

2024 Annual Report

REPAIR IN



ACTION



 **FirstRepair**

Informing Local Reparations, Nationally



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear FirstRepair Community:

2024 marked our 4th year of service with significant growth and deepening impact in informing local reparations efforts nationally. Our work remains firmly rooted in practical solutions and community empowerment, driven by the “solutions only” spirit of leadership that has inspired FirstRepair from day one.

together local government officials and practitioners to engage deeply on reparations policy design, implementation challenges, and improving the lived experiences of Black communities. The Symposium is strengthening our collective impact to implement tangible reparative measures at the state and local level.

We are fortunate to engage with hundreds of movement practitioners and supporters, sharing replicable models and frameworks that enable localities to enact just reparations programs. In 2024, we facilitated or participated in over 50 convenings including our *monthly strategy sessions* and our *regional retreat in Tulsa, OK*, in partnership with Beyond Apology.

The momentum generated throughout the year fuels our optimism and resolve to continue partnering with localities across the country. We are committed to expanding our network of experts and allies dedicated to racial justice and Black community empowerment, ensuring that reparations are not only a topic of discussion but a transformative reality.

Art and culture infused our efforts with life and meaning. Through *music* and *murals*, we delivered powerful messages that echoed the voices of the communities we serve. Our public art is enriching the dialogue on reparations and was acknowledged with an *architectural award for experiential design*.

As we look to the future, we also take a moment to remember the incredible contributions of leaders like Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and Alderman Delores Holmes, whose unwavering dedication to the reparations movement has left an indelible mark on our collective journey. Their passion and commitment live on in our efforts.

Our cornerstone event was the *4th Annual National Symposium for State and Local Reparations*. The Symposium embodied our commitment to fostering knowledge exchange, collaboration, and actionable strategies. It brought

I remain in awe and gratitude for all our partners, participants, and supporters who make this work possible. Together, we are transforming hope into history.

Onward,
Robin Rue Simmons
Founder and Executive Director



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VISION

FirstRepair envisions a just society where Black people are liberated, thriving, and repaired. FirstRepair supports community organizations, local government and other relevant institutions and bodies in successfully implementing tangible reparations through local efforts. We do this by synchronizing and equipping local leaders; building a national movement for local reparations; and demonstrating life with repair.

Founded in 2021, FirstRepair is led by Robin Rue Simmons, former Evanston, Illinois alderman and the architect of the nation's first government-funded reparations program. Evanston's

example has inspired and encouraged over 100 local initiatives working towards the same goal, where local leaders and stakeholders are urgently advancing local legislation.

In our first four years, FirstRepair has provided support to more than 100 communities engaged in local initiatives; established the National Symposium for State and Local Reparations, the signature convening for the local reparations movement that coalesces over 200 local leaders; and built four regional networks with local leadership. Engaged communities include Asheville, NC; Kansas City, MO; Tulsa, OK; Fayetteville, AR, and dozens more.



OUR SYMBOL

FirstRepair's logo is based on the Adinkra symbol "Adinkrahene", which emphasizes the importance of learning from the past to improve the present.

The three concentric circles also represent local, state, and federal repair. The combined negative and positive spaces of the symbol represent the five Forms of repair (restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, cessation), with the outer ring of the circle encompassing all humanity.

ABOUT FIRSTREPAIR



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SERVICES

FirstRepair synchronizes and equips local leaders in community and civic roles to implement tangible repair and redress that remedy historic and ongoing anti-Black practices.

STRATEGIC ADVISING

Drawing from the experience of and knowledge of experienced practitioners, FirstRepair provides **one-on-one strategic advising in closed sessions for elected leaders.** We provide testimony for public sessions, advise stakeholders and allies on action items, and support established committees, task forces and commissions.

MONTHLY STRATEGY SESSIONS build a network of informed and empowered local leaders equipped to advocate for reparations policies in their communities. Strategy sessions cover the principles of reparations, democracy and reparations, women in the reparations movement, legal and communication strategies, arts and culture, and more.

