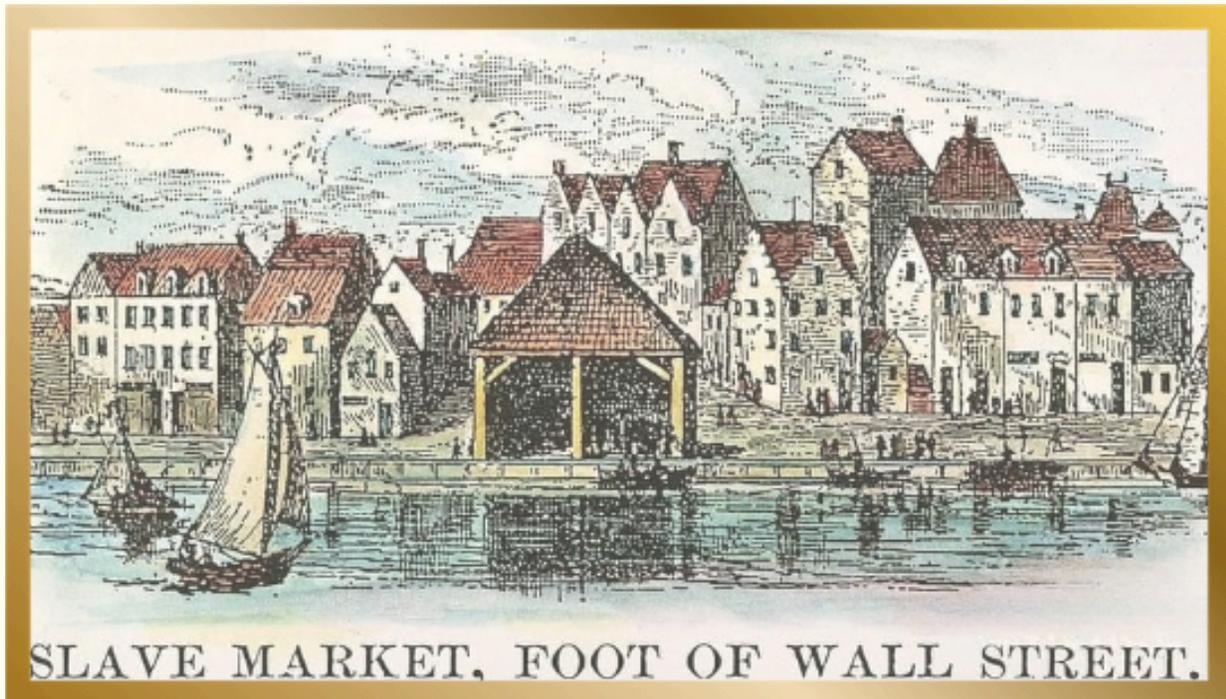


# Advancing Truth, Healing, Reconciliation, and Reparations in New York City



First Progress Report on the Implementation  
of NYC Administrative Code Title 34: Racial Equity

## Acknowledgements

**About NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR)** - The New York City Commission on Human Rights is charged with the enforcement of the [NYC Human Rights Law](#). For over 80 years, the Commission has fought for a city free from discrimination where all New Yorkers can live, work and thrive with dignity. Our work was born out of the need to address racial tension and disparities - work which remains central today. The Commission uses law, education, and community engagement to unify our city, even at our most challenging moments. To advance fundamental rights for all New Yorkers, the Commission is committed to: (1) Forge pathways to justice for individuals impacted by discrimination, resulting in individual remedies and systemic policy change through litigation; (2) Cultivate respect, understanding, and inclusion to prevent discrimination via education, outreach, and community engagement; and (3) Shape laws and policies that eliminate root causes of discrimination and advance equality, working with government and community partners.

**About NYC Civic Engagement Commission (CEC)** - The New York City Civic Engagement Commission's mission is to enhance civic participation, promote civic trust, and strengthen democracy in New York City. The Civic Engagement Commission (CEC) was established by the voters of New York City as part of an amendment to the City Charter adopted in 2018. For more information on CEC, please visit our website: [www.nyc.gov/civicengagement](http://www.nyc.gov/civicengagement).

**About Mayor's Office of Ethnic and Community Media (MOECM)** - The Mayor's Office of Ethnic and Community Media (MOECM) promotes City services and programs through partnerships with a diverse array of Ethnic and Community Media outlets and Community Based Organizations/Nonprofits that serve people across the five boroughs. For more information about MOECM. For more information, please visit our website: [www.nyc.gov/ethnicmedia](http://www.nyc.gov/ethnicmedia).

### Conversations with Experts -

**Diana Hosey and Antoine Joyce-Roach** – Dallas Texas' Faces Race, the city's Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation initiative, and the Racial Equity Now program

**Dr. Dwight Mullen** – Former chair of Asheville, North Carolina's Community Reparations Commission

**Lauren Hood** – Founding co-chair of the Detroit, Michigan's Reparations Task Force

**Mary Jones** – Policy advisor to Philadelphia Councilmember Jamie Gauthier

### San Francisco, California advisors

### Advisors from Oakland, California's Racial Justice Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation Commission

**Dr. William "Sandy" Darity Jr.** – Economist and Reparations scholar at Duke University

**Taja-nia Henderson and Jean-Pierre Brutus** – New Jersey Institute for Social Justice

**Linda Mann** – Co-founder of the African American Redress Network

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*New York slave market about 1730*

## Acknowledgements

**NYC CORE** - The NYC Commission on Racial Equity (NYC CORE) is an independent, 15-member commission responsible for holding the government accountable to advancing racial equity in government operations and increasing community voices in government decision making. NYC CORE provides accountability for New Yorkers, regularly evaluating the City's progress on its racial equity requirements and goals. Through its mandate, NYC CORE will propose and prioritize community equity goals and outcome measures, advocate for historically underrepresented groups, assess citywide racial equity plans, track compliance, address complaints, and respond to council inquiries on racial equity concerns.

