

We Can Wait No Longer!

It is time to repair the harms of slavery and its legacies in the US

[Coming to the Table](#) provides these ideas to help you get started on your personal acts of reparation and also promoting reparations in your community and in our country.

This list of possible reparations for slavery and its legacies was primarily created for action or consideration by European Americans when 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. The list includes both short-term and long-term actions for individuals as well as communities and society as a whole. The recommendations are inspired by the spirit and principle of abundance—that there is enough for everyone.

The Coming to the Table Reparations Working Group developed this list based on ideas submitted by members of Coming to the Table in a November 2014 conference call, in written form in December 2014 and January 2015, and in two break-out sessions at the 2016 CTTT National Gathering. The Working Group spent many hours working together to organize and refine the list and discuss each item.

As part of Coming to the Table's approach of facing history, the Reparations Working Group would like to acknowledge that there are many groups currently working on reparations and there have been calls for reparations for over 550 years (see Winbush, 2009). A list of some of these groups and some of the books that detail the history of the reparations movement is included at the end of this document under a section entitled "Some Reparations Resources and Sources." We also offer some resources (books, articles, websites) on racism and the history of racism and on white privilege for your use in developing your reparations plans.

(This is a work in progress. If you have suggestions for additional reparative actions and/or resources related to reparations, racism or white privilege, or have questions about this information, please contact the CTTT Reparations Working Group. We will periodically update this document.)

Personal Reparations

Acknowledging (facing, uncovering) our History

- Conduct personal historical research that connects you to US slavery 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 to yourself, your family and others the injustice, pain and suffering of generations of African American people and the racial prejudice perpetrated directly and indirectly by your ancestors.
- Acknowledge the spiritual and emotional pain and denial you have lived with as a result of your personal and family historical connection to slavery to yourself and others.

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- Own your personal transgressions that perpetuate racism and work to correct them.
- Educate yourself and others in your family and community about the true history and global context of the brutal nature and impact of American slavery and racism on African Americans in the past and present. A good start is this [list of books provided by The Huffington Post](#).
- Recognize and educate yourselves and others about the amoral and destructive system of white supremacy and privilege in the US.
- Recognize that systemic racism and legacies of slavery are still operating in our culture today.

Making Connections

- Search out and establish meaningful connections and friendships across racial lines.
- Be sure to connect with and involve people of all ages in formulating and implementing plans for reparations.
- Search out linked descendants (African Americans and European Americans linked through slavery) and establish connections and friendships when possible. See the [CTTT Linked Descendants Working Group](#).
- Help others who suffer from the historical pain of slavery to acknowledge and face their own family legacy.
- Reach out to others who you discover are investigating their family connection to slavery.
- Join [Coming to the Table](#) and work with us to repair the harms of slavery and its legacies. Join a [local CTTT affiliate group](#) or establish one in your community.
- Join and donate to organizations like the [NAACP](#), Coming to the Table, SURJ (Showing up for Racial Justice), Black Lives Matter, etc. that are working to correct inequalities via legal and educational efforts.
- Participate in public race dialogues in order to make connections across racial lines.
- Research and acknowledge current and past attempts at reparations in your local community.
- Seek inspiration for reparations work through other sources of ideas, such as the NAACP, the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA), the Urban League and the National American Reparations Commission and [Artist Natasha Marin's Reparations initiative and website](#).

Healing Wounds

- Encourage mental health providers in your community to recognize the stresses and mental health issues that some African Americans have experienced due to the legacies of slavery and to help African Americans reduce the adverse impacts of these stresses on their lives.
- Identify and accept your personal responsibility for righting historical wrongs.
- Be willing to discuss difficult racial matters in your community. Watch this [TED Talk](#) for guidance on how to do this.
- Monitor, clarify and analyze words and phrases of good intention, such as “white ally,” to ensure they best describe right relationship and appropriate meaning.
- Listen deeply to African American perspectives on racism, reparations and reforms.
- Engage with others in the practice of racial reconciliation and healing in communities like [Coming to the Table](#). Participate in CTTT’s local affiliate groups, conference calls, and National Gatherings. Check out [Coming to the Table’s resource page](#) on its website for guidance on reconciliation and healing practices.
- Write about, and possibly publish, your connection to slavery or your family’s specific racial crimes and acts oppression.
- Educate and immerse yourself in the variety and breadth of African American experiences (culture, art, organizations, publications, history, etc.), 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](#).
- Take responsibility for healing yourself of the guilt and shame of your connection to slavery through workshops on healing ([EMU STAR training](#)), meditation and guided reflection.

