



National
Urban League

SAFE & JUST COMMUNITIES

SUMMIT 2026

Urban League Empowerment Center

117 W. 125th St., Harlem, New York, NY 10027

AGENDA

ELEVATING LOCAL VOICES AND LEADERS FOR A SAFER AND STRONGER FUTURE

The Safe & Just Communities Summit brings together advocates, policymakers, and civil leaders committed to building communities that are safer, fairer, and more responsive to the current realities. Amid growing challenges around immigration enforcement, public safety, civil rights, and democratic participation, this summit offers space to discuss lessons learned and emerging practices.

TUESDAY, APRIL 14

8:30 am **REGISTRATION**

9:30 am **WELCOME REMARKS**

[Jerika Richardson](#), SVP of Equitable Justice and Strategic Initiatives,
National Urban League

OPENING REMARKS

[Marc H. Morial](#), President & CEO, National Urban League

9:40 am **FIRESIDE CHAT: ADVANCING SAFETY, JUSTICE,
AND CIVIL RIGHTS**

This fireside chat brings together leading civil rights advocates to examine concerns around federal law enforcement overreach, including aggressive immigration enforcement tactics, and to discuss practical solutions that strengthen public safety, safeguard civil liberties, and help communities thrive.

MODERATOR

[Jerika Richardson](#), SVP of Equitable Justice and Strategic Initiatives,
National Urban League

SPEAKERS

[Maya Berry](#), Executive Director, Arab American Institute

[Marc H. Morial](#), President & CEO, National Urban League

[Juan Proaño](#), CEO, League of United Latin American Citizens

10:10 am **FAIR AND EFFECTIVE POLICING IN
CHALLENGING TIMES**

How can local law enforcement build community trust at a time when federal law enforcement engages the community in ways that undermine trust? This panel will discuss policies, practices, and research that can help guide law enforcement to increase accountability and effectively engage communities in ways that build trust and improve public safety.

MODERATOR

Sasha Cotton, Executive Director, National Network for Safe Communities,
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

SPEAKERS

[Renee Hall](#), President, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE); former Dallas Police Chief

[Michael P. McMillan](#), President & CEO, Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis

[Marquita Stephens](#), President & CEO, Urban League Twin Cities

11:10 am **BREAK**

TUESDAY, APRIL 14

11:30 am

FIRESIDE CHAT: IMPACTFUL LEADERS ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE

This chat will feature a candid conversation on the leadership required to address gun violence and strengthen community safety. The conversation will explore how policy, partnership, and accountability can drive meaningful, community-centered solutions to reduce violence and advance justice. The discussion will highlight bold leadership and shared responsibility in building safer, more equitable communities.

SPEAKERS

[The Honorable Mayor Brandon Johnson](#), City of Chicago
[Marc H. Morial](#), President & CEO, National Urban League

12:00–12:30 pm

LUNCH

12:30 pm

LUNCH CONVERSATION: SAFEGUARDING DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

This conversation will explore the growing tensions between government and the media, including questions of press access, transparency, and First Amendment protections, while examining what it means to report independently in a polarized era. Together, the discussion will highlight how constitutional protections, public trust, and journalistic integrity intersect and why a free, accountable press remains essential to an informed public and a healthy democracy.

MODERATOR

[Michelle Miller](#), Journalist

SPEAKER

Errol Louis, National Political Anchor, Spectrum News
Darla Miles, WABC-TV, Channel 7 New York
[Ebony K. Williams](#), Attorney, Author, and Television Host

1:10 pm

THE ROLE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, RIGHTS RESTORATION, AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC SAFETY

Democratic participation is foundational to public safety. This session will examine the critical connections between civic engagement, rights restoration, and democratic participation, and why inclusion in civic life is essential to equitable public safety and community well-being. Attendees will gain practical insights on how strengthening democratic participation can empower communities to advocate for the resources, protections, and investments their neighborhoods need to be safe.

MODERATOR

[Britton Smith](#), National Political Director, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

PANELISTS

[Nic Grant](#), Policy Managing Director, Reform Alliance
[Pastor Mike McBride](#), Executive Director, Live Free
[Sheena Meade](#), CEO, The Clean Slate Initiative
[Nicole D. Porter](#), Senior Director of Advocacy, The Sentencing Project

2:10 pm

CLOSING REMARKS

[Jerika Richardson](#), SVP of Equitable Justice and Strategic Initiatives, National Urban League

partners



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