**ZEAL** - is a creative arts and social impact studio cooperative where we cultivate emergent creative community development strategies to own and steward the means of our cultural production. Through our creative talent development, social impact studio practice, and creative placemaking, we celebrate our lineages, assert our voices, archive our legacy, and showcase our artistic talents toward building community wealth across the Black diaspora. ZEAL provided support to NYC CORE in designing and facilitating a participatory, community-led process based on principles of transitional justice for the launch of implementing Local Law 91 and 92 that inform this report. You can learn more about ZEAL Co-Op at [www.zeal.coop](http://www.zeal.coop)

**4TE Capitol Solutions, founded by Tyrik Washington** - 4TE Capitol Solutions LLC is a multidisciplinary firm at the intersection of media, community engagement, and impact investment. Founded by Emmy Award Winning Filmmaker, Tyrik Washington, our mission is to harness the power of storytelling, strategic capital, and grassroots collaboration to drive systemic change and amplify underrepresented voices. Our primary goal is to craft narratives that inform, inspire, and mobilize. We are using high-quality media production and targeted campaigns to ignite community engagement through initiatives that are rooted in deep, ongoing partnerships with local leaders and organizations. This ensures that every project reflects the needs of our community, the values, and the aspirations of the people we serve. By aligning mission-driven capital with these efforts, we invest in various initiatives—from cultural ventures to small business development and social innovation—that produce measurable impact and sustainable growth. Our work is guided by a belief that equity, visibility, and economic empowerment must go hand in hand to create lasting transformation.

**Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice (MOERJ)** - Launched in October 2023, the NYC Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice is dedicated to creating a fairer and more equitable New York City. As the city's first centralized equity office, MOERJ takes an intersectional approach to advancing change across our city so people in every community can thrive. The office expands on the city's extensive equity efforts and fulfills the promise made in November 2022, when NYC residents voted for an office dedicated to racial equity. MOERJ includes the NYC Unity Project (UP), NYC Her Future (NHF), the NYC Young Men's Initiative (YMI), and the NYC Commission on Gender Equity (CGE), as well as multi-agency bodies like the NYC Pay Equity Cabinet (PEC) and the NYC Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity (TRIE). To learn more about MOERJ, visit [nyc.gov/Equity](http://nyc.gov/Equity) or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).

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**“We deserve for the government to pay us as an indemnity for the work we and our fore-parents were robbed of from the Declaration of Independence down to the Emancipation.”**

-Callie House, a pioneering advocate for Reparations who co-founded the *National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association* in 1894, passionately argued that the U.S. government owed compensation to Black Americans for centuries of unpaid labor—starting from the founding era through Emancipation.

**Callie House**



## Background



On October 15, 2024, the New York City Council passed Local Law 91 and Local Law 92 adding **Title 34 on Racial Equity** to the New York City Administrative Code. **Local Law 91 requires NYC CORE to create a Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation process.** Councilmember Crystal Hudson introduced it, and it passed with overwhelming support in the City Council. **Local Law 92 requires NYC CORE to study the impact of slavery and its legacies in New York City and recommend reparative policies to redress the harms.** Councilmember Farah Louis introduced Local Law 92 which was also passed with overwhelming support.



NYC CORE was mandated to implement both laws, which require several deliverables. The progress report that follows is one of the deliverables for Local Law 92. It is our hope that this first progress report will give New Yorkers a glimpse into the important and timely work that is taking place in our city. It is important to note that NYC CORE is not beginning this work. Rather, we are joining a long legacy of individuals, community organizers, and leaders who have been engaged in this work since 1783.



In this spirit, we are not only joining a national fight, but a global fight for peace and racial justice through Reparations, and Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation.



## Letter From The Commissioner

Dear New Yorkers,

On behalf of the NYC Commission on Racial Equity (NYC CORE), and our partners, I am honored to present the first progress update on our work to advance a NYC study for Reparations and a Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation plan. In the first progress report, NYC CORE outlines our approach to the simultaneous design and development of Local Law 91 and 92 of 2024 – companion racial equity and reparative legislation. Local Law 91 amended the New York City Administrative Code by adding a new Title (Title 34: Racial Equity) which establishes a trauma-informed, public-facing truth, healing, and reconciliation process. Local Law 92 amended the newly implemented Title 34 by adding Chapter 3 which mandates a citywide study examining New York City’s complicity in slavery and its legacy and developing a public pathway toward structural repair.

This report tells the story of what has happened so far, starting with open calls with interested community members asking for insights in the early stages of designing the work, to calls with leaders and organizers from across the nation learning about emerging practices towards Reparations, and the first-ever city wide gathering led by a government entity at the Weeksville Heritage Center in Brooklyn to have community identify the values that will underline this work. Over the past ten months, community members we have engaged with have defined Reparations as a fight to ensure debt is paid in full, the truth is told, and history is corrected so that trauma that has been passed down through generations can begin to heal. At our foundation, we are seeking to answer three critical questions in this work:

- 1. What harm has been done and reproduced from chattel slavery, Jim Crow, and the legacies of both?**
- 2. What compensation must be paid and what structural reforms must be conducted to repair this harm and guarantee non-repetition of this harm?**
- 3. What resources and support do communities impacted by chattel slavery, Jim Crow, and the legacies of both need in order to tell the truth about this harm and begin to heal?**

Community-informed tools are central to our work, helping us to establish the truth of past and ongoing harm, define government actions to prevent recurrence, determine compensation, drive institutional change, and encourage intentional healing. Local Law 91 requires that NYC develop and implement a citywide Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation plan. Local Law 92 requires NYC CORE to assess the role of the NYC government in perpetrating and perpetuating historical and ongoing impacts of slavery and recommend measures that promote repair. This work wrestles with the reality that NYC – a center of global financial capital – was the second largest port receiving enslaved Africans, and a key location for enslaved Africans to be held in bondage and sold as part of the domestic slave trade.

