of whom are tainted with the poison of Abolition principles and who are continually instilling into the minds of our slaves the most pernicious opinions, rendering them discontented with their situation, and inciting them to escape from the service of their masters."

The petition went on to claim that the existence of Black-led churches for Black people, as well as Black schools, were "a great injury to the value of slave property, as affording to evil disposed persons an opportunity to instill the poison of fanatical principles, without the pos-

sibility of detection, in to the minds of our slaves" and should be extinguished. The petitioners called for the enactment of the following laws: (1) "To prevent all free negroes or mulattoes from coming into or settling in this State, upon any pretext whatsoever;" (2) "That all free negroes or mulattoes, not born in this State, who are now residing here, may be removed from this state;" (3) "That the law allowing the emancipation of slaves, to reside in the State, may be repealed; and that all slaves, hereafter emancipated, shall be removed from the State by the person setting such slaves free;" (4) "That all assemblies of negroes and mulattoes may be prohibited, except during the day time on the Sabbath, for religious worship—such worship being conducted by some regularly ordained or licensed white minister or priest;" and (5) "That all schools for the education of negroes and mulattoes be prohibited, whether taught and kept by whites or blacks."

Influenced by this series of events, in February 1847, Missouri passed a law tightening restrictions for enslaved and free Black residents of Missouri. The legislature adopted most of the laws the St. Louis Anti-Abolition society had pressed for. It forbade the education of free and enslaved Black Missourians in reading and writing and barred Black Missourians from assembling for Black-led religious services unless a law enforcement officer was present to supervise it "in order to prevent prevent all seditious speeches, and disorderly and unlawful conduct." It further declared that no free Black person could move into the state "under any pretext," and that all free Black people under age 21 who were not old enough to be eligible for a license to remain in the state "shall not be bound out as apprentices in this State." Any violations of the act were punishable by a fine of up to $500, imprisonment of up to six months, or both (Missouri Revised Statutes, 1847).

In the 1840s and 1850s, white enslavers' concern over the prospect of Missouri's growing free Black population intersected with frictions stemming from competition between immigrant wage laborers and free Black wage laborers, as well as enslaved people who rented their labor. Such perceived threats led to violent race-based encounters over employment and status, with white wage laborers joining the slaveholding elite to promote Black exclusion as a means of both distancing themselves from Black lower classes and eliminating competitors for employment.

Such pronounced efforts had national repercussions when they were echoed in the courts. The infamous 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, in which United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney ruled that Black people "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect," underscored Missouri's central role in solidifying the era's culture of racial exclusion (p. 407). That ruling was the culmination of Harriet and Dred Scott's long effort to pursue freedom in the courts, beginning ten years prior in St. Louis in (what is now) the Old Courthouse. Building on the precedent of hundreds of Black St. Louisans who had successfully sued for their freedom on the grounds of having previously lived or labored in a free territory or state for over a quarter-century, the Scotts argued that they were free as a result of the time they had lived and labored in Illinois and Wisconsin Territory (Johnson, 2020). Though, at several points, the case looked like it was going in the Scott's favor, historian Walter Johnson highlights a key turning point when he notes that:

> In 1852, the Missouri Supreme Court overturned the lower court, invoking the Constitution of 1820's proscription of free Black immigrants and the interest of public safety in a

state threatened by the 'dark and fell spirit' of abolition. 'Every State,' the Supreme Court of Missouri declared, 'has the right of determining how far, in a spirit of comity, it will respect the laws of other states.' (p. 92)

The Dred Scott decision played a substantial role in precipitating the Civil War, in which Missouri emerged as a border state that remained in the Union while continuing to maintain slavery with a substantial pro-secession population. Following the firing on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, white men in St. Louis began forming pro-union and pro-secession organizations. Pro-slavery sympathizers gained control of the Missouri State Assembly, replacing the Saint Louis Police Force with a Board of Police Commissioners consisting of supporters of secession. The Police Board issued a proclamation ordering all free people of color without a license proving their legal residence in the state to leave at once, and threatened to arrest and prosecute any Black person found without a license. In fear of being forced back into slavery, 349 Black Saint Louisans rushed to obtain freedom licenses between April 15 and April 29. The proclamation further threatened to arrest any

The Last Sale of Slaves by Thomas Satterwhite Noble.
Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society

Black person selling liquor, forbade Black people from gathering, running public establishments, or attending Black-led religious services without a police officer present, and declared that any Black person found in the street after 10pm without a pass would be arrested (Daily Missouri Republican, 1861a). All of these statutes, the petitioners proclaimed, should "be rigidly enforced" (Daily Missouri Republican, 1861b).

White St. Louis even sought to control Black bodies before birth and after death. In a rare instance, in 1783 Auguste Chouteau paid a high price to purchase the unborn child of Marie (Cruzat, 1783). An 1835 Missouri law permitted enslavers to donate enslaved people's bodies to medicine and permitted medical facilities to acquire the bodies of Black people who had been educated. Some institutions even disinterred Black bodies from local cemeteries (Frazier, 2009, pp. 45–46).

Thomas Skinker died in 1887 and was buried at Bellefontaine Cemetery. A few years later when George Jackson, who had formerly been enslaved to Skinker, died at age 96, the Skinker family directed that he be buried in their family plot. The Collier family had Nelly Warren, whom they enslaved, buried next to their patriarch George Collier's grave site when she died in 1857, her name inscribed "Aunt Nelly" (Smith, 2020, p. 168). In 1878, after purchasing a new and larger family plot at Bellefontaine Cemetery, Wayman Crow had the remains of a formerly enslaved person named Robert, who had been buried in the Crow family plot in 1870, separated from his family and reburied in the unmarked graves of a public lot (Smith, 2020, p. 169).

When Thomas Franklin, a formerly enslaved man who migrated from New Orleans to St. Louis and had served three of St. Louis's Catholic bishops, died in 1938, Archbishop Glennon, rather than Franklin's surviving children, decided where he should be buried. He arranged for

Franklin to be buried at the foot of the bishops' graves, having eulogized at his funeral that (in the words of William Markoe), "he hoped that when he himself died and passed on into eternity he would find old Tom waiting to greet him as of yore and ready to serve him throughout eternity as he had done so faithfully through life in this world" (Schmidt & Ali, 2020). A newspaper reported: "At the foot of the great cross in Calvary Cemetery lies Archbishop Kenrick, there, at his feet, the ever-faithful servant 'Tom' will be laid to rest, to serve him in heaven." Franklin's flat headstone, overshadowed by the tall monuments of the bishops, reads, "Thomas Franklin: Loyal and dedicated servant of Archbishop Peter Richard Kenrick, Archbishop John Joseph Kain, and Cardinal John Joseph Glennon" (Schmidt & Ali, 2020).

Just as law and custom in St. Louis controlled where enslaved and free people of color could move, gather, and live, they sought to extend these restrictions following emancipation. While Shaw's will provided for the emancipation of a few of the people he enslaved, it dictated that they must behave according to his terms and continue to serve Shaw's siblings after his death. After slavery's abolition, several prominent St. Louisans, now unable to profit from enslaving people, sought to preserve their wealth by subdividing their lands into neighborhoods for wealthy white residents, including John Gano Bryan and descendants of Thomas Skinker and Robert Forsyth. When Henry Shaw and his executors developed Tower Grove Park and the neighborhoods (Shaw, Botanical Heights, etc.) around it from his former plantation lands, they ensured the area served elite white residents through racially restrictive covenants (Missouri Botanical Garden Archives, 1923; National Park Service, 1988). Through such means, which concentrated the value of tight-knit connections among white elite families, the wealth lost by enslavers between 1860 and 1870 had been, in the aggregate, recovered by the early 1900s (Ager et al., 2021).

Legacies

Over the past several decades, a large body of social science research on legacies of historical racial violence has elaborated how state and local histories of slavery shape an array of subsequent patterns of conflict, violence, and inequality, continuing in these places today. These studies generally show that racial terror lynching was more likely in U.S. counties with more pronounced histories of enslavement, and that state and local histories of slavery and lynching predict a vast and interactive array of contemporary attitudes, behaviors, and institutional outcomes related to crime, justice systems, health, and a host of other outcomes. This section summarizes several of these studies and considers their implications for reparations, particularly from a transitional justice, where ensuring "non-repetition" is a critical component of repair.

For context, it is helpful to recall that one of the earliest documented lynchings in the U.S. occurred in the City of St. Louis, and how this atrocity and its aftermath gave rise to one of the earliest warnings that histories of racial violence would have adverse future societal implications. In 1836, Francis McIntosh, a free black man from Pittsburgh working on a riverboat docked in St. Louis, was arrested following a fatal altercation with police. A white mob gathered and abducted McIntosh from the city jail, chained him to a nearby tree, and burned him alive as a crowd of white men, women and children looked on. The legacy of this horrific lynching relates not only to its incredible brutality, but the withholding of justice

afterwards. In a lengthy address to the grand jury that was also published in a local news-paper, Judge Luke Lawless urged jurors (and the public) not to indict the perpetrators of the lynching, who were unmasked and included prominent community figures, warning that this would embolden "abolitionist fanatics," thus tying the de facto rule of law to the pro-slavery agenda of many white St. Louisans (Shepherd of the Valley, 1836, p. 2).

Incensed by the McIntosh lynching and Judge Lawless' actions to deny justice, the previously moderate Elijah Lovejoy intensified his abolitionist work and wrote scathing editorials in his newspaper. For these acts of constitutionally-protected speech he was driven from St. Louis and later killed by a pro-slavery mob in Alton, Illinois, just across the Mississippi River, again with impunity. In an 1838 address, then Illinois state legislator Abraham Lincoln opened with the McIntosh lynching and closed with the assassination of Lovejoy to warn that slavery and the impunity accompanying racist violence in defense of that institution degraded the rule of law and legitimacy of the state, threatening the democratic republic (Lincoln, 1838).

St. Louis newspaper editors hoped the city might just move on and "Let the veil of oblivion be drawn over the fatal affair," yet legacies of the lynching lingered (Primm, 1981, p. 183). Follow-ing another lynching aboard a St. Louis-bound steamboat just two years later (1838), a German immigrant was detained when the boat docked in St. Louis but quickly released. A white mob formed outside the Old Courthouse; several judges quickly interviewed witnesses and pro-ceeded to drop all charges. The editor of the German newspaper complained that charges were even filed, arguing the McIntosh case established a legal precedent that individuals could not be punished for mob violence (Olbrich, 1996, p. 19).

In 1841, noting the local market for violent spectacle punishments of black offenders, entre-preneurs chartered a steamboat and sold tickets to Alton and St. Louis-based passengers wanting a closeup view of the execution by hanging of four black men on nearby Duncan Island. According to historian Harriett Frazier (2001): "After the execution the severed heads of the four hanged blacks were displayed in the showcase window of a St. Louis drugstore, and its proprietor made plastic casts of their heads for the then budding pseudoscience of phrenology," a method where measurements of the head were alleged to reveal character and mental states, including criminal propensity (p. 220). The lynching of Francis McIntosh and its aftermath in the region involve numerous aspects of the legacy of racial violence, including the nexus of slavery, lynching, crime, and justice that has grown evident through recent social sci-ence research in contexts including policing, courts, incarceration, and capital punishment, as well as housing, health, education, politics, and more, across the United States and beyond.

Legacies of slavery in crime and justice

Several studies have linked county-level histories of lynching to contemporary homicide rates and black-victim (white- and black-perpetrator) homicide, in particular. The authors attribute these relationships to affected area cultures of social control, including "brutalizing" effects of historic lynching on white populations, and "self-help" adaptations of black populations, two mechanisms anticipated by earlier research. In places where lynchings demonstrated the absence of access to legal protections, degrading faith in the rule of law, black community "self-help" orientations towards dispute resolution are more likely. Combined with easy access to lethal weapons, these "brutalization," "legal estrangement," and "self-help" legacies

of lynching for local cultures of social control increase the likelihood of interpersonal violence and ultimately homicide rates. These "legacy effects" for cultures of violence interact with other structural determinants, some of which shape the lethality of violent conflict. Other research helps clarify this lynching and lethal violence relationship. Examining data on women imprisoned for murder convictions in Alabama's Tutwiler Prison from 1929 to 1985, researchers found that nearly one-quarter of the black women convicted of murder in Alabama in the period would not have been guilty of homicide "if their victims had received the same [emergency medical] care as the victims of their [white] counterparts." Their analysis of national data from 1988 on homicide victims suggests a similar portion (27 percent) of African American victim homicides are attributable to racial disparities in medical care (Hanke & Gundlach, 1995).

Studies also report relationships between histories of racial violence, hate crime, and hate crime law enforcement. Area histories of slavery predict contemporary hate crime, and slavery is not only associated with anti-black hate crime but incidents targeting Jewish, Latino/a, and LGBT populations (Gunadi, 2019). Another study of relationships between prior enslavement rates and contemporary policing of hate-crime in U.S. Southern and Northeastern counties found higher rates of police under-reporting of hate crimes generally, as well as anti-black crimes in particular, across Southern and Northeastern counties historically dependent on slavery. This was attributed to a lingering, generalized suppression of legal protection of minorities "in areas where slavery was entrenched [and] the legal apparatus was devoted to White supremacy," and this study also finds that slavery' degradation of legal protections for minorities not only "disadvantage Black populations but also spill over to Latinos, particularly in the South" (Ward, 2022, p. 575).

Several studies demonstrate additional relationships between histories of slavery, lynching and contemporary criminal legal system outcomes, including racial disparities in arrest, lethal police violence, incarceration and capital punishment. A recent study focusing on Louisiana reported spatial relationship between county histories of slavery, lynchings of African Americans between 1882 and 1930, and "anti-Black violence during the Civil Rights Movement era" (between 1954 and 1974) implicating police or other legal authorities (Echols, 2022). Another recent study focusing on several southern states examined spatial relationships between past lynchings and contemporary lethal police shootings, conceptualizing this legacy-effect as a "historical transmutation of social control," where slave patrols gave way to informal (i.e., racist mobs) and later formal (i.e., racist police organizations) systems of racialized law enforcement, with potentially enduring spatial patterns of police violence (Lyons et al., 2024, p. 267). Their findings showed that area histories of lynching moderately predict contemporary police shootings of black civilians, and that lynching may also predict lethal shootings of whites (Lyons et al., 2024). These studies attribute findings to concentrated cultural supports for racialized state violence, where "the legacy of lynching sustains appetites for harsh punishment and the devaluation of individuals perceived of offending socio-legal norms," illustrating what several legacies studies describe as a process of behavioral and institutional path dependence (Lyons et al. 2024, p. 281; Acharya et al., 2016).

Research on slavery and contemporary racial disparities in arrest finds encouraging evidence of possible means of countering legacy effects. Attending to the severely neglected history of

slavery in the northeastern United States, and potential legacies of "resistance and resilience" in places where free African Americans were concentrated in the Antebellum era, this analysis revealed "reduced levels of racial inequality in social control (i.e., lower black–white arrest rate disparities) and reduced absolute levels of minority social control (i.e., lower African American arrest rates)" in areas where "free African Americans were more prevalent—and, thus, resistance to White's social control efforts and resilience in the face of White hostility more robust" (Ward, 2023, p. 498). The author attributes this finding to enduring "structural safeguards," including "contemporary civil rights infrastructure, black congregations, and black political power" which are "important components of the legacies of resistance and resilience left by free African Americans" and appear to contribute to relative protection from contemporary over-policing (Ward, 2023, p. 496).

Relationships between slavery, lynching, and imprisonment have also been identified in recent legacies research. A 2023 study reports that both the proportion of a state population enslaved in 1860 and later in-migration of black southerners help account for increases in incarceration between 1970 and 2015. This relationship is mediated by contemporary demographics (black population proportion) and public opinion or "policy mood," a measure of liberal policy priorities related to welfare spending, crime control, and racial equity the author uses to assess "intertwined changes in racial, economic, and criminal justice attitudes characteristic of the post-Civil Rights [Movement] era" (Duxbury, 2023, p. 9).

Findings that state-level legacies of slavery in incarceration outcomes are mediated by black in-migration and public opinion suggest nationally diffuse legacies of slavery resulting in part from white and black migration out of the Deep South. A 2021 study found that the likelihood and severity of prison sentences relate to the proportion of the county population enslaved in 1860 (Gottlieb & Flynn, 2021). Examining sentencing in the 1990s and 2000s for felony defendants sentenced in seventeen counties spanning four former slave states (Florida, Maryland, Missouri, and Texas), they found that pretrial detention, incarceration sentences, and longer sentences were more likely in counties with more pronounced histories of slavery. This relationship was observed for the full sample of defendants and white and black defendants independently, suggesting that all defendants may be "harmed by a legacy of slavery" (Gottlieb & Flynn, 2021, p. 28).

Several studies report at least somewhat generalized, rather than racially disparate, legacy effects of racial violence on incarceration and other system outcomes, with histories of slavery and other racialized violence yielding more "universally punitive" cultures and institutions (Gottlieb & Flynn, 2021, p.28; see also Baumgartner et al., 2023; Duxbury, 2023; Jacobs et al., 2012). Yet there is some evidence of white "carceral advantage" in areas of the south where slavery was once entrenched, a finding that reflects broader evidence of advantageous white socio-economic and health outcomes in such places today (Ward, 2024). A study of jail incarceration rates for the years 2000 to 2018 in census-defined U.S. counties found that white incarceration rates are lower in counties where slavery was more prominent, compared to areas where it was less pronounced. This effect was attributed to "slavery's advantageous shaping of White social and economic outcomes," specifically higher white educational attainment, median income, and proportions middle class, and lower white poverty and unemployment in places where slavery was especially entrenched (Ward, 2024, p. 228).

Relationships between historical racial violence and contemporary support for and use of the death penalty have been a particular focus of legacies research. Numerous studies have addressed capital punishment as an expression of an American tradition of vigilantism, rooted in government distrust, and reported a statistical association between past lynchings and current executions. This association is particularly strong in conservative political environments where the availability and use of capital punishment is greater, and where racial animus is intense (Jacobs et al. 2005; Messner et al., 2006; Phillips, 1986; Zimring, 2003). Indeed, a 2023 study considered how aggregate levels of racial resentment relate to death sentencing across U.S. states, net of other factors, and found that "racial hostility translates directly into more death sentences, particular for black offenders," and that racial resentment mediates the relationship between historic lynching, black population proportion, and death sentencing from 1989 through 2017 (Baumgartner et al., 2023, p. 42).

Recent studies of capital punishment as a legacy of racial violence have placed greater emphasis on its connection to slavery. Building on prior research which used the 1858 Slave Code of Tennessee to show that "antecedents of modern discrimination in capital cases are found in the codified rules that governed slavery," a 2007 study examined all death sentences imposed from 1977 to 2004 to assess how death sentences and executions relate to state histories of slavery (Vandiver et al., 2003, p. 67; Vandiver et al., 2007). Finding that over ninety per-

Slave Patrol Badge – North Carolina. (1859)

cent of executions in the period (post-*Gregg*) occurred in states and former territories where slavery was legal, the authors concluded that "capital punishment is one of the enduring legacies of American slavery" (Vandiver et al., 2007, p. 19). Similarly, a 2021 study comparing effects of slavery and lynching on capital punishment found that "slavery's perversion of state-level institutions and culture" is especially key to the legacy of historical racial violence on the contemporary practice of capital punishment (Rigby & Seguin, 2021, p. 206).

