

A Community Recompense Program for Institutional Expansion
Research Report

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Abstract

Historically, universities and other educational institutions have forcefully displaced nearby native communities to expand their campus size and power within their locality. This institutional expansion by colleges and universities adversely impacts predominantly Black and brown neighborhoods that receive little to no compensation from the academic institutions for the harm and loss of culture the communities have suffered through extraction of wealth and labor. Instead, these academic institutions have generally provided benefits to nearby communities in a manner that fits with the mission of the institution, but not at a scale commensurate with the harm caused, or the immense wealth that has accumulated within the institution over time at the expense of displaced residents.

This report will evaluate the impact of institutional expansion by colleges and universities on nearby native communities that they occupy, as well as detail a framework for a possible recompense program that would provide restitution to residents and their families who were directly impacted by prejudicial displacement. The focus of this report is on the University of Pennsylvania and its relationship with the former Black Bottom neighborhood; however, the general points from this report can be applied to various institutionally displaced communities with geographic proximity to an educational institution. The following research questions will be used to guide the formation of the framework:

1. How could we identify eligible residents (including descendants)?
2. What kind of harms qualify for reparations?
3. How would reparations be calculated?
4. What forms could the reparations take?
5. What role would the community have in designing the reparations process?

Considerations

Reparations are defined as “the act of making amends, offering expiation, or giving satisfaction for a wrong or injury.”¹ The notion of a reparations program for Black Americans was first motivated by the federal government’s failure to fulfill its promise of an endowment of 40 acres and a mule to the formerly enslaved at the end of the Civil War and during Reconstruction.² The conversation surrounding reparations was brought back into the spotlight after the publishing of “The Case for Reparations” by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Reparations programs are typically aimed at righting the wrongs of slavery and subsequent discrimination by shrinking the ever-widening generational “wealth gap” between whites and Black Americans. Reparations programs generally fall into two categories: judicial reparations ordered by a court; and administrative reparations provided by a government through legislation. Relief, assistance, and aid are important in contexts where poverty, inequality, and violence are linked. Scholars and practitioners have argued for blended approaches; however, it becomes problematic when the two are indistinguishable or when relief replaces reparations. It is exceptionally important to recognize the value in designating an initiative “a reparations program” as the term itself may be triggering and ignite passionate dialogue surrounding liberation for Black Americans across the US. In a 2021 Washington Post op-ed, authors of *From Here to Equality*, Kirsten Mullen and William A. Darity Jr. criticize the use of “piecemeal [legislation] and misleading labels” in the Evanston initiative, calling it a “...a housing voucher program, not reparations.” They explain that true reparations can only come from a full-scale program of “acknowledgment, redress, and closure for a grievous injustice” in the form of payments made directly to eligible recipients.³ They warn that mislabeling social service programs as “reparations” may lead to confusion as to what “reparations” encompasses as a tool for reckoning with past injustices. In another Washington Post op-ed, Brookings’s scholars Andre M. Perry and Rashawn Ray claim

¹ “Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “reparation,” accessed June 25, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/recompense>.

² Darity, William A., Kirsten A. Mullen. *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century*. University of North Carolina Press, 2020.

³ A. Kirsten Mullen, and William A Darity. “Evanston, Ill., Approved ‘Reparations.’ except It Isn’t Reparations.” Washington Post. The Washington Post, March 28, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/03/28/evanston-ill-approved-reparations-housing-program-except-it-isnt-reparations/>.

that the Evanston program is a form of reparations.⁴ They propose that the initiative represents just one wealth-building opportunity that can help to close the racial wealth gap in the US. They suggest that an inclusive reparations program will “...require many forms in many places” to address the many areas of stagnation and decline among the Black community. Both scholars address an important point in thinking about the formation of a comprehensive program that centers the impacted group in providing cash payments as well as investments in areas where Black Americans face disparities. Going forward, I will use the term “recompense” when speaking directly to my suggested framework for a Philadelphia community program that would “give something by way of compensation as an equivalent or return for something done or suffered.”⁵ This framework will propose a recompense program as compensation for harm and suffering because of housing legislation that allowed an educational institution to displace thousands of residents.