The sale and bondage of enslaved Africans is the foundation of the city's ability to be one of the world's financial capitals and the immense capital held by white Americans. Wealth generated by whites from enslaved labor led to the current racial wealth gap – a key factor in the reason why the Black population experiences the lowest life expectancy across all racial groups in NYC. The commodification of Black people for profit impacts every aspect of life as we know it today. Therefore, NYC cannot just put out a progress report. *We must issue continuous calls-to-action for meaningful redress of the harm caused by chattel slavery, Jim Crow, and their legacies and ensure a pathway for greater self-determination.*

Community members and experts agree that the process must foster an understanding of why Reparations must happen now; support widespread understanding of racial justice, truth, and healing; and result in long-term commitments. *Reparations, and Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation are interdependent fights we cannot afford to lose.*

Thank you to the *over 300 community members and a dozen experts* who have provided feedback to date. Thank you to everyone who will join in. This report is for you. It is written for our community, to keep you informed and involved. We have just picked up the baton first carried by revolutionaries like Belinda Sutton (1783), Tunis Campbell (1865), Jourdon Anderson (1865), and Callie House (1898), just to name a few, and we are committed to honoring the people's truth, the ancestors, and the fight.

In service.

Linda Tigani  
Chair and Executive Director



## Getting Started



In December 2024, before designing any program or identifying frameworks for repair, NYC CORE released a call for public input asking a simple, but profound question: How should we do this work? Through several information sessions and written submissions, NYC CORE engaged New Yorkers, city staff, organizations, and experts, creating space for the community to shape the process from the very beginning.

From December 17, 2024 to February 7, 2025, **over 200 individuals** representing local and citywide community-based organizations responded, including faith communities, scholars, directly impacted community members, cultural workers, and national experts from jurisdictions pursuing similar efforts. Simultaneously, NYC CORE staff and our partners — NYC Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice (MOERJ), City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR), and the NYC Civic Engagement Commission (CEC) — conducted learning calls with leaders from Dallas, Asheville, Detroit, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and other cities engaged in Reparations studies and Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation work.

## NEW YORK'S MUNICIPAL SLAVE MARKET

On Wall Street, between Pearl and Water Streets, a market that auctioned enslaved people of African ancestry was established by a Common Council law on November 30, 1711. This slave market was in use until 1762. Slave owners wanting to hire out their enslaved workers, which included people of Native American ancestry, as day laborers also had to do so at that location. In 1726 the structure was renamed the Meal Market because corn, grain and meal — crucial ingredients to the Colonial diet — were also exclusively traded there.

Slavery was introduced to Manhattan in 1626. By the mid-18th century approximately one in five people living in New York City was enslaved and almost half of Manhattan households included at least one slave. Although New York State abolished slavery in 1827, complete abolition came only in 1841 when the State of New York abolished the right of non-residents to have slaves in the state for up to nine months. However, the use of slave labor elsewhere for the production of raw materials such as sugar and cotton was essential to the economy of New York both before and after the Civil War. Slaves also cleared forest land for the construction of Broadway and were among the workers that built the wall that Wall Street is named for and helped build the first Trinity Church. Within months of the market's construction, New York's first slave uprising occurred a few blocks away on Maiden Lane, led by enslaved people from the Coromantee and Pawpaw peoples of Ghana.



Informational sign titled “New York’s Municipal Slave Market,” displayed by NYC Parks. The sign summarizes the history of New York City’s colonial slave market, established in 1711 at Wall Street, its role in the trade and forced labor of enslaved African and Native American people, and the broader context of slavery in Manhattan through the 18th and 19th centuries.

NYC Parks. (n.d.). New York’s municipal slave market [Informational sign]. NYC Department of Parks & Recreation.

The message was clear and consistent: **descendants of enslaved Africans and survivors of slavery's legacies in New York City must lead this work, not just participate in it.** Respondents demanded multiple critical elements: political education on the culpability of the city and state in slavery, Jim Crow, and their legacies; community-led decision-making power over study design and recommendations; community compensation for the time, effort, and labor of sharing traumatic stories; early and often progress updates; intentional, safe, and sustained community engagement; and, transparency and partnership when creating the eligibility for Reparations programs and policies recommended through these efforts. Community members want to maintain and build trust with NYC CORE for long-term collaboration that moves beyond symbolic gestures and into structural transformation, including direct compensation, land restitution, and guarantees of non-repetition.

The response to our call for public input made clear: this work must be done differently than how government typically operates — more slowly, with deep intentionality, more transparently, and with community voices not just consulted but leading the path toward repairing the harms of the past and healing.

Community members who responded to a public call for information shaped every decision that followed. NYC CORE began learning from and engaging with partners who had demonstrated previous experience working in Reparations, and Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation campaigns to help inform the first frameworks used to shape the design and implementation of this work. We started by exploring the UN’s Basic Principles on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation as the organizing framework and the W. K. Kellogg Truth, Healing, and Transformation processes. Our learnings from both frameworks allowed us to design the June 2025 Weeksville Gathering as a trauma-informed, healing-centered community Reparations and Truth city-wide gathering.

## Voices From the Field



**NYC is one of the only known municipalities in the United States to simultaneously design and implement a study on Reparations and a Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation process.** What's more, NYC is one of the only municipalities to incorporate Reparations and Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation work into a pre-existing commission. Learning from our colleagues around the country and leveraging lessons learned from around the world is essential to ensuring that NYC CORE and its partners are innovating and integrating promising practices and best recommendations on a hyper local level.

