



## Funding a Racially Just Food System *Strategic Resources DRAFT*

*“But all our phrasing -- race relations, racial chasm, racial justice, racial profiling, white privilege, even white supremacy -- serves to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth. You must never look away from this. You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions, all land, with great violence, upon the body.” ~ Ta-Nehisi Coates*

White supremacy is an “historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by White peoples and nations of the European continent for the purpose of establishing, maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.”<sup>1</sup> White supremacy infuses all aspects of society including our history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric, producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. What can be created, can be destroyed. Black food and land sovereignty is the collective responsibility of the entire community, not just the purview of African-Americans and other people of color. This handout offers strategies for people with access to power, resources, and privilege to take concrete action to uproot personal and institutional racism. We explore strategies for enacting reparations, equitable grantmaking, forming alliances, and transforming organizations. Recognizing that “you can’t be neutral on a moving train” - this guide offer steps to actively work against the grain in your spheres of influence and start to undo the harms of racism.

### Strategy #1 Reparations to POC-led Projects

Enslaved Africans never received reparations for their unpaid labor or broken families. The promise of “forty acres and a mule” during reconstruction was retracted. In fact, some white plantation owners received reparations for their “lost property.” If African American people were paid \$20 per week for our agricultural labor rather than enslaved, we would have \$6.4 trillion in today’s dollars in the bank today. This figure does not include reparations for denied credit and homeownership opportunities, exclusion from the social safety net and education, or property theft and destruction.<sup>2</sup> There is a reason

<sup>1</sup> Tuzzolo, Ellen, 2016. Personal communication

<sup>2</sup> Loeffelholz, Tracy Dunn and Jeff Neumann. 2015. 40 Acres and a Mule Would Be at Least \$6.4 Trillion Today—What the U.S. Really Owes Black America. YES! Magazine

why the typical white household has 16 times the wealth of a typical black household - 80% of wealth is inherited, often traceable back to slavery times.<sup>3</sup> Existing policies reinforce and augment the wealth gap.

The most important action that people with resources can take to uproot racism is to enact reparations, to quite literally give back what was stolen. We are not talking about Georgetown University-style reparations, where the institution gave a formal apology and preferential admission to the descendants of people sold as slaves in 1838, but did not offer scholarships or include the descendants in the reparations committee. We are talking about true reparations, which have the following three characteristics:

1. **“Nothing about us, without us” - Dispossessed people get to define what reparations look like**
2. **“No strings attached” - transfers of land and resources without oversight or conditionality**
3. **“The whole pie” - give the land, money, and jobs away, even and especially when it entails personal and organizational sacrifice**

A first step is to find out what POC-led organizations are working toward liberation in your area and see what you can do to support. An incomplete list of formations working on food, land, and liberation for people of color are listed here.

### **Black-Indigenous Led Organizations Working on Food, Land, and Freedom**

- African People’s Education and Defense Fund <http://apedf.org/>
- Black Belt Justice Center <http://blackbeltjustice.org/>
- Black Family Land Trust <http://www.bflt.org/>
- Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association <https://www.bfaa4us.org/>
- Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras <http://www.ofraneh.org/ofraneh/index.html>
- Black Immigration Network <http://blackimmigration.net/>
- Black-Indigenous Farmers Reparations Map <http://www.soulfirefarm.org/support/reparations/>
- Black Urban Growers [www.blackurbangrowers.org/](http://www.blackurbangrowers.org/)
- CATA – The Farmworkers Support Committee <http://cata-farmworkers.org/>
- Center for Heirs Property Preservation <http://www.heirsproperty.org/>
- Centro Campesino <http://mncentrocampesino.org/>
- Color of Food <http://thecoloroffood.com/>
- Community to Community <http://www.foodjustice.org/>
- Cooperation Jackson <http://www.cooperationjackson.org/>
- Cosecha <http://movimientocosecha.com/>
- Detroit Black Community Food Security Network <http://detroitblackfoodsecurity.org/>
- Dignity and Power Now <http://dignityandpowernow.org/>

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/make-it-right/infographic-40-acres-and-a-mule-would-be-at-least-64-trillion-today>

