



## CEO Action for Racial Equity Expands Issue Agenda and Launches Place-based Approach Fellowship to Help Address Widening Disparities and Empower Local Solutions

NEW YORK, MAY 20, 2021 – [CEO Action for Racial Equity](#) today announced an expanded issue agenda that will address widening disparities across economic empowerment, education, healthcare and public safety. After [recently announcing](#) its commitment to closing the digital divide and expanding access to telehealth, the Fellowship will also focus on six additional issues that have long impacted Black Americans across the country.

"Our Fellowship is focusing on eight issues where we can maximize the collective voice of our 100+ organizations to impact policy change," says Roy Weathers, CEO of CEO Action for Racial Equity. "These policies will positively affect access to opportunity, ways of working and the wellbeing of Black Americans across the country in our neighborhoods, classroom and beyond."

In addition to closing the digital divide and expanding access to telehealth, CEO Action for Racial Equity is committed to:

- **A Path Toward Greater Food Equity.** According to [USDA data](#), Black Americans experience food insecurity at twice the rate of white households. The COVID-19 pandemic widened this disparity and highlighted the need for access to grocery stores in Black communities and affordable healthy food through Federal Nutrition Programs.
- **Decriminalizing Poverty: Fines, Fees and Cash Bail Reform.** Pretrial cash bail policies are key drivers of mass incarceration, with more than [470,000](#) people sitting in local jails without having been convicted, often because they can't afford to pay bail and even though they may pose no threat to the community. In addition, fees and fines levied by the justice system disproportionately punish those in poverty. The Fellowship will address the criminalization of poverty where the inability to pay fines, fees, or bail in our justice system disproportionately punishes the poor and impacts Black Americans.
- **Equity and Excellence in Early Childhood Education.** Every dollar spent on high-quality, birth-to-five programs for children can deliver a [13%](#) per year return on investment from better education and health outcomes for children, employment gains for parents, greater economic productivity, and reduced spending on healthcare and crime. For far too many Black families, this is out of reach and the Fellowship will address policies around access, availability and quality of early childhood education.
- **Expanding Economic Opportunity Through Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs).** Financial inclusion has yet to be fully realized for Black Americans, as [23 million](#) remain unbanked or underbanked. The Fellowship will support the funding and expansion of CDFIs that provide a critical on ramp for Black communities to access banking services, bolster financial security and improve the quality of life for Black Americans.
- **Racism: A Public Health Crisis.** As recently declared by the [CDC](#), societal systemic racism negatively affects the mental and physical health of millions of Black Americans. The Fellowship will advance public policies at the local and federal level to declare racism a public health crisis to ensure the allocation of resources and investment to study the impacts of structural racism.
- **Supporting Police Integrity and Transparency: Advancing a National Policing Misconduct Registry.** There are currently no mandatory, centralized, standardized reporting practices that track police misconduct nationwide. To capture more consistent data at a federal level, the Fellowship will support efforts to establish a national policing misconduct registry.

Across all eight issues, CEO Action for Racial Equity is dedicated to advancing and amplifying new and existing local, state and federal public policies. "In addition to expanding our agenda, we're accelerating our advocacy around digital connectivity by calling for high-speed broadband infrastructure in unserved



communities and by shaping the future legislative and regulatory landscape around telehealth,” says Barron Witherspoon, Strategy Committee Member of CEO Action for Racial Equity.

CEO Action for Racial Equity is also launching its place-based approach across five cities beginning in Oakland, California. In these cities, Fellows and signatory companies will connect local stakeholders to the Fellowship’s issue agenda.

“Our place-based approach focuses on what we can deliver locally for the Black community through collaborative, community-driven solutions,” says Pia Flanagan, COO of CEO Action for Racial Equity. “Starting in Oakland, we will not only leverage the relationships of our signatory companies and Fellows, but also embrace the assets and vision of community stakeholders to work toward shared outcomes. This approach will allow us to learn before we scale more broadly.”

For a full list of participating companies or more information on how to become a signatory, visit [ceoaction.com/racial-equity](https://ceoaction.com/racial-equity).

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#### **About CEO Action for Racial Equity**

Launched in October 2020, CEO Action for Racial Equity is focused on advancing racial equity through public policy. Through the Fellowship, employees from more than 100 signatory organizations from CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion™ are working full time to address racial equity in four key areas: healthcare, education, economic empowerment and public safety. Overseen and governed by a group of 20 CEOs representing multiple industries and regions, CEO Action for Racial Equity unites the talent and resources of corporate America to drive societal change alongside community stakeholders and policymakers.