



SAN FRANCISCO REPARATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“There is not a distance between the facts of life in San Francisco and the facts of life in Birmingham. San Francisco is just another American city, and if you’re a Black man, that’s a very bitter thing to say.”

-James Baldwin, 1964

“Black people in our country cannot wait any longer for our government to begin addressing each and every one of the extraordinary bits of harm [...] it has caused since the founding, that it continues to perpetuate each and every day all across our communities, all across this country”

-Rep. Cori Bush, 2023

Background

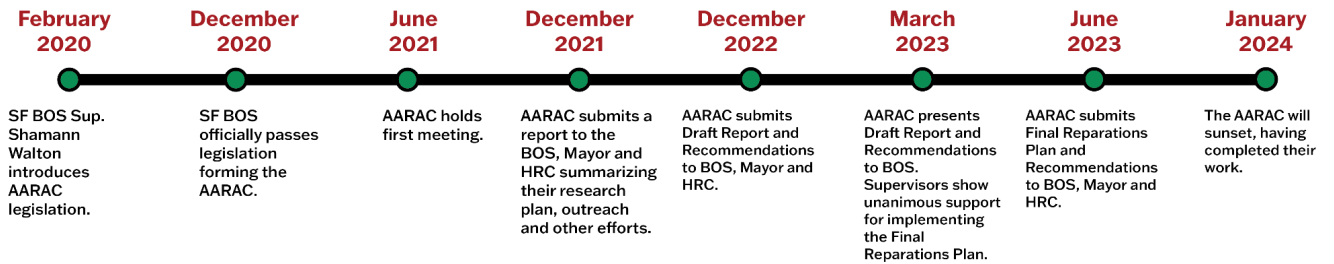
San Francisco occupies a unique space in the American imagination: Because of its history of being at the center of social movements, it is often widely regarded as a liberal bastion, an idealized oasis that has progressed beyond racial discrimination. However, the lived reality for Black San Franciscans tells a different story– one that has been indelibly shaped by residential displacement, persistent disparities in socioeconomic outcomes and broken promises.

In February 2020, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors acknowledged the City’s need to formally document the historical harms endured by San Francisco’s Black communities by voting *unanimously* to form the San Francisco Reparations Advisory Committee (AARAC). In addition to enumerating these harms, the AARAC was tasked with proposing solutions. After two years of research, community engagement and public meetings, the AARAC submitted the final version of the *San Francisco Reparations Plan* to the SF Human Rights Commission, Mayor London Breed and the SF Board of Supervisors in July 2023.



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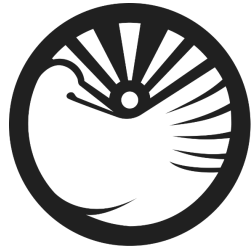
Below is a timeline of the AARAC’s activities:



The Plan and Recommendations set forth by the Committee give the City and County of San Francisco the opportunity to identify the drivers of inequitable community investment, and the public meeting process gave the community an active role in developing solutions. Overall, the *San Francisco Reparations Plan* offers a framework for defining the scope of the policy-based harms that have contributed to inequitable outcomes in Black communities over time, and outlines comprehensive, systemic remedies to address them, through policy and programmatic action.

A Bold Vision for Municipal Reparations

Though much of the national discourse about reparations for Black Americans centers on the history of chattel slavery in the United States, AARAC takes the bold step of demonstrating a municipal government’s unique role in codifying and perpetuating racial inequality. The AARAC names the period of urban history known as Urban Renewal and its effects as the primary catalyst for decades of disinvestment and racial discrimination, and the Committee identifies the ways that these harms were perpetuated through policy decisions and generational institutional decisions. This era, which lasted from the mid-1940s through the 1970s, was a primary driver of Black displacement from the city. Many of the disparities that still exist today can be traced back to policies that originated during this timeframe.