Echoing hopes of earlier scholars, including Zimring's (2003) view that ties between lynching and capital punishment might hasten its abolition, authors of recent studies have expressed hope that evidence of capital punishment's "deep historical and contemporary connection to white racial hostility toward blacks" will finally bring this extreme punishment to an end (Baumgartner et al., 2023, p. 42). Yet the findings themselves are discouraging here, especially considering the role of racist ideology and antipathy in support for these policies, and state-level institutional forces leaving cities like St. Louis vulnerable to the whims of more conservative and racially resentful state populations steeped in the legacies of locally more pronounced histories and legacies of slavery.

Legacies for Health, Policy, and Politics

Legacies of slavery have also been documented in the area of public health, especially in relation to disparities in cardiovascular disease. Specifically, research finds that nationally widespread declines in heart disease are not as apparent among black populations living in places distinguished by more pronounced histories of slavery. Kramer et al. (2017) explain that: "the presence of slower declines for Blacks in—as opposed to outside—the South, and slower declines for Blacks within southern counties with historically more dependence on slave labor, suggests that it is the place and its associated institutions and social norms that transmit health consequences, independent of the inter-generational transmission of the trauma of slavery" (p. 615).

As in the case of crime and justice outcomes, they attribute the legacy of slavery to heart disease mortality to a complex mix of risk exposures and opportunity structures:

> Inter-group and inter-place differences in mortality reductions result from uneven diffusion of effective prevention approaches, and/or uneven distribution of deleterious exposures within places and between races. Social, economic, and political structures, that have deep roots in the institution and legacy of slavery may contribute to racial differences in local opportunity structures that, in turn, influence heart health. (Kramer et al., 2017, p. 616)

In health, crime, justice, education, and other contexts, the legacies of slavery affecting St. Louis communities and institutions reflect complex local, state, regional and national dynamics, particularly through political and policy impacts, and through patterns of migration. Some of the most extensive recent research on legacies of slavery has focused on its contribution to white political conservatism. The percent of the county population enslaved in 1860 consistently predicts opposition to liberal candidates for political office from 1850 to 2008, as well as opposition to affirmative action and levels of resentment in the 2000s (Acharya et al., 2016, 2018). This pattern likely shapes opposition to various other remedial policy agendas, such as DEI initiatives, or the inclusion of Black Studies in school curricula.

In Missouri these political legacies are more concentrated in rural, predominantly white, politically conservative areas of the state, including areas like "Little Dixie" and the Bootheel where enslavement was once concentrated, but they shape laws and policies that profoundly impact St. Louisans, in areas including education, health, environment, and criminal justice.

For example, as the availability of capital punishment is a matter of state law, legacies of slavery in policy support for capital punishment and other punitive measures in areas outside of St. Louis nevertheless increase exposure of residents to this extreme, and clearly racialized, punitive measure, creating need for structural safeguards against these and other exposures to legacies of slavery. These state and local dynamics are also nested within a larger national context, where former pro-slavery states collectively maintain substantial influence in national politics and constrain capacities to enact local measures that would help counter legacies of slavery (e.g., gun control or tax reform).

Shared Interests in Reparations as Transitional Justice

Patterns of national and global migration also complicate legacies of slavery in St. Louis. Many residents of St. Louis are descendants of enslavers and people enslaved in other states including Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Virginia, and their intergenerational inheritances (positive and negative) concentrate here. These histories and their legacies combine in unmeasured ways with those of Bosnian, Afghan, African, and other refugee populations displaced by genocide, war, climate, and other factors seeking refuge in St. Louis, where a relatively high ratio of refugees to foreign-born immigrants may increase their capacity to impact the character of the place (Singer & Wilson, 2006). Descendants of these internationally displaced populations often live alongside, and sometimes in tension with, black descendants of internally displaced populations from the lower Mississippi Valley, in neighborhoods with more affordable housing and concentrated structural debris of historical racial violence, including high rates of interpersonal violence, incarceration, and environmental pollution (Petrin, 2018). This temporally and spatially accumulated trauma might combine, divide, or productively unite St. Louisans around specific objectives and strategies for reparations.

That unity is likely to depend on the development of "multi-directional memory" of the historical traumas weighing on the present and future of St. Louis, creating a shared understanding of linked fates and common interests in addressing legacies of slavery (Rothberg, 2009). It will hinge on an understanding that everyone in St. Louis is impacted by legacies of slavery, regardless of their genealogical ties to enslavers or the enslaved, or how recently they have arrived here. Noted "spillover" effects in hate crime illustrate how populations seemingly "unrelated" to the history of slavery are implicated in its wake, and legacies of slavery for the political and policy environment have implications for all of our families, neighborhoods, businesses, and institutions. Recognition of shared interests in addressing legacies of slavery might also benefit from more extensive engagement with principles of transitional justice in the discussion and organization of reparations, and communication of collective interests in the planned transition.

As municipal governments and local publics across the United States explore reparations for slavery and its wake, and federal legislators debate related and long-stalled legislation, they should consider how reparative justice measures can counter legacies of slavery, lynching and other racial violence, including what Lincoln recognized as corruption of our democratic culture, including the actual rule of law. Although reparations debates and frameworks are inconsistent in their engagement with the principle and dimensions of transitional justice, it is clear from nearly two centuries of research and advocacy that fully addressing the history of slavery requires a transformative transitional justice response to its legacies of violence, conflict, and inequality.

From a transitional justice perspective, this evidence relates most directly to the promise of "non-repetition," where the repetition of past injustice is sworn off, and publics are assured that this past will not be repeated. Works reviewed here provide insights into both specific areas (e.g., violence, hate crime, incarceration, and the death penalty), and potential means of achieving this. Broad support for reparations policies and practices would itself represent meaningful resistance to the behavioral and institutional path-dependence associated with legacy-effects. These reparative interventions should aim to bolster local "structural safe

guards" shown to limit exposure to legacies of slavery, while also building stronger relationships of political interdependence, locally, regionally, and nationally, that can sustain and extend commitments to transitional justice (Ward, 2023).

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Housing and Neighborhoods

Introduction

Shelter is a basic human right. In the United States, however, housing (especially homeownership) has been structured as a commodity; a wealth-building mechanism resting on the assumptions that housing assets are accessible to all and (unlike other high-priced commodities, such as cars) guaranteed to increase in value. Yet, for African Americans in St. Louis and elsewhere, neither of these assumptions hold true. A broad spectrum of policies and practices have effectively excluded African Americans from equal access to housing markets and exploited them, with higher costs and lower returns, in the neighborhoods where they have managed to rent or own.

Houses and households, in turn, are not just discrete private investments; they are the building blocks of neighborhoods which structure social ties, economic and educational opportunities, and the provision of vital public goods. Housing discrimination sorts local populations by race and class, yielding lasting patterns of racial and economic segregation (Krysan & Crowder, 2017). That segregation, in turn, shapes the resources and the resilience of local contexts. Some neighborhoods offer robust opportunities and social networks; others leave their residents "truly disadvantaged" or "stuck in place" (Sharkey, 2013; Wilson, 2012; see also Chetty et al., 2014, 2020; Sampson, 2009). The direct costs—in forgone wealth and intergenerational mobility, and in the erosion of all the advantages and opportunities that flow from homeownership—are incalculable.

Background

For almost 100 years, U.S. housing policy has emphasized housing—as a wealth-building mechanism among the broader American population. But for much of this period, this wealth-building mechanism was almost exclusively reserved for white families. Indeed, Black citizens of St. Louis have faced sustained, systemic, and institutionalized racism in the region's housing markets. Such racial disadvantages have manifested as outright exclusion from white neighborhoods and from the credit and insurance markets that make home ownership possible. And they have manifested as pervasive devaluation and exploitation within those markets and neighborhoods of color, stunting or savaging any returns on housing investment. African American residents have, over the course of the last century, seen little benefit from public policies aimed at subsidizing or protecting homeownership and have been disproportionately disadvantaged by public policies pursuing local redevelopment or "urban renewal." In fact, many public policies to enhance housing affordability for whites deliberately excluded Black residents. The consequences, rooted in our history and extending to the present day, include not only stark racial segregation (in the city and across the region) and dramatically uneven housing opportunity, but also a cascade of advantages for white St. Louisans and disadvantages for Black St. Louisans—in schooling, employment, public health, civic life, and social mobility—that accompanies such racial and spatial inequality.

The history of racial exclusion and oppression in St. Louis, Missouri is inextricably tied to events which took place during the East St. Louis riots in 1917, where Blacks were deemed as not simply inferior, but as outsiders—who needed not so much to be kept down, but locked out of any vehicles for social mobility and advancement. Violence, murder, and destruction of their homes and property was not only tolerated but supported. While other notable examples of

America's race wars occurred in Chicago in 1919 and Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921, it was the East St. Louis Massacre which drove out thousands of Black people—never to return (Lumpkin, 2008).

The landscape of unequal housing opportunity for Black and white St. Louisans emerged and hardened in the first half of the 20th century as local patterns of segregation confined Black residents to "the Ville" on the City's north side and a few pockets of residency in St. Louis County (populated in part by refugees from the East St. Louis Massacre). St. Louis passed a racial zoning ordinance in 1916 and, when the Supreme Court struck down such tactics a year later, turned to private realty and private racial restrictions to sustain segregation. In the first half of the 20th century, "Caucasian only" restrictions were attached to over a third of single-family units in the city and nearly 90 percent of those in St. Louis County. The result was a ragged noose of restriction surrounding the Ville, a hardening of the north-south "Delmar Divide," and an effective "Berlin Wall" barring occupancy in St. Louis County. Local authorities embraced these patterns of restriction and buttressed them with local planning and zoning—both in the City of St. Louis and in the patchwork of municipalities spilling west into St. Louis County (Gordon, 2008, 2023a).

Racial restrictions, St. Louis and St. Louis County, 1950
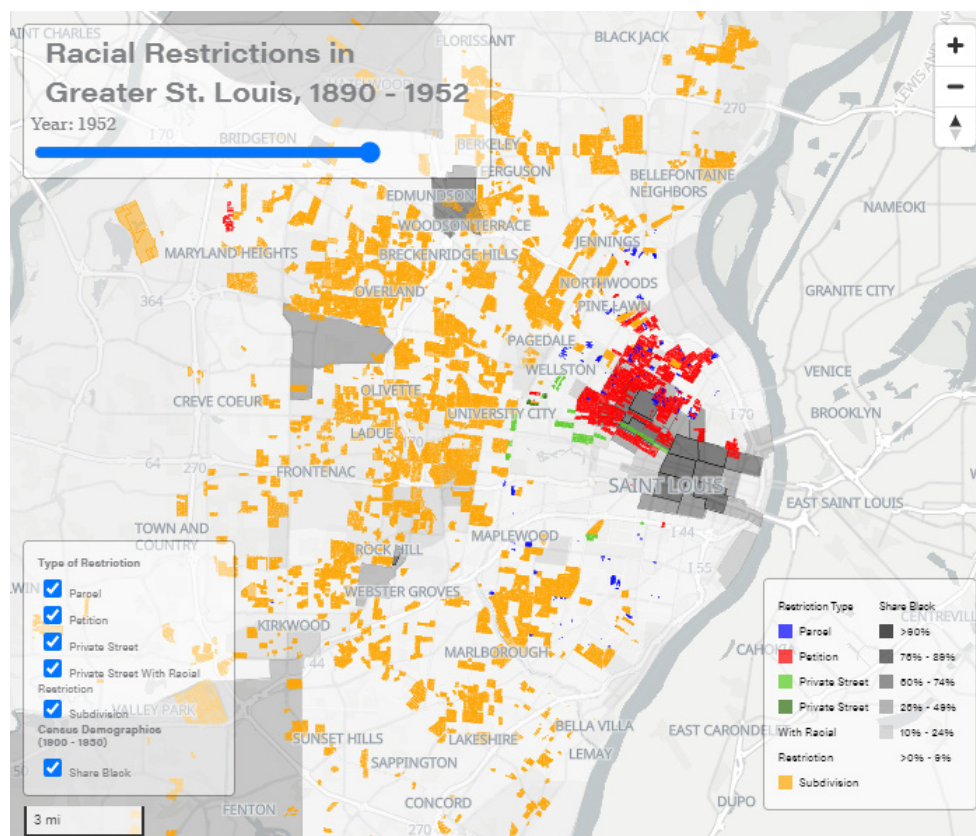
Note. Interactive map online supplement, from Patchwork Apartheid: Private Restriction, Racial Segregation, and Urban Inequality, by C. Gordon, 2023b, Russell Sage Foundation, https://www.russellsage.org/publications/patchwork-apartheid. Copyright 2023 by Russell Sage Foundation.

Private restrictions were held unenforceable by the Supreme Court in 1948 (in S*helley v. Kraemer*, a case that began in north St. Louis), but the damage was done. Before *Shelley* (encompassing the First Great Migration and the early years of the Second), the City's Black grew more than fourfold to just over 150,000, but the available housing stock barely budged. After *Shelley*, white homeowners, local realty interests, and public policies adjusted quickly to sustain exclusion and segregation. Local zoning and private real estate policies and practices sustained exclusive white neighborhoods in South St. Louis and the County and federal

mortgage programs subsidized such neighborhoods (often in the suburbs) (Gordon, 2009; Kucheva & Sander, 2014). These same policies and programs facilitated crowding and perpetuated devaluation of Black-owned properties north of Delmar, in the predominantly Black area of the city. Black St. Louis renters locked out of homeownership were also harmed by these policies: federal urban renewal dollars underwrote "slum clearance" and ensured the deep segregation of public and rental housing in central St. Louis.

Importantly, local housing and planning policies did not just fail to challenge segregation and neighborhood concentrations of disadvantage; they were key drivers of their creation and persistence. Segregated neighborhoods were defined and sustained by planning choices, such as the "traffic-calming" barriers that buttress the Delmar Divide; by local zoning, which "protects" some neighborhoods and neglects others (Lens, 2022); and by a provision of public goods, especially schools (Lareau, 2014; Rich & Owens, 2023), that favored some neighborhoods and condemned others.

These policies of neglect and displacement, and their impacts, are starkly evident in the City's

Unidentified Street in Mill Creek. (1956), Courtesy of the Missouri History Museum

long history of urban renewal and redevelopment. From the first grand schemes of the 1940s to the vpresent day, the City's redevelopment policies have pursued commercial pipedreams at the expense of Black neighborhoods and displaced Black residents. The clearance of the Mill Creek valley, for example, displaced over 4,200 families—97 percent of whom were Black. Relocation options and relocation assistance were almost nonexistent, effectively dumping displaced families into a deeply segregated housing market. Indeed, one of the few available options was the Pruitt-Igoe public housing complex (built in 1954 and razed in 1972), a project motivated more by the

need to clear the way for central city redevelopment than by any concern for tenants, displaced residents, or their neighborhoods.

Direct displacement and dispossession, in Mill Creek and in other projects across the city, were accompanied—to similar effect—by intentional neglect. Consider the fate of the DeSoto Carr neighborhood, bounded by Jefferson (and Pruitt-Igoe) to the west, I-70 to the east, Delmar to the south, and Cass to the north. In 1960, DeSoto Carr had a population of almost 8,000, over 80 percent of which was Black. The city "blighted" DeSoto Carr for redevelopment in 1959, but did nothing to address conditions in the neighborhood or provide housing options to its residents. Instead, it allowed the neighborhood to deteriorate, putting off redevelopment until abandonment and falling property values made commercial redevelopment (the convention center, built in 1972-4) possible and profitable (Christopher et al., 1978; Buchanan, 1970). When the federal urban renewal program ended in 1972, the tools of redevelopment changed but the pattern—a combination of commercial redevelopment at the expense of majority-Black neighborhoods, and pointed neglect—stayed the same. The City's notorious "Team Four" plan in 1975 proposed a policy of "triage" which reserved resources for neighborhoods that were doing well or showing early signs of stress, while recommending intentional "depletion" of

those most in need. Large scale clearance was replaced by systematic neglect (Cooper-Mc-Cann, 2016). Across this history, poverty and neighborhood distress were employed to justify redevelopment policies, but "renewal" was invariably designed to displace neighborhood residents rather than help them or reserved for pockets of the city where private investment was already secured (Tighe & Ganning, 2015).

Across this long history, and extending to the present day, private interests influenced public policies and vice versa, enforcing racial segregation and inequality in local realty and housing opportunity. In Greater St. Louis, as elsewhere, structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism have profoundly shaped both access to housing markets and the experience of homeownership or tenancy. The housing market itself—its norms, policies, and practices, all intertwined with public policies and programs—depends on and sustains such racism. Housing market industries such as housing development, rental property management, real estate brokerage, mortgage lending, and appraising—each of which are key to the purchase or sale of a home—do not effectively discourage or, worse, actively rely on explicit and subtle forms of racism, which often unfold behind the scenes. An extensive body of research documents disparate treatment of white and Black Americans in rental or housing purchase searches, in credit and insurance markets (even when accounting for background economic disadvantages), and in market and tax appraisals. Such institutionalized racism is exclusionary, serving as serial obstacles to housing opportunity among Black St. Louisans. It is also exploitative, ensuring that housing opportunities are often available only on unfavorable or predatory terms. And its effects are compounded, accumulating across the process of buying, owning, or renting a home (Korver-Glenn, 2018, 2021; Pager & Shepherd, 2008).

Current Realities

Unequal housing opportunity is rooted in a long history of explicit and subtle racist public and private policies and practices. As importantly, each effort to check that racism (such as the court decisions banning racial zoning in 1917, the enforcement of private restrictions in 1948, or direct private discrimination in 1968) challenged the prevailing mechanisms of segregation or discrimination but did little to address their prevalence or their impacts. Piecemeal legal progress has not fully addressed the structural or institutional racism characterizing these policies and practices and it has done little to undo the damage that has been done. As a result, such inequalities are persistent and durable. They are literally and metaphorically cemented into the built environment—reinforced by local planning, zoning, and investment decisions, and by persistent racist assumptions that guide decision-making about borrower and property risk and property appreciation or devaluation, among multiple other consequential processes (Faber, 2021).

We see this in the distribution of housing value—and housing distress—across the city and its neighborhoods. The Delmar Divide marks not just a sharp boundary of racial occupancy, but of housing value (Reinvestment Fund, 2019). Neighborhoods reflect not just gradations of housing value, but patterns of vacancy and abandonment that undermine the value of the remaining housing stock and signal generations of disinvestment, depreciation, and lost wealth. In this respect, Black St. Louisans have suffered the short end of both sticks: Those barred from housing opportunities in one generation fall deeper into the racial wealth gap and have little or no equity to pass on to the next (Akbar et al., 2019; Derenoncourt et al., 2022; Oliver &

Shapiro, 2006). Those overcoming such barriers, but shoehorned into segregated pockets of the city, have experienced few of the rewards of homeownership (Gordon & Bruch, 2020).

Vacancies (buildings and lots) in St. Louis, 2024

Note. STL Vacancy Map, by St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative, 2024, https://www.stlvacancytools.com/.

This long legacy of compounding advantage among white families and disadvantage among Black families is compounded by the growing gap between housing costs and social policies. Indeed, much of the current housing afford-ability crisis is a result of the hyper-valuation of homes in white neighborhoods even as wages have stagnated (Howell et al., 2023; Yeakey, 2024). As housing costs rise rela-tive to incomes, the affordability crisis has a distinct racial logic and impact (Robinson, 2021). Black Americans in Greater St. Louis own homes at a lower rate and have experi-enced significantly less appreciation in value when they do own a home (Gordon & Brunch, 2020). For renters (a disproportionately Black) group, housing cost burdens have grown sig-nificantly since the Great Recession—driven in large part by the predatory and extractive policies of large corporate landlords (Rosen & Garboden, 2022; Yeakey, 2024). Meanwhile, elected officials have largely dismantled ac-cess to social or public housing for renters: Alongside decommissioning huge amounts of multifamily public housing stock, the effective wait list for "Section 8" housing vouchers is over 42 years in the City of St. Louis and over 15 years in St. Louis County, with thousands on these waitlists (Affordable Housing Trust Fund Coalition, 2024).