Local Law 91 and 92, also referred to as Title 34 on Racial Equity in the New York City Administrative Code, requires that NYC CORE and its partners solicit input from community members with expertise and from experts across various fields of study. Our listening sessions with leaders across NYC and the nation have conveyed the complexity and importance of a genuinely reparative process, not a merely symbolic one.

## Key Themes and Lessons Learned

- **Clarity in shared language, eligibility, process design, and scope is essential. Without it, public trust erodes, and conflict grows.** Community surveys, community led steering committees dedicated to narrative change, and funding for community groups to fully participate in every aspect of the work must be included in the implementation. Creating processes without proper funding for community groups risks creating processes that perpetuate extractive participation from impacted communities. As organizations join in the work to build the necessary political power, we must keep a watchful eye against the “oppression Olympics” and conflict over perceived competing harms. Experts noted that elevating shared leadership and cultural healing to sustain the work may create a sustainable path for Reparations to build structural and institutional power, rather than just delivering resources.
- **Reparations must be healing and just at every stage, for committee members, government staff, and communities alike.** *The process is the product.* Reparations processes can be affected by political pressure, respectability politics, emotional fatigue, generational divides, and the tension between symbolic and real structural change. Experts warned that past reparative justice leaders have faced political backlash and termination, urging NYC to build political risk mitigation into its strategy from the start. Interviewees also lifted up bold experiments born from political resistance: direct personal Reparations, targeted health and wellness investments, and focused support for Black women, youth, and LGBTQ+ communities. The psychological and emotional toll of this work risks being extractive; truth-telling and healing is reparative. Political education, preparation for conflict, and building long-term structural power are reparative actions that advance Reparations.

Giving testimony does not equal healing. Experts stressed the need to design for what happens after people share their stories, including tiered engagement (intimate circles, larger gatherings, self-guided resources), on-site “healing responders,” and spiritual practices alongside clinical support. It was emphasized by all that healing must be institutionalized, well-funded, and Black-led wherever possible.

Reparations reports should be developed by a multidisciplinary team—comprising historians, analysts, Geographic Information System (GIS) experts, legal advisors, and community-rooted partners—to ensure a credible and defensible process. Reports should be structured to include a harms report, a report outlining legacy neighborhoods, and a report offering Reparations recommendations with specificity regarding how cash payments can be paired with targeted services in the legal system, economic development, education, and housing. To be effective, researchers must include auditing city agencies for racial harm, building lasting public memory infrastructure, and defining Reparations as both compensatory and restorative, rather than solely focused on equity. Structuring reports chronologically may be a helpful way to emphasize the codifying process, funding, and governance in law to weather political change. Experts cautioned against overly broad or overly ambitious frameworks used for each report that risk blurring intent, and instead emphasizing the need to define and enumerate the harms being repaired clearly.

Researchers and community members may experience re-traumatization as they collect data, write the report, provide feedback, and submit recommendations. Therefore, it’s important to uplift storytelling and creative expression as both evidence and tools for healing. This work must be slow, intentional, and transformative, not transactional or reliant on unprepared institutions. NYC must go beyond public records by building relationships with Black historians, institutions, and archives. A strong report will allow for early engagement with policymakers, and borough-level nuance within a citywide vision.

Lastly, Reparations is a moral duty that must be coupled with a cultural strategy. We must honor the culture, traditions, voices, and knowledge of Black communities. NYC CORE's belief that centering Black New Yorkers as we pursue utilizing art for cultural preservation, community engagement, and communications is essential to ensuring that this work incorporates the practices and the lived experiences and leadership of people who have survived harm to build a racially just future.



## Findings from City-Wide Gathering



On June 10, 2025, NYC CORE, 4TE Capitol Solutions, and ZEAL Co-Op hosted a powerful city-wide gathering focused on developing values that the government and its partners will use to guide Reparations, and Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation work. The gathering was held at the historic Weeksville Heritage Center in Brooklyn, one of the earliest parcels of land owned by African Americans and the second largest Black community in pre-Civil War America serving approximately 500 residents. The event brought together over 200 community members, families, including children, young people, elders, artists, organizers, educators, faith-based leaders, city workforce leadership, advocates, NYC CORE staff, and community partners. This gathering was a vital part of a broader convening dedicated to memory, healing, and Black futurism, aiming to provide historical context, legal understanding, and a values-driven framework for Reparations in New York City. Not only that, the Weeksville Gathering also represented the first of three meetings required by Title 34, Chapter 3, Section 34-301(d)(2)(b) of the Administrative Code. The Weeksville gathering demonstrated that people are ready to take the lead; the city must follow the community's lead.

The gathering, hosted by Tyrik Washington, and designed by ZEAL Co-Op to be deeply interactive and community-centered. Attendees enjoyed soul food from a local restaurant (Whitfield Catering & Event LLC), and a moving poetry performance from Tyrik Washington Jr. A key highlight was the critical truth-telling remarks from:

- **Charles Barron** - Former NYC Council member and NYS State Assemblyman
- **Bishop Ayana Ajanaku-Vason** - Ebenezer Christian Center Ministries
- **Kesi Foster** - Activist member of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement
- **Tracie M. Gardner** - Executive Director of the National Black Harm Reduction Network
- **Trevor Smith** - Executive Director of Black Liberation and Indigenous Sovereignty (BLIS) and member of New Yorkers for Reparations
- **Rev. Mark Thompson** - Make it Plain
- **Roger Wareham** - Member of the December 12 Movement

The presentation by NYC CORE, 4TE Capitol Solutions, and ZEAL Co-Op underscored the importance of Title 34 of the Administrative Code as an essential tool for repair, emphasizing its potential when rooted in community wisdom and international human rights frameworks.

