

06.22
2020

BLACK MASS.

COALITION

BLUEPRINT FOR THE NEW WORLD.

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VOLUNTEERS OF COALITION MEMBERS COMPILED THIS
DOCUMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLISHED: JUNE 22, 2020

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ABOUT THIS MOMENT

This is not the first time this has happened. Neither the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, or George Floyd, nor the reactions and conversations in reaction to them, are new. We are seeing the nation once again come to a partial reckoning with itself of the guilt of past injustices and present-day atrocities.

As Black leaders in our respective communities and fields, we are well acquainted with the cycle of grief that strikes the white community when the tragedy of our condition is too public to ignore. We formed this coalition to guide those individuals and organizations in the private sector, the nonprofit and philanthropy worlds, and the halls of government who are attempting right now to determine how they should respond to the constant rage of an oppressed people. What follows is the blueprint we developed that Massachusetts should strive to heed and follow.

While this coalition is formed by Black-led organizations from across the Commonwealth, we know that we are not the only group of people in the United States who have a long "history of repeated injuries and usurpations." Our Indigenous sisters and brothers have waited much longer, not only for their freedom, but for the return of their rightful land. This partnership is necessary for we know, as the great shero of the Civil Rights Revolution, Fannie Lou Hamer, once said, "Nobody's free until everybody's free."

Laid out in the following pages are the targets that we believe each sector identified above will commit to if they truly believe that Black Lives Matter. We include explanations for certain targets to help you better understand how we intend to reach said goal, justify a figure, or clarify our meaning.

We know that there are many issues, either being pushed by individual coalition members or those in our community, that are not addressed in this document, from closing the racial achievement gap in education, to ensuring COVID-19 contact tracing information is not shared with law enforcement agencies, to providing protections for transgender individuals, to extending more rights to immigrant populations, to addressing union representation, and much more. As coalition members, we have agreed to continue championing those issues related to our mission while coming together to also push for the items contained in the pages below.

We also note with excitement the various ideas, plans, demands, recommendations, and lists that have been generated by Black people across the state. If one thing has been learned by white Americans, it is that Black people are not a monolith. While these ideas and demands come from different persons and groups, the goals and principles remain the same: equity, action, and liberation.

This is not the first time this has happened. But, if we are intentional and work together to achieve all of the goals set forth in this document by Dec. 2020, we can make sure that it is one of the last.

COALITION MEMBERS

Black Economic Council of Massachusetts
Boston Ujima Project
City Life/Vida Urbana
Families for Justice as Healing

King Boston
North Americana Indian Center of Boston
Young Abolitionists



THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Capital. Culture. Who's in Charge.



TARGETS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR

These entities have access to significant financial resources and have significant influence at all levels of government. With consumer expenditures of the Black population of Boston alone expected to top \$10 billion in 2023, it is only right that these companies reinvest in our communities what we pour into their bottom line. Here are the private sector targets followed by an explanation for some of the items below.

01

Corporations, large enterprises, venture capital firms, insurance companies, and banks will commit to contributing to a Reconstruction and Rehabilitation fund that will total no less than \$1 billion before December 31, 2030.

02

Venture capital firms and banks will commit to making no less than 10% of their capital available for investment in start-up and scale-worthy Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses on an annual basis. These same entities will also commit to investing in the creation of venture funds and venture studios led by Black and Indigenous peoples.

03

Corporations, large enterprises, venture capital firms, insurance companies, and banks will commit to awarding no less than 10% of their yearly and multi-year contract dollars to Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses on an annual basis.

04

Corporations, large enterprises, venture capital firms, insurance companies, and banks will commit to supporting the health and well being of Black and Indigenous employees and adopting the Good Business Standards.

05

Corporations, large enterprises, venture capital firms, insurance companies, and banks will commit to ensuring that no less than 40% of their executive leadership, management, and board/trustees are Black or Indigenous Americans.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Corporations, large enterprises, venture capital firms, insurance companies, and banks will commit to contributing to a Reconstruction and Rehabilitation fund that will total no less than \$1 billion before December 31, 2030.

Is \$1 billion realistic?