Enslavement's Continuing Effects on Neighborhoods and the Built Fabric

Era of slavery — to 1865

(Federal) HOLC Grade 4-Hazardous rated areas - 1937 — 1930s

1940s

St. Louis Plan Commission Blighted/ Obsolete designations 1947 — 1950s

Mill Creek Valley - 1959+ — 1960s

1970s

Pruitt-Igoe - 1972

Homer G. Phillips Hospital - 1979+ — 1980s

Gaslight Square - 1994 and decades prior — 1990s

Laclede Town - 1995

2000s

McRee Town - 2004 — 2010s

NGA - 2017/18 — 2020s

St. Louis City boundaries, 1780 - today

HOLC/Home Owners' Loan Commission 'Fourth Grade - Hazardous'- rated areas (1937)

St. Louis City Plan Commission 'Blighted districts' (1947)

St. Louis City Plan Commission 'Obsolete districts' (1947)

Neighborhoods / significant institutions erased since 1950 (years listed in time-line above)

Areas today with lowest medium income (2016)

Notes: I have vacancy too from 2014 but difficult to read. Wards here are not updated since redistricting....
Deep Morgan/Chestnut Hill erasure dates?

1 inch = 2,500 feet

Map labels: Kinloch, Fairground Park, Homer G. Phillips Hospital, NGA, Pruitt-Igoe, Gaslight Square, Laclede Town, Deep Morgan, Mill Creek Valley, Chestnut Hill, McRee Town, Forest Park, Tower Grove Park, Carondelet Park, Areas of former slave pens/markets, 1876 - today, 1870 (post Civil War), 1841, 1839, 1780

Many legacies of the period of enslavement extend into other manifestations of inequality and exclusion in the built environment since that time. These manifestations appear as architectural, social, economic and infrastructural configurations that are particularly pronounced at neighborhood and household scales. Above are nine instances and sites of historic or more recent injustice that are present in the built environment and political planning processes behind it.

Over the last 100 years, injustices in the built fabric of neighborhoods all over the United States were carried out in direct and indirect ways. During the period of recovery after the great depression, many "top-down" federal government initiatives aimed to improve life for Americans. While that period produced socially minded programs like the New Deal projects and jobs, social security, and major new suburban housing incentives and downtown public housing projects. Unfortunately, the implementation of many of these programs was racialized. The 1937 Home Owners Loan Corporation maps determined where federally backed new home loans should and shouldn't be offered, based on the racial makeup of the city. This determination became known as redlining. Predominantly white areas of St. Louis were colored green or blue, for 1st and 2nd grade-rated areas, and predominantly Black neighborhoods were marked in orange in red as 3rd and 4th grade areas. Ten years later, the 1947 St. Louis City Plan Commission reinforced the racialized narratives of "hazardous" Black space by labeling some of the same areas in North St. Louis, along with South St. Louis, as "obsolete" or "blighted." That document claimed the blighted districts a "cancerous growth [that] may engulf the entire city if steps are not taken to prevent it."

Other major projects in St. Louis followed from these earlier racialized documents. The Pruitt-Igoe housing development removed vibrant but poor Black neighborhoods in the late 1940s and early 1950 to reimagine public housing in Modern towers that were subsidized, and interracial (although still segregated by building). That project notably failed because there was insufficient funding to support maintenance, and as apartment access was overlaid by unjust rules that shaped how Black families could and should qualify to live there. Meanwhile, the patterns of inter-war and post-war housing development in the growing suburbs of St. Louis were equally shaped by formal and informal policies that determined where white vs. Black residents could and could not live. The highway building projects during those same decades at midcentury wiped out yet more blocks of vibrant, historic Black neighborhoods like Mill Creek Valley and portions of McRee Town, and other areas in North St. Louis.

In more recent decades since the 1970s, the big federal projects of highway building ebbed, as did public housing. This was partly in response to the backlash against the clearing of so much of the historic fabric of American cities, but also as administrations shifted and the U.S. political economy moved towards more privatized models of urban redevelopment. Today subsidized housing is carried out by private developers, drawing on public assistance. Neighborhood change today involves a mix of private developers and institutions working together with the local government and other organizations. This format arguably creates new issues of injustice, since the private sector is not obliged to provide social programs to benefit all. Most development requires a substantial profit to even be viable. Additionally, the effects and impacts of today's neighborhood changes are still bearing similar physical-economic outcomes on poor Black neighborhoods. Places like historic McRee Town and North St. Louis again have been cleared and people moved elsewhere, rather than supported (Heyda, 2022).

The same exploitative ethos that drove enslavement as forced and free labor drives neighborhood clearing as access to land and development profit.

Looking Forward

Overcoming the legacy of housing discrimination, disparities, and disadvantage is a steep task. All of its elements—institutional "redlining," federal housing and urban renewal policies, prevailing patterns of segregation, the racial wealth gap, local zoning and planning policies—were underwritten by massive public investments. But federal urban policy has withered, state governments betray little interest in urban challenges, and local governments lack the fiscal capacity to address the damage (Reneau, 2024). The range and diversity of non-governmental and neighborhood initiatives in St. Louis around housing access and neighborhood revitalization is both a heartening measure of deep civic interest in these problems and a sobering reminder of how difficult it is to sustain meaningful change and accomplish it at scale (see, for example, St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative, 2024).

The challenge for St. Louis, in turn, is exaggerated by its broader setting. The City of St. Louis is at once the core of a regional economy, and (along with its inner suburbs) a victim of the political and jurisdictional fragmentation of that region. The policies of suburban municipalities, indeed their very existence, create a destructive, inefficient, and deeply racialized competition over opportunities and resources. This limits the options and impact of any single government in the region and compels us to consider regional or metropolitan solutions (Orfield, 2017; Swanstrom et al., 2002). In housing, such strategies would include stronger regional commitments to tenant rights and affordable housing, and equity-focused jurisdictional cooperation in zoning, planning, and economic development.

Solutions should invest in people and places—and avoid the trade-offs often made between these approaches. Given our history, and our regional challenges, it is vital both to ensure open and equal access to neighborhoods that are thriving, and to build opportunity and capacity in those that have been historically disadvantaged (Turner, 2017). Housing policies should connect residents of historically-disadvantaged neighborhoods to local and regional opportunities, while simultaneously and making and sustaining meaningful investments in those neighborhoods—for the benefit of those who live there.

Such approaches can and should be framed as both inclusive and equitable policy options, and as redress for past harms. Public goals and commitments should be understood as affirmative and reparative, and they should be met—in large part—by tapping existing resources and inequalities. Trust funds for affordable housing, entry-level home ownership, and neighborhood maintenance—to cite one example—can be sustained through a combination of public financing and targeted taxation of real estate transactions.

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Quotes from Public Testimony

"Housing programs historically have harmed, rather than helped Black Americans making them inadequate as reparations. These programs have perpetuated segregation, redlining, discriminatory practices, further exacerbating housing disparities in the Black community."
-**Antoine Donaldson**

"Why don't they come up with a program where they can offer us some housing? Let us buy it for a dollar. Give us some money to help us fix it up. Because it's too many empty houses over here."
-**Unnamed Speaker**

"Also when I heard about the Commission and looked at the plight of our neighborhoods and how we are generationally deprived from being able to maintain the buildings. We have vacancy issues. We have people holding on to property that their mother or their grandmother held on to. And I wanted to ask the Commission to consider some type of generational lineage when they think about home ownership."
-**Rhonda Jones**

"I'm a resident of North St. Louis City. After leaving the city at the age of 19 to move out to the county, where I was for about 35 years in North County, and returning to North St. Louis City and my family home in 2012. I will make this short. I raised two kids. And as we were coming to visit mom, my mom, or their grandma and grandpa, and I cannot tell them of all the places that I enjoyed, the movie theaters, the amenities that I enjoyed growing up in North St. Louis City. I'm telling my kids this, but I can't show them that."
-**Sheila Pargo**

Education in St. Louis City

Introduction

The City of St. Louis presents unique opportunities for young professionals. Deemed among the top quintile of "best cities for young professionals in America," St. Louis boasts innovative professional opportunities, including those associated with the geotechnology, plant sciences, and healthcare industries (e.g., the Cortex Innovation Community) (Niche, 2024). Yet, upon examination of the state of K-12 education in the City of St. Louis, a disconnect emerges between the educational preparation of the City's African American students and their collective opportunity to contribute in leadership capacities to economic growth. This brief report surveys three related areas pertaining to education in St. Louis City: 1) history of schooling in St. Louis for African Americans, 2) current realities for African American students, and 3) teacher and staffing challenges and funding and financial outlook.

History of Schooling for African Americans in St. Louis City

Like cities in the Northeast and others in the Midwest, in the 1830s and 1840s, the City of St. Louis began establishing free public schools, and Catholics started parochial schools (Baumgarten, 1994). Concurrently, Missouri, like southern states, passed legislation in the 1840s that outlawed African Americans from learning to read or to write (Tabscott, 2009). By the mid-1800s, Central High School, the first public high school in St. Louis, was founded. As more public high schools opened nationally following the Civil War, the city in 1875 established Sumner High School in the Ville neighborhood in North City St. Louis; Sumner was the first public high school for African Americans west of the Mississippi River (Tabscott,

African-American girls gather after school near Sumner High School. (1917), Courtesy of the Missouri History Museum

2009). In 1896 with the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling, segregation was enforced through legal means. Additional segregated Black schools were opened, including Vashon High School in 1927 in the Jeff-Vander-Lou neighborhood in North City St. Louis (Naffziger, 2018). Throughout the early and mid-20th century, many Black St. Louisans graduated from Sumner and Vashon, who would go on to lead in politics and activism, the arts, education, science, and athletics (Naffziger, 2018).

With European immigration and the Great Migration, St. Louis reached a peak population exceeding 856,000 by the mid-20th century. African Americans challenged segregation in housing and education; the Supreme Court ruled against racially restrictive covenants in housing in *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948) and found segregated education unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). As activism and advocacy for African Americans' civil rights and economic justice continued, a precipitous population decline in the city followed. Multiple factors caused this decline, including urban renewal and divestment in North City (such as the destruction of Black neighborhoods and public housing, and the closure of Homer G. Phillips Hospital), deindustrialization, and suburbanization and subsequent white flight to St. Louis County (Johnson, 2020).

Challenging the effects of school segregation, in 1972 Minnie Liddell sued the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis. In 1983, the *Liddell* case resulted in the St. Louis Student Transfer Program. By 1999, the Program, subsequently labeled the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC), had grown to include over 14,000 students (mostly Black students from the city) as one of the nation's largest school desegregation programs (VICC, n.d.). As it concludes, VICC continues to include Black students from the City of St. Louis who attend various St. Louis County schools (90% or more) and white St. Louis County students who attend city magnet schools through the program (10% or less).

Current Realities for African American Students

The early 21st century has ushered in a multiplicity of challenges for St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS). SLPS was subject to unstable leadership as a series of superintendents led the district in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 2007, SLPS, then enrolling approximately 35,000 students, lost its state accreditation and surrendered local control to the state (Gay, 2007). SLPS regained full accreditation in 2017 and returned to local school board control in 2019 (Kloepple, 2017; Rosenbaum, 2017). Concurrently, since the early 2000s, public charter schools have constituted a growing component of St. Louis' schooling landscape (detailed below). With a declining city population and an increased number of charter schools, a number of permanent school closures—especially in North City—have occurred, including an estimated 40% of SLPS schools over the last 30 to 40 years (Rhode-Collins & Anglum, 2023; see also Duncan-Shippy, 2023). Beyond its public schools, the St. Louis City schooling landscape continues to include parochial and private schools that some Black students attend. Schooling for Black children in the City of St. Louis is now a patchwork of systems that do not necessarily work together.

This section now turns to African American students' enrollment trends and academic outcomes, teacher and staffing challenges, and funding.

African American Students' Enrollment Trends and Academic Outcomes

The following section outlines St. Louis City enrollment trends since the 1990s, as well as recent graduation and college-going rates and standardized test scores. The data indicates that most Black public school students in St. Louis City do not exhibit the academic credentials and/or preparation to be the next industry leaders in St. Louis City.

Enrollment: Since the 1990-1991 school year, total K-12 public school enrollment in St. Louis City (across SLPS, St. Louis City charter schools, and VICC students in St. Louis City and County) has declined approximately 46%, from 56,463 to 30,349. Current SLPS enrollment is approximately 38% of its 1990 count, 16,542 versus 43,284, while total VICC enrollment has declined from 14,014 to 2,499 as the program phases out (VICC 2024). St. Louis City public charter schools enroll a growing share of students, now 11,370. Black students comprise the majority of St. Louis City's total public school enrollment, 46,767 (82.8%) in 1990-91, declining to 23,293 (75.9%) in 2022-3 (inclusive of charter schools and VICC). The disenrollment of African American St. Louis City students has outstripped that of non-Black students, especially over the past 15 years.

St. Louis Public School Enrollment, 1991-2023

Of note is that African American students are not solely concentrated in North St. Louis; Black students are the majority of students in traditional public and charter schools throughout the city, including in parts of Central and South St. Louis (Hogrebe, 2022). Where Black students are 50% or more of the student population, the schools are often located in high-poverty areas. Across St. Louis City, approximately 63% of public school students are eligible for federally subsidized free lunch, a common metric used to quantify student poverty.

Per 2022 American Community Survey estimates, 42,810 five- to 19-year-olds reside in the City of St. Louis. After subtracting the city's traditional public school, charter school, and VICC enrollments, we estimate there are now approximately 12,500 city student residents educated in non-public schools (i.e., private or parochial) or being homeschooled.

Graduation and Dropout Rates: Between 2016 and 2023, graduation rates fell for all SLPS students, from 84.9% to 69.3%, and for Black students from 85.6% to 68.7% (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2024).

SLPS Graduation Rates, 2016-2023

Year	Graduates	Graduates 4YR Cohort	Adjusted 4YR Cohort	Graduation Rate 4YR Cohort	Black Graduates 4YR Cohort	Black Adjusted 4YR Cohort	Black Graduation Rate 4YR Cohort
2016	1,484	1,398	1,646	84.9	1,137	1,328	85.6
2017	1,436	1,310	1,642	79.8	1,040	1,324	78.6
2018	1,509	1,423	1,780	79.9	1,155	1,438	80.3
2019	1,275	1,213	1,692	71.7	934	1,298	72.0
2020	1,294	1,184	1,634	72.5	915	1,282	71.4
2021	1,201	1,105	1,506	73.4	857	1,178	72.8
2022	1,110	1,037	1,402	74.0	769	1,058	72.7
2023	997	912	1,315	69.4	684	996	68.7

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2004, Jul 2). Compresensive Data System: Student Graduation and Dropout Rates. https:apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/home.aspx

Both 2023 percentages are lower than average state outcomes. Across the state, the graduation rate for all students is 89.9% and the graduation rate for Black students is 79.9% (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2024). For charter schools, the graduation rate is 85.3%, but of note is that most charter school enrollees attend grades K-8 rather than high school (SLPS graduates nearly three times as many students).

SLPS' dropout rate is 10.8% among Black students, compared to 10.5% for all SLPS students. Both percentages are higher than state percentages: 3.9% for Black students across the state and 1.8% for all students (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2023b).

Post-Graduation College Going and Workforce Rates: For all SLPS students, 33.5% enter a four-year college; 16.5% enter a two-year college; and 37.6% enter the workforce upon high school graduation. Compared to statewide figures, SLPS' four-year college going rate is on par (33.8%), its two-year college going rate is lower (22.7%), and its percentage of students going into the workforce is higher (28.9%). For St. Louis charter schools, the four-year college going

rate is 38.8%, two-year college going rate is 14.6%, and the post-grad employment rate is 40.5%. As with graduation rates, note that most charter schools are K-8 rather than high schools.

English Language Arts and Mathematics: Approximately 40% of students statewide score at proficient or advanced levels on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) English Language Arts exams (grades 3 to 8), but only 20.8% of all students in SLPS and 13% of Black students in SLPS score at proficient or advanced levels. In comparison, 28% of all charter school students in St. Louis scored at proficient or advanced levels in English Language Arts. Compared to approximately 30 to 40% of students across the state scoring at proficient or advanced levels on the MAP Mathematics Tests, only 15.7% of all students in SLPS and 8.4% of Black students in SLPS score at proficient or advanced levels. In comparison, 23.6% of all charter school students scored at proficient or advanced levels on the MAP Math test.

Teacher and Staffing Challenges and Funding and Financial Outlook

High poverty schools may present difficult teaching conditions, yet these schools are the most in need of strong teacher workforces. Indicators of teacher and staffing challenges for SLPS include comparatively low teacher experience, in-subject assignment, and yearly retention, despite receiving relatively high salaries for the region and the state. Below we review these indicators and offer a funding and financial outlook, amid a context of expiring COVID relief funding.

Teachers and Administration Years of Experience and Expertise: On average, SLPS staff have eight years of experience compared to 13.1 years for all staff across the state. In addition, 25.2% of teachers in Title I SLPS schools (the vast majority of schools in SLPS) are inexperienced compared to only 7.9% of teachers in Title I schools statewide. Also, 28.9% of SLPS teachers in Title I schools teach out-of-field versus 15.2% of teachers in Missouri. Finally, 42% of all professional staff in SLPS have advanced degrees compared to 61.7% statewide (Missouri Department of Education, 2023a, 2023c, 2023d).

Teacher Compensation: Teacher compensation constitutes the largest expenditure in public education and a key component for teacher recruitment and retention. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) indicates wage competitiveness for teachers across Missouri is fourth highest in St. Louis City among the state's 115 counties, surpassed only by St. Louis County, Jackson County, and St. Charles County. St. Louis-area teachers, therefore, may have regional access to other high-paying jobs. Average SLPS salaries ($53,854) are fourth highest statewide; however, teacher turnover in SLPS (transfer to other districts/states or departure from the profession) reached 26% over the pandemic, exceeding 97% of traditional public school districts statewide (Bernhard, 2024). Attempting to redress average and starting pay ranked in the bottom decile nationally, recent state-level salary reform efforts have focused largely on improving minimum teacher salaries. Such reforms are predominantly relevant to Missouri's rural areas, where average teacher salaries often are closer to the state minimum (increased from $25,000 to $40,000 in the 2024-25 school year). SLPS, conversely, offers the state's fourth highest average salary; many state-funded salary reforms, therefore, have not reached St. Louis (Anglum et al., 2024).

Though S.B. 727 increased minimum teacher salaries and state pre-K funding, it also allows charter schools to open in Boone County. The legislation also expanded the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program, the state's private school choice education savings account program, by 50%, potentially directing $75 million annually to private schools via public state tax credits (S.B. 727, 2024).

Funding and Financial Outlook: U.S. public schools are funded by local, state, and federal revenue sources. Per Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education data, in 2022-23, Missouri school districts received resources from local (45.1%), state (36.7%), and federal revenues (18.2%) (note: federal funding increased over the pandemic and typically averages around 10% in Missouri). By contrast, SLPS derived 79.3% of its revenues from local sources, with the remaining 7.4% from state and 13.3% from federal sources (Missouri Department of Education, 2023e). Large disparities exist in local school district capacities to raise public school revenues. Because property taxes typically constitute the largest local revenue source, school districts of limited property wealth often disproportionately rely on state funding. Per NCES, however, in 2020-21 Missouri provided the third least amount of revenue per public school student via state sources of all states nationwide, leaving most public school funding responsibility to local district revenues.