We began by acknowledging New York City's historical and ongoing complicity in slavery and its enduring harm, illustrating the city's legal and economic participation in various issues like policing, displacement, and dispossession, ranging from the 1620s to the present-day. We stressed that Reparations are not symbolic gestures or acts of charity, but a legal and moral obligation designed to:

- **Repair material and emotional harm.**
- **Provide compensation for debt owed.**
- **Restore dignity to impacted communities.**
- **Guarantee non-repetition of harm through structural transformation.**

To provide a global perspective, we introduced the *United Nations Basic Principles to a Right to a Remedy and Reparations* as the first framework to be used in a NYC study on Reparations, outlining its five core principles: Restitution, Compensation, Rehabilitation, Satisfaction, and Guarantees of Non-Repetition. National and global examples from places like Bruce's Beach, California; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Santa Monica, California; and the country of New Zealand demonstrated how reparative work is already underway, offering valuable lessons for New York City.

The discussion then turned to New York City's own legislative efforts. For NYC CORE, 4TE Capitol Solutions, and ZEAL Co-Op, these laws are not endpoints. Rather, they are invitations to develop public processes that are led by descendants of chattel slavery and survivors of its vestiges, informed by lived experience, and shaped by ancestral knowledge.

To further ground this work in community voice, we facilitated breakout discussions focused on each of the five Reparations principles. Participants explored the prompt: **"Since descendants/survivors of enslaved Black people have not received [restitution, compensation, etc.], our lives have been shaped in the following ways..."**

The stories that emerged were incredibly powerful, detailing generational experiences of land theft, underemployment, surveillance, family separation, and erasure. Yet, these narratives also highlighted profound resilience, creativity, and the enduring power of cultural legacy. From these discussions, shared values — ethics, trust, accountability, and care — were identified as essential guides for all reparative efforts.

To support the emotional depth of these conversations, group agreements were established, including:



Listed below are community-created values derived from the themes that came from our break out groups, categorized by the UN Basic Principles on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation. Researchers will apply these values when engaging descendants and survivors in developing proposals and recommendations under Title 34 of the Administrative Code. Section 34-204 requires NYC CORE to “issue terms and guidelines for the creation and safeguarding of a physically and psychologically secure space and process for truth and reconciliation” and the development of these community-created values represents an important step in this process.

The values outlined below represent conversations from the first city-wide gathering. As we continue this work, the values, definitions, and implications presented below will be revisited and refined by community members participating in this work and NYC CORE.

### I. Compensation

- **Holistic Recognition of Harm:** Value a comprehensive understanding that compensation extends beyond direct enslavement to encompass the enduring and multidimensional harms experienced by descendants, including but not limited to racial terror, land theft, housing discrimination, educational inequities, healthcare disparities, and mass incarceration.
- **Asset-Building and Intergenerational Wealth Creation:** Prioritize compensatory models that foster sustainable wealth accumulation and provide long-term assets for future generations, rather than solely one-time payouts.
- **Lineage and Historical Connection as Foundation:** Center eligibility on demonstrable lineage to chattel slavery in New York City and familial experiences with post-slavery systemic harms, acknowledging that the impact extends beyond the immediate period of slavery.
- **Respect for Existing Knowledge and Documentation:** Value and utilize existing historical documentation at all levels of government to establish eligibility and claims, rather than burdening communities with a "start from scratch" process.
- **Constitutional and Legal Integrity:** Ensure that proposed compensatory frameworks address legal tensions and leverage established legal precedents.
- **NYC's Accountability:** Acknowledge and address New York City's specific historical role and complicity in racialized capitalism and the slave economy.
- **Future-Oriented Well-being:** Frame compensation as a means to achieve mental, physical, and financial health for future generations, aiming to reduce stress, heal divides, and break cycles of poverty and exclusion.

### II. Non-repetition

- **Systemic and Institutional Transformation:** Prioritize fundamental legal and institutional transformations to permanently end the harms, such as abolishing the prison industrial complex and addressing wage theft.
- **Dehumanization and Exploitation Prevention:** Value efforts to dismantle the mythology of anti-Black history and culture that perpetuates dehumanization and exploitation.
- **Self-Determination:** Center the goal of fostering self-determination for Black communities, moving away from past and present commodification of bodies and economic harm via exploitation and extraction of labor, culture, and resources.

### III. Satisfaction

- **Truth-Seeking and Acknowledgment of Harm:** Value the process of truth-seeking and directly confronting the fraudulent historical narratives perpetuated by the U.S. education system.
- **Autonomy of the Harmed:** Emphasize that the definition of "satisfied" must be determined by those who have been harmed, centering their voices and experiences.
- **Direct Access and Decentering the Harm-Doer:** Prioritize direct access to Reparations for individuals and communities, and actively decenter the harm-doer in initiatives towards Reparations and social change.
- **Systemic Educational Reform:** Advocate for a complete overhaul of educational systems to provide accurate historical truths and support the Black community.
- **Legislative Language Reform and Identity Affirmation:** Value the reformation of language in legislation and a revision of the 14th amendment to specifically address identity markers for ongoing Reparations dispersal.