<sup>3</sup> Shin, Laura. 2015. The Racial Wealth Gap: Why A Typical White Household Has 16 Times The Wealth Of A Black One

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurashin/2015/03/26/the-racial-wealth-gap-why-a-typical-white-household-has-16-times-the-wealth-of-a-black-one/#b639dab1f45e>

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- Ella Baker Center <http://ellabakercenter.org/>
- Familias Unidas por la Justicia <http://familiasunidasjusticia.org/en/home/>
- Farmworker Association of Florida <http://floridafarmworkers.org/>
- Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund <http://www.federationsoutherncoop.com/>
- Food Chain Workers Alliance <http://foodchainworkers.org/>
- Food Sovereignty Ghana <http://foodsovereigntyghana.org/>
- Freedom Food Alliance <https://freedomfoodalliance.wordpress.com/>
- HEAL Food Alliance <http://healfoodalliance.org/>
- International Indigenous Youth Council <https://www.facebook.com/IYCstandingrock/>
- La Via Campesina, International Peasant Movement <https://viacampesina.org/en/>
- Land Loss Prevention Project <https://www.landloss.org/>
- Lideres Campesinas <http://www.liderescampesinas.org/english/>
- Malcolm X Grassroots Movement <https://mxgm.org/>
- Movement for Justice in El Barrio <https://www.facebook.com/Movement-for-Justice-in-El-Barrio-54775959685/>
- National Black Farmers Association <http://www.blackfarmers.org/>
- National Black Food and Justice Alliance <http://www.blackfoodjustice.org/>
- National Black Growers Council <https://nationalblackgrowerscouncil.com/>
- National Coordination of Peasant Organizations of Mali <http://www.cnop-mali.org/>
- National Domestic Workers Alliance <http://www.domesticworkers.org/>
- National Women in Agriculture Association <http://www.nwiaa.org/>
- Operation Spring Plant <http://operationspringplant.blogspot.com/>
- PODER: People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources <http://www.poder-texas.org/>
- Restaurant Opportunities Center <http://rocunited.org/>
- Sierra Seeds <http://sierraseeds.org/>
- Soul Fire Farm [www.soulfirefarm.org](http://www.soulfirefarm.org)
- Southeastern African American Organic Farmers Network (SAAFON) <http://www.saaфон.org/>
- Standing Rock Sioux <https://nodaplsolidarity.org/>

## Strategy #2: How to Distribute Funding

*Donors and foundations, make resources more accessible to frontlines organizations using these guidelines.*

1. **Racial Equity:** Work together with the grantmaking community to conduct a racial justice assessment of where donors are currently investing and what kind of disparities exist, publicly share the results, and create strategies for correcting those inequities. We ask that all foundations dedicate a percentage of their giving towards explicit “reparations” for organizations led by and serving people of color. Note the Grantmakers for Effective Organizations has an [equity statement](#) to guide this process.