On average, school districts in the St. Louis region that serve the largest shares of Black students hold less property wealth than their geographic neighbors that serve larger white student populations. These majority Black districts, however, achieve similar school funding levels to their peer districts by exerting greater tax effort; that is, they elect to tax themselves at higher rates in order to fund their schools, limiting capacity to invest in other public services (Anglum, 2023). Moreover, unlike most states, Missouri's school funding formula is based principally on student average daily attendance (weighted by student characteristics like poverty), not enrollment, providing less funding to districts with higher student absenteeism.[8] At present, SLPS is one of the five most "penalized" districts in the state by this aspect of the formula.

Beginning in the 2024-25 school year, the expiration of COVID-era federal relief funding will accelerate, exhausting a heretofore unprecedented amount of federal funding in K-12 public education. Following a similar expiration of federal relief funding in response to the Great Recession beginning in 2012, student test scores and college-going rates declined, increasing achievement disparities between Black and white students (Jackson et al., 2021). Meanwhile, SLPS' proposed AY2024-25 budget includes a $133 million shortfall, or 30% of revenues, in part due to a year-over-year decline in state and federal grants exceeding $55 million (Banks, 2024).

Conclusion

The City of St. Louis is potentially poised to rebound given its growing industries, the appeal of City living for young adults employed in these industries, and the historical landmarks, sports, restaurants, and entertainment that attract many to the city. Yet, the extent to which African American children, the majority of the city's children, are academically prepared to lead the revitalization of St. Louis City is important to consider. What we have outlined above indicates that the majority are not being prepared for such leadership for multiple reasons.

Enrollment figures in the city have fluctuated significantly in recent decades, declining precipitously as depopulation in the city has continued. For example, SLPS has lost 62% of its enrollment over three and half decades, while charter school enrollment now encompasses 37.5% of public school enrollment (SLPS, charter schools, and VICC) since their advent two and half decades ago. These figures bear significantly on future prospects of permanent school closure. Average academic achievement in the city significantly lags statewide figures while graduation figures declined sharply over the pandemic. Teacher retention also declined significantly over the pandemic, with more than one in four leaving the district or the profession in 2022-23.

Outcomes for Black students in St. Louis often fall behind city and state averages, including on standardized tests scores and high school graduation. As the region's school desegregation program concludes, African Americans continue to comprise the vast majority of enrollment in SLPS and many public charter schools, placing the quality and outcomes of the city's public education system at the forefront of socioeconomic mobility.

Served by a patchwork of public and private education providers, ongoing depopulation and disenrollment, cross-school enrollment shifts, continued staffing challenges and precarious financial well-being loom large as the city plans for its future and the future of its students.

Acknowledgment

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Quotes from Public Testimony

"City of St. Louis BOE should create an institute of curriculum that teaches the history of gun violence, cultural entertainment industries, and mental health impact on gun violence."
-Larry Graves, Resident

"I think we should have STEM learning centers, where our kids learn how to do advanced STEM. . .We need innovation, acceleration centers to redevelop those cities."
-Dr. Kim V. Robinson, Resident

"I'd be curious to see how the report can also fold in how the educational system might be able to better prepare students to learn about financial security, financial literacy, and financial self-sufficiency. Because having grown up in the United States, I'm aware of how, many times they're not telling us how to save up for a house, how to save up for a family, and how to be able to build businesses in our communities. And very curious as to how as you're considering jobs and the economy, two current programs are in consideration for that."
-Ousmane Gay, Resident

"But one, we must always start first and foremost with education. Because without investing in quality education and skill development programs for individuals and communities, where will we be?"
-Dacia Polk, Resident

Public Health

Background

Public health and the healthcare system in the U.S. is fundamentally flawed, with a focus more on the ability to pay and less on a social justice contract that allocates care on the basis of need and the desire to have each individual reach their full health potential (Hoffer, 2019). The public health and healthcare sector have spawned deep-wide distrust in the Black population, based on longstanding abuse and mistreatment of Blacks. Reports have long argued that the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, in which Blacks were denied treatment for syphilis before and after penicillin was available, is the most important reason why many African Americans distrust the institutions of medicine and public health (Gamble, 1997). However, according to historian Vanessa Gamble, that interpretation neglects the critical historical point that the mistrust pre-dated public revelations about the Tuskegee study (Gamble, 1997). J Marion Sims (1813–1883) was widely heralded for his successful operations for the cure of vesicovaginal fistula. His attempts to cure vesicovaginal fistulas (without anesthesia) were carried out on a group of enslaved African American women whom he quartered in a small hospital behind his house in Montgomery, Alabama (Sims, 1998). Between late 1845 and the summer of 1849, he carried out repeated operations on these women in a dogged effort to repair their injuries. Anarcha, a young enslaved woman with a particularly difficult combination vesicovaginal and rectovaginal fistula, underwent 30 operations before Sims was able to close the holes in her bladder and rectum.

This wanton neglect of Black health is illustrated by the reduced life expectancy in the US and the persistence of intractable and immoral health disparities among Blacks. Life expectancy at birth in the United States declined nearly a year from 2020 to 2021, according to new provisional data from the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (Arias et al., 2022). The declines in life expectancy between 2019 and 2021 largely reflect an increase in excess deaths amid the COVID pandemic, which disproportionately impacted Black, Hispanic, and AIAN people. The disparities fluctuated among states; Missouri saw the largest increase in life expectancy disparities over the time period (World Health Organization, 2024; Johnson et al., 2022).

These reports were preceded by the 1985 Report of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. DHHS) Task Force on Black and Minority Health, known as the Heckler Report (Heckler, 1985), the first government-sanctioned assessment of racial health disparities, followed nearly two decades thereafter by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report on Unequal Treatment (IOM, 2003). The Heckler Report noted mortality inequity was linked to six leading causes of preventable excess deaths for the Black compared to the white population (cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, infant mortality, chemical dependency, and homicide/unintentional injury). The IOM Report focused on health care disparities and highlighted the role interpersonal racism can have on health outcomes for members of minoritized groups. We will later outline a few health disparities that characterize the Black community in St. Louis. Ameliorating these disparities will require a full-blown effort to dismantle the systemic policies and structures that enabled and perpetuated them. In this report we use the term healthcare reparations for all Blacks, defined as free high-quality healthcare insurance covering: inpatient and outpatient, preventive, and reproductive healthcare; prescriptions; childcare when accessing healthcare; transportation for healthcare access; healthcare

navigators; committed healthcare providers and institutions.

Healthcare reparations and effective promotion of public health and healthcare and the requisite delivery of culturally appropriate healthcare requires the elimination of the social and structural barrier to public health and healthcare that enable and perpetuate ill health and the institution of health care reparations. In the case of the greater St. Louis community, these barrier - social determinants that negatively affect health outcomes, have deep historical roots in the poverty and degraded socio-environmental setting of the area. The social determinants of health are defined by the World Health Organization as the conditions in which people "are born, grow, live, work, and age" (World Health Organization, 2024). Health is thus affected by discrimination, adverse early life events, poor education, unemployment, underemployment and job insecurity, economic inequality, poverty, neighborhood deprivation, food insecurity, poor-quality housing, housing instability, inadequately built environment, and poor access to health care.

The stress of living with limited resources can contribute to a variety of health problems. Americans living in extreme poverty have "more chronic illness, more frequent and severe disease complications, and make greater demands on the health care system (Chokshi, 2018). Overall, African Americans have higher rates of diabetes, stroke, and other preventable diseases compared to white Americans. African American, American Indian and Puerto Rican infants continued to have higher mortality rates than those reported for white infants (McGrath et al., 2019). In addition, African Americans are 30% more likely to die of heart disease and twice as likely to have a stroke (Graham, 2015).

In 2019, African Americans were twice as likely to die of diabetic-related complications (Flourish STL, n.d.). Maternal mortality is 3-times higher among African American mothers compared to whites. These health inequities are not naturally occurring or immutable. Rather, they have been fueled by historical and contemporary laws, policies and practices. St. Louis is one of the most starkly segregated metropolitan areas in the United States, influenced by a confluence of racist federal, state, and local laws, policies and practices such as redlining, inequities in zoning, restrictive covenants, private streets, and residential steering (Saint Louis Story, n.d.). These factors have defined the deeply seated, widespread racial residential segregation that characterize the racial health inequities present throughout the region.

Social determinants of health, particularly socioeconomic resources at the individual and neighborhood levels, undergird health inequities (World Health Organization, 2024). This is especially true in St. Louis where there is a persistent gap in the rate of poverty in the past 30 years, translating to poverty that affects close to 1 in 3 African Americans, compared to less than 1 in 10 among white Americans in St. Louis County and St. Louis City (Chokshi, 2018). The impact of poverty on children is especially troubling since starting life in poverty has negative consequences for health well into adulthood (Flourish STL, n.d.). Almost half (46%) of African American children under 18 live in poverty in St. Louis County and St. Louis City. Simply put, due to policies and practices based on structural racism, African Americans in St. Louis are more likely to live in poverty and without adequate access to equitable opportunities, including high quality schools, health promoting resources, gainful employment, and transportation, these health inequities will continue to persist (Flourish STL, n.d.).

The effects of these factors were manifest during the COVID pandemic in which African Americans were more likely to live in crowded, multi-generational households or were employed in service jobs where they could not work remotely, placing a disproportionate burden of COVID exposure, morbidity, and mortality on African Americans (Vasquez, 2020). Another example of a persistent health inequity that has been strongly influenced by disproportionate experience of stress is infant mortality. African American infant mortality outpaces white infant mortality deaths. Within St. Louis City, African American infant mortality rates, at 13.5 deaths per 1,000 live births, are three times higher than whites (Chokshi, 2018). Public health professionals often state that zip code is more influential than genetic code. Racial residential segregation and factors such as stress and poverty have also drastically affected African American life expectancy, with gaps upwards of 18 years within just miles of different zip codes, as outlined in the For Sake of All (2015) plan. There has been a robust and commendable effort by dedicated public health leaders and healthcare leaders to address the myriad upstream causes of health disparities in our region, culminating most recently with the 2023-2027 St. Louis Regional Community Health Improvement Plan, incorporating well-documented national statistics (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2023; Economic Innovation Group, n.d.; St. Louis Department of Health, 2024).

Historically, those efforts were hampered by gaps in our healthcare safety net, the lack of a dedicated tax stream in the City of St. Louis, and the declining population in our region. The increasing paucity of available care, particularly for African Americans, is reflected in the fate of hospitals in the city. In 1906, St. Louis City Hospital opened; it was known as both City No. 1 and Max C. Starkloff Hospital. Despite the city's desire to open a public hospital that would provide care to residents irrespective of race, the hospital functioned as a segregated facility, with African American patients relegated to the rear part of the second and third floors (Berg, 2003). African American physicians were not extended privileges to practice at City No. 1. Only under duress, after 1955, did City No. 1 admit and treat all patients irrespective of race, creed, or color.

Homer G. Phillips Hospital opened its doors in the city's Northside as a "non-segregated" facility in 1937; however, in practice, it remained deeply segregated throughout its history. The Homer G. Phillips Hospital became the premier training ground for African American medical professionals, many of whom remained to deliver high-quality health care in the St. Louis area and later assumed prestigious positions nationwide (O'Connor, 2021). Located in the Ville Neighborhood in North St. Louis, Homer G. Phillips Hospital was a source of immense pride for its patients and the

Homer Phillips Hospital Program students visiting. (1939), Courtesy of the Missouri History Museum

members of the surrounding community, many of whom were employed by the facility. However, although the hospital was constructed as a state-of-the-art medical facility, it was consistently underfunded and understaffed. After the City of St. Louis recognized that it could no longer afford to run two hospitals at a combined deficit of $40 million per year, Homer G.

Phillips Hospital was closed on August 17, 1979, under massive citywide protest from the African American community. Its closure was followed by City Hospital No. 1 in 1985, St. Louis County Hospital in 1987, and St. Louis Regional Hospital (a public-private partnership) in 1997 (O'Connor, 2021).

The St. Louis Regional Health Commission chartered in 2001, the St. Louis Integrated Health Network and the City and County Departments of Health have collaborated extensively with the area's Federally Qualified Health Care Centers to improve the health of African Americans in our region. The persistence of these unconscionable disparities obligates continued collaboration with healthcare systems and systemic reform to repair the harm done to the African American community through sustained and targeted reparations. We will highlight public health and health care issues in the following areas:

- Health of children
- Violence
- Medical racism
- Black mother mortality rate
- Food Access
- Access to free mental health services and therapy
- Access to free medical care
- Medical Deserts and Inaccessibility
- Environmental health concerns

Figure 1: Percentage of Population with No Insurance
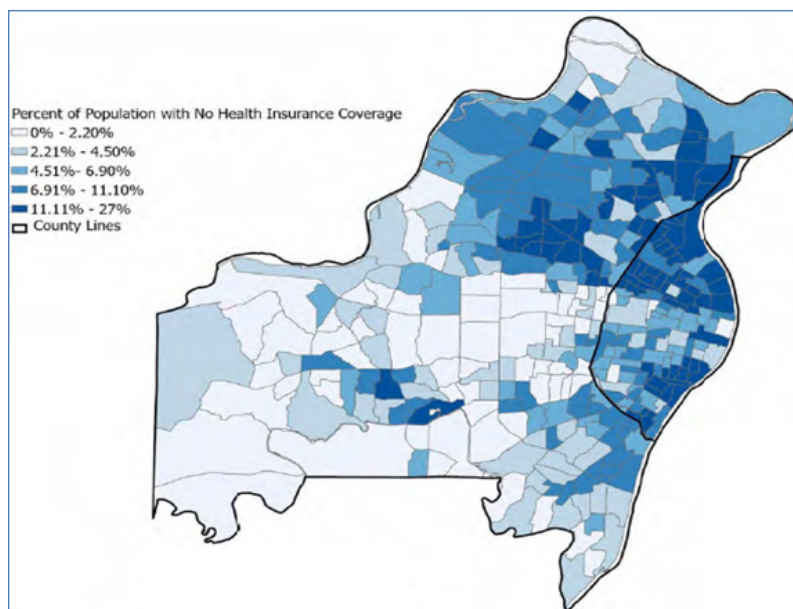
Key Health Facts About the City of St. Louis

Our nation's current system of care is not well designed to equitably serve all City of St. Louis residents with disparities in access to care by race, geographic location, and health insurance status, to name a few. Access to timely, quality health care is a key driver of health status and outcomes. A lack of health insurance is a primary barrier to healthcare access, including regular primary care, specialty care, and other health services.

Historically, the U.S. population has experienced inconsistent access to care based on race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, sex, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and residential location (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Figure 1 shows the city has a higher rate of uninsured persons (10.2%) compared to the County (6.1%) and Missouri overall (9.4%). In the City of St. Louis' race and geography are highly correlated due to the historic de jure segregation of Black residents through restrictive covenants and redlining. In the City of St. Louis, 47.4% of residents are Black, yet these residents do not have equal access to care compared to their white counterparts.

Whether there are sufficient healthcare facilities and workers to meet a region's demand also influences healthcare access. The ratio of population to primary care physicians in the City of St. Louis is 1 physician for every 1,130 residents, compared to St. Louis County's rate of 1:820 and a statewide rate of 1:1,430 (St. Louis Department of Health, 2024). 78.3% of City of St. Louis residents saw a primary care doctor in the past year, and 56.4% of City of St. Louis residents saw a dentist within the past year (St. Louis Department of Health, 2024). While health insurance and physician availability help patients attain and afford health care, additional factors affect access to care. 18.7% of the City's population doesn't have access to a vehicle (compared to 6.2% in the County), making transportation more burdensome and time-consuming for patients seeking care (Flourish STL, n.d.). Furthermore, patients need to be able to communicate effectively about their needs. About 10% of the City's population speaks a language other than English at home (Missouri Economic Research & Information Center, n.d.). Language barriers create obstacles to healthcare access, communications, and health literacy/education (Missouri Economic Research & Information Center, n.d.).

A collaborative effort by the City of St. Louis Department of Health (DOH) and St. Louis County Department of Public Health in partnership with numerous stakeholders formalized the St. Louis Partnership for a Healthy Community to produce the 2022 Community Health Assessment (CHA) Report. The CHA aims to determine the health status of residents in the St. Louis region, understand the factors that contribute to health issues, identify areas for health improvement, and establish the assets and resources that can be mobilized to address the health of these populations. The CHA identified the following priority areas: Maternal & Child Health, Chronic Disease, Violence Prevention, Behavioral Health, and the Intersection of Health & Economic Mobility (St. Louis Partnership for a Healthy Community, 2023).

The DOH partners with the Integrated Health Network (IHN) to support community health centers, hospital systems and the Community Health Worker Coalition, ensuring healthcare access for priority populations in the St. Louis City. DOH also enhances public health literacy to reduce hospitalizations and guide when to seek medication or behavioral health care. The department contributed $5 million from the City of St. Louis to the Health Care Trust Fund, supporting the "Gateway to Better Health" project to improve care for the medically uninsured before Medicaid expansion, and continues to support these efforts post-expansion. Additionally, DOH promotes Medicaid expansion, provided 46,013 COVID vaccinations, tests, masks, and connected individuals with primary care during the pandemic. DOG manages numerous grant-funded contracts for HIV, STI, housing services for persons with AIDS, and behavioral health and related services.

Maternal & Child Health

Disparities in every facet of maternal and infant health are rooted in long-standing systemic inequities, often based on race. Women of color are more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women, and infants born to women of color are more likely to die before they reach their first birthday than infants born to white women. Maternal and Child Health is an indicator of the community's overall health. Healthy parents and babies throughout the birthing process lay the foundation for improved health outcomes later in life. Infant mortality refers to the death of an infant before their first birthday. Common causes of death among infants include birth defects, preterm births and low birth weight, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), or other unexpected infant deaths, injuries, and complications from pregnancy. As with most other maternal, child, and family health indicators, there remains a large racial disparity in infant mortality. Black infants were about three times more likely to die during the first year than white infants in the City of St. Louis (Flourish STL, n.d.).

When disaggregated by race, white women receive prenatal care at higher rates than Black women in the City of St. Louis. The disparity difference in the city shows a 49.2% decrease in prenatal care for Black women (St. Louis Department of Health, 2024). The race disparities between accessing prenatal care in the first trimester can have lasting effects on both mother and child, resulting in adverse health outcomes and co-morbidities.

Ongoing Efforts: The DOH has a block 5 grant from Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MODHSS). Our state funding allows us to provide upstream minded services focused on a healthy mom equals healthy baby. DOH MCH has worked with local hospitals and FQHCs to encourage birthing mom's utilization of prenatal care visits with their OBGYNs. DOH has also solicited the participation of community birthing moms in focus groups to hear their voice on what was important to them for successful pregnancies. Information from these sessions were shared with community partners to help address identified needs. Some of the identified needs included resources for their new newborns. DOH MCH has also provided child fatality visits to support and educate grieving families that have suffered the loss of a child. Our goal is to have no child fatalities, but if there are; we educate parents on preventive methods to ensure there are no more.