THE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM FOR STATE AND LOCAL REPARATIONS is the signature event for the local reparations movement. Held each year in Evanston, IL, the Symposium welcomes more than 220 attendees to hear from over 50 speakers on topics including policy design, interfaith partnerships, technology, communication, legal strategies, allyship, and more. Attendees also participate in a bus tour, a Town Hall Session, regional reports, live Toolkit sessions, and an awards dinner recognizing significant leaders and achievements of the past year.

RESOURCES, TOOLKITS, AND RESEARCH

There is no exact blueprint for implementing reparations, but there are best practices, flexible models and other templates and resources that are proven. FirstRepair's toolkits and resources for practitioners are shared at conferences, workshops, , in focused training sessions, through the *National Resource Center for State and Local Reparations* and on our website.

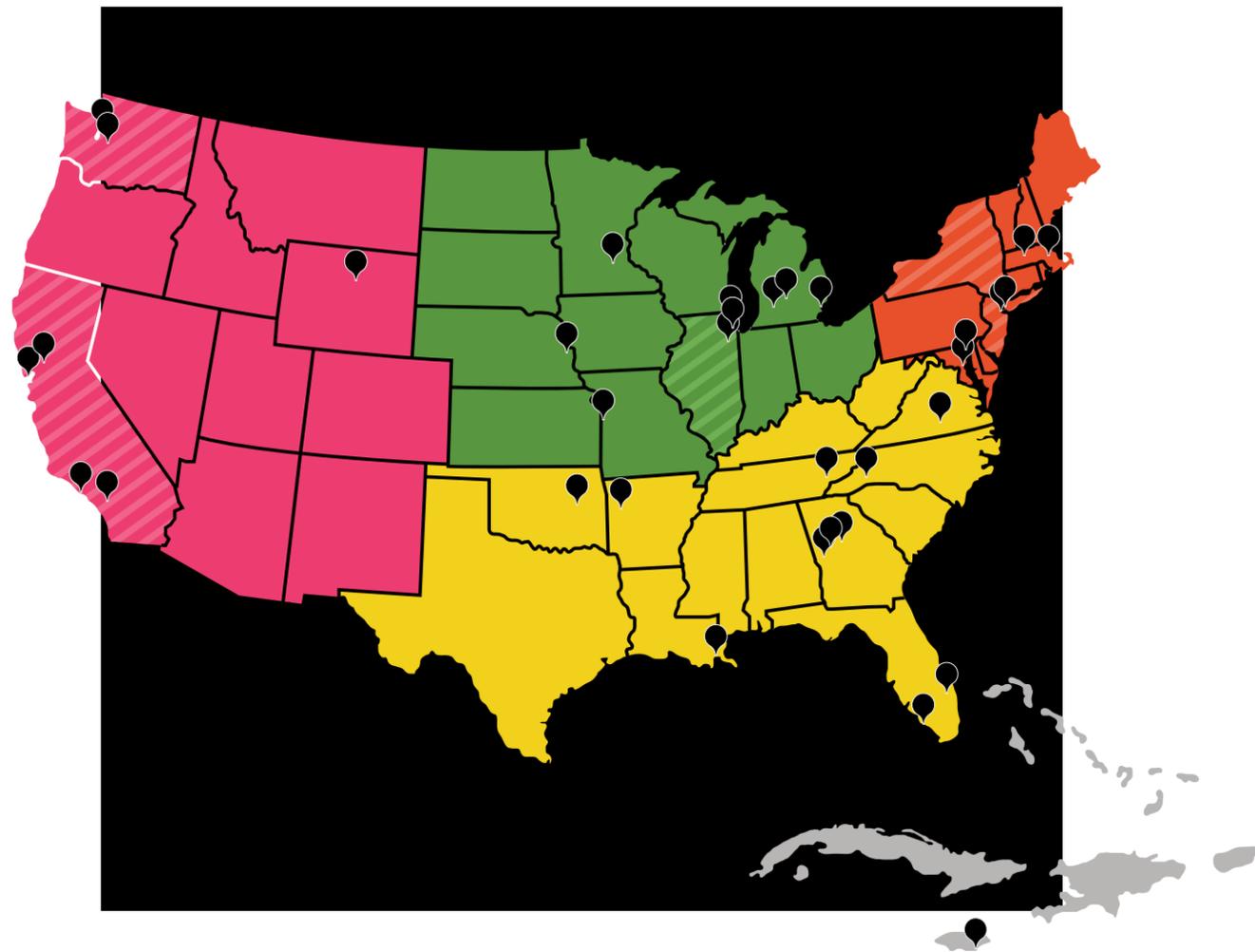
ARTS AND CULTURE

FirstRepair curates a range of commissioned arts and culture programming that showcases life with repair including exhibits and showcases, public art, music, documentaries, books, and digital media.

WORKSHOPS, LECTURES, PANELS

