

Equitable Justice & Strategic Initiatives Division (EJSI)



National
Urban League

Our vision for a better, fairer America and Justice System



The National Urban League knows that America has the potential to fulfill its promise of being the land of liberty and justice for all. However, significant work is still required to fully realize a truly equitable nation. To create systems that protect, serve, and restore all communities, we must first acknowledge and address the inequities in our society and institutions. Born in response to George Floyd's tragic death, EJSI empowers our affiliates and communities by supporting them in advocating for equitable justice through policy guidance, research, coalition-building, convening conversations, drafting legislation, and organizing advocacy days and meetings with elected officials to push for reforms.

This is the National Urban League's approach to bringing America closer to not only equal justice under the law for all, but also equitable opportunities in every arena.

Reimagining the Justice System

21 PILLARS FOR REDEFINING PUBLIC SAFETY & RESTORING COMMUNITY TRUST

The 21 Pillars framework is designed to serve communities, particularly those disproportionately affected by systemic inequalities in the justice system to rebuild community trust in law enforcement. 21 Pillars has influenced policing reform legislation locally and also nationally through the Biden Administration's adoption of 12 of the 21 pillars in Executive Order 14074. Since EJSI established the framework, the Department of Justice has launched nearly a dozen investigations initiated by our advocacy.

The impact of this work is evident in the growing adoption of these principles nationwide, fostering a more just and inclusive society.

GUN VIOLENCE & COMMUNITY-LED SAFETY INITIATIVES

Gun violence has plagued communities in this country for generations. The National Urban League has advanced solutions to make communities safer for all Americans through policy research, thought leadership and summits focusing on community-led prevention strategies.

The League's biennial Safe & Just Communities Summit is a two-day national convening in New York City that provides a comprehensive, community-centered framework for safe communities that are resourced, just, healthy, and restored. Featured experts from government, community-based organizations, advocacy, law enforcement and academia share actionable solutions to address violence prevention, improve community trust, and promote public safety.

10+



Since EJSI established the 21 Pillars framework, the Department of Justice has launched nearly a dozen investigations initiated by our advocacy.

350+



Police reform bills authored across 43 states and Washington, DC in 2023. Several dozen became law.

Civic Engagement & Democracy

RECLAIM YOUR VOTE

Reclaim Your Vote is the National Urban League's flagship civic engagement and voter participation campaign. The campaign engages the entire Urban League movement, including 90+ affiliates, in mass mobilization efforts for voter registration, election education, and get-out-the-vote.

Our work also extends to people impacted by the justice system through our Voting in Jail Project. Centering detained or incarcerated individuals awaiting trial or those serving misdemeanor offenses, we are focused on ensuring ballot access for all Americans. We are closing civic equity gaps by partnering with local jails and prisons, legal organizations and advocacy groups to register voters, provide education on voting rights and increase ballot access.

CENSUS BLACK ROUNDTABLE

The Census Black Roundtable is co-convened by National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial and the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation President and CEO and Convener of the Black Women's Roundtable Intergenerational Public Policy Network Melanie L. Campbell. Over the past 60 years, census accuracy has steadily improved, but some groups still experience higher undercounts and omissions from the census than others. The Roundtable provides space and resources for leaders to get ahead of the many obstacles that threaten an accurate count of Black people and aims to improve Census data quality and representation.



Restoring Our Communities

URBAN EXPUNGEMENT PROGRAM

The Urban Expungement Program aims to establish a national model for record relief throughout the Urban League movement. It provides pro bono legal support to program participants navigating the expungement process and alleviates what often is considered a heavy financial burden for participants by paying their fines and fees.

CANNABIS EQUITY

We believe that the path to a brighter future for the people, families, and communities harmed by unjust marijuana convictions can be reached through the establishment of social equity and community reinvestment programs, the immediate expungement for those with non-violent drug offenses, the institutionalization of workforce development programs in areas hit hardest by the war on drugs, and an entrepreneurship pipeline for Black and Brown people interested in cannabis-related business.

1,000



People obtained record relief, Certificates of Qualification for Employment (CQEs), expungements, sealing, and pardons from the Urban Expungement Program in its first year.

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Justice won't restore itself—it takes all of us. Every summit, convening, and grassroots effort we lead influences lawmakers and empowers communities to create real, lasting change. As we forge ahead, our division will broaden its impact, advancing equity through civics education and tackling economic, environmental and climate justice.

When you support the National Urban League today, you're not just making a donation—you're fueling action. You're helping to make our communities safer, defend democracy, promote economic equity and fight injustice everywhere. Invest in this movement, and together, let's build a future where justice and equity truly belong to all.

- Supports 92 affiliates, 65 Young Professional, and 27 Guild Chapters
- Annually, EJSI's 6-member staff engages in 400+ touchpoints with Affiliate leadership for issue-area support
- Annually, conducts 50+ events, briefings, and trainings on behalf of the National Urban League