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2. **Geographic and Class Equity:** Prioritize funding for the [Deep South](#), focused on organizations led by the communities they serve. Look beyond “academic speak” when reviewing applications, prioritizing instead people’s deep lived experience in movement work. Provide video/audio application processes instead of exclusively written applications. Provide translation services to applicants to overcome language barriers in the application process.
3. **Funding What Counts:** Grantmakers, please fund general operating expenses, “overhead,” salaries, insurance, as well as the tangibles - seeds, greenhouse plastic, and shovels. It takes both people making a living wage and infrastructure. Enough with the deference toward “projects”, “innovation” and “direct costs.” Look around to see who is doing the real work and fund those people, letting us decide exactly how to allocate resources. All grants should be multi-year and renewable. Consider a donor advised fund which would be managed or directed by farmer groups to rotate loans and credit- tangible resources our folks need. Provide a “matching grant promise” fund for organizations to use for USDA grant programs.
4. **Streamline Applications and Reporting:** Donors, organize in your giving community and create a common application and common reporting format. Set up *one* online portal where we can put all of our information *one* time. Donors can work together to figure out how to make sure frontlines organizations are funded. This will increase the amount of time frontlines groups have to do the work on the ground.
5. **Respect:** Donors, please hold your privilege consciously. Much of the wealth being distributed was accumulated on the backs of exploited people, often the ancestors and relatives of these grassroots organizations. It is an honor for donors to get to be in relationship with frontlines organizers. Please do not pressure organizers to spend social time with funders, please respect personal boundaries, and do not use patronizing language referring to organizers. Remember that people on the frontlines are “experts” in their community and should be treated with respect and deference, never with an air of paternalism or entitlement.
6. **Calendaring:** There is a current trend for donors to be in relationship with grassroots organizers and to move beyond “transactional” relationships into something more meaningful. While this is laudable, it also means that organizers are expected to spend more and more time with donors. In many cases, this becomes a full time job and little time is left for the mission work. Please request, not demand, time from organizers, giving months of advance notice. Please be conscious of non-Christian holidays and pre-existing community commitments in your scheduling.
7. **Incentivize Sanity:** Donors, please work to change culture where grantmakers demand “over-promising” and constant “innovation.” Offer grants specifically for grassroots organizations to pay a living wage and offer benefits to their employees. Celebrate depth over breadth, quality over quantity, seventh generation thinking over instant “results.” Fund reflection and planning. Invest in metrics that get at transformation beyond what we can quantify. Real change is not simply a result of “numbers of people served.”
8. **“Partnering:”** Larger nonprofits should apply for the big government and other challenging grants and write emerging organizations into the grants - transferring wealth to frontlines, take little for themselves, transfer most. Large nonprofits and government should donate administrative resources - grantwriter, accountant, bookkeeper, database subscription, data entry, blog writer, web development, videography, graphic design, etc. so frontlines communities can “do the work” and not get bogged down with administration.

9. **Technical Assistance:** Support grassroots organizations in accessing culturally responsive technical assistance, including project management, fundraising, development planning, budgeting, strategic planning, board development, proposal writing, website development, marketing, consulting, legal, networking, accounting, and reporting. Provide samples of model grant applications and budgets so that grassroots organizations can learn from these examples.
10. **Be the First Dollar:** Rather than wait for others in the funding community to validate the legitimacy of a grassroots effort by putting the first dollar on the table, tune in to who community members say they trust. Take the “risk” to put real dollars toward grassroots projects.

#### **Further Reading on Equity**

- [We Need a New Definition of Effectiveness](#), Kathleen Enright CEO at GEO
- [Policies, Practices, and Programs for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) by D5
- [Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide](#) by Annie E. Casey Foundation
- [SAFSF Diversity Resources](#)

### **Strategy #3 - Alliances and Relationships With Community**

Adopting a listener’s framework is the first step for white people and white-led organizations who want to form interracial alliances. Rather than trying to “outreach” to people of color and convince them to join your initiative, find out about existing community work that is led by people directly impacted by racism and see how you can engage. Frontlines communities have the long term commitment, strategy, and expertise necessary to transform the system. Ten guidelines for interracial alliance building are provided here.

1. **Center Relationships:** There is no shortcut to building relationships. The first step is to “show up.” Spend as much time as possible attending community meetings, getting involved in neighborhood associations, and lending your skills and time to projects that are important to members of the community. When you tangibly demonstrate your commitment to the community, people are more likely to invite you in as a partner in initiatives. When you only reach out to someone because you want their presence at your one-time event, that is tokenizing, not relationship-building.
2. **Pass the Mic:** While you might be savvy with social media, writing, or public speaking, that does not give you permission to control the narrative of other people. Rather than telling or interpreting the stories of people of color, work to amplify the voices of people directly. Offer your technical support so that people can tell their own stories.
3. **Welcome Feedback:** Develop a no-retaliation system for community members to give you feedback on your role in the alliance. Demonstrate your receptivity to feedback by thanking those who have the courage to offer you suggestions and implementing those suggestions in a timely fashion. Circle back with your partners asking if the changes you have made are acceptable.
4. **Cultural Deference:** Because white culture is so ingrained in our society, we can mistakenly assume that work habits like tight deadlines, written communication, and Robert Rules of Order

are universal norms. Take time to get to know the communication styles, conflict management strategies, pace, and other characteristics of your partner organization and work to fit into that culture rather than impose your own.