FirstRepair hosts, facilitates, and participates in workshops across the country and internationally, presenting and speaking at events across the nation and the globe. We have presented and organized side events since 2022 at the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. Founder Robin Rue Simmons is in high demand to share a reparations vision and possibilities for implementation at conferences, invited talks, and to media and community-based efforts. Our work attracts new partners and connections to aligned efforts in racial and social justice including education, economic justice, housing and philanthropy.





Since our founding in 2021, FirstRepair has supported over 100 communities in advancing local reparations initiatives with active work underway in:



WEST

- California (State)
- Los Angeles, CA
- Palm Springs, CA
- Sacramento, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Denver, CO
- Renton, WA
- Seattle, WA
- Washington (State)

MIDWEST

- Illinois (State)
- Chicago, IL
- Evanston, IL
- Oak Park, IL
- Waukegan, IL
- Detroit, MI
- Kalamazoo, MI
- Lansing, MI
- St. Paul, MN
- Kansas City, MO
- Omaha, NE
- Beloit, WI

EAST & MIDATLANTIC REGION

- Baltimore, MD
- Bowie, MD
- Amherst, MA
- Boston, MA
- Cambridge, MA
- Jamaica Plain, MA
- Martha's Vineyard, MA
- New Jersey (State)
- New York (State)
- New York, NY
- Philadelphia, PA
- Providence, RI
- Washington, DC