1. Background

West Philadelphia and the Black Bottom

The characterization of West Philadelphia as it is today is a product of three periods of rapid population growth and shifts. The era of Reconstruction saw the first mass migration of former slaves leaving southern farms and entering urban settings. Philadelphia was seen as a metropolitan headquarter for urban Black Americans as it had the largest Black population in the North.⁶ The official census showed that the Philadelphia Black population grew from about 20,000 to 65,000 between 1870 and 1900.⁷ The early 1900s marked the second period with the construction of a permanent bridge across the Schuylkill River which allowed affluent white residents to move into the suburbs, leaving city neighborhoods to low-income communities of color. At the outset of WWI, Philadelphia’s resources and manpower provided a large portion of war materials for the nation. This explosion of new wartime jobs saw a surge in the population

⁴ Andre M. Perry, and Rashawn Ray. “*Evanston’s Grants to Black Homeowners Aren’t Enough. But They Are Reparations.*” Washington Post. The Washington Post, April 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/evanston-housing-reparations/2021/04/01/4342833e-9243-11eb-9668-89be11273c09_story.html.

⁵ *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “recompense,” accessed June 25, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/recompense>.

⁶ Roger Lane. *Black Philadelphia, then and now*, The Fate of Black America, accessed June 12, 2022, <https://www.nationalaffairs.com/storage/app/uploads/public/58e/1a4/e0c/58e1a4e0c2565394034364.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.

and within the Black American communities as many of the domestic service and low-skilled jobs were occupied by low-income people of color. The 1950s saw the third boom in population growth due to the migration of African Americans from the South to the North to find a better quality of life and escape racial segregation and oppressive conditions.

Expansion at the University of Pennsylvania

The first of five distinct periods of urban redevelopment and residential displacement began with the initiation of the federal urban renewal program in the Housing Act of 1949. The act stated that the government would pay two-thirds of the net cost incurred by the local authorities in purchasing and cleaning blighted areas.⁸ The legislation allocated \$1 billion to cities for slum clearance and blight removal. “Urban Renewal” was introduced as the government’s response to impediments facing urban development. Methods of this classification included the designation of an area as blighted, the preparation of a development plan, use of eminent domain for land assembly by the renewal agency and, clearance and marketing of the cleared land. The University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) received financial backing from the government and public recognition for both its academic and research efforts which propelled them into a position of authority in its locality. Section 112 of the Housing Act of 1959—which provided universities the federally supported power to clear city blocks for institutional expansion and commercial redevelopment—allowed for Philadelphia’s Redevelopment Authority (RDA) to classify three areas in West Philadelphia for university redevelopment.⁹ Unit 3 would encapsulate the University City Science Center, Unit 4 would complete the University’s West campus, and Unit 5 accommodated the expansion of Drexel University.¹⁰ Then university president, Gaylord P. Harnwell, would establish the West Philadelphia Corporation (WPC), as an institutional coalition that included the University of Pennsylvania, the Drexel Institute of Technology, the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science, and the Presbyterian and Osteopathic hospitals in West Philadelphia. This collective would become a crucial component in allowing UPenn to take advantage of federal housing legislation to engage with the RDA for the

⁸ John L. Puckett, and Mark Frazier Lloyd, *Becoming Penn: The Pragmatic American University* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 59

⁹ John L. Puckett, “*Federal- and State-Funded Urban Renewal at the University of Pennsylvania*,” West Philadelphia Collaborative History, 2015.

¹⁰ Puckett and Lloyd, *Becoming Penn*

acquisition and clearance of Black Bottom properties for academic and commercial purposes.¹¹ Between 1965 and 2000 the University of Pennsylvania was able to displace hundreds of families under this pretense of “urban renewal” with estimates of displacement ranging from 4,496 to over 10,000 residents.

The Black Bottom

In the late 1800s, African American slave descendants and their families had settled down in an area of West Philadelphia called Greenville that would later be renamed the Black Bottom.¹² The Black Bottom was a residential community that existed in the section of Philadelphia now referred to as “University City”. The Black Bottom received its name from being a predominantly Black American community located at the “bottom” of West Philadelphia.¹³ The original Black Bottom neighborhood was situated between 40th Street on the east, 32nd Street on the west, Powelton Avenue in the north, and Woodland Avenue in the south. This self-contained and vibrant community operated on values of hard work and self-determination which provided the groundwork for this community to be self-sustaining.