Chronic Disease

Figure 4. Age-Adjusted Heart Disease Mortality by Race 2016-2020
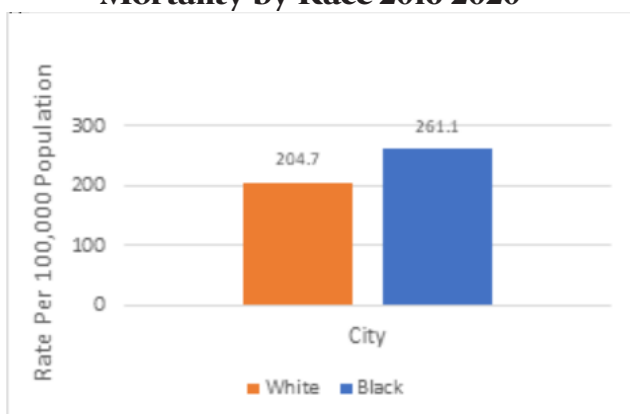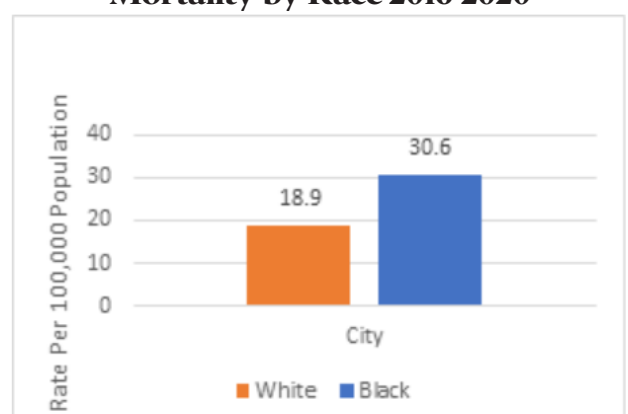

Figure 4. Age-Adjusted Diabetes Mortality by Race 2016-2020

Black men are disproportionately impacted by chronic diseases when compared to other racial groups. The leading cause of early death due to chronic diseases among Black men is heart disease (Figure 4), and low-income, older Black men have a significantly higher risk of developing chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and stroke. Black males are disproportionately affected by heart disease and diabetes compared to their white male counterparts. The rate of diabetes mortality by race is 38% higher for Black residents than white residents in the city (Figure 5). The age-adjusted diabetes mortality rate for Black residents is 30.6 per 100,000, whereas the rate for white residents was 18.9 per 100,000 (St. Louis Department of Health, 2024). Similarly, Black residents have higher rates of age-adjusted heart disease mortality at a rate of 261.1 per 100,000, compared to white residents with a rate of 204.7 per 100,000 for the St. Louis region (Graham, 2015; St. Louis Department of Health, 2024).

Ongoing Efforts: The DOH has organized several large-scale events to promote men's health and preventive practices. In 2013, DOH held a Men's Health Symposium at St. Louis Community College, Forest Park Campus, collaborating with Siteman PECaD, Urban League, DPH, Affinia Health and others. The event highlighted the importance of health insurance, having a trusted primary physician, and annual physical exams, covering topics like mental health and fatherhood, and offering screenings for prostate cancer, diabetes and hypertension. Furthermore, DOH has implemented programs to combat breast and cervical cancer through the state-sponsored Show-Me Health Women Program. DOH participates in the Sistah Strut event to raise breast cancer awareness among Black women, annually serving over 500 women.

Violence Prevention

Figure 6. Age-Adjusted Mortality Rate per 1,000 due to Homicide by Race 2016-2020
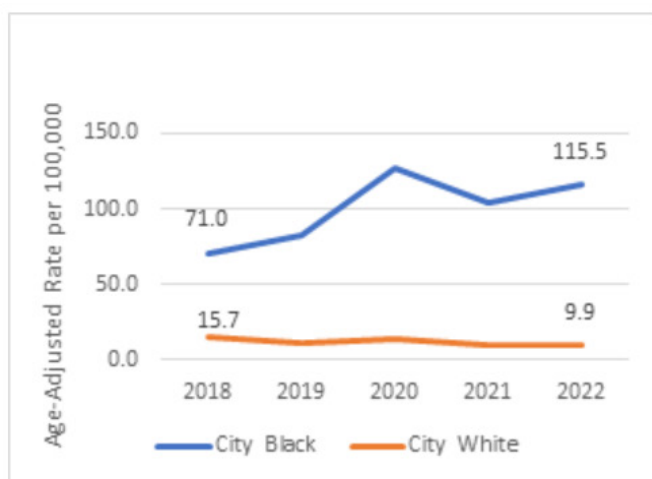
Figure 7. Mortality rate among Children Age<18 due to Homicide by Firearm (2011-2020)
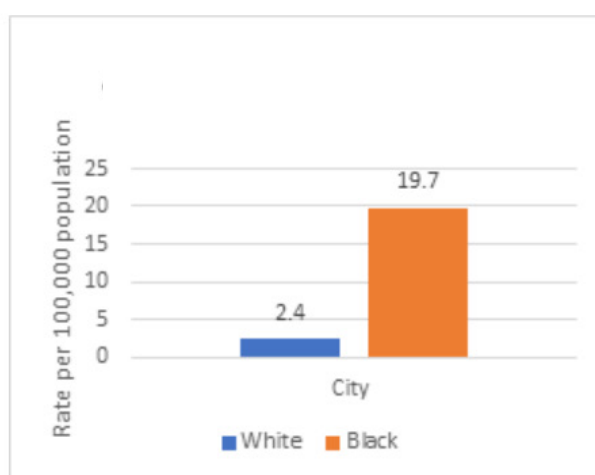
The data also highlights disparities in violence that disproportionately affect Black children, youth, and adults, men, and residents living in the Northern areas of the City of St. Louis. In 2022, the age-adjusted homicide mortality rate was 11.6 times higher for Black residents compared to white residents (Figure 6) (St. Louis Department of Health, 2024). A similar disparity can be seen regarding firearm-related mortality by sex. Figure 7 shows that in the city from 2011-2020, the homicide mortality rate by firearm for children under 18 years was about eight times higher in Black children (19.7/100,000) when compared to white children (2.4/100,000) (St. Louis Department of Health, 2024; see also Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, n.d.).

Ongoing Efforts: The DOH collaborates with organizations such as the Violence Prevention Commission (VPC), Office of Violence prevention (OVP), Gun Violence Response Network, and the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association to reduce gun violence. Programs aimed at youth intervention and support are a key focus. The Handle With Care program partners first responders with schools to provide trauma-sensitive care when children witness potentially traumatic events. The OVP's youth diversion program helps juveniles transition back to schools and community life after arrest or confinement, while mentorship and education initiatives promote leadership and connect youth with supportive organizations. Organizations like the Bullet Related Injury Clinic (BRIC) implement a holistic approach to addressing community violence. This includes culturally sensitive, trauma-informed care for both personal and community healing. BRIC not only treats physical gunshot injuries but also offers wound care supplies, physical therapy, education, and cognitive therapy resources.

Additionally, data-driven strategies for violence prevention like the Cardiff Model (working with health system partners) and risk-terrain modeling (crime activity in relation to the built environment) are also being used to identify opportunities for interventions.

Behavioral Health

Opioid-related deaths account for the bulk of all deadly overdoses in the St. Louis region. There are striking racial disparities in the impact of the overdose epidemic. Figure 7 shows that Black residents in the city were significantly more likely to die by overdose than their white counterparts. The five-year mortality rate for Black residents in the city is 39.7 higher than that of white residents, at 95.9 deaths per 100,000 population compared to 57.8 deaths per 100,000 population (Figure 8). Substance use has wide-ranging impacts on residents across all age groups and locations in the St. Louis area.

Figure 8. Age-Adjusted Overdose Mortality by Race 2016-2020

Figure 4. Age-Adjusted Suicide Mortality by Race 2016-2020
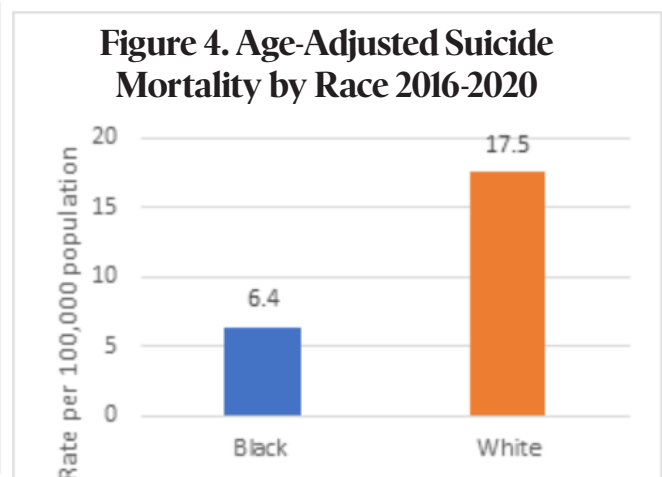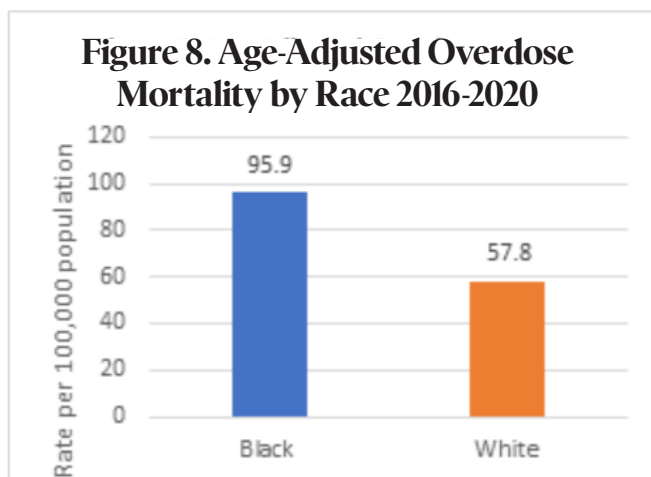
Suicide is a leading cause of death for all age groups in the United States. In the City of St. Louis, white residents had higher rates of suicide mortality than their black counterparts (Figure 9). This is a shift compared to rates of emergency department visits for self-harm and suicidal ideation, where Black residents had higher rates.

Ongoing Efforts: The DOH launched the Behavioral Health Bureau in May of 2023 in response to rates of mental health and substance abuse that placed us at the highest rates in the state of Missouri. The vision of that bureau is to pursue the holistic healing of St. Louis families and communities by overcoming obstacles to them experiencing their highest optimal mental

health and well-being.

As a part of that vision, we have focused on the priority areas of linkage to care, outreach, Narcan distribution, education and training, coalition building and criminal justice and crisis response. Those focus areas have led to over 275 linkage-to-care calls in the community, over 2,500 doses of Narcan distributed, participation in over 140 outreach events, crisis response training for city employees, and the awarding of over $1.6 million to organizations doing this critical behavioral health work in the community in the first year of operations. These initiatives are focused on neighborhoods that have disproportionate inequitable outcomes in behavioral health and social determinants.

Regarding the criminal justice system, the Behavioral Health Bureau are involved in the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the NCCHC audit process, jail diversion in the circuit attorney's office, re-entry planning, the jail monitoring report, and the training of the City Justice Center correctional officers and medical team on mental health outcomes and responses.

Despite some improvement in health status in the St. Louis region over the past decade, race- and gender-based health inequities continue to be concentrated in economically distressed neighborhoods, particularly in North St. Louis. Nonetheless, health equity is in the best interest of everyone in the region. One pathway to health equity is "curb-cut" policies. These policies center on people who often have the least but stand to benefit everyone. For example, Angela Glover Blackwell, Founder of PolicyLink, has used the analogy of a person confined to a wheelchair making their way down the street (Andrews, 2023). If they come to the end of a block and there is no ramp access to provide a way for the person to continue one, the person may have to embark on an arduous process to find another pathway to circumnavigate that barrier. However, if there is a "curb cut" in the sidewalk that provides a ramp to the street level, the person in the wheelchair benefits. Additionally, a person riding a bicycle or pulling luggage would also benefit. In this scenario, centering equity benefits everyone. Bold solutions are being developed and implemented across the country, including conversations around reparations to Black Americans as well as the development of cash transfer programs such as baby bonds to redress historical legacies of racism.

Conclusion

St. Louis has a long history of de facto and de jure segregation, stemming from structural racism that perpetrated and sustained persistent and unconscionable Black-white health disparities. This brief has highlighted the harm inflicted on the descendants of African slaves, including age-adjusted homicide mortality rate 11.6 times higher for Black residents compared to white residents, Black infants were about three times more likely to die during the first year than white infants in the City of St. Louis. Bassett and Galea (2020) identified reparations as a public health priority and outlined strategies that could end the disparities gap: Reducing the resource gap and providing Black Americans the means to obtain health-producing resources; addressing the mental legacies of slavery by directing funds to improve mental of Black Americans; and leveling the wealth playing field and provide funds to reduce intergenerational poverty, which begets poor health. Strategies to improve Black American Health outlined in this report include improving the per capita public health spending in Missouri, which at $7 ranks 50th out of 50 states (Figure 10), enhancing funding for the City of St. Louis Department

of Health, and increasing funding for maternal child health (Geressu & Yeung, 2022). These and other measures to improve Black health is consistent with our overall goal of restorative justice and improving health equity.

Figure 10. Per Person State Public Health Funding. Missouri rank 50 out of 50

State	Dollars
Alabama	$52
Alaska	$88
Arizona	$28
Arkansas	$45
California	$84
Colorado	$74
Connecticut	$41
Delaware	$51
Dist. of Columbia	$423
Florida	$22
Georgia	$35
Hawaii	$76
Idaho	$44
Illinois	$43
Indiana	$15
Iowa	$37
Kansas	$32
Kentucky	$40
Louisiana	$29
Maine	$45
Maryland	$190
Massachusetts	$129
Michigan	$39
Minnesota	$80
Mississippi	$17
Missouri	$7
Montana	$19
Nebraska	$45
Nevada	N/A
New Hampshire	$24
New Jersey	$43
New Mexico	$235
New York	$100
North Carolina	$17
North Dakota	$72
Ohio	$30
Oklahoma	$67
Oregon	$182
Pennsylvania	$18
Rhode Island	$63
South Carolina	$29
South Dakota	$41
Tennessee	$73
Texas	$17
Utah	$35
Vermont	$62
Virginia	$47
Washington	$69
West Virginia	N/A
Wisconsin	$19
Wyoming	$33

Note. Analysis of per person state public health funding, from State Health Compare, SHADAC, https://state-healthcompare.shadac.org/map/117/per-person-state-public-health-funding. Copyright 2024 by Regents of the University of Minnesota.

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Selected Quotes from Public Testimony

"And I'm glad that this reparations committee has been formed to help us heal, but we need a mental healing piece to that. There are a lot of people who have been affected by that, not only financially but mentally. And I'm here to do my part in bringing a collective group of residents and business owners together so that we can stand and be economically empowered, mentally empowered as well. So there's a lot of healing that needs to take place."
-Karen Breer, Angels Within Foundations

"And when you talk about reparations, the first thing that comes to my mind is that my community needs therapy. Mental therapy. Because of living through slavery, there was a mindset that was passed down generations and generations and generations. It was like we had to learn how to cope with things because we never knew what was going to be thrown at us. We not only have to suffer from food deserts in our communities, but mental health is also a top dog to me. Free mental health."
-Denise Otay, Resident

Jobs and the Economy
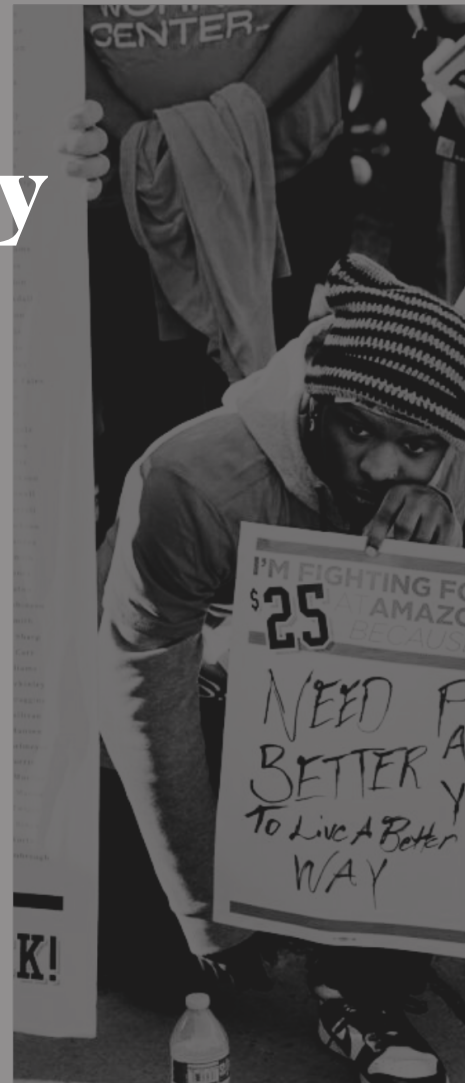
Historical Legacies of Exclusion and Exploitation

As the Great Depression approached, and waves of migrants traveled northward to settle in St. Louis, a legacy of disenfranchisement and exclusion from highly-remunerated white-collar work concentrated Black St. Louisans toward the bottom of the labor market (Lang, 2009). While fiercely-policed neighborhood segregation, paradoxically, opened up some opportunities for African Americans to teach in segregated schools, staff segregated newspapers, and see patients in segregated hospitals, many Black men—especially recent arrivals—worked as common laborers, doing "dirty, mean, and unskilled" jobs (Lang, 2009, p. 17). Large numbers of Black women, meanwhile, worked in the city's laundries, beauty salons, and the homes of white St. Louisans (Johnson, 2020, p. 280).

The Depression tore through the local economy, hitting Black workers especially hard. Only seven percent of the city's Black population was employed full-time in 1933—70% were out of work; the remainder employed only part-time (Lang, 2009, p. 23). This level of joblessness devastated families and the neighborhoods they lived in, interrupting any upward economic mobility gained in prior years. As the nation gradually dug out of the depths of the Depression—aided by New Deal relief projects, the rapid expansion of industries like auto, and, eventually, the production demands of the United States' entry into World War II—African-American workers' economic condition did improve, albeit gradually and incompletely. As the historian Clarence Lang writes, "Just as they had been the first fired during the Depression, African Americans now found themselves the last hired as the economy tilted toward full employment" (Lang, 2009, p. 43). This pattern would repeat itself decades later when the city's manufacturing base collapsed.

NAACP Flier. (1964),
Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society

Neighborhood segregation abetted job segregation—and outright exclusion. Many industries relied on personal networks to secure employment. For example, getting a job in the beer industry, a sizable employer in mid-20th century St. Louis, often depended on word-of-mouth recommendations from existing employees (Sugrue, 1996). Lacking access to connections already working in a plant blocked Black workers from establishing a foothold in sectors that relied on friends, family members, and neighbors for notices of job openings. As late as the early 1960s, of the thousands of St. Louisans working in the dairy, soft drink, and brewing industries, just 3.6% were Black (Lang, 2009, p. 133).

The role of organized labor

Passage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935 helped catalyze the growing labor movement. The New Deal-era legislation established the basic framework for collective bargaining in the private sector, and in the years that followed unions successfully organized many of the mass-producing industries that dominated St. Louis and other manufacturing hubs. As a result, from the mid-1930s through the mid-1950s, a sizable fraction of the private sector workforce belonged to unions, peaking at just over a third of the workforce in the mid-

1950s. These unions would transform the jobs—and the broader lives—of millions of workers, helping to expand the nation's fast-growing middle-class. Research finds that union members not only earn more than their non-unionized peers, but they are also more likely to receive benefits such as generous healthcare and retirement plans, and are afforded protection from unfair treatment at the hands of their bosses (Medoff & Freeman, 1984; Rosenfeld, 2014).