SOUTH

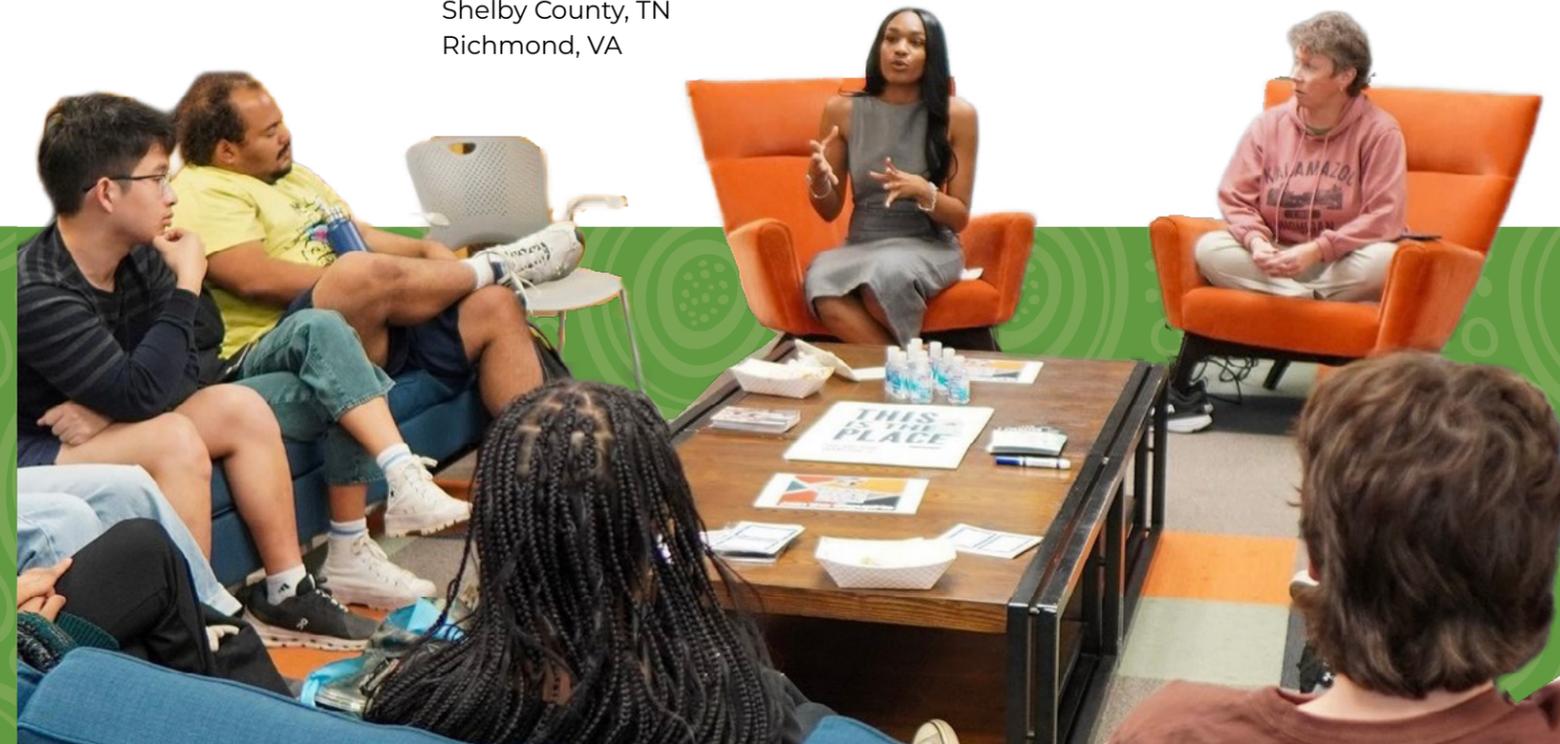
- Fayetteville, AR
- Naples, FL
- Stuart, FL
- Atlanta, GA
- Decatur, GA
- South Fulton, GA
- New Orleans, LA
- Asheville, NC
- Tulsa, OK
- Shelby County, TN
- Richmond, VA



INTERNATIONAL LOCALITES

- Kingston, Jamaica

COMMUNITIES SERVED



2024 HIGHLIGHTS

THIS YEAR WE...

...HELD 11 NATIONAL STRATEGY SESSIONS

Topics Included: the History of Black Wall Street, democracy and reparations, women in the reparations movement, legal and communication strategies, earning reparations certification from NAARC, and Black music.

Featured Speakers: included: Dr. Ron Daniels (NAARC), Kamm Howard (Reparations United), Nkechi Taifa (Reparation Education Project), Dr. Alvin Tillery (Northwestern University), Tulsa City Councilor Vanessa Hall-Harper, recording artist ALäZ, Dr. Amilcar Shabaaz (UMass Amherst), Virginie Ladisch (International Center for Transitional Justice), Justin Hansford (Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center), Nicole Carty (Get Free), Richard Brookshire (Black Veterans Project).



...MADE 50 PRESENTATIONS

at conferences, hearings, panels, and other speaking events. We are honored to support the movement in a variety of ways, including Liberation Ventures' Steering Committee, Decolonizing Wealth Project's funding committee, and other movement taskforces and committees.

◆ 2024 PFPAD in Geneva, Switzerland

In April 2024, FirstRepair attended the UN Permanent Forum for People of African Descent in Geneva. We hosted a side event on reparative justice infrastructure and delivered a statement highlighting Evanston's local reparations as a national model inspiring over 100 communities advancing similar efforts across the United States.



◆ Robin Rue Simmons delivered a two-lecture series at the launch of the San Francisco HBCU satellite campus as part of the **Black 2 San Francisco HBCU Lectures**, marking the first of 150 reparations initiatives stemming from the SF Reparations Taskforce proposals.

