



## From Here to Equality

Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century

By William A. Darity Jr., A. Kirsten Mullen



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Racism and discrimination have choked economic opportunity for African Americans at nearly every turn. At several historic moments, the trajectory of racial inequality could have been altered dramatically. Perhaps no moment was more opportune than the early days of Reconstruction, when the U.S. government temporarily implemented a major redistribution of land from former slaveholders to the newly emancipated enslaved. But neither Reconstruction nor the New Deal nor the civil rights struggle led to an economically just and fair nation. Today, systematic inequality persists in the form of housing discrimination, unequal education, police brutality, mass incarceration, employment discrimination, and massive wealth and opportunity gaps. Economic data indicates that for every dollar the average white household holds in wealth the average black household possesses a mere ten cents.

In *From Here to Equality*, William Darity Jr. and A. Kirsten Mullen confront these injustices head-on and make the most comprehensive case to date for economic reparations for U.S. descendants of slavery. After opening the book with a stark assessment of the intergenerational effects of white supremacy on black economic well-being, Darity and Mullen look to both the past and the present to measure the inequalities borne of slavery. Using innovative methods that link monetary values to historical wrongs, they next assess the literal and figurative costs of justice denied in the 155 years since the end of the Civil War. Finally, Darity and Mullen offer a detailed roadmap for an effective reparations program, including a substantial payment to each documented U.S. black descendant of slavery. Taken individually, any one of the three eras of injustice outlined by Darity and Mullen--slavery, Jim Crow, and modern-day discrimination--makes a powerful case for black reparations. Taken collectively, they are impossible to ignore.

### About the Authors

William A. Darity Jr. is the Samuel DuBois Cook Professor of Public Policy, African and African American Studies, and Economics at Duke University.

For more information about William A. Darity Jr., visit the [Author Page](#).



A. Kirsten Mullen is a writer, folklorist, museum consultant, and lecturer whose work focuses on race, art, history, and politics. For more information about A. Kirsten Mullen, visit the [Author Page](#).

## Reviews

"Essential to any debate over the need for and way to achieve meaningful large-scale reparations."--*Kirkus Reviews*

"A worthwhile compendium on an extremely important topic."--*Library Journal*

"An extraordinary accomplishment and a brilliant and provocative contribution to the current debate on reparations. *From Here to Equality* provides a genuinely novel and thoughtful solution that will propel this evolving, international political movement."--Craig Steven Wilder, author of *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities*

"Darity and Mullen have written a vital intellectual history and a roadmap for these times. Tragically, the nation continues to bequeath its original sin to yet another generation with a persistent unpaid debt and unearned privileges. The issue of reparations for African Americans is long-debated but not often enough seriously considered. This book is a glimmering exception. *From Here to Equality* is tautly written, fiercely argued, and passionately committed to the spirit and letter of freedom."--Tressie McMillan Cottom, PhD, author of *Thick: And Other Essays*

"A powerful study of the long arc of injustice in America, *From Here to Equality* offers clear remedies for problems that fester in our nation because of slavery's legacies. This beautifully written book is a game-changer, required reading for all who wish to understand the historical and contemporary reparations movement."—Daina Ramey Berry, author of *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation*

"Here is a book the United States profoundly needs--one that places black Americans' press for reparations within the context of a terse, honest account of our nation's past. Bringing together well-known



stories and willfully forgotten ones, Darity and Mullen present an altogether fresh vision of how we came to our present moment and of what should be done to drain the American abscess and heal. Reading the book leaves one inspired--no small feat considering the unflinching attention given to the most painful details of American history. A landmark work sure to inform national and international conversations in the decades to come."--Paul Farmer, MD, Harvard University