Unions were no panacea for African American workers in St. Louis and elsewhere. Racism and the exclusionary and discriminatory practices that flowed from it dominated many locals, especially (but not exclusively) those anchored in the trades and construction. The use of African Americans as strikebreakers frequently spurred anti-black violence. In 1904, during a meat-packers' strike in Chicago, white picketers brutally attacked Black workers and their families, stabbing one to death (Rosenfeld, 2014, p. 100). Labor strife could even lead to a lynching, as in Oklahoma City in 1922 when white unionists hung Jake Brooks, a Black worker hired to keep production going during a meatpacking strike (Rosenfeld, 2014, p. 101). At the dawn of the 20th century, less than 1% of the nation's union members were African American, with much of the labor movement hellbent at protecting white male workers' privileged positions at all costs.

That would change rapidly as the century progressed, but the transformation was uneven and often highly contested. Hate strikes were not uncommon, with white union members walking off the job to protest the hiring (and organizing) of Black workers. For example, as the World War II ramp up in production began to wind down, white workers at General Cable Company in St. Louis struck multiple times—not to contest low wages, forced overtime, or other exploitative management practices—but because the firm brought in Black employees (Johnson, 2020, p. 286).

Nonetheless, many Black workers would find refuge in labor unions from the viciously racist and outright violent treatment they faced in non-union employment settings. In a historic reversal, by the early 1970s, no group was more overrepresented in labor unions than Black workers. This included African American women as well as men: In the heavily-unionized Mid-west, for example, Black women's private sector unionization rate reached 40%.

Multiple developments spurred these rising rates of labor organization for Black workers. First, many unions began to shed racist, exclusionary practices of their past—especially unions affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). This change had ideological and practical underpinnings, as left-leaning organizers sought to capture industries that Black workers had finally gained entry into during wartime labor shortages. Under the innovative leadership of Harold Gibbons and Ernest Calloway, for example, St. Louis's Teamsters Local 688 swelled to 10,000 members strong during the 1950s—with a sizable contingent of Black warehouse and transportation workers (Bussel, 2003, p. 52).

Second, as certain unions began to welcome African Americans, African American workers themselves would seek out unionized employment to escape racist treatment at the hands of bosses in unorganized workplaces. Collective bargaining agreements standardized wage rates and hiring and firing processes. Wages were tied to seniority and job classification; seniority rules also guided the order of layoffs in the case of a production slowdown. On the one hand, these practices protected Black workers from particularistic treatment at the hands of racist

bosses. On the other, given how long it had taken Black workers to gain entry into unionized workplaces in large numbers, these same practices often meant they were the first to be let go during cutbacks—and were rarely able to climb the income ladder given their short duration on the job.

The problem was timing. Black workers flooded into unions in St. Louis just as factory jobs began drying up in central cities across the Midwest and northeastern manufacturing hubs. Many of these jobs were automated; some simply vanished as wartime production demands and government contracts disappeared. Companies shipped many of them elsewhere—often to far-flung rural and exurban centers as a way to escape union demands. These tended to be locations without large numbers of Black workers. Thousands upon thousands of Black workers who had just secured a toe-hold in decent-paying industrial work found themselves jobless. The reconversion to a peacetime economy following World War II "portended a disaster" for Black workers—especially Black women (Johnson, 2020, p. 285). Eighty-thousand African Americans arrived in St. Louis during the early 1950s, just as the city's job base began to crumble (Lang, 2009, p. 100). By the mid-1950s, the Black unemployment rate was three times as high as unemployment among white St. Louisans (Lang, 2009, p. 102).

A similar dynamic would play out in municipal employment. After years of struggle and protest, Black workers finally gained access to stable, high-paying government jobs. But they did just as these jobs—and the tax base that underwrote them—began to vanish. As a result, Black workers were never able to use a strong labor movement and public sector work as a springboard to the middle-class to the same extent white workers were in earlier, more prosperous years for the city.

The post-industrial picture

Following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, opportunities began to open up for Black workers. Newly able to access educational and occupational options that were previously closed, Black Americans were legally able to pursue educational opportunities at predominantly white colleges and to move into professional, white-collar jobs that had historically been largely unavailable. Yet even with the end of legal segregation, several obstacles still precluded Black workers from moving in large numbers into newly available professional occupations.

For starters, the city was emptying out. Nearly 60% of the white population fled St. Louis between 1950 and 1970 (Gordon, 2008). Following these decades of white flight, African Americans began leaving the city in large numbers in the 1970s. These waves of outmigration in the post-industrial era left behind an increasingly shrinking tax base and an urban core increasingly bereft of decent employment prospects for those who remained.

Black communities encountered an economy undergoing a profound restructuring as they entered newly desegregated labor markets. A major aspect of this economic transformation was a growing consensus advocating for increased privatization and deregulation of industries. Policymakers responded to the global recessions of the 1970s and 1980s by engendering a backlash against the post-war welfare reforms of the earlier era. The backlash, understood as the neoliberal consensus, sought to "unleash" markets from state interference by reorganizing the economic order around unregulated and unfettered market competition between firms.

Political leaders bolstered their privatization and austerity platforms to constituents through a racialized discourse that melded ideas of the public sphere with "Black" and inferior and the private sphere as "white" and thus superior (Hohle, 2012). Neoliberal economics spelled the end of ambitious public investment programs, relegating economic stability and mobility to goals that individuals should achieve through markets and not through governmental intervention.

And as noted above, access to jobs relied heavily on referrals and connections. This continues to be true today, with upwards of 70% of job seekers finding employment through existing networks (Pedulla, 2020). However, despite using their networks at rates similar to their white counterparts, Black workers are less likely to find jobs through this mechanism, leaving Black candidates at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to hiring (Pedulla & Pager, 2019).

Construction of the St. Louis Arch. Courtesy of National Park Service, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial

Researchers have also noted that, despite the passage of federal civil rights legislation, substantial labor market discrimination continues to persist. Resumes that indicate that the applicant is Black are less likely to receive callbacks (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). Employers demonstrate a preference for white workers with a criminal record over Black employees with no history of incarceration (Pager, 2007). And even in fields that profess a commitment to diversity, white women are often preferred over Black candidates (Weisshaar et al., 2024). Furthermore, these issues are not limited to the hiring stage—Black workers face more scrutiny from employers, are often held to higher standards, given less room for error, and experience wage gaps that do not disappear even with educational attainment (Rodgers & Wilson, 2016; Roscigno, 2007). In corporate settings, they are less likely to be given management responsibilities that lead to CEO roles, report more distance from managers than workers of other races, and are more likely to be placed in teams where isolation and disparate assignments result in higher turnover (Coqual, 2019; Linos et al., 2024; Woodson, 2023).

Even in the new, tech-driven economy, which purports to offer workers more autonomy, independence, and flexibility, Black workers still encounter additional adversity. As flexible work arrangements have become more popular, Black workers are more likely to want jobs that offer opportunities to work from home yet are less likely to be employed in occupations that offer this option. When Black workers are in jobs that offer flexible arrangements, they experience heightened scrutiny from management, often resulting in overwork as they strive to prove their worth and offset stereotypes (Chung et al., 2024). Black workers are also underrepresented in sectors such as tech and financial services that show the most growth, and are overrepresent-

ed in jobs that are likely to be disrupted by automation.

Overall, the picture for Black workers reflects one where occupational inequality is a persistent and detrimental fact of life. The effects of these long-term patterns are borne out in Black workers' underrepresentation in leadership roles across all industries. Black workers are less than 10% of the work force in high growth, high wage sectors such as tech, health care, and finance (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). They are also underrepresented in management and leadership roles. As a result of these systemic factors, Black workers encounter pronounced labor market and occupational inequality that has significant consequences for their economic security.

Protest for a $15 Minimum Wage. (2015), Courtesy of St. Louis Public Radio

Policymakers presumed markets to be better capable of achieving color-blind outcomes for Black workers, but as we detail here, segregation and discrimination against Black workers persists. The wage gains that Black workers experienced from the 1940s to 1970s were stalled, as neoliberal thinking rejected structural solutions to Black inequality for individualized blame.

Quite simply, state and local governments did not have the mechanisms in place to help workers adjust to the demandsof a newly privatized and globalized labor marketplace. As manufacturing hubs and other employment mainstays closed or migrated away, leaders assumed that workers would be able to adjust—but many workers did not. Financially distressed, workers faced difficulties finding work while also being held individually responsible for discovering new career paths and financing increasing education or training costs. This was particularly devastating for Black workers, who held vastly less wealth and resources to finance new career paths and were marginalized and segregated outside of predominately white social networks that could link them to emerging industries and opportunities.

The challenges Black workers face embedding themselves within the current economic landscape persists in present-day St. Louis. Many employment opportunities have disappeared, moving west to chase new business opportunities from wealthier and predominately White suburbanites (Gordon, 2008). St. Louis City continues to house a thriving anchor economy— vital industries like healthcare and higher education that meaningfully contribute to the local economy. The anchor economy is promising because the key industries are tied to place and will never endanger their regional contributions by moving away like manufacturing hubs of the past. The wealth of 71 higher education institutions and 115 hospitals contributes 13.9% of the region's employment and 9.3% of the St. Louis MSA's income (Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, n.d.). But the residents benefitting from anchor employment are disproportionately white, higher income, and college-educated professionals. The wealth generated by the anchor economy also contributes to the community-level "revitalization" of neighborhoods

throughout the Central Corridor and South city. But many of the neighborhoods of North St. Louis City and County, neighborhoods that house most Black residents, have been left out of these promising opportunities for economic uplift and community stabilization.

It's clear that policy officials, researchers, and political leaders were not honest enough about how a shift towards an increasingly globalized and de-industrialized economy would create new economic winners and losers while exacerbating the gap between them. Many workers, particularly those without a college degree, have found it difficult to adjust to the new economic order that has further marginalized them through lower wages while concentrating community-level poverty, leaving communities without the resources or fiscal capacity to deal with their major issues.

Where to go from here

In 2023, the national Black-white employment gap fell to its lowest rate on record. Wage gaps between Black and white workers narrowed as well (The Economist, 2024). What explains the progress? Historically low unemployment rates, which force employers to compete for workers by offering better pay and working conditions. As The New York Times' David Leonhardt (2023) has written: "Tight labor markets help almost all workers, and they tend to help disadvantaged workers the most." Given generations of labor market exclusion and exploitation, African Americans remain disproportionately concentrated at the bottom end of the labor market. Maintaining full employment ensures those workers in lower-paying positions benefit the most.

For generations, employers in St. Louis simultaneously relied upon African American labor to fulfill many of the most dangerous, low-paying jobs while excluding them from stable, well-paying ones. Going forward, the city should allocate resources to serve as an employer of last resort when labor demand slackens. This will ensure St. Louisans can secure decent employment even in down times, and help remedy the historical exclusion from high-paying municipal work faced by many Black residents of the city (Lang, 2009, p. 107). Current worker shortages across a range of city services—trash collection, 911 operators, and police officers, and others—highlight how the benefits of such a program would redound not only to those hired, but to the broader operations of the city.

Securing stable, meaningful employment requires knowing about the opportunity in the first place. Social networks facilitate the spread of such information, but unevenly: not everyone has access to the ties necessary to hear about desirable openings in the local economy (Trimble & Kmec, 2011). A positive word from an existing manager to a hiring manager can facilitate a job match with a prospective employee. Here, too, social networks play a key role in connecting people with jobs. These networks flow through neighborhoods, friends, and family members, but generations of residential segregation restrict access to them and the vital social capital they contain. Pathways to desegregate city neighborhoods will help connect historically disadvantaged populations to the networks often necessary to gain entry into stable jobs with the potential for long-term upward mobility.

Similarly, integrating neighborhoods puts potential workers closer to the available jobs. The city's long history of residential segregation, disinvestment, and deliberate isolation has concentrated the least-advantaged in neighborhoods cut off from promising economic

opportunities.

More broadly, policy solutions should seek to answer how to prepare and support workers who are experiencing real difficulties adjusting to the realities of our current economic system. What systems can we put in place to continue to raise the incomes of American workers who do not have college degrees? How can we help workers find stability in the labor market, while also granting them the opportunity to experience greater economic security and mobility over time? Meaningful public investments into employment insurance programs would support workers as they seek to find footing in an arduous labor market. More generous funding for career and technical education in community colleges, local public universities, or apprenticeship programs would help workers retrain or upskill to meet the employment demands of current employers. Investments in new business enterprise would bring employment opportunities into communities that have been devastated by business out-migration or help entrepreneurs launch new businesses that can serve community and fiscal needs. While investments are key, residents must be given the autonomy and agency to decide how they wish to participate in the economy.

The Biden administration has signaled a significant policy shift away from neoliberal privatization by embracing greater public investment in job creation, public industries, and infrastructure. There have been promising wage gains for workers at the lower end of the wage scale, but this has occurred after decades of wage stagnation. Solutions should continue to embrace public investment by recognizing that supporting workers is the key to a sound economy where everyone, regardless of their racial status or place of residence, can thrive.

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Quotes from Public Testimony

"Minority contractors aren't *really* minority contractors. You may have one Black with a whole gang, white folks who are not Black."
-Unknown Speaker

"When we talk about reparations and also moving forward to create sustainable economic promises, part of that consideration is when we're going into communities and creating more space for opportunity, how are we not only trying to bring in new voices, new blood into communities but also being able to appreciate and offer support to the people that have continued to make the choice of living in North St. Louis?"
-Ousmane Gay

Policing and State Violence

While violence can take a number of forms within communities, including the commission of crime or more political actions undertaken by private residents with varying levels of organization, official bodies tied directly to, or sanctioned by, governments also deploy violence as a means of control and, sometimes, coercion. Such actions are intrinsic to the criminal legal system, which employs force to pursue its law-and-order mission. We term such government-sanctioned force state violence, and view it as inherently linked to the development of the United States as a tactic for seizing and sustaining power. In St. Louis and across the nation, the logic of state violence has been—and continues to be—racialized, disproportionately targeting and impacting Black and Brown people and the spaces they occupy. The consistency and severity of these racial disparities point to an understanding of violence as a means of control, pursued as a longstanding strategy that has functioned to solidify and advantage white socioeconomic and political interests.

We highlight the continuity and persistence of state violence, even as its core forms have shifted—from chattel slavery, to legalized Jim Crow-style segregation and exclusion, to mass incarceration and policing intended to drive revenue to municipal coffers. We also recognize the role of the state in actions often considered as civil violence. The 1836 lynching of Francis McIntosh in downtown St. Louis, for instance, was considered a "mob" action but was tied to McIntosh's arrest and the police and other officials' sanctioning and enabling of citizens to take him from the city jail. We also adopt an expansive conception of violence, encompassing physical punishment but also threats to overall well-being and maltreatment in spaces tied to the criminal legal system.

While we focus primarily here on police as frontline workers interfacing most directly with communities, we also highlight how such actions relate to, and are reflected within, other elements of the overall criminal legal system, in particular city jails as spaces of incarceration and courts as defining and shaping how detainees are impacted by the system. Each of these spaces is characterized by significant racial disparity, with Black residents of the St. Louis region disproportionately targeted and impacted. We highlight those inequities, and point to broad and deep impacts they have created, both for those directly impacted by the criminal legal system and for the families and neighborhoods connected with those individuals.

Policing in St. Louis

Research has well documented the ways that modern day policing and its militaristic evolution were racialized from the start, shaped by slave patrol systems developed in the 18th century (Alang, 2018; Balko, 2014; Durr, 2015; Pfeifer, 2006; Turner et al., 2006). Communities most likely to be targeted by law enforcement are comprised of Black residents, and police interactions within Black communities are also the ones most likely to escalate to police violence. These interactions, whether experienced directly or vicariously through observing others in the community encounter police, have lasting effects on communities: eroding trust and confidence in the state's ability to ensure safety and protection.

Understanding the scope and scale of these impacts is vital for comparative purposes and also to inform advocacy and policy that might effectively foster social change. Organizing and advocacy efforts have the potential to take root when the public is armed with critical data sources that demonstrate the scale of a given issue. In the case of police violence, accessing

quality data continues to be a challenge, but this challenge is not novel.

Beginning in the 1890s, Ida B. Wells embarked on a sustained investigative campaign to highlight the persistence of lynchings taking place in the United States (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1895; Wells, 1895). From these statistics, Wells compiled a list of lynchings—a method used to terrorize Blacks and abolitionists—to highlight its prevalence and advocate for its eradication. These data illuminated the degree to which Black citizens were being lynched for a variety of alleged reasons ranging from attempted murder to purported sexual assault. Ultimately Wells' efforts catapulted the anti-lynching movement forward. The number of recorded lynchings declined from 235 in 1892 to 107 in 1899, and anti-lynching laws and other checks were enacted in some areas of the U.S. South. Even so, lynching remained a tragically common form of racialized control up to the 1930s, often involving police and agents of the state as well as private white vigilantes (Tolnay & Beck, 1995; University of Chicago Library, 2019). More contemporary research has sought to systematically compile the record of lynching. More than 6,500 such racial terror events targeting Black victims have been identified, though most analysts argue that the actual number of unrecorded deaths is much higher (Equal Justice Initiative, 2020).

Figure 1. Judge Lynch's Record. (1895), Courtesy of Chicago Daily Tribune

As such efforts have well demonstrated, to highlight the prevalence of a full range of state-involved violence, access to reliable data sources is crucial, yet there exists no federal mandate requiring police departments to systematically track each time a police officer harms a civilian. To fill this gap in data access, several publicly available data sources have emerged over the past decade including Campaign Zero's Mapping Police Violence (MPV, 2024), FatalEncounters.org (FE, 2021), The Guardian (2016), and the Washington Post (2024). Research on the validity of these data sources showed similarities in their overall conclusions but also key differences, suggesting the importance of these distinct sources as a method of checks and balances to identify any gaps in data (Comer & Ingram, 2023).

Ensuring public access to data not only for enhanced personal knowledge but also for advocacy purposes is vital. The record of historical police violence in St. Louis emerges through the archival files of the ACLU of Missouri and the research efforts of organizations such as ArchCity Defenders, but each of these incidents of police violence also was covered in local newspapers including the St. Louis Post Dispatch and the Globe Democrat. We also point readers to an interactive website for the public to gather information and ensure it lands in the hands of key stakeholders to utilize for advocacy efforts (Mapping Historical Police Violence, 2024).

Historical Police violence in St. Louis City: 1969-1981

As discussed in more detail below, in the City of St. Louis, Missouri, Black residents

specifically tend to be more likely to hold negative perceptions of police and to reside in communities where police perpetrate violence on civilians at higher levels. While data on historical accounts of police violence can be uneven, according to comprehensive data-gathering by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, n.d.) of Missouri (formerly the ACLU of Eastern Missouri), between 1969 and 1981, 141 individuals were shot by police in the St. Louis region (includes St. Louis City and County), with over half of those incidents occurring in the City of St. Louis.