◆ Robin Rue Simmons was a featured speaker for the panel "Reparations Now: America's Historical Unpaid Debt to Descendants of Formerly Enslaved Africans," at the **Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference**, the leading public policy convening for issues that promote the political, economic, and social advancement of African Americans and the global Black community.



...CO-CONVENED LEGAL EXPERTS AND COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS

in the reparations movement to develop and disseminate talking points and narrative frameworks that enable our colleagues to drive forward a positive message with facts and compelling examples. Broad awareness and consensus are essential for generating support for reparations, especially in a fractured political and social environment. Recent legal attacks on the movement provide us with an important opportunity to galvanize public support.

...CONVENED A REGIONAL REPARATIONS RETREAT

in Tulsa, Oklahoma, intentionally aligned to Tulsa's Juneteenth Festival. With the themes of Fellowship, Self-Determination, and Wellness, the retreat was held in the Historic Greenwood District at the Historic Mount Vernon AME Church, and featured remarks from Councilor Vanessa Hall-Harper, Rev. Dr. Robert Turner, and Attorney Damario Simmons, among others, as well as a public performance of the Reparations Anthem at the Tulsa Juneteenth Festival, a tour of Black Wall Street, and working sessions for participants. In August 2024, Tulsa, OK officials announced the creation of the Beyond Apology commission that will explore reparations for the descendants of the Tulsa Race Massacre. In November 2024, the Beyond Apology commission submitted their housing reparation draft program outline. The City of Tulsa also assigned funds to send a delegation of Tulsa reparations leaders to FirstRepair's National Symposium, further signaling Tulsa's commitment to reparations.



ARTS & CULTURE

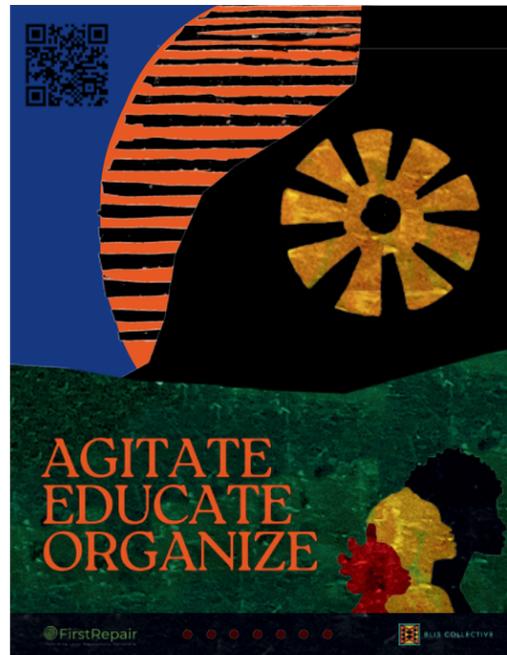
The Reparations Anthem, a hip hop track, explores the history and ongoing legacies of slavery, serving as a call to action and a lyrical white paper for this centuries-old movement. Written, produced, and performed by Arm Real, Golden Child, ALäZ, Ras Kass, Supreme Kai, and the Holy Thief, the Reparations Anthem was performed in 2024 at the nation's largest Juneteenth Festival in Tulsa, Oklahoma.



Agitate, Educate Organize premiered at the 2024 National Symposium for State and Local Reparations. This inspiring single features an extraordinary lineup of artists and activists, including Young RJ (of Slum Village), Ras Kass, Nkechi Taifa, Kymrence Young, and BLIS co-founder and guest rapper Trevor 'Tricky Trev' Smith.

"Through music, we're not just telling stories—we're sparking movements and inspiring action. "AEO" is more than a song; it's a movement soundtrack."

– Trevor Smith, co-founder of BLIS and featured artist "Tricky Trev"



RESOURCES FOR THE MOVEMENT

FirstRepair has increasingly received requests to support reparations advocacy efforts across the country. To help guide people to the right experience, expertise, and resources, we put together a *Resource Guide for State and Local Reparations* in partnership with Liberation Ventures. The Resource Guide offers links to existing toolkits, example materials, coalitions, and experts for efforts at different stages of the state and local reparations process. This Guide helps reparations leaders access the range of resources already available to the movement in a more centralized way.

