

Reparations and Redistribution

At RG, we believe reparations are long overdue and are a crucial tool in closing the racial wealth divide and healing from white supremacy. We follow the lead of the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), one of our national campaign partners, and the legacy they are part of in defining reparations, and in guiding our strategy for making them real. We do not believe reparations should focus on individual acts, such as fundraisers but rather on institutional and systemic accountability. This strategy allows for broader impact on a greater number of people. There is often some confusion within RG about if individual giving from families with wealth accumulation to families who have been exploited by racial capitalism is considered reparations. We would say: most of the time, no. Generally speaking, this is an aspect of wealth redistribution that is an important harm reduction strategy, but not the same thing as reparations.

In their [Reparations Now Toolkit](#), M4BL lifts up the United Nations definition of reparations:

1. Cessation, assurance and guarantees of non-repetition
2. Restitution and Repatriation
3. Compensation
4. Satisfaction
5. Rehabilitation

Within the U.S context, the term reparations is used predominantly as an acknowledgement of the immense intergenerational harm inflicted upon Indigenous and Black communities, and thus the repair that is due. Reparations might look like local governments investing in affordable housing, education and transportation, while divesting from policing. An aspect of reparations might look like the national government passing the Breathe Act, which would put in place four different commissions for reparations for slavery, the war on drugs and mass criminalization, police violence, and immigration enforcement. Reparations might look like #Landback with national public lands being given back to Indigenous stewardship. All of these examples are things that must be won, and that people who have benefited from exploitation should play roles in advocating for.

Differences between reparations and redistribution

- Reparations and Redistribution both include the idea of returning wealth that has been extracted and/or denied to certain communities.
- Reparations relate to a specific, and generally speaking, racialized violence or harm; including broad harms such as chattel slavery or more specific harms such as forced sterilizations in North Carolina.
- Redistribution is a more general act relating to the current unjust distribution of wealth and our class system.
- Within the current economic system in which wealth generates more wealth and debt generates more debt, redistribution is an ongoing necessary practice to prevent further wealth accumulation.

- Reparations are needed to close the racial wealth gap for the long term. Reparations for any category of systemic harm, including mass incarceration, land theft and denial, and the economic system of slavery, would all immediately change the landscape of poverty in this county.
- Reparations should come from the state or an institution that did harm, and include cultural repair and guarantee of non-repetition, in addition to the transfer of wealth.

Examples of how RG members can engage in reparations work

- Be part of reparations-based campaigns locally or nationally.
- Participate in reparations praxis groups for deeper peer-based learning
- Researching your family's wealth accumulation story and how it has profited from anti-Black racism and attempted Indigenous genocide, as applicable, working with your family and impacted Black and Native communities to return stolen wealth through a reparations, rather than redistribution, lens.
- Funding power-building organizations working towards reparations, such as the Movement for Black Lives.
- Orient towards reparations as lifelong, intergenerational healing work that asks us to be in daily practice toward its full actualization.