Figure 2. Number of incidents of police violence by year (1969-1981)
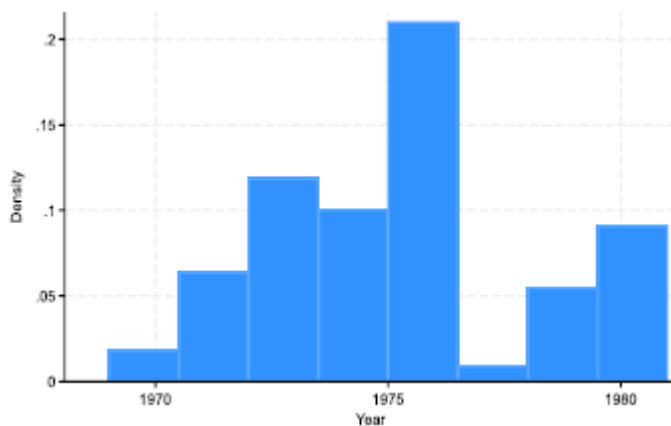
Such victimization spans the life course—during the 1969-1981 period in St. Louis city, victims ranged in age from 13 to 73, with an average age of 25 years old, and all were male. Although less is known about the race of the individual shot by police, of the incidents where the racial identity of victim was known (n=4), the data show that all were Black. Comparatively, during this same time span but within the larger St. Louis region (includes St. Louis County) 8 of the victims of police violence were Black and 5 were white. Of the 74 incidents of police violence in St. Louis City, over 40% were fatal and another 47% resulted in significant injuries.

Contemporary police violence in St. Louis City: 2010-2021

While, as noted above, comprehensive data on police violence continues to be difficult to access given the lack of standard reporting requirements nationally, several open-source databases have emerged to fill the gap. We draw primarily on two of those here, FE (2024) and MPV (2024), both of which triangulate across multiple sources to reliably report9 police encounters that resulted in a fatality.

Between 2013 and 2021, 179 individuals were shot by police in the City of St. Louis. Black victims are heavily overrepresented in this total; 84% of victims with a known, specified race were Black (48%), compared to under 15% who were white and/or Latinx. Victims ranged in age from 6 to 87 with an average age of 31 years old. In contrast with police violence incidents that occurred during the 1960s to 1980s period, recent police violence involved more women—specifically 11% of victims were female and 1% were transgender. The most common immediate causes of death from these encounters involved gunshots (64%), vehicles (29%), and tasers (4.5%). Among the individuals that experienced police violence, 68% were allegedly armed and about a quarter were known to be unarmed.

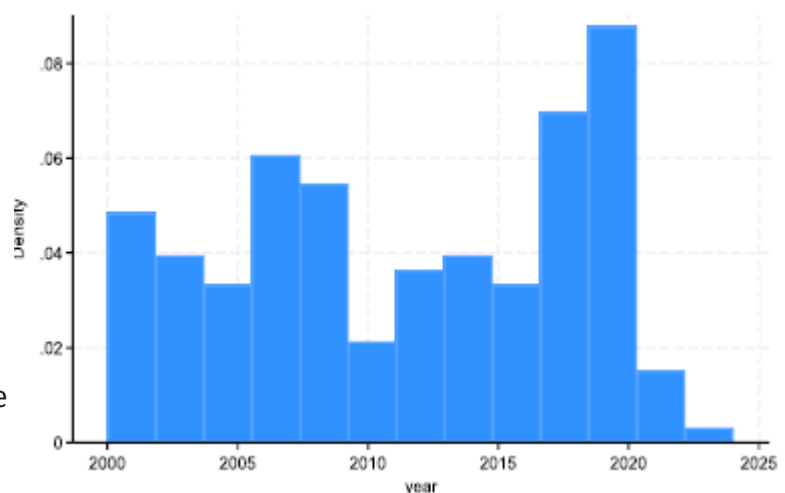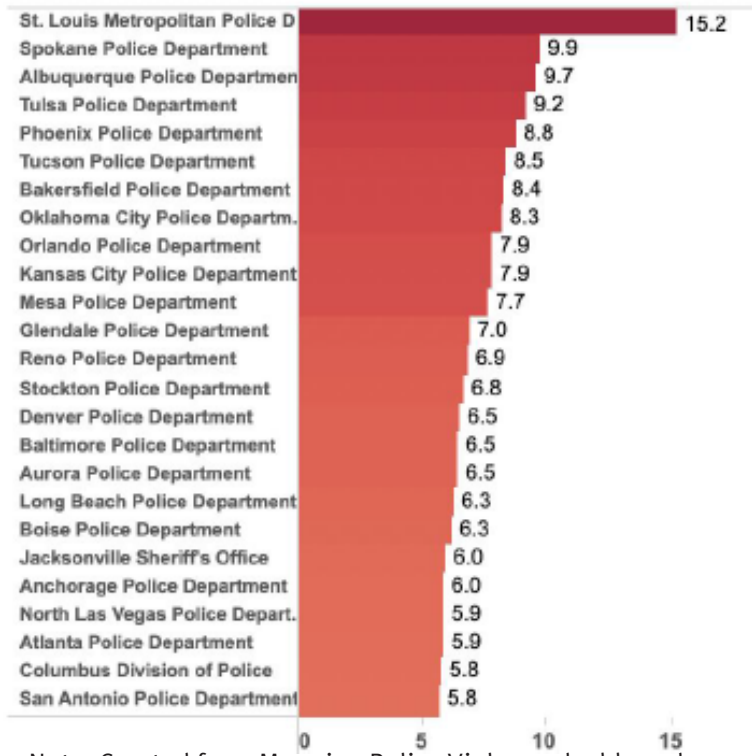**Figure 3. Number of incidents of police violence by year (2000-2021)**

Figure 4 below demonstrates that this level of police violence is exceptional in St. Louis compared to other metropolitan police forces around the nation. Indeed, when considered on a per capita basis, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department had the highest rate of police killings in the nation between 2013-2024.

Figure 4. Average Police Killings Rate, per 1 million residents (2013-2024)

Police Department	Rate
St. Louis Metropolitan Police D	15.2
Spokane Police Department	9.9
Albuquerque Police Departmen	9.7
Tulsa Police Department	9.2
Phoenix Police Department	8.8
Tucson Police Department	8.5
Bakersfield Police Department	8.4
Oklahoma City Police Departm.	8.3
Orlando Police Department	7.9
Kansas City Police Department	7.9
Mesa Police Department	7.7
Glendale Police Department	7.0
Reno Police Department	6.9
Stockton Police Department	6.8
Denver Police Department	6.5
Baltimore Police Department	6.5
Aurora Police Department	6.5
Long Beach Police Department	6.3
Boise Police Department	6.3
Jacksonville Sheriff's Office	6.0
Anchorage Police Department	6.0
North Las Vegas Police Depart.	5.9
Atlanta Police Department	5.9
Columbus Division of Police	5.8
San Antonio Police Department	5.8

Note. Created from Mapping Police Violence dashboard (2024), https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/.

Spatial analysis revelations: race and economic disadvantage

The previous section provides an overview of the scale of police violence between 1969-1981 and 2013-2021, but the spatial connection of these incidents to the composition of the communities where these incidents took place tells a deeper story. For example, based on the 1970 Census, during the 1969-1981 span of time the census data suggests that areas where higher levels of police violence occurred were not only home to St. Louis City's highest Black population

(Figure 5), but also sites of economic disadvantage, specifically higher levels of poverty. Similar trends were found for the 2013-2021 period based on the 2020 census data (Figure 6).
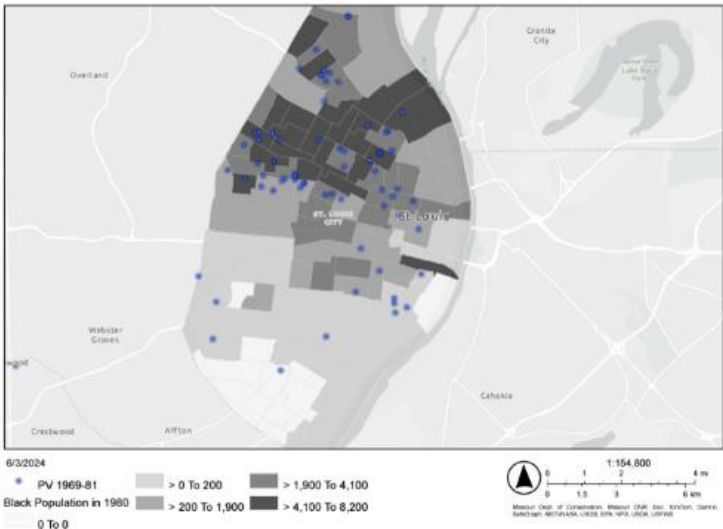
Crucially, when we look across the ACLU's historical data and the contemporary landscape captured by FE and MPV, the consistent takeaway is that a higher concentration of police violence persists in communities with higher populations of Black residents. Similarly, another recent study shows that, in addition to Black victims being significantly overrepresented in cases of fatal police violence, the zip codes in which these cases most often occur (i.e., 63118, 63113, and 63147) are all areas with heavy concentrations of Black residents (ArchCity Defenders, 2021, p. 21). While data on the race of victims of

Figure 5. Police Violence (1969-1981) by proportion Black population (1980)

police violence is often incomplete, this link importantly highlights the composition of the environments where police violence is more likely to occur. In short, these forms of state violence occur most frequently in historically marginalized communities, particularly where more Black residents tend to reside. Such patterns persist alongside a broader fiscal climate in

which the St. Louis Municipal Police Department has successfully lobbied to expand its funding—in 2021, St. Louis' ratio of 62 officers for each 10,000 residents was more than double the national average for departments in comparably-sized cities—while money allocated to basic social services has correspondingly shrunk (ArchCity Defenders, 2021, p. 43).

Figure 6. Police Violence (2013-2021) by proportion Black population (2020)
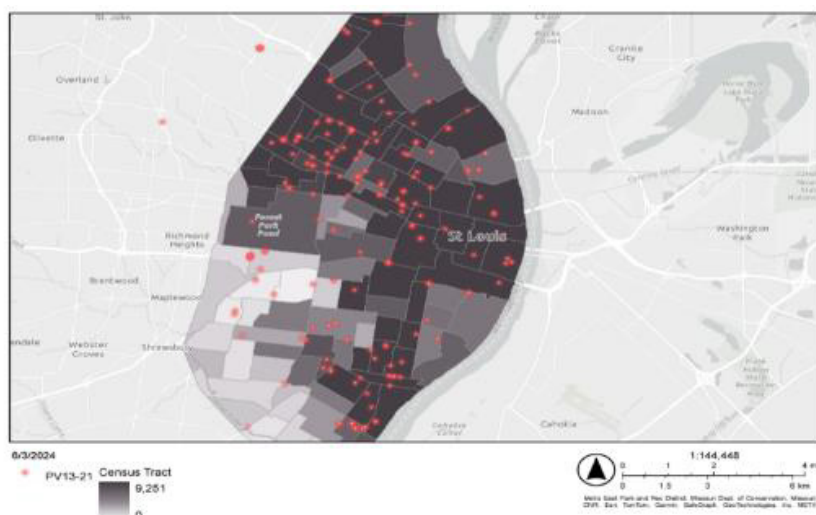
Courts and Jails in St. Louis

The history of jail facilities in St. Louis likewise reveals the racialized nature of criminalization and incarceration in the city. St. Louis' jails in the early 19th century were modest in size and capacity, with the first and second iterations consisting of four and 36 cells, respectively (Simmons, 2018). But as the city's investment in the mechanisms of incarceration grew, so did their impact on Black St. Louisans.

Through much of St. Louis' history, the city has operated two jails simultaneously. This began in 1853 with the opening of the first Workhouse as a debtors' prison in south St. Louis City. By city ordinance, the Workhouse became a site of forced labor for "[e]very person duly convicted of a violation of any ordinance of the city, for which a fine or forfeiture is imposed, who shall refuse, neglect or be unable to pay said fine or forfeiture . . ." (Revised Ordinances of Saint Louis, 1843)

In 1966, city officials relocated the Workhouse to its present location along Hall Street in north St. Louis. This move reflected significant changes in both the racial makeup of the city's population and the geographic distribution of that population during and after the Great Migration of the early and mid-20th century. In 1880, Black residents made up 6.7% of the population (Missouri State Archives, n.d.). By 1940, that figure was 13.3%; by 1970, it spiked to 40.9% (Gibson & Jung, 2012). By relocating the Workhouse northward to an area where St. Louis' growing and highly segregated Black population was concentrated, the city signaled that these communities would be the target of the new carceral infrastructure.

In subsequent decades, litigation, investigations, and grassroots campaigns highlighted patterns of abuse and inhumane conditions imposed upon the overwhelmingly Black and

and poor population of detainees held in the Workhouse (Beck et al., 2013; Bogen, 2015; Close the Workhouse, 2018; Hudson, 2009; Patrick, 2012). These problems, which mirrored those already under scrutiny in the downtown St. Louis City Jail, were exacerbated by local court practices relying on high levels of cash bail in criminal cases, resulting in jail populations largely consisting of pretrial detainees not yet convicted of any crime. In a 1990 order during a decades-long federal lawsuit challenging jail conditions in the city, Judge Clyde Cahill observed how many of these forces converged to wreak havoc on specific Black communities in St. Louis:

> Most of the persons now arrested for these drug-related offenses are young black men from North St. Louis. Their prospects are as bleak as their surroundings. . . . There are myths, which have been partially developed by the media, that only minorities are involved with drugs. The City's prison population, nearly all black, perpetuates this misconception. . . . The trial to determine the guilt or innocence of the defendant may not occur for many months, even years. . . . Because he is poor he cannot make bail. (*Tyler v. United States*, 1990)

After noting that Black men made up more than 90% of jail detainees despite far less representation in the general population, Judge Cahill concluded, "Perhaps that is one reason our society is so indifferent to the plight of those now imprisoned."

These observations regarding the criminal legal system's treatment of Black people—and Black men in particular—are borne out in the available data regarding incarceration trends in the city (St. Louis City Division of Corrections, n.d.).

As St. Louis has invested in expanding its jail capacity over time, it has done so to the effect of incarcerating disproportionately large numbers of Black residents. In 2002, the city expanded the number of available jail cells by opening the City Justice Center (CJC) to replace the former City Jail as St. Louis' second correctional facility. The following years saw an immediate and sustained increase in the jail population, an increase almost entirely made up of Black detainees. From 2001 to 2007, the average daily jail population increased from 982 to 2,373 people, with Black detainees increasing from 881 to 2,077 people. In other words, Black people, who already made up 90% of the jail population in 2001, accounted for 85% of a nearly 1,400-person increase in the city's jail population after the CJC was built. In recent years, there have been multiple reports of abuse, inhumane treatment, and death at the CJC. Those reports include 17 documented deaths of those in jail custody in St. Louis City between 2009-2019 (ArchCity Defenders, 2021).

The historical trends with respect to St. Louis' investment in local jails, and the impact of those policy choices on Black incarceration, are clear. After nearly 60 years in operation, the administration of Mayor Tishaura Jones emptied and decommissioned the Workhouse in 2021. By reducing the city's jail capacity in this way, St. Louis has maintained over the past three years the lowest average jail population and lowest Black jail population in three decades.

We also note that the legal processes discussed above take place within a Missouri state court system that has produced evidence of systemic racial bias. In 2023, researchers at Missouri State University produced a report on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Missouri Court System

commissioned by the Supreme Court of Missouri (LaPrade & Amidon, 2023). One topline finding of the report was that "official court records revealed significant racial disparities across the state of Missouri and most of the 33 selected jurisdictions," including disproportionate negative outcomes for Black litigants in St. Louis City in ten of 12 categories examined. They also discovered a lack of awareness of these disparities among various court officials. Researchers "found that 61% of people surveyed did not believe that racial bias was a problem in Missouri courts, while 26% agreed in some way that racial bias was a problem[.]"

Broader Impacts of State Violence: Inequality and Trust

Myriad harmful effects stem from those directly targeted by police violence. A 2021 ArchCity Defenders report notes how the pain and grief of family members of those victimized by police violence has been compounded institutionally by "callous responses from local government and police departments; inaccurate news media coverage that villanizes [sic] their loved one and defends the state; the costs associated with pursuing accountability and closure; and the difficulty of attaining justice and change from the legal system."

We also emphasize broader impacts associated with direct and indirect exposure to violence. At the neighborhood and community level, a long line of social science research emphasizes the enduring legacies of unaddressed historical violence on contemporary communities. Such effects are discussed in more detail earlier in this report, but studies have found that pronounced histories of state-sanctioned violence (associated with enslavement, lynching, and other forms of racialized conflict) help to explain the persistence of racialized inequities in those places. In particular, we know that places beset by historical violence continue to possess higher levels of residential segregation, Black victim homicide, Black incarceration rates, and racial economic gaps. In southern communities, such relationships extend to corporal punishment in schools and higher likelihood of hate group mobilization. Importantly, however, research also demonstrates how efforts to acknowledge and address such histories through reparative processes such as this one has the capacity to interrupt such legacies, removing an enduring basis for the continuance of community-level inequalities (Gabriel & Tolnay, 2017).

In a more immediate sense, the persistence of police violence also impacts levels of trust that civilians have in the police. Direct exposure to police violence has been linked to reductions in police legitimacy and trust (Oliviera & Jackson, 2021). Such effects also extend well beyond those directly victimized. When examining how knowledge of a police violence impacts citizens reactions, researchers have found an erosion of trust especially for Black residents. Citizens placed blame not only on law enforcement but public officials for the incident (Boudreau et al., 2021). High-profile police violence incidents also play a role in the levels of trust citizens have in police. For example, research shows how high-profile police violence incidents are often associated with reductions in 911 calls for police-related service suggesting a further erosion of trust in police (Ang et al., 2021; Desmond et al., 2016).
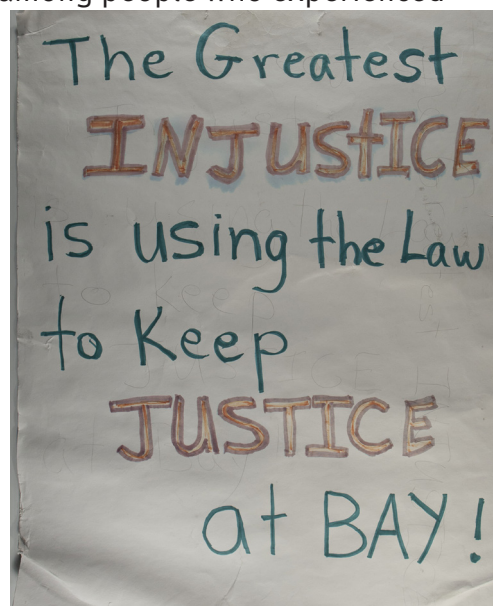
The collateral consequences of police violence and its impact on trust are not merely cross-sectional and fixed in time. Fears of dying or having a loved one die at the hands of police is a fear many people have, especially people of color (Graham et al., 2020). Thus, it is no surprise that many families of color engage in a process of ethnic and/or racial socialization that includes several strategies for self-protection and preservation, including preparation for

bias and the promotion of mistrust (Atkin & Yoo, 2019; Bowman & Howard, 1985; Csizmadia & Atkin, 2022; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes et al., 2006; Thompson, 1994; Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2023; Wang et al., 2020).

Nationally, research on this socialization process also found that Black parents tended to report lower levels of trust in police and emphasized more messages to their youth about compliance, anticipating negative police behaviors (e.g., unfair treatment by police), and safety behaviors to ensure safety from the police than white parents (April et al., 2022). Closer to home, 18- to 27-year-old individuals residing in East St. Louis, Illinois revealed high levels of mistrust in police and subsequent engagement in the intergenerational transmission of norms about how best to prepare for police contact and avoid a fatal police encounter (Brunson & Weitzer, 2011).