FirstRepair is so honored to be the recipient of the *Ivory Prize in Policy and Regulatory Reform*. In making the award, Chris Herbert Managing Director at The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, Ivory Prize Advisory Board Member said "FirstRepair's transformative approach to reparations not only rectifies significant historical injustice in the housing market but also contributes to more equitable and empowered communities and has proven to be a powerful model for communities across the country."



In an extraordinary organizing effort across 18 houses of worship, the Evanston Interfaith Community, in collaboration with Evanston Community Foundation, has donated over \$1 million to the nonprofit Reparations Stakeholders Authority of Evanston (RSAE) as a way to champion and supplement the City of Evanston's reparations fund. *"The Interfaith Community: A Model Ally"*, a 10-minute film, chronicles the unification of Evanston's churches, synagogues and temples, which came together in support of the city's historic reparations bill, passed in 2019. The film was released in December 2024.



MORE 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

FOR STATE AND LOCAL REPARATIONS

The National Resource Center for State and Local Reparations is a home for the local reparations movement to:

- ◆ coordinate partners
- ◆ organize and increase access to resources, support, and information
- ◆ create and inform engagement points for professionals in aligned industries; including law, civics, youth education, and Black creatives
- ◆ archive the local reparations movement.

The Resource Center hosts reparations-centered *exhibits, artist talks, expert panels and public viewings* of art and data to engage and inform the dialogue around racial healing and repair. Office hours and a resource and referral process further support local initiatives across the nation to advance their efforts. *The Resource Center Library* houses foundational materials, such as sample legislation and harm reports, equipping local leaders to directly challenge discriminatory policies and shift the balance of power in their communities.

The Resource Center was founded with partnership and support from the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC).



Inaugural exhibit, *Reparations are Due!* by artist creator of the *Folded Map Project*, Tonika Lewis-Johnson opened December 2024



The design of the Resource Center is the culmination of a series of community workshops and dialogues that began in 2023. FirstRepair and design partner *Defining Humanity* gathered input and stories from residents and reparations movement leaders to capture the essence of their experiences, aspirations, and dreams. Using tools like scaled models and movable furniture, participants physically modeled their ideas, while dot exercises and inclusive voting ensured every voice contributed to the design. This approach not only democratized the process but also infused the Resource Center with the community's collective spirit.

Wrapping the building is *vibrant mural that celebrates* the promise of a repaired future, depicting life with reparations and emphasizing prosperity and joy. The building mural, designed by Chicago-based artist *Damon Reed* with support from *Defining Humanity* incorporates symbols of the reparations movement, Black liberation, and FirstRepair's mission. QR codes embedded in the mural provide passersby access to deeper insights into the history and context of FirstRepair's work and the broader reparations movement.

In 2024, FirstRepair's mural was recognized by *Design Evanston with an award in Graphic/Experiential Design*.

RESOURCE CENTER HERITAGE SITE DESIGNATION

On December 4, 2024, 1900 Asbury in Evanston, IL was recognized as an Evanston African American Heritage Site #10. A bronze coin marker on the sidewalk marks the location of FirstRepair's Office and the National Resource Center for State and Local Reparations and the *historic location of Black-owned businesses and organizations*.

PHOTO BY JOERG METZNER



THE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

FOR STATE AND LOCAL REPARATIONS

NAARC

NATIONAL AFRICAN-AMERICAN REPARATIONS COMMISSION

The National Symposium for State and Local Reparations is the signature event for the local reparations movement, bringing leaders from across the country together in fellowship and learning.

The 2024 Symposium hosted the premiere performance of the new single “Agitate Educate Organize”, and a welcome reception and soft launch of the National Resource Center for State and Local Reparations.