While this is an ambitious goal, a combination of corporate, nonprofit, and philanthropic giving will make it possible to reach this goal in a five-year span. In 2018 alone, the total cash giving of the top 100 corporate entities and top 25 foundations was close to \$1 billion (information obtained from the *Boston Business Journal*). With just 10% contributed annually to the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction fund, we would reach the goal of \$1 billion that would be reinvested in Black and Indigenous communities.

What will the money be used for?

These funds will be used to support alternative economic institutions; grassroots organizations; Black- and Indigenous-led nonprofit organizations that address health, education, LGBTQ, and economic inequities; business development initiatives; land repatriation; and Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses.

Who will manage the money?

The fund will be governed by a participatory process created by coalition and community members to ensure full transparency in awarding funding to local organizations, businesses, and initiatives.





THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Venture capital firms and banks will commit to making no less than 10% of their capital available for investment in start-up and scale-worthy Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses on an annual basis. These same entities will also commit to investing in the creation of venture funds and venture studios led by Black and Indigenous peoples.

Why did you choose 10%?

According to the American Community Survey 2014-2018, Massachusetts residents claiming African American or American Indian as their sole racial identity or as one of two or more racial identities totals roughly 10%. Because of the large share of consumer spending that is directed toward firms with large investments from venture capital firms and banks, we believe that their investment in our business ventures should match no less than our total of the population. Nationally, less than 1% of venture capital dollars are invested in Black startups.

Why should this happen on an annual basis?

Sustainability is key. And, just as the system of oppression took years to intertwine itself into the fabric of American life, systemic change will take years to dismantle. To address longstanding inequities, those who profit from the current imbalance should make long-term commitments to breaking the cycle. Entities like venture capital firms and banks should work to grow the viability of Black- and Indigenous-led ventures until we reach the day that the playing field is level for all.

Why is venture capital investment important?

Venture capital investors make deep capital investments in firms at higher risks. Black- and Indigenous-owned enterprises rarely get this seed funding necessary to scale their brilliant ideas. Investments of this nature could go a long way toward growing a billion-dollar idea that will employ many people from our communities and increase the wealth of community members.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Corporations, large enterprises, venture capital firms, insurance companies, and banks will commit to awarding no less than 10% of their yearly and multi-year contract dollars to Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses on an annual basis.

Why 10% of contracts?

As mentioned earlier, African-Americans and Indigenous peoples make up roughly 10% of the total Massachusetts population. With the investment of these communities in the profits of corporations, large firms, and the rest of the private sector, we believe the percentage goal is the very least these entities should commit to for the growth and sustaining of Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses.

Why are contracts so important?

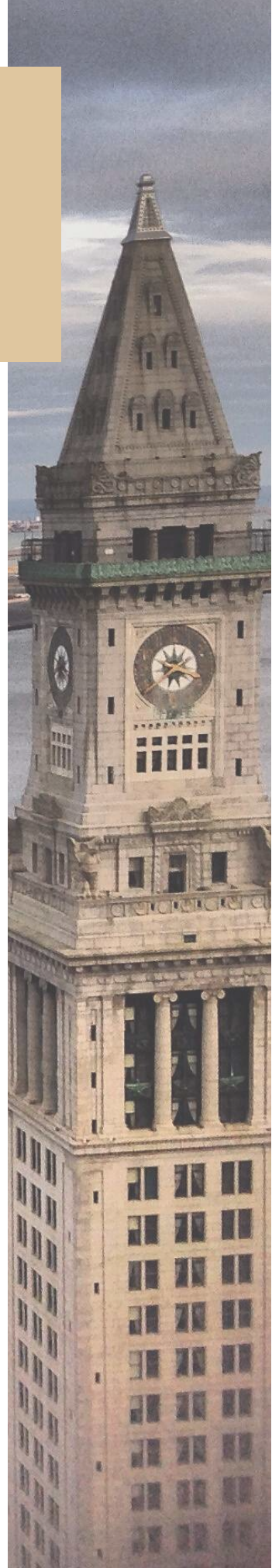
Access to capital has been a longstanding barrier to the growth of Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses. In addition, access to commerce has continued to keep our businesses in a cycle of low-revenue generation. Contracts are key to generating this commerce, which leads to greater profits, certain sustainability, more employment opportunities, higher wages, and important benefits. Contracts impact not only businesses, but whole communities.