In 1977, the U.S. Department of Justice surveyed residents of St. Louis on topics related to victimization and police perceptions and found that white survey participants held more favorable views of police (70%) than Black respondents (30%) (Garofalo, 1977). Victimization played a key role as well with lower ratings of police found among people who experienced two or more incidents of victimization (38%) compared to people who reported no victimization history (10%). Juxtaposed to these earlier findings, results from a 2014 survey of St. Louis County residents reveal similar patterns—Black residents held more negative perceptions of police compared to their white counterparts, especially after the murder of Michael Brown. In St. Louis City, researchers have found that adolescent and young adult males also tended to view police negatively and reported experiencing abuse, unfair treatment, and disrespect by the police (Gau & Brunson, 2009).

Protest Sign. (2014), Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society

These findings related to individual, family, and community impacts of both historical and ongoing criminal legal practices each point to the importance of recognizing and repairing these harms to break associated patterns.

Informing recommendations: Opportunities for Reparative Justice and Redress

Reparative justice rarely involves a singular strategy because the effects of racialized violence are rarely singular. Slavery and subsequent state violence perpetrated by police impact myriad facets of life like perceptions of police, mental health, and academic outcomes. State violence is also often driven by various socioeconomic factors including a lack of access to quality jobs, housing, education, and health care. Thus, reparative justice and its aim to repair harms done will require a complex and comprehensive approach to sustainably address each of these core areas. The wounds and scars from racialized violence remain and continue to be irritated as each new event of police violence occurs; these incidents are reminders of the degree to which violence can escalate during a police encounter.

In present day, state sanctioned violence continues to impact historically marginalized communities. High levels of police violence places further strain on the relationship—if one

exists—between communities and police.

Awareness of the prevalence of police violence ebbs and flows, but hostile and fatal encounters with the state, unfortunately, are not novel for many historically marginalized communities—specifically communities of color—who have persistently experienced the occupying presence of police historically (Wells-Barnett, 1895) and presently (Harrell & Davis, 2020). As cities search for ways to mitigate state-sanctioned violence and its collateral effects, the scars of these incidents of violence remain. These scars are deepened when the same communities continue to be impacted by hostile police encounters, specifically police violence. The persistence of state violence potentially creates an enduring impact creating what sociologist Geoff Ward (2016) described as "microclimates of racial meaning," through which environments become inexorably shaped by traumatic events like catastrophic natural disasters or state violence.

This report has the potential to generate valuable insights into myriad drivers of racialized violence as well as ways to redress harms done as a result. Similar mobilizing efforts have also taken root across the nation. In New Jersey for example, after two recent police-involved shootings in 2023, community leaders mobilized, and their efforts spurred intense legislative advocacy aimed at strengthening community responses to better support people experiencing mental health crises. These efforts led to the passing of the Seabrooks-Washington Community-Led Crisis Response Act, which appropriated $12 million to community-based organizations leading crisis response teams (Bonamo, 2024). There was also a recognition in New Jersey that there must be an acknowledgement of the state's history of racialized violence and the need to address the harms done. In 2023, the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice was launched, which aimed to reckon with the state's past history of slavery by identifying ways to repair harms done through the establishment of a Reparations Council (2018). The council is comprised of several committees, two of which include a committee on public safety which explores the history of policing and incarceration in New Jersey and a committee on the history of slavery in New Jersey that examines not only how slavery shaped society in the state but how it continues to impacts society presently.

In 2015, Chicago became the nation's first city to provide reparations for racially-motivated state violence through its passing of the Reparations Ordinance (Chicago Torture Justice Center, 2024). These efforts grew out of a recognizing for the pain and suffering many endured by police under the Jon Burge's command of the Chicago Police Department between the 1970s and 1990s. Burge and officers he commanded were accused and of engaging in acts of torture and abuse. A series of reparations items were created including a formal apology from the city, free college education for survivors of police abuse and torture under Burge, financial compensation, a public memorial, and therapeutic support.

Related fiscal measures do not have to rely solely on expanded funds made available through reparations processes. Relative to other comparable cities, the severe overrepresentation of police—and the funding those positions require—in St. Louis speaks to the benefits of reallocating portions of the large share of the city's budget currently provided to the Municipal Police Department (36% of the city's overall budget as of 2021) to "basic [social] services and resources to combat systemic issues like poverty, racism, and egregation" (ArchCity Defenders, 2021). Such measures can reduce over-spending on police, and diffuse the tasks for which

the police department serves as front-line responders to other agencies better equipped to address.

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Quotes from Public Testimony

"The second proposal deals with high-speed police chases. It deals with a more effective and safer means of pursuing fleeing felons."
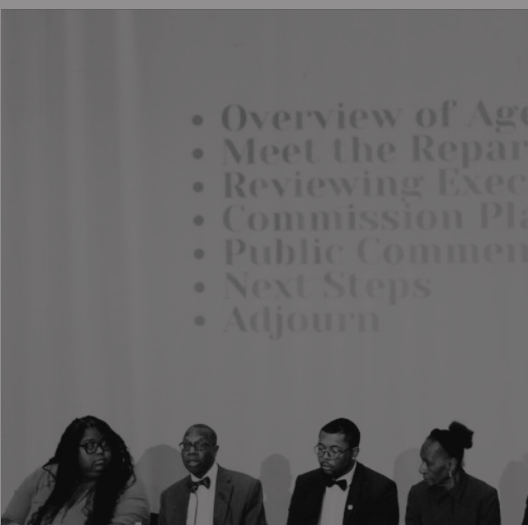
-**Larry Graves**

"I worked in the 1st Ward for Catholica Charities and I'm a community activist in the 18th Ward, now the 10th Ward, and they started skipping over the Fountain Park neighborhood because of the drug wars in there and all the drugs and all the prostitution, and police don't come nowhere near it. "

-**Pastor Troy**

Recommendations

Executive Order 75 requires the Commission to engage thoughtfully on recommendations to address the race-based harms outlined in this report. For many months we engaged and struggled in public around themes of eligibility, scale and scope. Before presenting the recommendations, we must acknowledge that this commission is a local reparative initiative, and as such, we do not see this report or these recommendations as a replacement for the broader national conversation on reparations. Instead, we view this as a vital complement to those efforts, recognizing that local communities have a unique role to play in addressing historic injustices. Our work is a step toward justice, but it must be part of a larger movement that addresses systemic inequities at all levels of society. We encourage continued dialogue and action, not only locally but across the country, to ensure that meaningful reparative justice is achieved for all impacted communities.

The recommendations that follow are divided into two distinct categories: those focused on restitution and those focused on policy reform.

Restitution-Oriented Recommendations are designed to address and reconcile the injustices experienced by those directly harmed. This includes not only individuals who were personally impacted by the targeted harms but also those who lived in communities where these harms were perpetuated. These measures focus both on the redistribution of resources as well as public recognition of the dignity of those harmed by historical practices, and aim to provide direct redress and compensation to restore standing and opportunities to those affected by systemic inequities.

Policy-Oriented Recommendations are aimed at preventing the repetition of these harms in the future. By addressing structural issues, these proposals focus on long-term change through policy reforms that ensure these injustices are not repeated. The goal is to create lasting systemic improvements that safeguard vulnerable communities and promote equity for future generations.

These two categories work in tandem to address past wrongs and establish safeguards for a more just and equitable future.

Key Considerations and Implementation

As a local reparative initiative, we focused on addressing two key questions that would define eligibility: determining the criteria for lineage and residency. Our commission carefully debated these issues and ultimately reached the following conclusions:

- **Lineage**: The Executive Order that guides our work set out that we must "assess the history of slavery, segregation and other race-based harms in the City of St. Louis; explore the present-day manifestations of that history." In our reflection of that mandate, we voted that reparations should be provided to those who can trace their ancestry to enslaved people and Black residents who have been disproportionately impacted by systemic racism in St. Louis.

- **Geography and Residency**: As a local commission, we acknowledge the challenges posed by the region's fragmentation in formulating our recommendations. Many Black families, for various reasons detailed in this report, have relocated outside the city of St. Louis in pursuit of greater stability and opportunity. Often, these moves were made under pressure

and as a direct response to the harms discussed in this report. Therefore, this commission recommends that any compensatory reparations be extended to Black individuals who can provide proof of past or present residency, regardless of their current location.

Action around these recommendations should be guided by a consistent ethic of **accountability** and **transparency**. To realize these values, the City should establish a permanent City Reparations Committee to oversee the implementation of recommendations made here and develop policies that address ongoing disparities, ensuring that reparative measures are effectively executed and monitored. This committee will consist of community members and will call in experts as needed to provide guidance and support. Additionally, the committee will collaborate with peer groups in Kansas City, Missouri, and nationwide to advocate for action and policy changes at the state and federal levels.

The permanent City Reparations Committee should be comprised of members with appropriate experience and expertise to act on a dual charge:

1. Carry out the calculations required to determine the scale of reparations payments and initiatives outlined here, drawing on the parameters established in this report; and

2. Monitor the progress and execution of the recommendations outlined in the report.

The Committee should hold regular public hearings to update the community on the implementation of reparations and collect ongoing feedback from residents, and develop a public-facing dashboard that tracks the city's commitments and outcomes related to reparations efforts. It should also offer support resources for those seeking to make eligibility claims related to the parameters included in this report, by establishing an interface that clarifies and directs current and former residents to the information required to establish their families' status and history in the City of St. Louis.

Recommendation for Recognition I: Public Apology

We recommend that the City of St. Louis issue a formal public apology to acknowledge and take responsibility for the historic and systemic harms inflicted on Black residents, as detailed in this report. A public apology is a critical first step in the process of reparative justice, offering a formal recognition of the pain, suffering, and disenfranchisement that has persisted for generations. This apology serves not only as an acknowledgment of the past but as a commitment to a more just future. It is essential in rebuilding trust between the city and its Black residents, demonstrating a willingness to confront uncomfortable truths and paving the way for meaningful action. The intended impact of this apology is to validate the lived experiences of those harmed, foster reconciliation, and lay the foundation for restorative policies that promote healing and equity.

Recommendation for Recognition II: Adoption of a Formal History Acknowledging Racial Harms

We also recommend that the City of St. Louis adopt a formal, comprehensive history that explicitly acknowledges the racial harms inflicted upon Black residents throughout its history. This history should include detailed accounts of systemic injustices such as segregation,

redlining, economic disenfranchisement, and other forms of racial discrimination that have impacted Black communities. By embedding this narrative into the city's official record, we ensure that these harms are neither forgotten nor minimized. The purpose of this formal history is twofold: to provide continued learning opportunities for current and future generations and to create a permanent space for memorialization. It is critical that the city takes responsibility for accurately documenting its past in order to confront the legacies of racism and create a foundation for informed policy-making. This will also serve as a tool for public education, raising awareness of the historical roots of inequality and the ongoing efforts to address them.

The intended impact of adopting this formal history is to foster an environment of reflection, healing, and accountability. By making racial harms an integral part of the city's historical narrative, we honor the memory of those who have been harmed and help prevent the repetition of such injustices in the future.

Recommendation for Recognition III: Cultural Preservation & Memory

We recommend that the city fully fund initiatives to preserve Black cultural and historical landmarks in St. Louis. These municipal actions should prioritize partnerships with existing Black institutions to establish a memorial or museum dedicated to honoring the legacy of enslaved people and acknowledging the city's role in perpetuating systemic racism. Robust support for existing and new cultural programming celebrating Black art, history, and contributions to St. Louis will additionally ensure the city's continuing, active efforts to properly recognize the pivotal role played by Black residents and communities in the city's development.

Recommendation for Redistribution I: General Cash Payments

Provide direct cash payments to individuals who can trace their ancestry to enslaved people and to Black residents who have been disproportionately impacted by systemic racism in St. Louis. Implementation of this measure will require that the city develop a transparent and equitable system for determining eligibility and amounts of compensation based on historical harm and ongoing economic disparities, which we recommend should occur through the formation of a permanent City Reparations Committee. To maximize the impact of these cash payments, we additionally recommend that they be delivered in a way that supports wealth-building opportunities, such as investments in education, housing, or business development, rather than as one-time payouts. Tax exemptions or credits should also be offered to recipients of reparations payments to prevent financial penalties related to their compensation.

Recommendation for Redistribution II: Targeted Cash Payments to Black Residents Subject to Specific Historical Harms

Provide additional cash payments for reparations of up to $25,000 for designated communities with documented direct harm. These would include former residents or direct descendants of residents of Mill Creek Valley, the Pruitt-Igoe housing project, and McRee Town. As we recognize that the displacement associated with these areas resulted in the denial of opportunity for families to accrue intergenerational wealth, we intend this targeted restitution to be provided to documented direct descendants of residents in cases in which the former residents themselves are no longer living.

Recommendations for Housing and Land Ownership

Restitution:

- Establish a fund to provide housing grants to descendants of enslaved people and residents of historically redlined neighborhoods.

- Launch programs that provide financial assistance for homeownership, home repair, and property tax relief in historically disadvantaged areas.

- Allocate land for affordable housing developments specifically benefiting Black residents impacted by discriminatory practices.

Policy:

- Offer a grant for Black homeowners in historically disinvested neighborhoods that provides resources for essential home repairs and property tax relief. This initiative aims to mitigate displacement and promote community stability, helping to preserve long-term homeownership and strengthen local neighborhoods.

Recommendations for Neighborhood & Built Environment

Policy:

- Invest in the revitalization of neighborhoods that have been historically underfunded due to segregation and systemic racism.

- Establish a North City Development Plan wtih Dedicated funding, staff, and resources to develop North St. Louis with a clear timeline, measurable goals, and accountability mechanisms.

- Increase access to public parks, recreational areas, and green spaces in predominantly Black neighborhoods.

- Ensure environmental justice by addressing pollution and health hazards in impacted communities.

Recommendations for Education

Restitution:

- Create scholarships and educational grants for descendants of enslaved people and Black students from historically underserved areas.

Policy:

- Provide funding for educational equity programs, such as after-school tutoring, mentorship, and technology access in predominantly Black schools.

- Support the development of an African American history curriculum in public schools, ensuring that students are educated about the local history of racial injustice.

- Increase funding to St. Louis Public Schools for higher teacher salaries, recognizing the unique role SLPS plays in combatting decades of outmigration and diminishing resource allocations for public education in the city.

- Establish a free wifi program in St. Louis.

Recommendations for Public Health

Restitution:

- Establish a community health fund to address racial disparities in healthcare access and outcomes for Black residents.

Policy:

- Expand access to free or low-cost healthcare services for low-income residents, focusing on health equity.

- Increase funding for community health centers in Black neighborhoods to establish dedicated centers that specifically address intergenerational trauma and stress related to systemic racism. These centers should provide culturally competent mental health services, including counseling, support groups, and educational workshops, while also offering comprehensive healthcare services, preventive care, and wellness programs tailored to the unique needs of the community. Collaboration with local organizations, such as Affinia Healthcare, ARCHS, The T, and the Restorative Justice Movement Community, will ensure effective outreach and support for residents.

- Maintain sufficient funding to Health Department so that it is less dependent on Federal grants to support core functions.

Recommendations for Economic Justice & Wealth Creation

Restitution:

- Provide direct financial reparations in the form of cash payments or tax relief to descendants of enslaved people and Black residents.

Policy:

- Fund Black-owned businesses through grants, low-interest loans, and technical support programs.

- Launch job training and entrepreneurship programs aimed at reducing unemployment and economic disparities in Black communities.

Recommendations for Criminal Justice & Policing

Restitution:

- Establish a reparations fund for victims of police violence, starting with a baseline minimum of $25,000 for each documented incident.

<u>Policy:</u>

- Implement community-driven alternatives to policing, such as restorative justice programs and mental health crisis response teams, in part through the reallocation of budget funds presently allocated to the Municipal Police Department. This measure will reduce existing over-spending on police and the risk of continued harms associated with this pronounced presence, and diffuse the tasks for which the police department serves as front-line responders to other agencies better equipped to address.

- Increase civilian oversight and accountability in the St. Louis police department, particularly in cases of misconduct against Black residents.

Recommendations for State Violence & Legal Reform

<u>Restitution:</u>

- Acknowledge and address the long history of state-sanctioned violence, including police brutality and the criminalization of Black people, within both the official apology and formal history adopted via the related recommendations outlined above.

- Expunge the criminal records of individuals convicted of non-violent offenses related to systemic racial injustice, such as drug-related offenses.

<u>Policy:</u>

- Advocate for legal reforms that reduce mass incarceration and support community-led safety initiatives.

> **"Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced."**
> **—James Baldwin (1962)**

Report Conclusion

The St. Louis Reparations Commission extends its deepest gratitude to the community members who contributed their insights, experiences, and voices to this process. Black St. Louisans have long faced systemic under-resourcing and over-research, and the Commission acknowledges the skepticism many may feel toward reports like this one. Your honesty, vulnerability, and engagement made this report possible, ensuring it reflects the lived realities of those most affected.

Delivered to Mayor Tishaura Jones and the public on October 14, 2024, this report serves as a comprehensive guide for addressing historical racial injustices in St. Louis. It offers the City's Board of Aldermen and the Mayor actionable recommendations aimed at repairing the harms inflicted upon Black residents. However, this is just one step toward lasting change.

The Commission urges all residents to remain active participants in this ongoing process. Your voices are critical to ensuring that the Board of Aldermen and Mayor take meaningful action on the recommendations outlined here. This report is not just a document—it is a call to continue the work of advocating for justice, equity, and reparations.

It is the Commission's hope that this report fosters accountability and learning, and ultimately leads to reparative actions that will improve the quality of life for Black St. Louisans. By working together, we can begin to heal the wounds of the past and create a more equitable future for our city. We recommend that the City of St. Louis issue a formal public apology to acknowledge and take responsibility for the historic and systemic harms inflicted on Black residents, as detailed in this report. A public apology is a critical first step in the process of reparative justice, offering a formal recognition of the pain, suffering, and disenfranchisement that has persisted for generations. This apology serves not only as an acknowledgment of the past but as a commitment to a more just future. It is essential in rebuilding trust between the city and its Black residents, demonstrating a willingness to confront uncomfortable truths and paving the way for meaningful action. The intended impact of this apology is to validate the lived experiences of those harmed, foster reconciliation, and lay the foundation for restorative policies that promote healing and equity.

This history should include detailed accounts of systemic injustices such as segregation, redlining, economic disenfranchisement, and other forms of racial discrimination that have impacted Black communities. By embedding this narrative into the city's official record, we ensure that these harms are neither forgotten nor minimized.

The purpose of this formal history is twofold: to provide continued learning opportunities for current and future generations and to create a permanent space for memorialization. It is critical that the city takes responsibility for accurately documenting its past in order to confront the legacies of racism and create a foundation for informed policy-making. This will also serve as a tool for public education, raising awareness of the historical roots of inequality and the ongoing efforts to address them. The intended impact of adopting this formal history is to foster an environment of reflection, healing, and accountability. By making racial harms an integral part of the city's historical narrative, we honor the memory of those who have been harmed and help prevent the repetition of such injustices in the future.

Monday, March 6

8:00 P. M.

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH

(Goode and North Market)

Subject: "The Jim Crow Gimmick in the proposed Tandy Pool."

NEGRO SEGREGATION

A Measure to Assassinate a Race

——IN——

ST. LOUIS, MO.

(FALL OF 1915)

A Statement of Principles

A Review of Race Relations and a Protest

——BY——

REV. GEO. E. STEVENS

Pastor Central Baptist Church, St. Louis

(This statement of principles was adopted and ordered published Aug. 2, 1915, by the Antioch Baptist Association, of St. Louis, Mo., representing ten thousand Negro citizens.)