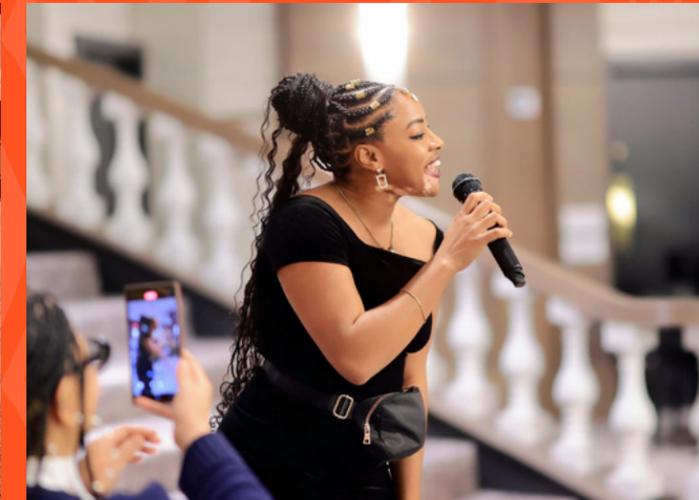
recap video

Held December 4-6 in Evanston, IL, in partnership with NAARC, the 2024 Symposium welcomed more than 220 attendees from over 40 localities to hear from over 50 speakers in 22 sessions on topics including policy design, interfaith partnerships, technology, communication, legal strategies, and allyship.

The 2024 keynote speaker was Dr. Joy DeGruy, author of “Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America’s Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing”.

Attendees also participated in a bus tour, a Town Hall Session, live Toolkit sessions, reports from each of the four regions, and an awards dinner recognizing 10 significant leaders and achievements of the past year.

220 attendees
from over 40 localities
more than 67 initiatives
to hear from over 50 speakers
in 22 sessions



MOVEMENT VOICES

"HUGE thanks to Robin and the FirstRepair team for a phenomenal retreat. Y'all are magic and so much gratitude for all the love and care you poured into this event. It was such a joy to share space with each of you and looking forward to staying connected. Blessings to all! Asé!!"

– Amber Banks



"Many Thanks to Robin and FirstRepair for your kind, generous support, and an informative and inspiring retreat. It was such a blessing to share space with you all. Thank you to the FirstRepair team for having me and for putting together such a beautiful retreat. God bless you all!!"

– Mother Efia Nwangaza



"Grand Rising, beautiful people! I am full of gratitude for the inspiring, enriching, and informative experience shared with all of you. Robin, and the FirstRepair team, you all ROCK!!! Every gathering has been well organized with lots of love."

"I pray the Creator increases your capacity to do even greater works to catapult the reparations movement to victory."

– Janay Reliford

"Beautiful life-changing retreat! I feel as if I have been bathed in a sacred river. Thank you Robin and FirstRepair, for this moment of respite, repair and collective healing. May you continue to run this race with courage and confidence. In Solidarity."

– Joanne Braxton

"It was so powerful to dream and heal with this group. So much love to FirstRepair for giving us a movement home."

I like seeing our ancestors and every part of what is sacred and divine is helping us weave a beautiful tapestry of love and justice together.

Thank you to each and everyone of you for being your ancestors beloved dream. Your Creator made you beautifully and lovingly because within your soul is the collective blueprint of repair."

– Davida Ingram



"Sending a huge shoutout and Thank You to FirstRepair for orchestrating this retreat and connecting such likened individuals across all age spectrums. That was a healing, uplifting and educational experience! Such a perfect setting for a powerful network of people doing great things and accomplishing what was thought to be impossible. I'm grateful to have built a connection with you all, and look forward to what the future brings!"

– Will Bowles



IN THE NEWS

The past year has underscored the growing prominence of reparations in the national media landscape.

FirstRepair has consistently served as a leading voice and sought-after expert within this critical dialogue. Our Founder and Executive Director, Robin Rue Simmons is featured in numerous national outlets, providing insightful commentary, historical context, and expert analysis on the complexities and possibilities of reparations. These interviews and quotes help to shape public understanding and inform nuanced discussions on the path towards racial justice.