Why yearly and multi-year contracts?

Contracts are important. But, their value is tied to their amount and longevity. Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses have been stuck in a cycle of receiving low-dollar, one-time contracts from major firms that require a longer process to apply for than the life of the contract overall. Many choose not to apply for these opportunities because the dollar amount is rarely worth the effort. Multi-year contracts are lucrative and the guaranteed income helps business sustainability.

How can this goal be achieved?

By working with local business groups, this goal can be achieved. With a growth of entrepreneurship in our communities, and with access to new investments by venture capital firms, banks, and the newly established Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Fund, we are confident of the availability of businesses to reach this goal.





THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Corporations, large enterprises, venture capital firms, and banks will commit to supporting the health and well being of Black and Indigenous employees and adopting the Good Business Standards.

How do I support the health and well being of my employees?

Black and Indigenous peoples need community, not merely safe spaces. In a state where we make up roughly 10% of the population, it is important that corporations, large enterprises, venture capital firms, banks, and other major employers that draw talent to the area invest in initiatives and companies that create an environment for the sharing of burdens, resources, advice, opportunities, and the chance to be oneself.

What are the Good Business Standards?

Developed in a participatory process by members of the Boston Ujima Project, the Good Business Standards are 36 enterprise practices across 8 categories designed to ensure that businesses we invest in together reflect the values and goals of working class neighborhoods of color. The standards are approved and updated yearly by Ujima's voting members. The standards fall into the following categories: good faith effort, community ownership, good local jobs, worker power, health and safety, customers and vendors, environment, and community power.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Corporations, large enterprises, venture capital firms, and banks will commit to ensuring that no less than 40% of their executive leadership, management, and board/trustees are Black or Indigenous Americans.

Why did you select 40%?

The African-American and Indigenous population invest a large percentage of their purchasing dollars in corporations and large enterprises, and are a significant amount of banking customers. Therefore, it is only appropriate that these groups be represented in the leadership of these entities.

Why is this important?

Representation matters. It is important that Black and Indigenous peoples be represented at the executive level beyond positions like the Chief Diversity or Equity Officer; that we be more visible as Directors or Trustees rather than liaisons to them; that we have opportunities to serve as senior management, not consistently relegated to low-level positions. All of this is important to ensure that high-level decisions are thoughtful and made with a lens toward equity. Black and Indigenous people also bring valuable perspectives to the table and new insights that others may not share or have. Finally, the conscious consumer makes their decision to spend their dollars with companies whose leadership and board reflect the diversity of the community they come from.

How can this goal be achieved?

Most of these positions are already filled. We are not calling for massive layoffs or the vacating of board/trustee positions to make way for members of our communities. Rather, we believe that we should follow a plan of matching Black and Indigenous peoples to positions that will become available through upcoming retirements or for other reasons, and that companies begin succession planning for board/trustee positions now with a goal of replacing outgoing members with Black or Indigenous peoples. This can be achieved by working with local organizations.





NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

Capital. Culture. Who's in Charge.



NONPROFIT INSTITUTION TARGETS

This category includes public and private universities, hospitals, and cultural institutions. They also have access to significant financial resources and have considerable political power in their local city/town. Most, if not all, contribute heavily to gentrification and displacement. Here are targets for nonprofits followed by an explanation for some of the items below.

01

Nonprofit institutions will commit to 100% participation in PILOT programs across the Commonwealth and to award no less than 10% of their yearly and multi-year contract dollars to Black and Indigenous-owned businesses.

02

Nonprofit institutions will commit to divesting from the prison industrial complex, fossil fuels, and other toxic assets, and reappportion those dollars to a fund that will employ a community-led, participatory process to determine the investments that will be made.

03

Nonprofit institutions will commit to expanding workforce development options by aligning with data that shows where the opportunities for higher paying jobs actually are.

04

Nonprofit institutions will commit to ensuring that no less than 40% of their executive leadership, management, and board/trustees are members of the Black and Indigenous community.

