

JULY 27, 2021

## Announcing a \$300,000 Grant to Support Research on Reparations for Black American Descendants of Enslaved Persons

In what may be a historic first for a national foundation, the William T. Grant Foundation today announced a \$300,000 grant to the **Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity at Duke University** for research on the feasibility of paying reparations to Black American descendants of enslaved persons. The project, "Making Black Reparations in America," will be led by Cook Center director William A. Darity Jr.

The project comes amid increased interest in reparations as a mechanism to reduce racial inequality. Whereas a 2004 study reported that only 4 percent of Americans endorsed reparations, today that figure is 30 percent, and more than half of Americans would favor a Congressional commission to study the legacy of slavery and ongoing systemic racism directed at Black Americans.

*Research is clear that the disadvantages faced by Black children and youth substantially reflect the unequal transmission of wealth across generations, which is rooted in slavery and continues through systemic racism into our own day*

Although the full toll of slavery in the United States is immeasurable, one metric that underscores its effects is the racial wealth gap: Black Americans constitute nearly thirteen percent of the population, but they possess less than three percent of the nation's wealth. At the mean, the average level of Black family wealth is \$850,000 less than that of the average White family. The wealth gap matters in terms of understanding Black-White differences because it is a critical index of the cumulative effects, across generations, of racial injustice in the United States.

"Research is clear that the disadvantages faced by Black children and youth substantially reflect the unequal transmission of wealth across generations, which is rooted in slavery and continues through systemic racism into our own day," said Foundation President Adam Gamoran. "Reparations to descendants of enslaved persons has the potential to address the structural foundations of racial inequality, and as a potential national policy, it calls for rigorous scientific inquiry to address questions of feasibility and practicality."

Darity, co-principal investigator Lisa A. Gennetian, and a team of researchers will conduct a series of macro-simulation exercises to investigate the effects of different configurations of a Black reparations. The simulations will gauge not only the impact on the economic well-being of Black children and their families, but also the economy-wide ramifications for all Americans. The scientific work will be accompanied by four engagement activities to bring the findings to both research audiences and the broader public.

*This is a signal moment in the evolution of the effort to develop an effective, comprehensive plan for African American reparations*

A noted scholar of inequality and the economics of reparations, Darity is the Samuel DuBois Cook Professor of Public Policy, African and African American Studies, and Economics at Duke University. Co-principal investigator Lisa A. Gennetian, also at Duke, is the Pritzker Associate Professor of Early Learning Policy Studies, who specializes in research on child and family policy and family wealth.

"This is a signal moment in the evolution of the effort to develop an effective, comprehensive plan for African American reparations," said Darity, who is the co-author of ***From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century*** and helped produce "**The ARC of Justice**" series on the same subject through Duke's Ways and Means podcast. "We appreciate the support of the William T. Grant Foundation in enabling us to move forward at the Cook Center in the design of a program of national redress that finally will close the racial wealth gap in the United States."

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