The neighborhood operated as a large extended family with standard practices of ensuring the safety and prosperity of all its members, particularly its young and its elderly. Unwritten codes of “Black Bottom respect and allegiance” were obeyed with little exception. This “village” approach allowed families to not worry about the safety of their children and feel safe leaving their houses unlocked and walking alone at night. Neighbors looked out for each other, often getting together to raise money to help anyone who needed help paying rent.¹⁴ This close-knit community was one centered around peace and love which produced an environment that promoted safety and joy. Black Bottom member WD Palmer exemplified the heart of this vibrant community saying, “I could hardly sleep at night because I [heard] the horns, and the drums, and the music, and the singing; it had my heart fluttering.”¹⁵ By 1950, the Black Bottom was a dynamic, working-class neighborhood of rowhouses with many Black-owned restaurants, barber shops, stores, and markets. Few homes were owned by African American families at the time with more families renting; however, all homes were occupied.

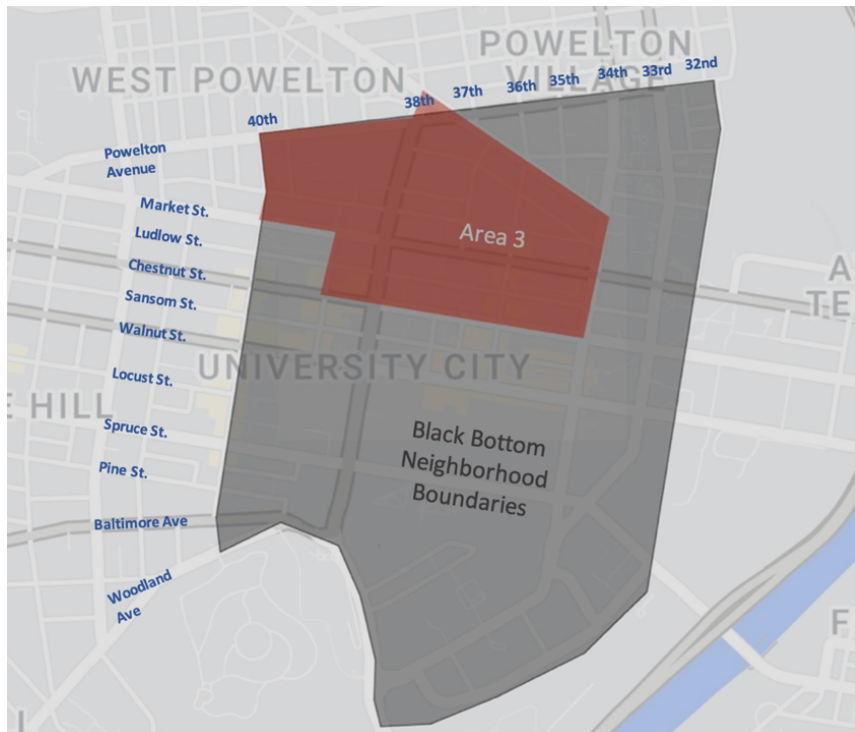
¹¹ Ibid., 60

¹² Dr. Walter Palmer (Black Bottom resident) in discussion with the author, April 2022

¹³ Walter Palmer. “*History*.” Black Bottom, WordPress, “<https://theblackbottom.wordpress.com>

¹⁴ Walter Palmer. “*Voices*.” Black Bottom, WordPress, “<https://theblackbottom.wordpress.com>

¹⁵ Dr. Walter Palmer (Black Bottom resident) in discussion with the author, April 2022



The early 1960s saw the area slated for construction of a new science center carved from Area 3, which encompassed the heart of the Black Bottom neighborhood. The WPC initially believed that with a relatively small investment of \$5 million, the erection of the University City Science Center would revitalize the surrounding neighborhood by bringing more jobs into

the area, increasing city payroll taxes, and boosting real estate taxes.¹⁶ In 1978, the Philadelphia Inquirer described the land as “20 devastated acres of rundown bars and garages and warehouses”. Five hundred and twenty-nine families and 137 individuals still lived in these “devastated acres”, the majority of whom were elderly, poor, and Black.¹⁷ The residents’ resistance against the building of the Science Center was so intense, and their political action so effective, that full-scale construction was delayed for almost eight years.¹⁸ This permanent removal of the Black Bottom would come to undermine UPenn’s community relations in West Philadelphia for years following.

