



FirstRepair

Advocating For Local Reparations, Nationally



newsletter

September 2022

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DEAR COMMUNITY

I hope you are Well...



Greetings Community,

I hope you and your loved ones are well.

It was a productive summer for FirstRepair as we were invited to collaborate and be in community with many of you locally, nationally, and internationally. Our big take away this summer was Black joy and rest is reparative and we are thankful for our partners that highlighted that this summer. Our work is heavy, and we hope you get all you need to be well.

We are moving into fall, inspired and better prepared to partner with you.

We have traveled near and far learning and sharing best practices so that we might apply them in our hyperlocal practice of reparations. Synchronizing local initiatives is a smart path and proven path to transformational change. We look forward to continuing our support of HR40 under the leadership of Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and staying engaged with the global Black movement for reparations, recognizing the impact each win has on our collective goal of repair.

This week, along with a distinguished group of scholars and activists, I will present “Local Action, Global Impact – How Local Reparations Efforts Are Advancing Global Black Repair” at the Envisioning Reparations conference at The University of Cambridge. [Virtual registration is available.](#)

Thank you for your partnership. We look forward to continuing this work with you.

Onward,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RR Simmons'.

Robin Rue Simmons

Executive Director

 **FirstRepair**

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LOCAL REPARATIONS IN THE NEWS

“What is less seen, is the internal work the assembly has done to create an environment of trust and unity among members. This will be especially important as we begin the process of listening to the community and creating eligibility and use criteria that will be embraced by the Town Council. In addition to the ways the Assembly is hoping to serve the Amherst community, the African Heritage Reparation Assembly is acting as a lodestar for other cities and towns hoping to bring healing and repair to their communities.”

- Michele Miller, chair of the African Heritage Reparation Assembly



BLAZING THEIR OWN TRAIL

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“To me, reparations is paying back African Americans for the harm that was caused through the historical racism that happened in Detroit. To me, Detroit’s harm was in housing and economic development, that’s where there was the most harm.”

Keith Williams, local resident and Michigan Democratic Party Black Caucus Chair

DETROIT CITY COUNCIL SETS UP REPARATIONS TASK FORCE

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“Our recommendations are centered on the objective of moving people, institutions, and businesses in a similar direction towards universal equity.”

- Rodney Davis, Chair of the Providence Commission

RHODE ISLAND REPARATIONS REPORT SUGGESTS PROGRAMS, NOT CASH

[Read more](#)



“This is not a prize [Reparations recipients] have won; it is not a gift to you. Instead, it is the beginning of long overdue redress of past wrongs. We do not contend that this distribution in any way represents complete repair for the harms you have suffered. So much more is owed, but you said “yes” to this critical start. Your participation in Evanston’s Housing Redress Program and your gracious acceptance of your distribution is the first of many crucial steps toward healing for our entire Evanston community.”

Claire McFarland, Evanston Reparations Committee Member

EVANSTON HONORS FIRST REPARATIONS RECIPIENTS

[Read more](#)



MILESTONES & METRICS

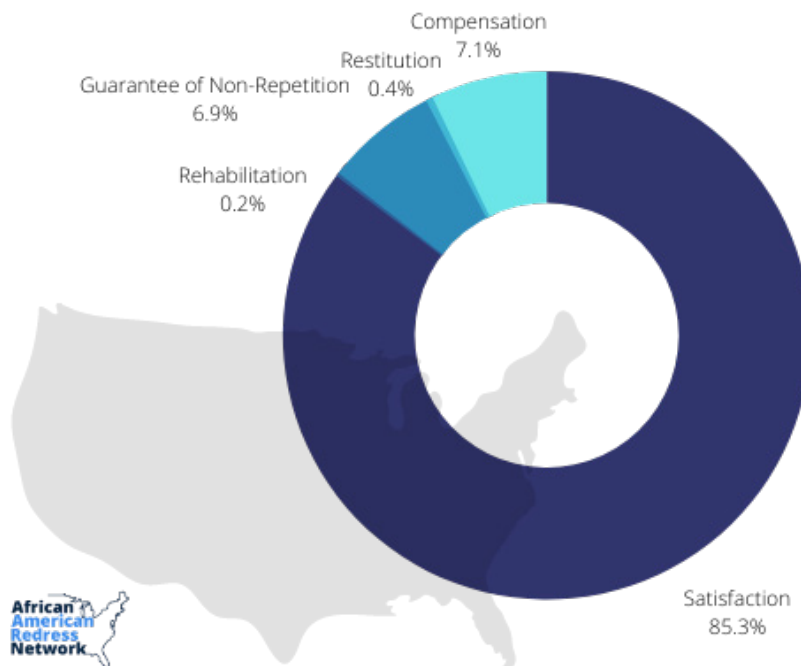
AARN REDRESS MAP



[Click here for more information from The African American Redress Network](#)

- Overall, there are currently **463 instances of reparations and redress efforts** across the United States.
- These efforts are each categorized by reparation type, as defined by **UN General Assembly Resolution 60/147** and the **International Commission of Jurists**.
 - Restitution
 - Compensation
 - Rehabilitation
 - Satisfaction
 - Guarantees of non-repetition

United States Reparations Categories





THE BIG PAYBACK DOCUMENTARY

features
FirstRepair

Erika Alexander and Whitney Dow co-directed *The Big Payback*, a film that chronicles the journey of reparations advocates on the local and national level. The film follows the long-running efforts of Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee as she continues the crusade for the passage of HR40, a bill to establish a national commission to examine slavery and anti-Black discrimination in America from 1619 to present. HR40 has been introduced annually in Congress for over 30 years, and the Congresswoman picks up where Congressman John Conyers left off.