### IV. Rehabilitation

- **Holistic Healing and Mental Well-being:** Prioritize interventions that address the deep psychological impacts of racism, colonialism, and oppression, including trauma, anxiety, self-hatred, and addiction.
- **Trauma-Informed and Anti-Oppressive Development:** Value youth investment and development support that is specifically trauma-informed and anti-oppressive.
- **Addressing Root Causes:** Explicitly name and address settler colonialism, colonialism, and racial capitalism as the fundamental causes of psychological issues and systemic problems.
- **Community-Level Interventions:** Emphasize system and community-level interventions in key areas like schools, health services, and municipal infrastructure (e.g., water quality).
- **Cultural Affirmation and Stigma Reduction:** Value cultural organizing and narrative change work to shift the culture around mental health and remove the stigma associated with seeking help.
- **Reconnecting Mind, Body, and Spirit:** Promote approaches that facilitate relearning or remembering the connection between mind, body, and spirit, and support self-regulation.
- **Interpersonal and Community Cohesion:** Value interventions that strengthen healthy interpersonal relationships, family bonds, and community cohesion, recognizing how systemic stress breaks these down.
- **Economic Stability for Healing:** Prioritize economic freedom and anti-poverty measures as essential components of healing and improved quality of life.
- **Culturally Grounded Healing at Scale:** Emphasize the need for specialized, culturally grounded healing services delivered at scale to address generational trauma at individual, family, and community levels.
- **Ethical Data Collection and Acknowledgement of Cost:** Value ethically collected research and data from Black people that centers their stories, acknowledging the expansive and multi-generational cost of harms.
- **Food Justice and Land Sovereignty:** Prioritize food policies that benefit Black communities, increase Black farmland, address Black land loss in solidarity with Indigenous nations, and dismantle racism within the food system, recognizing the connection between nutrition and health.

**V. Restitution**

- **Addressing Health Disparities:** Value targeted efforts to address severe health disparities, including Black maternal health, infant mortality, chronic illnesses, and environmental health impacts like lead poisoning.
- **Rectifying Housing Discrimination:** Prioritize direct efforts to remedy harms caused by redlining and discriminatory lending practices.
- **Historically Informed Approaches:** Emphasize that restitution efforts require a significant amount of historical knowledge and a nuanced understanding of the scope of racial harm.
- **Government-Aided Models:** Consider and explore models where government entities actively aid in restitution efforts for racial harm, drawing on precedents like the Holocaust Claims Processing Office.



**“The commodification of Black people for profit impacts every aspect of life as we know it today. Therefore, NYC cannot just put out a progress report. We must issue continuous calls-to-action for meaningful redress of the harm caused by chattel slavery, Jim Crow, and their legacies and ensure a pathway for greater self-determination.”**

*-NYC CORE Commissioner, Linda Tigani*

## Understanding the Dimensions of Reparations

Beyond the formal presentation, small group conversations allowed participants to define community-led values that will guide the research and direct solutions regarding Title 34 of the Administrative Code. Stories about family, survival, housing, education, policing, and health were shared, along with visions for healing and what Reparations should encompass — land, education, healthcare, and community safety — with many emphasizing that healing begins with listening. To further capture communities’ perspectives, NYC CORE continued to collect responses to the question, "What does Reparations mean to you?" between the gathering and Juneteenth. These varied perspectives, reflecting diverse experiences and future aspirations, underscore the profound significance of Reparations. A systematic analysis of these responses revealed five primary themes that define the contemporary understanding of Reparations:

Key Theme	Core Concept/Goal	Illustrative Responses on Post-it notes
<b>Financial Compensation and Economic Empowerment</b>	Direct compensation and wealth creation	"We want it now," "Pay us what we are overdue," "Reparations should also be about racial capital building," "No income tax!"
<b>Land and Property Reclamation</b>	Return of stolen assets and associated compensation	"Reparations, I would like the land we were promised," "The reclamation of land/property that was forcefully taken," "Descendants of Seneca village... getting their fair share."
<b>Justice, Equity, and Reparative Policies</b>	Dismantling discrimination and achieving racial equity	"Reparations look like justice for all—no more discrimination, oppression," "Reparations should be as systematic as enslavement and its aftermath," "make up for ongoing Jim Crow!"
<b>Acknowledgement, Education, and Cultural Reckoning</b>	Official recognition of harm and truth-telling	"Acknowledgement," "Accurate education that honors the founding builders of our nation," "A cultural reckoning that requires America look at itself."
<b>Specific Programs and Tangible Benefits</b>	Targeted services and investments in key areas	"Free education for African American children," "50 Billion down payment on a state-of-the-art health facility," "Fair housing," "Free, easy ancestry search."

By the end of the gathering, it was clear that Reparations cannot be reduced to mere reports or timelines; they must be felt, built, defined and defended by the community, and inextricably linked to deep structural change. The presentation and breakout sessions, a vital thread in the fabric of the first city-wide gathering, reinforced a central truth: **we cannot chart a liberated future without confronting the past and adequately resourcing the present.** NYC CORE remains committed to co-creating a city where repair is not rhetorical, but real.

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

The work is not easy. We are learning as we go from the work happening nationwide, globally and in our own backyard locally. Some challenges include:

- Ensuring a space that is psychologically safe for everyone to speak their truth and fully participate in the development of this work.
- Building trust with and across communities that may not have the same definitions of who is considered a descendant of chattel slavery, or a survivor of its vestiges and of harmful policies created by the City of New York.

## What the City Has Done So Far

Since the laws passed, here are some early steps the city has taken:

- NYC Government has provided NYC CORE with funding in fiscal year 2026 to support researchers; a public education campaign; borough-based public gatherings; development and early implementation of political education; capacity building for organizations invested in Reparations, and Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation; and to collect input from community members across the five boroughs.
- Began identifying contracting mechanisms and potential vendors to support our learning sessions, community engagement, communications services, develop curriculum, and lead the development of and outreach for our first gathering.
- Conducted learning calls with leaders and community to help guide our processes.
- Hired two full time staff members who will focus a significant portion of their time on Reparations, and Truth, Healing and Reconciliation. Began drafting a truth telling guidebook for community members across the nation to participate in this work.
- Developed a solicitation, which will be released in the coming weeks, to identify the first round of community groups to directly work with NYC CORE to design and implement the next stages of this work.

The city will continue to learn from community experts, activists, and organizations that have been doing this work for decades. This is only the beginning. However, this beginning is rooted in the collective of our communities.