5. **Skills Transfer:** White privilege often affords European-heritage people with the opportunity to learn technical skills, such as bookkeeping, grant writing, web design, legal advocacy, and business management. As you volunteer your time to apply these skills to anti-racism work, invite community members to work side-by-side with you to gain these competencies.
6. **Pay Well:** Leverage your resources so that people of color are paid for their time as they organize for a racially just society. If you are an employer, hire people who might otherwise be overlooked in the capitalist economy - people of color, formerly incarcerated people, those without documents, elders, those with disabilities. Offer jobs with training built in, a living wage, health care, and job security. Fundraise so that people of color can be paid for their time as consultants, speakers, and organizers. Never assume that Black and Brown people should volunteer their time as part of alliance work.
7. **Make It Easy:** Limit or eliminate the number of hoops that community members need to jump through to access the resources that you control. In the case of grantmaking, provide video/audio application processes instead of exclusively written applications. Offer multi year grants for general operating expenses, rather than requiring innovating special projects each cycle. Coordinate with other funders to have a universal application and reporting process, and minimize the demands you make on people's time. Organizers should not have to feel obligated to show up at your events because you donated money or other resources to their project. Include community members in the committees and boards that guide grant-making and resources allocation.
8. **Pass the Oars:** At all times, people of color should be setting the agenda and determining the priorities in your alliance work. Check and recheck that you are not dominating the space or steering the ship. Because we have all internalized white supremacy to some degree, it is easy to collude in the "white expert" narrative and defer to white people's ideas. White folks need to be proactive to interrupt this pattern.
9. **Ask Why You Want to Work with People of Color:** When organizations have the "diversity conversation," it invariably goes to the seemingly intractable problem of "attracting people of color to our organization." Perhaps a better initial question is, "How can we work with other white people to raise consciousness and shift policies that are causing the harm?" In response to an influx of white progressives travelling to work with the Zapatistas in Mexico, they issued a statement that read, "If you can remove the boot from our neck by stopping your society from funding our government who is doing [the harm] directly to us, then boy, wouldn't that be a big relief?... Then, please go home and organize... not just against imperialism and massive military expenditures going down to support the war in Mexico, but against the shit that you need to reorganize as your own problems. Stop letting us distract you from the fact that your cities have third worlds in them, that racism and sexism, things that we are really beginning to get a grip on here, are rampant in your home. Go home and take care of that."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Starr, Amory. 2013. *Global Revolt: A Guide to the Movements against Globalization*. Zed Books Ltd.



## Strategy #4: Internal Organizational Transformation

### *Uplift: Haymarket Fund*

*The Haymarket Fund was founded in 1974 to honor the Haymarket affair, a working people's uprising in 1886 that paved the way for the 8-hour workday. The Haymarket fund has donated money to almost every major social justice movement in New England. However, for decades they were a white-led organization distributing money to mostly white-led organizations. In 1998, they embarked on a deliberate journey to uproot the racism ingrained in every aspect of the organization. With the guidance of the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, they updated their mission, changed organizational policies, hired new leadership, and shifted organizational culture. While they will always be in a learning process, Haymarket Fund is now led by people of color at all levels of the organization. People work together across racial lines to build relationships rooted in trust and accountability. Haymarket Fund published a manual detailing their transformation process, called Courage to Change.*

Given that fewer than 20% of nonprofit leaders are people of color, it is very likely that you will find yourself working in a white-led organization on social justice issues. There are several inherent problems with this arrangement, from the moral fallacy of the “white savior complex” to the exploitation inherent in “poverty pimping” to keep white do-gooders employed. Existential questions should also arise for predominantly white organizations as to whether the resources going into the organization could be allocated more effectively and justly by investing in Black-led projects. Even with these sticky and challenging questions, many white-led organizations take the courageous step toward internal transformation. For example, both the National Young Farmers Coalition and the Groundswell Center for Food and Agriculture developed equity statements and corresponding equity practices as first steps toward uprooting racism in their organizations.

