



National Urban League

The Division of Education & Youth Development

The Washington Bureau

The National Urban League's initiatives support, local, state, and national advocacy, engagement, and reform/innovation efforts by leveraging our greatest asset, the Urban League Affiliate Movement along with the presidents and chief executive officers that lead it.

The Equity & Excellence Project

A SIGNATURE PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE



Our Purpose.

To expand educational access and opportunity via reform and innovation, the National Urban League launched The Equity and Excellence Project (EEP) in 2010. The EEP explicitly supports local, state, and national advocacy, engagement, and education reform efforts throughout the Urban League Affiliate Movement and with local, state, and national partners.



2025 EMPOWERMENT GOAL

Every American child is ready for college, work and life.

\$23B

gap between funding provided to majority-white & majority-nonwhite school districts in 2019

4M+

African American/Black students would enroll in an after-school or out-of-school time (OST) program if one was available and/or accessible

82%

of our nation's African American/Black 4th grade students were not reading at grade level in 2019

44%

of African American/Black students enrolled in 4-year colleges & universities graduate within 6 years

Our Intention.

TO BUILD more inclusive advocacy and engagement efforts that center youth and generate additional and deeper support for educational equity, opportunity, and excellence.

TO STRENGTHEN the ability of the civil rights community and those we serve to effectively advocate for equity and excellence at scale to ensure the equitable and high-quality implementation of critical education reforms and investments.

TO IMPROVE a range of educational and developmental outcomes for underserved students.

TO HIGHLIGHT the investments, policies, practices, reforms, and innovations which explicitly confront historic inequality, and to create new paths for urban children and historically underserved and excluded children and youth to succeed.

TO INNOVATE via enhanced strategic investments, reform, content, policy change, and educational practice.

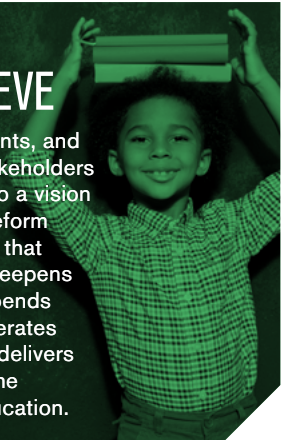
TO UPEND inequity by providing additional access to and investment in expanded opportunities to promote better youth outcomes, including academic, health, and social-emotional well-being.

Making The Case For Change.

In the United States, public education is viewed as the best and most impactful way to upend inequity and to intentionally create equitable opportunities for families, children, and youth to advance and succeed. However, as long as policymakers continue to exacerbate inequities by investing less in those with the greatest need and fewest assets than for many Black and Brown students, urban students, and others historically underserved, access to high-quality public education remains an unrealized and distant dream. The COVID pandemic has magnified inequities in our public education and related child and youth development systems. As such, what our communities require are sustained, targeted, and inclusive efforts to provide an equitable and excellent education for students of color.

WE BELIEVE

Students, parents, and community stakeholders should *opt in* to a vision of education reform and innovation that expands and deepens opportunity, upends inequity, accelerates progress, and delivers more fully on the promise of education.



Our Approach. Having a local, statewide, and national reach allows us to implement a multi-pronged approach to the EEP, which includes:

- Engaging Urban League affiliates, partners, and coalitions in local, state, and national education reform and innovation efforts.
- Ensuring integration across our early learning, youth development, postsecondary success, workforce development and college completion and attainment agendas.
- Broadening and deepening our communication efforts to build a different education reform/innovation narrative in—and concerning—the African American/Black community and other historically excluded communities of color.
- Building the capacity and executive leadership of the Affiliate Movement, the National Urban League, and the National Urban League Washington Bureau to work more effectively and comprehensively with civil rights/equity partners and with the national education reform & innovation community.
- Organizing local, state, and national convenings centered on diverse aspects of equity and excellence that intentionally include additional stakeholders, perspectives, and strategies.
- Creating opportunities for meaningful student, parent, and stakeholder engagement, including developing effective advocates, to build agency, voice, and efficacy to drive local education reform & innovation in pursuit of equity and excellence.

Education reformers and innovators must be able to clearly explain what will be different for students who have been historically underserved and excluded and who remain so under current policy and practice.

Our Areas of Focus. To realize a more equitable future, the National Urban League believes that children and youth require systems, policies, and practices that attend to the development of the whole person.

To that end, the EEP targets seven areas that are highly and tightly related to the historic mission of the National Urban League. Improvements in any one of these seven areas would help some students across the full P-16 education spectrum. However, we can help many more students by intentionally and meaningfully combining reform and innovation strategies into a *whole-learner equity approach* to systematically address the complex barriers that Black and other underserved students, parents, and communities continue to face in pursuit of an equitable and excellent education.

- 1. FAIRNESS:** Equity and excellence at scale
- 2. FOUNDATIONAL INVESTMENT:** Early childhood learning and development
- 3. CRITICAL PREPARATION:** 21st century skills-based curriculum
- 4. ENSURE ACCESS:** High-quality curricula, teachers, and administrators
- 5. MEASUREMENT:** Comprehensive, transparent, user-friendly, culturally appropriate, and aligned data systems
- 6. OPPORTUNITY:** Out-of-school time learning and development with an emphasis on comprehensive and coherent approaches to child and youth success
- 7. FULFILLMENT:** Postsecondary degree or credential attainment