Taking Action

- Support and participate in events, such as the [Slave Dwelling Project](#), that preserve and publicize different aspects of the realities of the life of the enslaved.
- Speak out and support initiatives, programs and laws that correct racial injustices (i.e. affirmative action).
- Help create a media relations committee at Coming to the Table (European American and

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African American) to publicize CTTT's existence and comment on the issues of the day.

- Document personal stories and experiences of racial discrimination and share in appropriate supportive communities.
- 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.
- Share family genealogical data, stories, and other information, etc. on [Our Black Ancestry](#), [Ancestry.com](#) and other websites as well as with historical societies, libraries and local, state and national archives.
- Encourage descendants of enslavers and slave traders to join CTTT.
- Acknowledge and take action to level the "playing field" in personal and professional situations.
- 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 (i.e. volunteering for after-school programs, one-on-one homework support, African American events and festivals, etc.)
- In your personal or professional life, fight for full rights and privileges of equal citizenship for African Americans.
- Offer personal or family foundation college scholarships, or make contributions to a scholarship program like the [United Negro College Fund](#).
- Work with educators individually and/or school boards and state boards of education to reform curricula that will recognize that slavery was the foundation of our country's achievements and wealth.
- For teachers, teach beyond specific African American heroes and "firsts" and include the full spectrum of the impact of African Americans on history, literature and poetry etc. in your high school and university classes; host those who write and speak on the impact of slavery and its aftermath on current conditions and concerns of African Americans.
- Encourage families, but European Americans especially, to donate historical materials about their families' connection to slavery to local, state and national libraries, historical societies and archives.
- Advocate for the hiring of African Americans in your personal and professional life.
- Patronize African-American owned businesses and support non-profits led by African Americans

and/or benefitting African Americans, e.g. Coming to the Table.

- Support African Americans for public office and for leadership positions in other governmental and non-governmental positions.
- Seek out African American doctors and medical professionals, attorneys, accountants, and sales and service professionals.
- 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 and participate in organizations promoting racial justice such as [Black Lives Matter](#), Coming to the Table, SURJ (Showing up for Racial Justice) and others.

Community and Societal Reparations

While the following list describes reparations mostly at the national level, all can be started at the community level. Communities can make meaningful change and can inspire national transformation.

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 in 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 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.
- Revise the curricula of US and World history classes to accept the impact of slavery on the US and 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 as well as the contributions of people of color to the Americas and Europe.

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- Encourage the National Park Service, the National Register of Historic Places, the National Trust and State Historical Societies and State Historic Preservation Officers to proactively identify, preserve and make available to the public historic sites that will tell the *entire* history of the country (i.e. the Fort Monroe, VA Contraband Camp) through historic preservation and interpretative programs such as establishing markers, roadside plaques, museums, monuments and publications documenting historic events related to slavery and achievements of African Americans
- Provide greater media exposure of the stories of African Americans, their struggles and triumphs through the Corporation of Public Broadcasting, [PBS](#), [National Public Radio \(Story Corps\)](#), and other media outlets.
- Create a national society/commission to locate, honor, memorialize and support the preservation of the marked and unmarked graves in slave cemeteries in honor of the lives of people buried there with appropriate public and private memorials.
- Ask lineage societies like the General Society of Mayflower Descendants (<https://www.themayflowersociety.org/>) and Daughters of the American Revolution (<http://www.dar.org/>) about reparations, finding out whether or not they have addressed the issue.

Making Connections

- Establish [Coming to the Table local affiliate groups](#) in communities throughout the US.
- Create collaborations between Coming to the Table and such organizations as SURJ, Everyday Democracy, and White Privilege Conference to promote a better understanding of our common humanity and break down barriers that divide us.
- Encourage European Americans to listen authentically to African Americans' ideas about societal reparations and develop a joint recommendation regarding what reparations might be pursued together on the societal level.
- Be sure to connect with and involve people of all ages in formulating and implementing plans for reparations.

Healing Wounds

- Acknowledge the psychological impacts of slavery and its legacies.
 - Encourage mental health providers to recognize the stresses and mental health issues that some African Americans have experienced due to the legacies of slavery and to help African Americans reduce the adverse impacts of these stresses on their lives.
 - Update the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), which is the standard classification of mental disorders used by mental health professionals in the United States as appropriate after thorough research of the psychological impacts of the legacies of slavery that may affect some African Americans.

