

## COMING TO THE TABLE

This list of possible reparations for slavery and its legacies was developed by African Americans and European Americans primarily for action by European Americans as requested and endorsed by African Americans. African Americans may wish to engage in some of these activities so as to ensure that trust, healing, and true reparations of the harms are achieved.

### **Personal Reparations**

#### **Acknowledging (facing, uncovering) our History**

- Conduct personal historical research by collecting family genealogical data, family stories, and other information, etc., using [Our Black Ancestry](#), [Ancestry.com](#), and other websites and historical societies, libraries, and local, state and national archives.
- Acknowledge the injustice to and the pain and suffering of generations of African American people and the racial prejudice perpetrated directly and indirectly by your ancestors.
- Own your personal transgressions that perpetuate racism and work to correct them.
- Acknowledge, both African Americans and European Americans, the spiritual and emotional pain and denial you have lived with as a result of your personal and family history.
- Educate yourself and others in your family and community about the true history of the brutal nature and impact of American slavery and racism on African Americans in the past and present.
- Recognize and educate yourselves and others about the realities of the illegitimate system of white privilege in the U.S. and the systemic racism and legacies of slavery that are still operating in our culture today.
- Support and participate in the [Slave Dwelling Project](#).

#### **Making Connections**

- Search out and establish meaningful connections and friendships across racial lines.
- Search out linked descendants and establish connections and friendships when possible.

- Help others who suffer from the historical pain of slavery to acknowledge and face their own family legacy.
- Share family genealogical data, family stories, and other information, etc., on [Our Black Ancestry](#), [Ancestry.com](#) and other websites and historical societies, libraries and local, state and national archives.
- Join and donate to organizations like the [NAACP](#) that are working to correct inequalities via legal and educational efforts.
- Participate in public race dialogues and engage in deep discussions about racial reconciliation.

## Healing Wounds

- Accept your personal responsibility for righting historical wrongs.
- Practice authenticity—be willing to discuss difficult matters in community.
- Understand and practice what being a white ally means, including exploring other perhaps more preferable terms to the word “ally.”
- Listen deeply to African American perspectives on racism, reparations and reforms.
- Engage with others in the practice of racial reconciliation and healing.
- Write about your connection to slavery or your family’s specific racial crimes and acts of repression.
- Educate and immerse yourself in the variety and breadth of African American experiences (culture, art, organizations, publications, history, etc.), and particularly the historical harms of slavery in order to understand how the past continues to inform the present.
- Read authors like [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#) and [Randall Robinson](#) to better understand the issues of national reparations. Coates articles can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- Transform personal or spiritual pain into peace by communicating to others the story of your family’s connection to slavery or other specific racial crimes and acts of repression.
- Take workshops on healing like the [EMU STAR training](#).
- Heal your own guilt and shame through meditation and reflection.

## Taking Action

- Work together, European Americans and African Americans, to make things right in variety of contexts.
- Acknowledge and take action to level the “playing field.”
- When you hear or see racism, speak up using whatever tactics work best for you from direct confrontations to humor. Make clear that you do not share racist views. Turn the event into a teaching moment for others who may be present. Seek training on how best to do this.
- Find ways to “give back” to the African American community through public service.
- Fight for full rights and privileges of equal citizenship for African Americans.
- If possible, offer personal or family foundation college scholarships, or make contributions to a scholarship program like the [United Negro College Fund](#).
- For educators, teach African American history, literature, and poetry to high school and university students; raise questions around race in the classroom; and host those who write and speak on multicultural issues on campus.
- Advocate for the training and hiring of African Americans in your personal and professional life.
- Work with your local community to reform how police officers act in the line of duty with the African American community, e.g., civilian review boards.
- Support the [Black Lives Matter](#) movement.
- Participate in a local chapter of [Showing Up for Racial Justice \(SURJ\)](#).
- Participate in anti-racism training.

