

REPARATIONS

"The process of repairing, healing, and restoring a people who were injured, due to their group identity, in violation of their fundamental human rights by a government, corporation, institution, or individual."

N'COBRA: National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America

Locally addressing impacts of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, slavery, colonialism, apartheid and genocide and their lasting effects on African descendants.

Seeking atonement, redress, and ensuring that historical injustices and crimes against humanity never happens again as part of the wider movement for the liberation, human rights, and civil rights of African-descendants across the world.

METHODOLOGY

With the goal of creating an educational resource to document the harms that Black residents in Boston have faced, the following techniques were used to compile a detailed report to support reparations by the City of Boston:

- Defining 7 Injury Areas with the greatest impact on Boston's Black residents using N'COBRA and NAARC definitions as a foundation.
- Creating a context of the issue through research
- Outlining Boston's history around each injury
- Evaluating past and present policy actions
- Reviewing any scholarly reports or available datasets
- Staying up-to-date on current events and activism
- Analyzing examples of reparations in U.S. cities

DOCUMENTING HARMS IN BOSTON TO MAKE A CASE FOR REPARATIONS FOR SLAVERY

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INTERSECTIONALITY

While each injury area - derived from N'COBRA's five injuries as a result of slavery - was researched individually, the intersectionality and causal relationships between the seven were of great significance.

For example, redlining (housing) leads towards fewer Black Bostonians owning property, reducing potential net worth (income and wealth). Less wealthy neighborhoods typically have lower school budgets (education) and often, the first cut to be made is arts programs, preventing youth participation (culture and symbols).

Recommendations were given on an individual basis as well, but for reparations in Boston to be truly effective, legislation will need to reflect the complexity of these relationships.

CONCLUSIONS

- The information in this report does not capture the entire problem; deeper analysis is still needed.
- Each injury area intersects with the others, highlighting the wide-reaching effects of their harms.
- The City of Boston needs to form a committee to evaluate the local need for reparations and explore how to bring them to fruition.
- Clear goals and definitions are vital in making reparations, and deeply rooted discrimination cannot be solved by a single legislative action.
- Reparations should take the form of legislative review of inherently discriminatory practices, investment in social programs that improve each of the injury areas, and financial compensation to Black residents.

Housing

Policy practices have shifted away from overt discrimination but their legacies remain.

Lasting effects of policy action and inaction perpetuate harms.

Transportation & Infrastructure

Lasting effects of highway construction that leveled predominantly Black neighborhoods

Areas subject to redlining still face concerns with limited mobility to access resources such as job opportunities, groceries, health services and more

Health

Culture & Symbols

Black art, and artists, are too often only accepted under white institution's approval or lens

Black people are underrepresented in Boston's cultural scene

Income & Wealth

Boston's racial income disparity is one of the most aggressive in the country

Black people have never been afforded the chance to fully participate in the American economy

Criminal Justice

Black individuals and their communities in Boston are still overpoliced and criminalized at a higher rate than white people.

The 2018 CORI reform still has limitations, which impact Black individuals when trying to apply for jobs and housing.

Education

KING BOSTON

King Boston, a program of the Boston Foundation, recognizes the need for reparations in Boston. The Embrace Project, following the creation of a memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King, hopes to spark community engagement and conversations pertaining to the social and economic harms that have been carried out against Black individuals in Boston.