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- Expose the fallacy of white supremacy and superiority that was based on the power of life and death that enslavers and traders held over the human beings they called slaves and treated as chattel. Explore how that fallacy continues to impact thinking and behavior.
- Increase understanding by all of the impact of the legacies of slavery and systemic racism on African Americans.
- Create national efforts to organize the national discussion on race.
- Provide support to writers, filmmakers and other artists to address the subject of racial justice, healing, and reconciliation.
- Support academic research on conflict resolution, dialogue and reconciliation.

Taking Action

(Acknowledgement-related ideas)

- Support [HR40](#) in the U.S. Congress to compile existing and new studies/surveys for repairing the harms of slavery. (The number of the bill, 40, was chosen to symbolize the forty acres and a mule that the United States initially promised freed slaves.) The bill focuses on recognizing the consequences of enslaving African Americans for generations. The bill:
 - 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 by enhanced publicity and marketing and by creating programs that ensure free admission to school children.
- Encourage students attending colleges that participated in slavery to document and publish the history of their schools' connection to slavery. Work with administrations to create a plan for providing reparations to the people whose ancestors were enslaved at the school.
- Include the story of slavery and African American experience in all museum exhibits about the history and culture of the US.
- Maintain support of the [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) in Washington, DC.

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(Education related ideas)

- Support national, state and local efforts to revise how the history of slavery, segregation and civil rights is taught in U.S. school systems.
- As part of a national reparations program, provide scholarships for African American students for education and job training.
- Ensure that all students can afford to attend public universities and have the financial support they need to succeed.
- Promote the re-establishment of national funding for the [Upward Bound](#) college support programs for low income students of all races.
- Forgive student loans for all low and middle income African Americans, including loans taken out by parents of students.
- Create a national program that encourages European Americans who are descended from enslavers to create scholarship funds for descendants of the people who were enslaved on their plantations and other property.
- Continue the [Pell Grants](#) program and annually increase the grant amount.
- Establish mentorship [programs](#) for African American students to enable them to thrive in new professional and vocational environments.

(Economic related ideas)

- Create 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.)
- Create more opportunities for jobs and businesses for African Americans.
- Support the Southern Reparations Loan Fund (SRLF), a project of the Southern Grassroots Economies Project (SGEP). SGEP makes business loans to cooperatively owned businesses anchored in the most marginalized Southern communities. They focus their lending toward start-ups and expansions of democratically governed enterprises that meet the needs and elevate the quality of life of African Americans, immigrants, and poor whites.
<http://sgeproject.org/about/southern-reparations-loan-fund/>
- Promote the provision of a Federal income tax credit for descendants of persons enslaved in the U.S.
- Hold corporations accountable for their profits accrued through association with slavery and

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develop ways to provide reparations.

- 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 that will use skillful media and publicity 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.
- Issue 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.)
- Provide opportunities for all people to thrive economically through good money management, job training and training in entrepreneurship.
- Create 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. Provide education, home loans and other G.I. bill-like programs to descendants of enslaved people.
- Increase funding for Federal programs dedicated to the eradication of poverty.

(Justice related ideas)

- Transform the legal and criminal justice system to end mass incarceration.
- Establish a system for “[restorative justice](#),” especially in schools to help dismantle the [school-to-prison pipeline](#) also known as the “womb-to-prison pipeline.”
- Address systemic problems of injustice 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. Equalize sentencing rules that currently target African Americans.
- Ensure that formerly incarcerated individuals are eligible for reparations.
- Research organizations that provide assistance to families of incarcerated persons and support those efforts through donations and volunteer work. If organizations focused specifically on

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providing assistance to families of the incarcerated do not exist in your community, research other community organizations, including churches and other faith-based organizations, that serve members of the community whose families have been affected by mass incarceration and might welcome your support.