## Societal Reparations

### Acknowledging our History

- Seek a national apology from the U.S. government regarding the brutal institution of African American slavery and its continuing impact on African Americans:
  - Seek a national acknowledgement that African American slavery was first and foremost an economic system, based on racism, to gain wealth for a small group of Europeans from the free labor of African Americans.

- Seek national acknowledgement that even after emancipation, racism and unfair laws, practices and attitudes negatively impacted the education and economic stability of African Americans and continue to do so to the present.
  - Support local, state, national and international efforts for Truth and Reconciliation Commissions acknowledging the history and legacies of slavery in the U.S. (Example: [The Kellogg Foundation's new initiative, the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation project.](#))
  - Seek apology from countries in Europe that participated in importing African Slaves to the Americas during colonization.
- Establish a national, U.S. government sponsored Day of Healing to honor those African Americans who sacrificed their lives to slavery in the founding and building of this country. Let this be a day when the wounds of racial prejudice that have divided us are acknowledged, and we rededicate ourselves to healing those wounds.
  - Promote the update of American/World history school books to include factual, true and accurate stories of the contributions of people of color to the Americas and Europe. This educational initiative should be applied in all schools to promote a full understanding of the role slavery played in the development, even survival, of the United States and other countries, including slavery's role in the industrial revolution and in the development of banking/finance.
  - Acknowledge the psychological impacts of slavery and its legacies:
    - Educate others, emphasizing that African Americans are most likely to experience conditions due to discrimination that others may not experience. Examples are high levels of stress and even the serious condition of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This puts African Americans at high risk for developing health issues or coping behaviors that can negatively impact their lives.
    - Through word and deed, expose the fallacy of white supremacy that is based on:
      - the power of life and death that enslavers and traders held over the human beings they called slaves and treated as chattel;
      - the attitudes of superiority and actions of discrimination that continue today.
  - Establish additional markers, roadside plaques, museums, monuments and publications documenting slavery and subsequent historic events and achievements of African Americans.
  - Establish programs for collecting case studies to document the stories of African Americans, their struggles and triumphs. (Possibly supported by the [National Endowment for the Arts](#), [PBS](#), [National Public Radio](#), [Coming to the Table](#), and other funders and sources)

### **Making Connections**

- Work together, African Americans and European Americans, to promote a better understanding of our common humanity and break down barriers that divide us.

- Encourage European Americans to listen to African Americans’ ideas about societal reparations and develop a joint recommendation regarding what reparations we might pursue together on the societal level.
- Work in partnership with other organizations devoted to racial healing and justice. (That is, CTTT should make connections and seek partnerships in this work.)
- Recruit new members for CTTT and continue to establish CTTT local/regional gathering groups. Encourage local gathering groups to connect with other local groups seeking to acknowledge and heal wounds from racism that is rooted in the United States’ history of slavery.

### **Healing Wounds**

- Facilitate public dialogues on race and racism.
- Promote celebrations of the National Day of Healing (described above).
- Write and publish on the subjects of racial reconciliation—acknowledging history, making connections, healing wounds and taking actions.
- Create events promoting the sharing of stories and the honoring of those stories through ritual and ceremony.
- Work through CTTT and other organizations to unite African and European Americans for deep change in this country.

### **Taking Action**

#### **(Acknowledgement-related ideas)**

- Support [HR40](#) in the U.S. Congress. The number of the bill, 40, was chosen to symbolize the forty acres and a mule that the United States initially promised freed slaves. Because slavery was a brutal system that caused terrible harm to African Americans, the bill focuses attention on the fact that the extent of the negative consequences of enslaving African Americans for generations have never been officially recognized by the US Government. [The bill does 4 things](#):
  - Acknowledges the fundamental injustice and inhumanity of slavery;
  - Establishes a commission to study slavery, and the racial and economic discrimination against African American individuals once they were freed;
  - Studies the impact of the residual forces on today's living African Americans;
  - Instructs the commission to make recommendations to Congress on appropriate remedies to redress the harm experienced by living African Americans.
- Lobby for and support legislation for a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Promote wider access to museums, lectures and cultural events that represent African American culture and concerns.