### Equity Statements by Predominantly White Farming Organizations

#### **National Young Farmers Coalition**

“Ending Violence Against People of Color in Food and Farming”

<http://www.youngfarmers.org/ending-violence-against-people-of-color-in-food-and-farming/>

#### **Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming**

“Equity Statement”

<http://groundswellcenter.org/equity-statement/>

#### **Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group**

“Statement of Intent on Race and Equity”

<http://nesawg.org/node/230882>

#### **National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**

“Statement on Race and Equity”

In order to transform your organization from one that is complicit in white supremacy to one that actively resists white supremacy, there are a number of actions you can take:

**Decision Making and Power:** Organizations working to end racism should have people of color in leadership at all levels - on the staff, board, trustees, and volunteer leadership. Transforming an organization toward power-sharing means first ensuring that everyone in the organization understands how power is distributed, how decisions are made, and how they can increase their decision-making power. Make training and mentorship available, along with clear steps for advancement open to everyone in the organization, including program participants. Too often, those with the most power in an organization or business are white, while those with the least decision-making influence are people of color. White people are responsible for making space so that people of color can lead.

**Budget and Finances:** Implement a cap on the wage and benefits gap between the highest and lowest paid person in the organization, so that there is equitable distribution of resources for everyone involved. Everyone in the organization should be able to see the budget and balance sheet at any time and have input on budget priorities. White-led organizations can work to actively transfer their resources to frontlines organizations, by contributing money, meeting space, customers, and staff time as well as making introductions to press and funders.

**Accessibility:** Work to increase accessibility of your programs and events to people of color. Provide transportation, childcare, food, wheelchair accessibility, all gender bathrooms, and interpretation services. In some cases, it is also appropriate to provide stipends for attendance. Review whether your decorations, music, and menu selections reflect a white dominant culture. Consider hiring a DJ, caterer, or guest speaker from the community you “serve” to bring their expertise to your events.

**Culture and Commitment:** Implement an equity statement and safer space practices that explicitly address racism, sexism, transphobia, ableism, classism, and other oppressions. Invest organizational resources into transforming the culture from white-dominant to culturally inclusive. This may mean devoting more time for self-care, reflection, and collaboration, shifting work pace, updating definitions of success, and investing in more time in training and support. Make space for people to bring elements of our cultures - music, stories, food, dance - to the organization. Be willing to name racism and directly address oppressive behavior.

**Programs:** Your organization’s programs should be designed to build and share power with people of color, not to “serve” or “save” us. Address the root cause of problems, recognizing that this will eventually mean your project becomes obsolete. The people directly affected by oppressions should be the people involved in planning and designing those initiatives, and should have a pathway to take on leadership roles in the organization. Provide anti-racism training to all of your staff and infuse anti-racism topics into your community programs. If you are unsure what race has to do with your mission or goals, hire an anti-racism consultant to help you develop that equity lens.



**Narrative:** Update the narratives you tell about the work to uplift the contributions of people of color in the field. For example, many farming and food organizations omit the contributions of Booker T. Whatley, George Washington Carver, Fannie Lou Hamer and the other visionaries. Actively participate in regional and national networks that are led by people of color. Use your social media, newsletter, and press platforms to promote the campaigns and stated priorities of people of color.

**Behavior:** Check your own white supremacist behavior and that of other people in the organization. Racist structures are perpetuated through the accrual of seemingly minor exclusive and bias acts. Here are some common white supremacist patterns to challenge:

- Speaking first, more often, or interrupting
- Unilaterally setting the agenda
- Assuming white people are more capable
- Trivializing the experience of others
- Dismissing the content of what people of color say, because of disliking the “tone” or “attitude”
- Speaking on behalf of others
- Assuming one person of color speaks for the group
- Unilaterally controlling the organization’s resources
- Reducing power struggles to personality conflicts
- Assuming that misunderstandings are the root of problems in organization
- Demanding proof or justification for perspectives of people of color
- Appropriating cultural elements of people of color
- Expecting gratitude and praise
- Defending mistakes because of “good intentions”
- Assumption that everyone has the same options and access to resources
- Expecting people of color to educate white people about oppressions
- Expecting to be trusted
- Assuming that high-performing people of color are exceptional
- Expecting comfort