¹⁶ Walter Palmer. “History.” Black Bottom

¹⁷ Pothier. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. 1978

¹⁸ Walter Palmer. “History.” Black Bottom

Government-Sponsored “Urban Renewal” in other U.S. cities

Unfortunately, the Black Bottom neighborhood is not alone in their its against universities that infringe upon their communities with promises of “urban renewal.” The Hyde Park–Kenwood Urban Renewal Plan of 1958 coordinated the massive displacement of Black Americans and rezoned 80 percent of Hyde Park’s commercial districts for residential use, in the process securing land values for the University of Chicago.¹⁹ In 2011, Johns Hopkins University and the city of Baltimore joined forces to create the East Baltimore Development Initiative (EBDI) and take control of eighty acres by invoking eminent domain to displace 742 Black families to make way for a biotechnology park.²⁰ In 2017, the University of Southern California demolished a decaying shopping center in South Central Los Angeles to make way for its upscale \$900 million residential and commercial complex, USC Village. This “institutional expansion” of colleges and universities in native communities is described by urban studies scholar, Davarian Baldwin who asserts that “...the placement and design of college campuses reflected a clear antagonism toward urban life and the kind of social diversity that cities engendered.”²¹ Many of today’s urban colleges and universities sit on what once were the fringes of their cities, including the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard, Columbia, USC, and the University of Chicago. The ability to target well-kept Black neighborhoods for urban renewal is rooted in the politics of eminent domain and the racially charged urban designation of “blight.” The term blight, which has its origins in the study of plant disease, is now vaguely used to describe any perceived “decay” that may turn what are deemed healthy neighborhoods into slums. The perception of “decay” is often tied to an area’s racial or ethnic composition. To justify the demolition and displacement of areas, Black American neighborhoods regardless of their physical condition were often the ones deemed blighted.²² These communities were easy targets due to their lack of influence on all levels of government. This is where urban universities and colleges enter to become the friendly faces of urban renewal with the mission to attract wealthy families and students to the area while masking discriminatory policies that reinforced racial discrimination.

¹⁹ Sol Tax. “*Residential Integration: The Case of Hyde Park in Chicago.*” *Human Organization* 18, no. 1 (1959): 22- 27. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44124474>.

²⁰ Davarian Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities Are Plundering Our Cities* (New York: Bold Type Books, 2021), 20

²¹ Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower*, 20

²² *Ibid.*

2. Overview of Relevant Literature and Research

Historical Disinvestment in Black Communities

The 1940s brought about a rise of a dominant low-wage laborer class and segregated institutional networks such as Black churches, press, stores, etc. Urban and geographic studies scholar David Wilson describes this development by saying, “Residency in these spaces meant the simultaneity of being marked as low-skilled and undesirable, living in substandard housing, going to separate and unequal schools, and working in factories at minuscule wages to build wealth for others.”²³ Specific zoning ordinances mapped out Black ghettos to help engineer a marginalized population that would have, “...poor blacks would live in their own worlds and not contaminate other housing submarkets, and their labor would feed the burgeoning industry of the cities.”²⁴ Between 1950-1970, the flight of whites leaving the cities for suburban neighborhoods opened the doors for Black Americans to take their spots within metropolitan areas. During this time, the racial and socioeconomic geography of the U.S. urban metropolis went through drastic changes with the new urban geography being informed by class with undertones of intentional racial stratification.²⁵ Low-income groups from across the racial divide were being concentrated in distressed neighborhoods with their higher-income counterparts resided in outlying areas of the city or suburban areas.²⁶

During the 1980s, President Reagan’s coarse rhetoric of unfounded opinions on poor African Americans and their neighborhoods sparked a public assault against “welfare people”, who are low socioeconomic persons who are dependent on public assistance programs. He was able to shift common fears and anxieties about emotionally charged domains, such as crime, immigration, and public safety, toward the easily identifiable group of “young Black gangbangers”, “Hispanic families”, and “welfare mothers.”²⁷ These racist and discriminatory ideals intensified already negative perceptions of the Black poor which resulted in decreased resource flow leading to increased poverty, homelessness, and hopelessness while also spurring

²³ Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower*, 20

²⁴ Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower*, 22

²⁵ Henry Louis Taylor, Linda McGlynn, and D. Gavin Luter. “*Neighborhoods Matter: The Role of Universities in the School Reform Neighborhood Development Movement.*” *Peabody Journal of Education* 88, no. 5 (2013): 546. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42001796>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 547