- Promote the inclusion of African American history, art, and culture in all U.S. museums.
- Support the [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) in Washington, DC.
- Support increased Federal funding for the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) and the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) to expand programs focused on African American art and culture.

**(Education related ideas)**

- Support national, state and local efforts to improve how the history of slavery, segregation and civil rights is taught in U.S. school systems.
- Support programs that provide scholarships for African American students for education and job training programs for the unemployed.
- Support proposals to ensure that all students can attend public universities and have the financial support they need to succeed, paying only what they are able.
- Promote the re-establishment of national funding for [Upward Bound](#) college support programs for low income students of all races. Provide mentoring programs in the same context—for students and those entering new professions or vocations.
- Promote the establishment of programs to forgive student loans for all low and middle income African Americans, including loans taken out by parents of students.
- Research and establish scholarship funds for African Americans, e.g., establish a CTTT scholarship fund.
- Promote the continuance of [Pell Grants](#) and annual increases in the grant amount.
- Promote the establishment of mentorship programs for African American young people to enable them to thrive in new professional environments.

**(Economic related ideas)**

- Promote the creation of a mechanism for “reclaiming” land that was misappropriated by legal maneuvers to deprive African Americans of their inheritance/ownership. (Implementation of this reparative action could conflict with efforts of Native Americans to reclaim land taken from them and so must be approached with sensitivity and fairness.)
- Advocate to revitalize and reindustrialize inner cities so there will be more opportunities for jobs and businesses.

- Promote the provision of a Federal income tax credit for descendants of persons enslaved in the U.S.
- Promote the establishment of a decent living minimum wage/minimum income for all.
- Create a reparations philanthropic fund, under the umbrella of a large national community foundation, named and publicized for this sole purpose, to attract media attention and to encourage gifts and bequests. Seed the fund with prearranged commitments of funding. Invite high profile European American descendants of slaveholders to make contributions, and high profile African American descendants of slaves, especially those with philanthropic expertise, to serve on an advisory board for grant-making. Seek publicity to encourage the national dialogue about reparations.
- Promote the issuance by the Federal government of cash reparations to adult descendants of those who were enslaved. For those recipients in the lower third of income and wealth, provide for debt forgiveness so that reparations are not taken to repay debts.
- Develop an educational program on money management to be offered to recipients of reparations, especially if cash is part of the program. The purpose of this education is to enhance the possibility that recipients can realize an improved financial situation throughout their lifetime because knowledge increases the odds of achieving defined financial goals.
- Create and advertise opportunities for all people to thrive economically through good money management, job training and training in entrepreneurship.
- Promote a government or non-profit program to provide one-time mortgage down payment assistance to enable African Americans to purchase a home at a low interest rate.
- Increase funding for Federal programs dedicated to the eradication of poverty.

**(Justice related ideas)**

- Seek the transformation of the legal and criminal justice system to establish a system for [“restorative justice.”](#)
- Support and promote programs to implement restorative justice in schools so as to dismantle the [school-to-prison pipeline](#). Also address issues related to challenges for African American children earlier in life leading to the “womb-to-prison pipeline.”
- Research and participate in activities to promote restorative justice and improvements in the systemic problems for African Americans in housing, education, employment, health care and the legal system.

- Seek the repeal of the death penalty throughout the country since African Americans, people of color, and the poor are more likely to be executed.
- Ensure that formerly incarcerated individuals are eligible for reparations.
- Seek reinstatement of the full voting rights protection of the [Voting Rights Act](#) to protect African Americans, poor Americans and formerly incarcerated individuals from voting disenfranchisement.
- Speak out and support initiatives, programs, and laws that attempt to correct racial injustices. Take affirmative action.
- Continue civil rights campaigning around issues such as housing, police brutality, and access to education.
- Promote greatly increased U.S. aid to African countries from which people were stolen and enslaved.
- Push for legislation that will repeal the law that bans felons from returning to live with their families and children in subsidized and public housing.