### **Strategy #5: Self-Reflection and Education**

Almost all of us embody a complex matrix of identities, including some that provide social advantage and others that limit access. Explore the “Matrix of Intersectionality” and record your identities in the appropriate categories. Then, share stories related to the identities that are most difficult for you to claim. For example, as an able bodied person, it is easy for me to take that identity for granted as “normal” and ignore the ways that this privilege opens doors for me that are closed for others. I do not bristle when sidewalks are crusted over with snow or bathrooms are not accessible, because I can effortlessly navigate. I ask myself, “How can I have the same urgency around disability rights as I do about race and gender equality?” Individuals comprise the system, so this work of challenging our limited perspectives on identity can transform institutions and power structures. What action can you catalyze by bringing your privileged identities into awareness?

### Matrix of Intersectionality

<b>Social Identity Categories</b>	<b>Privileged Social Groups</b>	<b>Border Social Groups</b>	<b>Targeted Social Groups</b>	<b>Ism</b>
Race	White People	Mixed Race People (with recent white ancestry)	Asian, Black, Latinx, First Nations People	Racism
Color	White- presenting people	People with light brown, tan skin	People with dark skin	Colorism
Sex	Men	---	Women, Intersex	Sexism
Gender	Gender conforming cis men and women	Gender ambiguous cis men and women	Transgender, non-binary people	Transgender Oppression
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual people	Bisexual people	Queer, lesbian, gay people	Heterosexism
Class	Rich, owning, upper middle class people	Middle Class People	Working Class, Poor People	Classism
Ability/Disability	Temporarily Able Bodied People	People with Temporary Disabilities	People with Disabilities	Ableism
Religion	Protestants, Secular	Roman Catholics	Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Indigenous religions	Religious Oppression
Age	Adults	Young Adults	Elders, children	Ageism, Adulthood
Language	Fluent English-only speakers	Bilingual speakers of English	Speakers of languages other than English	Language Oppression
Education	College educated people	High school educated people	People without formal high school education	Elitism
Documentation	US Citizen	US Resident	Undocumented	Xenophobia

*Adapted from Teaching for Diversity and Social Inclusion, Second Edition, Routledge, 2007*

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For further learning, please see the recommended readings and training programs below:

### **Recommended Reading on Racial Justice**

- [White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#) by Peggy McIntosh
- [Dismantling Racism: A Resource Book](#) by Western States Center
- [Examining Whiteness: An Anti-Racism Curriculum](#) by Reverend Doctor William J. Gardiner
- [The Case for Reparations](#) Coates by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- [The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness](#) by Michelle Alexander
- [Rewriting the Racial Rules: Building an Inclusive American Economy](#) by Andrea Flynn et al.
- [Opportunities for White People in the Fight for Racial Justice](#) by Jonathan Osler
- [Curriculum for White Americans to Educate Themselves on Race and Racism—from Ferguson to Charleston](#) by Jon Greenberg

### **Recommended Training Programs for Dismantling Racism**

- People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond <http://www.pisab.org>
- AORTA Collective <http://aorta.coop/>
- Catalyst Project <http://www.pisab.org>
- Training for Change <https://www.trainingforchange.org/>
- Beyond Diversity 101 <http://www.beyonddiversity101.org/>
- White Noise Collective <http://www.conspireforchange.org/>
- Center for Study of White American Culture <http://www.euroamerican.org/>
- Interaction Institute for Social Change [www.interactioninstitute.org/](http://www.interactioninstitute.org/)
- Soul Fire Farm’s Uprooting Racism in the Food System [www.soulfirefarm.org](http://www.soulfirefarm.org)

Maya Angelou said, “History, despite its wrenching pain cannot be unlived. But if faced with courage, we need not live it again.” We are never finished with the work of facing our history with courage. Continue to educate yourself, engage in conversations, and catalyze action toward a racially just world.