²⁷ David Wilson. *Cities and Race: America’s New Black Ghetto*. (London: Routledge, 2006), 30

gentrification and downtown restoration.²⁸ This demonization of poverty allowed him to cut the Housing and Urban Development budget from \$36 million in 1980 to \$18 million in 1987.²⁹

Urban scholars Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. et. al distinguish the difference between an institutional ghetto and a distressed community. The Black Bottom neighborhood at its peak was an exemplar model of the institutional ghetto. An institutional ghetto is characterized as a thriving cross-class and highly organized community, which was filled with hope, optimism, and self-determination.³⁰ Although they encountered struggle, these communities are informed by values of solidarity and struggle which allowed them to be self-sustaining.³¹ The reduction in social safety net programs saw institutional ghettos being transformed into distressed communities as a result of what sociologist Paul A. Jargowsky calls “jobless poverty.”³² This structured joblessness would heighten already deteriorating conditions in these communities’ causing issues like underperforming schools, poverty, and crime to increase exponentially. Compounding socioeconomic pressures and direct disinvestment in Black communities has contributed to the ever-widening wealth gap between Black Americans and white Americans. Inequality and discrimination, and differences in power and opportunity have resulted in a society that has not and does not afford equality of opportunity to all its citizens.³³ Acknowledgment of critical race for modern inequality is significant as it explains why certain groups cannot advance themselves despite there being a reversal of discriminatory de jure legislation.

Addressing the Powerful Hold Universities Have on Cities

Over the years, universities have become powerful in the cities they occupy, emerging as the dominant employers, real estate holders, health-care providers, and even policing agents in major cities. In Philadelphia, one of the poorest large urban cities in the U.S., the University of

²⁸ Ibid., 32

²⁹ Ibid., 32

³⁰ David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1973.

³¹ Henry Louis Taylor, Linda McGlynn, and D. Gavin Luter. “Neighborhoods Matter: The Role of Universities in the School Reform Neighborhood Development Movement.” *Peabody Journal of Education* 88, no. 5 (2013): 541–63. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42001796>.

³² Paul A. Jargowsky, *Poverty and Place: Ghettos, Barrios, and the American City*. Russell Sage Foundation, 1997. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610443081>.

³³ Kriston McIntosh et al., “Examining the Black-White Wealth Gap,” Brookings (Brookings, February 27, 2020), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/>

Pennsylvania is both the largest employer and the largest private landowner. The university currently owns \$3.2 billion worth of property spread out over more than 1,000 acres of nontaxable land.³⁴ While UPenn and many similar universities across the country pay virtually no taxes on their real estate, they directly reap the benefits of police and fire protection, snow and trash removal, road maintenance, and other municipal services.³⁵ Baldwin describes this phenomenon as the rise of “Univercities”, where educational institutions exercise political authority over housing costs, labor conditions, and policing practices of a given jurisdiction. This practice may not only contribute to displacement among federally supported university land developments, but also inflate housing costs due to the demands for upscale housing, high-tech laboratories, and retail options that will attract world-class students, faculty, and researchers. Communities of color frequently sit in zones of relatively cheap and divested land, while holding little political influence when compared to schools like UPenn which possess extremely large and high valued land that contributes to skyrocketing housing and land values in the area.

In cities like New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles, urban universities with medical centers--the “Meds and Eds” --are especially responsible for dynamic conditions within cities due to their large-scale land acquisitions which increase housing and land values beyond the means of local and native community members. For many universities, rising property values on or around the area they occupy translate into bigger endowments. Baldwin states that the blind spot to universities increasing clutch on cities comes from the assumption that higher education is an inherently beneficial public good, marked by its non-profit tax-exempt status.³⁶ Colleges and universities are often celebrated for renewing communities when they provide education and public safety protections while also creating new economic opportunities; however, their increasing financial and political hold on housing, land values and labor play an outsized role in contributing to collapsing conditions in native communities.