## What Comes Next and How to Get Involved

This is just the first step. Many more gatherings will happen in the future. The Commission will continue to listen, collect stories, and work with community members to shape what Reparations and healing can look like in NYC.

Next NYC CORE and our partners will launch the following pieces:

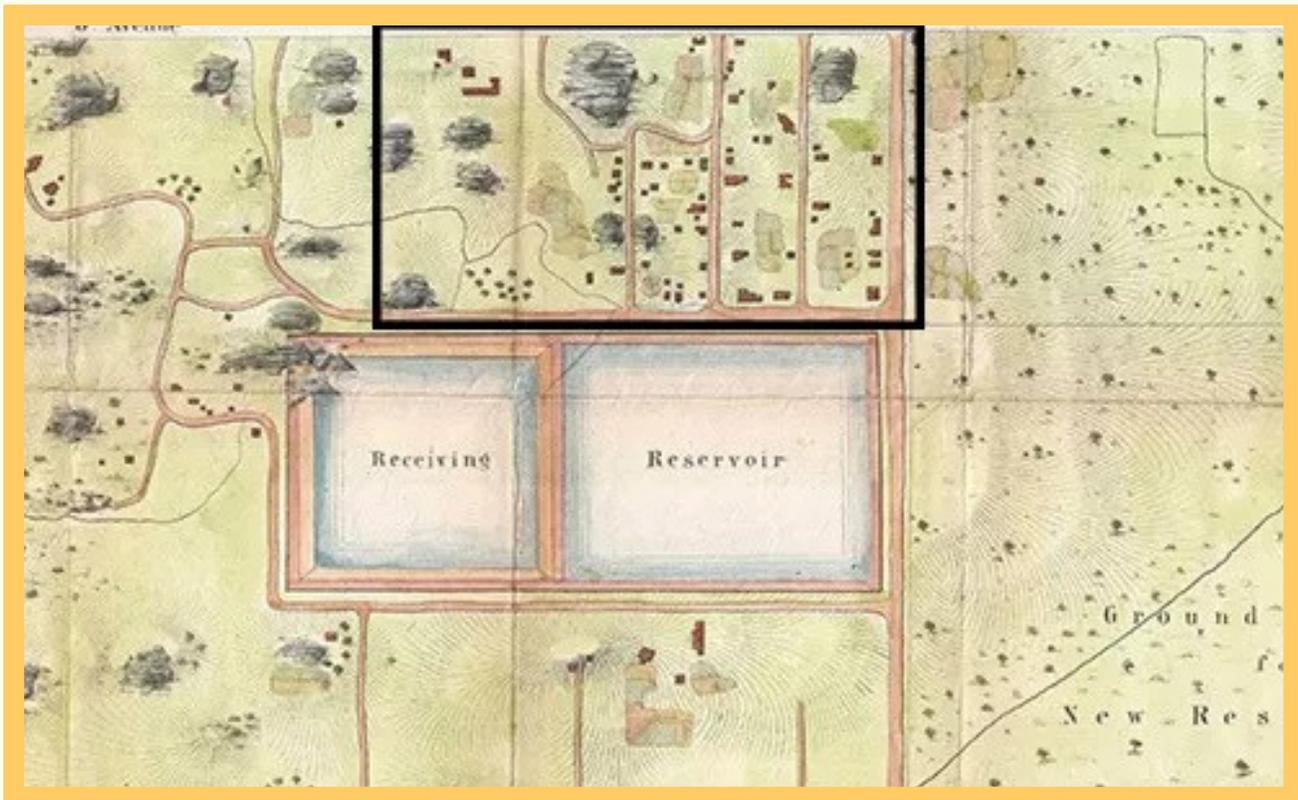
- **Call for researchers to establish a study on Reparations.** NYC CORE will select researchers who will then select experts to commence the study. We have put together a cursory history and timeline of chattel slavery in New York City, please see the appendix section of the report.
- **Telling Our Truth: Reparations and Racial Healing Guidebook:** NYC CORE and its partners will create a Guidebook for New Yorkers interested in sharing the truth of their experiences with racial injustice. The stories shared can be from the first-person perspective or they can be retellings of stories passed down in families. The Guidebook will include detailed questionnaires, informed consent forms, and instructions on how to submit written, oral, or video testimonies. The Guidebook will also include resources to support the well-being of New Yorkers throughout the process of sharing their truth. The Guidebook will be based on the highest standards of rights for the participants and on the best practices compiled from similar efforts both in the United States and abroad.
- **Community Organizing Network To Inform NYC study on Reparations and Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation Plan:** NYC CORE will establish a network made of no more than 30 organizations committed to ensuring community voices directly inform the development and implementation of a NYC Study on Reparations, and a Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation process. Organizations will receive awards of up to \$17,500. They may be nonprofits, community and faith-based organizations, local community governance groups, volunteer-led and mutual aid entities, collectives, cooperatives, small businesses, and MWBE's. Through this network, organizations will work closely with NYC CORE and its partners to establish a community-informed study on Reparations, conduct public outreach and local gatherings, participate in research and training efforts, and acquire testimony from those affected by the legacies of Jim Crow and slavery throughout the five boroughs.
- **Borough-based and citywide gatherings** to continue to learn and build the reparations process with the community.

## How You Can Stay Connected

Here's how you can stay involved:

- Visit the Commission's website for updates - [www.nyc.gov/core](http://www.nyc.gov/core)
- Attend future events in your borough
- Share your story at listening sessions
- Follow us on social media @racialequitynyc and tell your friends, family, and community about NYC CORE and our work!

Together, we can tell the truth, heal from harm, and build a future that repairs the past and moves forward.



The black outlined area shows the historic Black neighborhood Seneca Village in 1856. The area shown as the "Receiving Reservoir" is now the Great Lawn in Central Park. Detail from "Map of the Lands Included in The Central Park, from a Topographical Survey, June 17th, 1856" by Egbert Viele.