The film also tracks FirstRepair's Executive Director, Robin Rue Simmons, as she leads Evanston's fight for reparations at the local level, which culminates in the passage of the first ever tax-funded reparations ordinance for Black Americans in US history. Alexander and Dow were inspired to record Robin's journey, when they flew to Evanston to meet her after hearing of the passage of Evanston's historic ordinance in 2019. They paused an earlier project documenting more general aspects of the US reparations movement and decided to continue filming Evanston's progress for the next two years. The documentary reveals "a Black woman stepping into her power and creating measurable change."

Film professional Karen McMullen stated, "With a cameo by TaNehisi Coates, this informative, insightful window into the

legislative process brings with it an uplifting message championing the rights of citizens to challenge the status quo and gives needed exposure to the conversation around reparations." Viewers get a close-up look at uphill battle from visionary to strategist, educator, mediator, legislative activist. Their stories may now be familiar to FirstRepair readers, but they remain inspiring nonetheless.

The *Big Payback* premiered earlier this summer at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York City and will be presented next month at the Chicago International Film Festival.

[Click here to get tickets](#)





GLOBAL CIRCLE FOR REPARATIONS & HEALING – VATICAN CITY

Global Circle for Reparations and Healing hosted and led a delegation of global reparations leaders, FirstRepair was humbled to be invited to join in the meeting with members of the Vatican to begin a dialog with the Catholic Church on its specific role in sanctioning and benefitting from the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the division of the Continent of Africa. The historic meeting took place as part of the Global Circle for Reparations and Healing. The Global Circle delivered a presentment, outlining the Church’s leading role in the trans Atlantic slave trade, and its horrendous aftermath, and the Church’s moral and legal obligation of redress.”

EMBRACE IDEAS FESTIVAL – BOSTON

The Embrace Ideas Festival, hosted by King Boston which is a program of the Boston Foundation, is a yearly celebration of ideas grounded in arts, culture and public scholarship. This week-long gathering brings together local, state and national leaders to amplify anti-racism and a vision for a transformed Boston by 2030. Rooted in racial equity, healing, wellbeing, and joy, the theme of Embrace Ideas 2022 was “Building A New Boston Together”.



KAIROS, CONVENING FOR THE CULTURE – MARTHA’S VINEYARD

To end the busy summer, FirstRepair addressed leaders of color in Martha’s Vineyard as part of Kairos, Convening for the Culture, a three-day event organized by U.S. politician Michael Blake.



ADVANCING JUSTICE SUMMIT - ACCRA

Global Circle for Reparations and Healing in early August, hosted and led a delegation of global reparations leaders, FirstRepair was humbled to be invited to join a global coalition of diplomats, scholars, activists, artists, and civil society organizations at the Advancing Justice: Reparations and Racial Healing Summit 2022, in Accra, Ghana. The President of Ghana, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo delivered the keynote address and encouraged the African Union and Heads of State throughout the continent to join him in making reparations a priority. The summit culminated with the release of The Accra Declaration on Reparations and Racial Healing, a groundbreaking document to chart a new path for the reparations movement.

[Read Communiqué](#)

FirstRepair In The News

*Click on logos for full story



RESOURCES

[BLACK WEALTH DATA CENTER](#)

[THE UNITED STATES PAYS REPARATIONS EVERY DAY—JUST NOT TO BLACK AMERICA - CORNELL WILLIAM BROOKS AND LINDA BILMES](#)

[CAMBRIDGE RESPONDS TO LEGACIES OF ENSLAVEMENT INQUIRY](#)

[MAKING THE PUBLIC HEALTH CASE FOR REPARATIONS: LANDSCAPE REPORT](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

September 29 @ 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm
Local Reparations Strategy Session: HR-40 Update – Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee

September 30
University of Cambridge – Envisioning Reparations: Historical and Comparative Approaches

October 6 - October 7
San Francisco Human Rights Commission – Pathway to Parity: Investing in Economic Rights for All

October 20 @ 7:30 am - 5:00 pm
Enterprise’s 40th Anniversary National Conference

October 22 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Evanston Reparations Townhall - Second Baptist Church 1717 Benson Avenue, Evanston, IL

October 22 @ 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
Chicago Film Festival: *The Big Payback* featuring Robin Rue Simmons
Chicago History Museum

October 23 @ 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Chicago Film Festival: *The Big Payback*
AMC River East Chicago, IL

October 27 @ 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm
Local Reparations Strategy Session: Reparations Community Education – Kamm Howard

November 24 @ 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm
Local Reparations Strategy Session: Local Reparation Certification – Dr. Ron Daniels, NAARC

December 1 - December 3
Save the Date: Local Reparations Symposium

December 29 @ 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm
Local Reparations Strategy Session: Special Kwanzaa Celebration

Thank you to our funding partners and all honoraria that fund our work.



LEWIS-SEBRING
FAMILY FOUNDATION

NAARC

NATIONAL
AFRICAN-AMERICAN
REPARATIONS
COMMISSION

Liberation
Ventures