3. Framework for a Recompense Program in West Philadelphia

Limitations on Existing Community Reparations Programs

³⁴ PILOTs Action at Penn, “*How Penn Is Cheating Philly’s Public Schools*,” Disorientation Guide (Disorientation Guide, September 7, 2020), <https://penndisorientation.wordpress.com/pilots/>

³⁵ Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower*, 25

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 25

Models for community reparations programs are being piloted in Evanston, Illinois, Santa Monica, California, and Asheville, North Carolina. The city of Evanston will make reparations available to eligible Black residents for harms caused by “discriminatory housing policies and practices and inaction on the city’s part.”³⁷ Qualifying households will be granted up to \$25,000 for down payments or home repairs with funds coming from a reparations fund of \$10 million, established in November 2019 to address historical wealth and opportunity gaps for Black residents.³⁸ Santa Monica’s Right to Return program provides priority access to apartments with rents well below open-market rates for 100 displaced families or their descendants. The City of Asheville passed legislation, dedicating \$2.1 million toward funding programs aimed at increasing homeownership, business, and career opportunities for Black residents.³⁹ City leaders said their goal was to help create generational wealth for Black Americans, who have been hurt by income, educational, and health care disparities.⁴⁰

Each of these programs is the first of its kind and demonstrates work being done to undo the wrongs of government-sponsored displacement. They have influenced other communities including Amherst, Massachusetts, Providence, Rhode Island, and Iowa City, Iowa to consider providing reparations;⁴¹ however, these programs center on housing as the most significant impact of displacement without addressing the various socioeconomic effects of forced displacement on community members. Housing displacement has widespread and long-term effects on health outcomes, neighborhood conditions, academic results, employment opportunities, and community fellowship. Opponents of these initiatives also note the limited participation and inadequate autonomy over how funds are spent. Each of these programs has an allotted number of residents that will receive benefits; however, these caps allow for a small percentage of those impacted to be assisted. Santa Monica’s initiative caps the application at 100,

³⁷ Rachel Treisman, “*In Likely First, Chicago Suburb of Evanston Approves Reparations for Black Residents*,” NPR.org, March 23, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/23/980277688/in-likely-first-chicago-suburb-of-evanston-approves-reparations-for-black-reside/>.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ The City of Asheville, Resolution No. 20- “*Resolution on Supporting Community Reparations for Black Asheville*,” Asheville City Council, July 14, 2020

⁴⁰ Neil Vigdor, “*North Carolina City Approves Reparations for Black Residents*,” The New York Times, July 16, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/16/us/reparations-asheville-nc.html>.

⁴¹ “North Carolina City Commits \$2.1M for Reparations,” AP NEWS (Associated Press, June 9, 2021).

with an estimated 2,000-2,500 residents who were impacted by city-led demolitions.⁴² Residents also lack discretion over how to spend their money once they receive it with both the Evanston and Asheville initiatives providing conditions on what they can spend the money on. Restricting spending to strictly housing projects disempowers recipients and denies them choice over how best to use the funds. For a reparations program to truly repair historical wrongs, they must work to address more barriers to generational wealth and prosperity in the Black community as well as give complete autonomy over how the funds are spent.

Community Recompense Program for Black Bottom Residents

What programs will the overall initiative encompass?

This program is two-pronged in that it will encompass a compensation component as well as a community investment component. The first element is a direct cash payments system where reparations payments are made directly to impacted Black Bottom residents and their ancestors. Allowing residents to personally choose what they would like to spend their money on allows for autonomy in making the best decision for themselves. Mass displacement not only impacts homeownership and generational wealth but also other socioeconomic outcomes that are not always comprehensively addressed in housing programs.⁴³ Direct cash payments will empower recipients and allows them choice in how best to use the funds. The second component of this recompense program will address procedures that can help mitigate the socioeconomic problems facing the community adjacent to large educational institutions. Health outcomes, neighborhood conditions, academic results, employment opportunities, and community health are a few of the factors that create barriers to economic development in West Philadelphia.

Who will be eligible for these benefits and how do we identify them?

To determine which Black Bottom residents may be eligible for compensation, I will model requirements around Darity Jr. and Mullen's two criteria for a nationwide reparations program. First, residents would need to establish that they had at least one ancestor who was living in the Black Bottom between 1950 and 2000 and was displaced because of the University

⁴² Jessi Russell, "Cities Experiment with Restitutive Housing Programs. Do They Advance Reparations? | CLASP," CLASP, April 28, 2022, <https://www.clasp.org/blog/cities-experiment-restitutive-housing-programs-do-they-advance-reparations/>.

⁴³ William A. Darity and Kirsten A. Mullen. *From Here to Equality*

of Pennsylvania's expansion. The time 1950-2000 was chosen as it encompasses the significant periods of mass displacement as a direct result of institutional expansion by the University.⁴⁴ Second, residents would need to prove that they self-identified as "Black," "Negro," "Afro-American," or "African-American" at least 12 years before the enactment of the reparations program or the establishment of a council commission or committee.⁴⁵ This criterion would be reasonably easy to access, as any government-issued document that indicated the individual's race would provide acceptable proof of racial identity. Census tracking would also provide adequate response to this criteria.