## Glossary

**Affected person or community:** The terms “affected person” and “affected community” mean a person and a group of people, respectively, that have experienced harm or injustice as a result of the legacies, badges, and aftereffects of slavery, or whose ancestors were subjected to slavery.

**Community stakeholder:** The term “community stakeholder” refers to a person who is an affected individual or member of an affected community, a representative of a community-based organization, a community or religious leader, a scholar or expert, or a representative of a student group.

**Equity:** The term equity means both an outcome and a process. Equity as an outcome means the achievement of a city where the worth, talents, and contributions of all people are valued and recognized, irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, mental or physical disability, national or ethnic origin, immigration status, education, or economic status, and where these characteristics of identity, whether taken individually or through the ways in which they intersect, are not predictors or determinants of economic, political, social, or psychological outcomes, as they neither confer privilege nor deny opportunities.

**Equity as a process:** the closing of gaps in policy, practice, and allocation of city resources through the prioritization of access, opportunities, and resources to those people and communities with the greatest need, whether due to historical or current marginalization or oppression, underinvestment, disinvestment, or under-resourcing of those people and communities, or due to the way in which their intersecting characteristics of identity serve to magnify inequities.

**Healing:** The term “healing” means the process of recognizing psychological, social-emotional, or physical harm done to an individual or community and the process of repairing such harm.

**Marginalization:** The term "marginalization" means the effects of past or current policies or actions that have had a long-term negative impact on an individual, family, community, or neighborhood, including, but not limited to, any collateral consequences of disproportionate law enforcement, any underinvestment in neighborhoods, or any disproportionately penalizing enforcement method. The term "*anti-marginalization*" means actions and policies that reverse and prevent the effects of past or current marginalization.

**Racial Capitalism:** A system where racial oppression is not simply a side effect of capitalism, but is an integral and essential method for extracting, exploiting, and accumulating profit and managing surplus as a result of the European nations trafficking of enslaved Africans (i.e. Dutch West India Company). It views capitalism as having emerged historically from feudalism, its caste system, and slavery. It continues to reproduce itself through all facets of our economy, public safety, and how inequitable development occurs geographically as we know it.

**Racial equity:** The term "racial equity" means, when referring to an outcome, the achievement of equity with a particular focus on race or the intersection of race with other characteristics of identity. When referring to a process, the term "racial equity" means the closing of gaps in policy, practice, and allocation of city resources through the prioritization of access, opportunities, and resources to those people and communities who, based on or at least in part due to race, have historically faced or currently face marginalization or oppression, underinvestment, disinvestment, or under resourcing.

**Reconciliation:** The term "reconciliation" means an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful societal relationships rooted in the acknowledgement of historical truths, universal human dignity, and the shared pursuit of racial equity.

**Reparation:** The terms "reparation" or "reparative measure" mean a measure, policy, law, or program designed to remedy or redress one or more violations of human or civil rights by providing material or symbolic benefits to affected persons, families, or communities.

**Slavery and its legacies:** The term "slavery and its legacies" means the legally sanctioned, race-based practice in New York of holding persons of African and indigenous American descent as chattels between the years 1626 and 1827, and the effects, legacies, badges, and aftereffects of that practice.

**Truth and reconciliation:** The term "truth and reconciliation" means public proceedings, including public hearings and research efforts, conducted for the purpose of investigating and recording serious human rights violations and abuses with the goal of achieving genuine healing, reconciliation, and progress toward a more just and equitable society. Such proceedings seek to establish patterns, practices, and chains of command that reveal the purposeful and systematic nature of such violations and abuses, potentially but not necessarily in concert with or in anticipation of reparative or restorative justice measures.

Appendix A

## TIMELINE ON SLAVERY IN NEW YORK

In the 1700s, slavery in New York City was legalized and institutionalized through a combination of colonial laws, city ordinances, and economic practices under Dutch and then British control.

**1620s-1664**

Dutch West India Company Policies (1620s-1664): The Dutch introduced slavery to New Amsterdam (now NYC) around 1626, importing enslaved Africans for labor in infrastructure and trade. While some Africans under Dutch rule were granted "half-freedom," most were not, and children of the enslaved inherited their status. The Dutch established codes of labor control and created a reliance on African labor in early colonial NYC.

**1665**

British Colonial Laws (Post-1664): After the British seized New Amsterdam and renamed it New York, they expanded and codified slavery through a series of laws:

- The Duke's Laws (1665): Early British governance that didn't outlaw slavery and implicitly allowed enslaved labor in the colony.

**1711**

Municipal Enforcements & Economic Incentives: NYC established a municipal slave market in 1711 at Wall and Pearl Streets, approved by the Common Council. Slavery was embedded in city contracts like infrastructure, port labor, and domestic service. Wealthy merchants, city officials, and clergy were often enslavers



Appendix B

## TIMELINE ON THE SLAVE CODES

The New York Slave Codes were a series of laws passed in the early 1700s that formally legalized and regulated slavery in the colony. These were modeled after Southern slave codes and explicitly legalized slavery and restricted the rights of Black people.

**1702**

This law formally defined enslaved Africans and their children as chattel for life, establishing that slavery would be permanent and inherited across generations.

**1706**

Restricted the rights of free Black people by prohibiting them from owning slaves unless they were close relatives, reducing opportunities for freedom and family protection.

**1712**

Passed in direct response to the New York Slave Revolt of 1712, this law imposed harsh punishments, including death for conspiracies or rebellions. It also increased surveillance by limiting the movement, literacy, and gathering of enslaved individuals.

**1730**

The most comprehensive of the codes, this law reinforced the idea that enslaved people were property. It banned unsupervised gatherings of more than three enslaved people and prohibited them from testifying against white individuals in court.