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Summary of Recommendations

The *Overall Recommendations* determined by the Committee are as follows:

- I. The City and County of San Francisco and its agencies should issue a formal apology for past harms, and commit to making substantial ongoing, systemic and programmatic investments in Black communities to address historical harms.
- II. The City and County of San Francisco should establish an independent Office of Reparations within the City to execute this plan. This Office must track implementation of the recommendations of the Reparations Plan and ensure the continued success of programs.
- III. The City and County of San Francisco must create and fund a committee of community stakeholders –such as a Reparations Stakeholder Authority or similar– to ensure equity and continuity in the implementation of relevant policy initiatives, independent of the City and County of San Francisco.

The rest of the AARAC’s Recommendations are primarily divided into four subcommittees, through which the bulk of the Committee’s work was done. These areas are **Economic Empowerment, Education, Health, and Policy**. Through holding regular public meetings, engaging subject matter experts and taking community feedback into account, each subcommittee defined its own priority areas:

Economic Empowerment

- **Financial Reparations**
 - Provide a one-time, lump sum payment of \$5 million to each eligible person.
 - Supplement African American income of lower income households to reflect the Area Median Income (AMI) annually for at least 250 years (\$97,000 in 2021)
- **Rental Housing and Homeownership** for all who qualify.
- **Spatial Justice, Cooperatives and Community Space Ownership**
 - Fully fund Black cultural districts and community centers



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- Create a multi-million dollar fund to buy buildings along Black business corridors.
- Support Black housing cooperatives.
- **Job Creation and Succession**
 - Build the bench and invest in jobs, training and internships.
- **Black Business Ownership and Entrepreneurship**
 - Multimillion dollar investments in Black business ownership.

Education

- **Creating Black-Centered Educational Pathways**
 - Establish an Afrocentric K-12 school in San Francisco, similar to existing culturally specific schools in SFUSD. Study innovative public school models (e.g. *I Promise School*, *iLearn Remediation Intervention and Scholastic Enrichment [iRise]*, and *Freedom Schools*) to implement best practices for urban education and pedagogy in a brand new school built intentionally for African-American student enrollment.
 - Establish an historically Black college and university (HBCU) in the city.
- **Recruiting, Retaining and Supporting African American Educators**
- **Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline**
 - Culturally competent mental health to include meditation, yoga, and which teaches and models healthy coping skills, anger management, navigating gender relations, empowerment and anti-bullying.
 - Create pathways for African American students to pursue both traditional and non-traditional educational opportunities, which create pipelines to living wage jobs, rather than reinforcing pipelines to prison.
 - Work in consultation with the District Attorney and Public Defender's offices to implement a cash incentive program (similar to Richmond's Office of Neighborhood Safety gun violence intervention model) that offers a stipend to those who are at risk of being justice-involved for achieving educational benchmarks like degree completion.



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Health

- Addressing health disparities at the root, including acknowledging historical harms caused by the City and County of SF and taking actions to reduce health disparities by investing in structural, long-term solutions.
- Creating safer public spaces through improvements to the built environment
- Reducing the ongoing burden of stress disparately endured by Black San Franciscans.

Policy

- Addressing the historical and existing state policies that have disproportionately harmed San Francisco's African American communities.
- Enforcing existing local policies that are designed to address historical harms.
- Seeking continuity in implementation by recommending a nonpartisan body and/or new city agency to ensure the successful implementation of Reparations policy recommendations after the AARAC officially sunsets in January 2024.

The AARAC's comprehensive suite of recommendations was called "the nation's most ambitious reparations plan" by the *New York Times* in May 2023, and ultimately sets forth a roadmap that policymakers and community leaders can use to make atonement for discriminatory policies enacted on the local level. The work is undoubtedly rooted in San Francisco; however, the AARAC's work has been a catalyst for other communities in the Bay Area and beyond who are exploring local reparations.

The *San Francisco Reparations Plan* is another step towards justice for Black San Franciscans. It will take commitment, resources and support from the entire community to ensure that this monumental effort continues to move forward.