How will we calculate the amount to be given as reparations?

Linnentown was an African American neighborhood close to the University of Georgia (UGA) campus that was destroyed to make room for student housing in the early 1960s.⁴⁶ In 2022, a team of research from UGA released a report that established a method for calculated reparations for the effect of urban renewal or similar policies by estimating the financial losses to property owners as a result of displacement.⁴⁷ While the study did not account for socioeconomic effects on employment, education or the emotional trauma of forced displacement, the study estimated a financial loss of \$5,022,375 per resident attributable to underpayment at the time of sale and lost appreciation had the residents not been displaced.⁴⁸ This study could be a model for where Philadelphia could start in developing an actual number for what is owed to former Black Bottom residents.

Who will be involved in the design process?

Community Members

As the city considers potential action to redress these past housing injustices, conversations with those impacted residents can help inform programing and policy responses. Paolo Freire argues this point saying that oppressed people can regain they humanity in their

⁴⁴ Dr. Walter Palmer (Black Bottom resident) in discussion with the author, April 2022

⁴⁵ Darity and Mullen, *From Here to Equality*, 258

⁴⁶ Dr. Jerry Shannon, Dr. Richard Martin, and Aidan Hysjulien. "*Assessing financial losses from urban renewal Linnentown*"

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

struggle for liberation, only if they are the ones leading that struggle.⁴⁹ Storytelling is a crucial tool in providing adequate context for the long-term consequences of mass placement and erasure of a community's culture and history. Former Black Bottom resident, WD Palmer stated in an interview, "The greatest thing the community [can] give [is] their story and explain what the losses were through the stories."⁵⁰ One limitation in the various recompense programs already enacted was the lack of community input in the design process. The sole dissenter of the Evanston bill, Alderwoman Cicely Flemming criticized the bill for its lack of concern for the voices of the community members and limited timeline that does not lay the groundwork for long-term efforts.⁵¹ Community in this vein is defined as those who are the subject and/or victim of the offense of inequality and injustice. Scholars have emphasized that critical community engagement is a necessary feature in the reparations-making space. For a community recompense program to be successful and equitable, it must center the needs of impacted residents and be designed by those community members.

Legislators

City Council members will play a crucial role in the formation and maintenance of a reparations program for residents who were displaced because of displacement. The first step the city council can take is establishing a commission to investigate the displacement of the Black Bottom neighborhood and its multigenerational effects to assess the feasibility of recompense.⁵² The report that will be produced by the commission will construct a record of racial injustice in West Philadelphia as it relates to housing injustice because of institutional expansion. This report will be a valuable instrument in garnering public support for a recompense project by engaging with the community to share significant stories and experiences. It is critical that these city council members make a genuine commitment to developing a comprehensible reparations program as this will provide space for dynamic praxis that consists of both reflection and concrete actions. When reflection is not paired with action, it can result in powerless words and futile actions.⁵³ Civic engagement is a great way for legislators to understand what a community needs or wants from its leaders while also providing the community with a voice in the political

⁴⁹ Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 30th anniversary ed. New York: Continuum, 2000.

⁵⁰ Dr. Walter Palmer (Black Bottom resident) in discussion with the author, April 2022

⁵¹ Evanston bill

⁵² Darity & Mullen, *From Here to Equality*

⁵³ Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

decision-making process. This type of engagement is both a process and an outcome. It is a process in which organizations and individuals build ongoing relationships to elevate and apply their collective vision for the community. It is an outcome in that people are willing, ready, and able to advocate effectively for that vision.⁵⁴ Below are several best practices for civic engagement to ensure that community engagement is meaningful and centers the impacted group:⁵⁵