- Seek reinstatement of the full voting rights protection under the [Voting Rights Act](#) to protect African Americans, poor Americans and formerly incarcerated individuals from voting disenfranchisement.
- 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.
- Support food justice. Empower African Americans in obtaining food security through such efforts as education in sustainable agriculture, support for commercial sustainable agriculture operations, and establishment of sustainable community and home gardens.
- Promote structural change to hold police departments accountable to the community and to end the following:
 - End automatic assumptions of the guilt of African Americans
 - End provocative actions by the police
 - End practices that unfairly single out African Americans for harassment, harsh treatment, lethal force and arrest.
- Strengthen police training
 - Promote police training and tactics that emphasize de-escalation and peaceful resolution of conflict without force or with the least amount of force necessary.
 - Add police training on the legacies of slavery and the traumas related to oppression, discrimination and injustice.
 - Add police training on working with compassion and understanding in poor communities where many feel without hope.
 - Add police training in skillful and compassionate treatment of people with mental illness.
 - Increase understanding of the impacts of systemic racism on African Americans.
- Seek laws to provide reparations to survivors of law enforcement brutality and torture and to their families. [A 2015 law passed in Chicago provides an example.](#)

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Black Lives Matter: <http://blacklivesmatter.com/>

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Coming to the Table (CTTT): www.comingtothetable.org

CTTT Linked Descendants Working Group develops resources for people who are "linked" through their connections to historic enslavement. They call themselves "[linked descendants](#)" due to having a joint history in slavery – a pairing of a descendant of an enslaved person with a descendant of his or her slaveholder – who have found each other and who are in communication (see: <http://comingtothetable.org/groups/working-groups/linked-descendants/>).

CTTT Local Affiliate Groups:

<http://comingtothetable.org/groups/local-regional-cttt-groups/cttt-local-affiliate-group/>.

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR): <http://www.dar.org/>.

General Society of Mayflower Descendants: <https://www.themayflowersociety.org/>.

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NAACP: <http://www.naacp.org/>.

Our Black Ancestry: <http://www.ourblackancestry.com/>.

Pell Grants: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/grants-scholarships/pell>.

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Showing Up For Racial Justice (SURJ): <http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/>.

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Southern Reparations Loan Fund (SRLF), a project of the Southern Grassroots Economies Project (SGEP). SGEP makes business loans to cooperatively owned businesses anchored in the most marginalized Southern communities. They focus their lending toward start-ups and expansions of democratically governed enterprises that meet the needs and elevate the quality of life of African Americans, immigrants, and poor whites (see: <http://sgeproject.org/about/southern-reparations-loan-fund/>).

Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR): <http://www.emu.edu/cjp/star/>.

Story Corps: <https://storycorps.org/>.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tUBJ-1MWG8>

United Negro College Fund: <https://www.uncf.org/>.

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<http://www.wkkf.org/news-and-media/article/2016/01/wkkf-leads-broad-coalition-to-launch-trht>.

Zehr Institute for Restorative Justice: <http://zehr-institute.org/>.

Some Reparations Resources and Sources

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The following includes a list of some of the groups currently working on reparations and some of the books that detail the history of the reparations movement.

Black Land & Liberation Initiative has a reparations platform (see: <http://blacklandandliberation.org/uncategorized/land-based-reparations-models/>).

Black Lives Matter <http://blacklivesmatter.com/> has a website called Backing Black Business that aims to list every business in the country owned by a Black American (see: <https://www.backingblackbusiness.com/>). For more information, see: <http://fusion.net/story/377476/black-lives-matter-backing-black-business/>.

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The Movement for Black Lives <https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/> has a six part platform, one of which addresses reparations: <https://policy.m4bl.org/reparations/>.

The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA) is the premiere mass-based coalition of organizations and individuals organized for the sole purpose of obtaining reparations for African descendants in the United States. <http://www.ncobraonline.org/>.

Robinson, Randall. *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks*. <http://www.randallrobinson.com/>.

Showing Up For Racial Justice <http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/>. SURJ describes itself as "a national network of groups and individuals organizing white people for racial justice. Through community organizing, mobilizing and education, SURJ moves white people to act as part of a multiracial

majority for justice with passion and accountability.” The Baltimore and Washington DC Chapters of SURJ are working on reparations in their respective chapters (see: <https://www.facebook.com/SURJBaltimore/> and <https://www.facebook.com/surjdc/>).

Southern Reparations Loan Fund (SRLF), a project of the Southern Grassroots Economies Project (SGEP). SGEP makes business loans to cooperatively owned businesses anchored in the most marginalized Southern communities. They focus their lending toward start-ups and expansions of democratically governed enterprises that meet the needs and elevate the quality of life of African Americans, immigrants, and poor whites (see: <http://sgeproject.org/about/southern-reparations-loan-fund/>).

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Some Resources on White Privilege

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