Furthermore, FirstRepair is increasingly recognized as a trusted and authoritative source of information on reparations. Our website, resources, and public statements are utilized by journalists, policymakers, community leaders, and the general public seeking accurate and comprehensive information on the history, implementation, and impact of local reparations movements. We remain committed to providing clarity and fostering informed engagement as the nation continues to grapple with the urgent need for repair.



HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS



THE WASHINGTON POST
Reparations advocates prepare for backlash during next Trump term



CHICAGO TRIBUNE
Evanston Has Paid Out Just Over \$5 Million in Reparations So Far



CNN
Reparations have become the latest target for conservative activists. Advocates say they are prepared to fight back



THE R WORD PODCAST
Season 3 Episode 5: Robin Rue Simmons



THE BLACK WALL STREET
Building Generational Wealth: Black-Owned Bank Receives Illinois Reparation Fund



INVISIBLE WOMEN PODCAST
The Impact of Reparations: Hope, Community Engagement, and Support w/ FirstRepair Founder, Robin Rue Simmons



NBC5-CHICAGO
Discussing the importance of reparations and impact in Evanston



EVANSTON ROUND TABLE
Reparations nonprofit FirstRepair unveils new mural

For a roundup of all FirstRepair press and related reparations movement news, please visit our [website](#).

\$250,000+

Wellspring Philanthropic Partners

\$10,000 - \$20,000

Evanston Community Foundation
MVP3 Foundation
National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC)

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Feldman Family Charitable Fund
Jessie & Douglas Macdonald



\$1,000 - \$4,999

Northwestern University
Anonymous
Lisa Altenbernd and Steve Hagerty



\$500 - \$999

Corporate Accountability
Lotte Dula
Stephen Heaviland
Patrick Mulroy



\$100,000+

Decolonizing Wealth Project
Lewis-Sebring Family Foundation
Liberation Ventures
New Profit
Tricia Wilson via Freedom Futures

\$50,000+

Anonymous via Freedom Futures
Fund for Nonviolence
Ivory Innovation
John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

FIRSTREPAIR THANKS ALL OF OUR DONORS, VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS WHO MAKE THIS WORK POSSIBLE!

DONORS

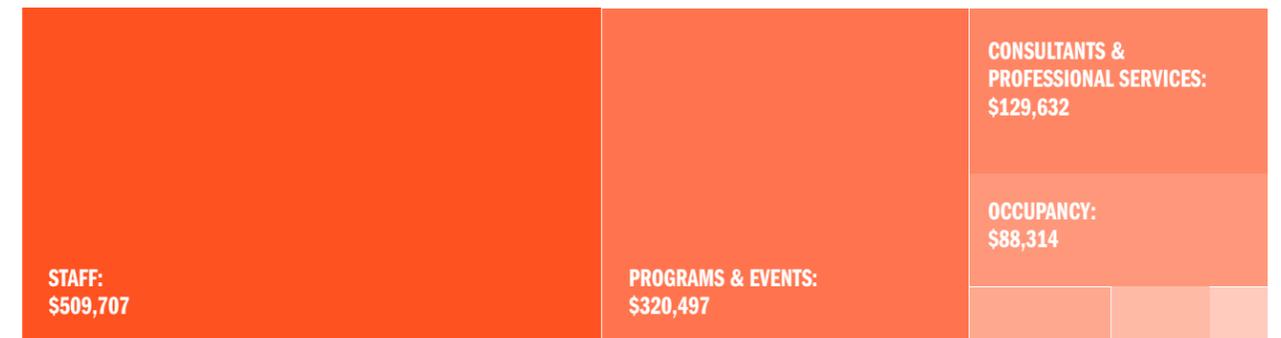


FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2024 Operating Revenue: \$1,180,038



2024 Operating Expenses: \$1,093,637



COMMUNICATION & MARKETING: \$21,470
TECHNOLOGY & SUPPLIES: \$15,021
OTHER INDIRECT COSTS: \$8,996

JOIN THE REPARATIONS MOVEMENT!



U.S. REPARATIONS
MOVEMENT MAP



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