1. Ask the community what THEY want. It is important to never assume you know what other members of your community are thinking. Constantly testing your perspective against those of others will help you remain knowledgeable about how the issues are impacting residents within the community.
2. Meet community members where they are. Going to places where community members gather, or visit will make it easier for them to engage with you and feel comfortable. This also means choosing a time of day that works with their schedules, and even wording questions in a way that sounds familiar to them. This attention to inclusivity allows for various perspectives to have voices on important community issues.
3. Engage a variety of community members. Examine your community in terms of geography, age, education level, socioeconomic status, race, and any other factors that will include all other historically underrepresented groups. This broad range of representation will help ensure that your strategy and messages appeal to everyone. This initial engagement of all members will also work to build support for local initiative as more community members will feel like they have a stake in the outcome.
4. Tap into authentic engagement that is driven and led by community members. Allowing community members to lead the conversation and surface related issues that are important to them is significant in defining the ways in which engagement will feel most meaningful.
5. Use a mixed methodology in order to gather the most input. Surveys, focus groups, or one-on-one interviews are ways legislators can use data to tell a story of how

⁵⁴ Advocacy & Communication Solutions, *Tips and Best Practices for Engaging Your Community*.
https://www.advocacyandcommunication.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ACS_Engaging_Community_new_blureverse.pdf

⁵⁵ Ibid.

communities are impacted by policy and how this can inform evidence-based and equitable solutions.

Academic Institutions

Academic institutions that occupy native communities have a duty to serve and build upon those communities into which they expand. While educational institutions are not the only ones responsible for institutional displacement, their service could take different forms including entering into community benefit agreements that address shared use of space in municipalities, sponsoring more neighborhood schools, and contracting with local groups in neighborhood development projects. In support of this proposed program, UPenn could contribute its resources and research capabilities to investigate those who would be eligible for compensation in collaboration with the city council commission.

The University may be able to contribute to the reversal of certain socioeconomic conditions in West Philadelphia with increased funding in the Philadelphia public school district. Nonprofit tax exemptions greatly affect Philadelphia's ability to provide public services, specifically regarding funding the public school district which heavily relies on property taxes for revenue. Many schools have been closed in recent years due to serious environmental hazards and dozens of others remain open with damaged asbestos, peeling lead paint, and mold, which poses daily threats to the health of students and employees. The University was previously involved in a PILOT (Payments in lieu of taxes) program from 1995 to 2000, and contributed \$1.93 million annually; however, since then, University administration has consistently cited other financial and non-monetary contributions to the city of Philadelphia in defense of not paying PILOTs, arguing they have a greater impact on the community than PILOTs would through university-sponsored service programs (Services in lieu of taxes).⁵⁶ UPenn scholars have asserted that the transformation of three interactive socio-spatial sites – the university, the public school, and the neighborhood—is the key to transforming the overall community.⁵⁷ They express that public schools are the best vehicles for problem-solving and imbuing neighborhoods with participatory democracy. For many colleges and universities, the goal is to “amend” conditions

⁵⁶ Chase Sutton and Celia Kreth, “Penn’s History of Refusing to Pay PILOTs, Explained,” *The Daily Pennsylvania* (The DP, July 11, 2020),

⁵⁷ Henry Louis Taylor, and Linda McGlynn. “Solving the Dewey Problem: Where Do We Go from Here?” *The Good Society* 17, no. 2 (2008): 56–62. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20711300>.

and “give back” to the community, rather than socially transform society by recreating schools and communities.⁵⁸ City-enforced PILOTs is one practical way that universities must be an agent for positive social change in the communities they occupy and expand into. The University could work with the city to determine what percentage of buildings are being used strictly for academic purposes and they must compensate the municipality accordingly. This would not only compensate municipalities for their use of public services, but it would also provide additional funding to the habitually underfunded Philadelphia public schools system.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Conclusion

Black and brown communities who have been subject to forced displacement because of institutional expansion by colleges and universities have faced harsh socioeconomic consequences that expand beyond the realm of housing. These compounding effects can see decreased community outcomes despite the multitude of social assistance programs available. In thinking about university-community relations, an important question to ask is “what does it mean to be a good neighbor?” Being a “good neighbor” requires compromise to give a certain amount to the community by way of funding services and programs, while also including the community in decisions that will impact residents. William Rainey Harper writes, “If communities surrounding higher ed are abundant with underperforming schools, unemployment, violence, dilapidated housing, hopelessness, then the university is not performing its mission.” Academic institutions that occupy native communities have a duty to serve and build upon those communities with the assembly of resources they have at their disposal. The implementation of a recompense program that provides both a direct cash component along with increased funding for crucial social and economic development programs will work to negate the wrongs of the past the denied Black and brown communities with the tools to build generational wealth. Within University City, this would provide former Black Bottom residents with the means to improve their socioeconomic conditions to undue effects of historical discriminatory housing policy.