05

Nonprofit institutions will commit to adopting an approved racial equity framework for services and investments.



NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

Nonprofit institutions will commit to 100% participation in PILOT programs across the Commonwealth and to award no less than 10% of their yearly and multi-year contract dollars to Black and Indigenous-owned businesses.

What is PILOT?

PILOT -- or the Payment In Lieu Of Taxes program -- is a voluntary contribution to a city each year by large nonprofits like universities and cultural institutions in the form of cash and community programs. Despite sitting on large tracts of land and benefiting from city or town services like the fire department or snow removal, these entities don't pay property taxes. PILOT contributions help offset the burden placed on taxpayers to fund these services for all property owners.

What does full participation mean?

We want full cash participation and a redrawing of the standards of "community benefits" to ensure institutions impact their neighbors in healthy, desirable ways.

Why yearly and multi-year contracts?

Contracts are important. But, their value is tied to their amount and longevity. Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses have been stuck in a cycle of receiving low-dollar, one-time contracts from major institutions that require a longer process to apply for than the life of the contract overall. Many choose not to apply for these opportunities because the dollar amount is rarely worth the effort. Multi-year contracts are lucrative and the guaranteed income helps business sustainability.

How can this goal be achieved?

By working with local business groups, this goal can be achieved. With a growth of entrepreneurship in our communities, and with access to new investments from the newly established Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Fund, we are confident of the availability of businesses to reach the goal of 10%.

NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

Nonprofit institutions will commit to divesting from the prison industrial complex, fossil fuels, and other toxic assets, and reappropriation those dollars to a fund that will employ a community-led, participatory process to determine the investments that will be made.

Why is divestment important?

As stated by the Movement 4 Black Lives, "We demand investments in the education, health and safety of Black people, instead of investments in the criminalizing, caging, and harming of Black people. We want investments in Black communities, determined by Black communities, and divestment from exploitative forces including prisons, fossil fuels, police, surveillance and exploitative corporations."

Where would I divert the funds?

We are establishing a \$1 billion Reconstruction and Rehabilitation fund in order to support alternative economic institutions, grassroots organizations, small nonprofit organizations, business development initiatives, land repatriation, and Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses.





NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

Nonprofit institutions will commit to expanding workforce development options by aligning with data that shows where the opportunities for higher paying jobs actually are.

How can this goal be achieved?

Many workforce training programs located in our communities tend to steer people toward the same job sectors that are low-wage and provide few, if any, benefits. We believe that these programs should be retooled to begin training members of our community for higher wage jobs with access to benefits that we are not adequately represented in.

Who can help me establish that at my institution?

There are a number of experts, consultants, and contractors in our community across the Commonwealth who are well-equipped to guide your organization on this matter. We will be happy to connect you with such persons who will help you reach this goal.

NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

Nonprofit institutions will commit to ensuring that no less than 40% of their executive leadership, management, and board/trustees are members of the Black and Indigenous community.

Why did you select 40%?

African-American and Indigenous are overwhelmingly negatively impacted by the expansion of these institutions into their neighborhoods. Universities in particular contribute to rising costs of rent due to the need for student housing, and this further displaces historic communities. Therefore, it is only appropriate that these groups be represented in the decision-making process.

Why is this important?

Representation matters. It is important that Black and Indigenous peoples be represented at the executive level beyond positions like the Chief Diversity or Equity Officer; that we be more visible as Directors or Trustees rather than liaisons to them; that we have opportunities to serve as senior management, not consistently relegated to low-level positions. All of this is important to ensure that high-level decisions are thoughtful and made with a lens toward equity. Black and Indigenous people also bring valuable perspectives to the table and new insights that others may not share or have.

How can this goal be achieved?

Most of these positions are already filled. We are not calling for massive layoffs or the vacating of board/trustee positions to make way for members of our communities. Rather, we believe that we should follow a plan of matching Black and Indigenous peoples to positions that will become available through upcoming retirements or for other reasons, and that companies begin succession planning for board/trustee positions now with a goal of replacing outgoing members with Black or Indigenous peoples. This can be achieved by working with local organizations.





NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

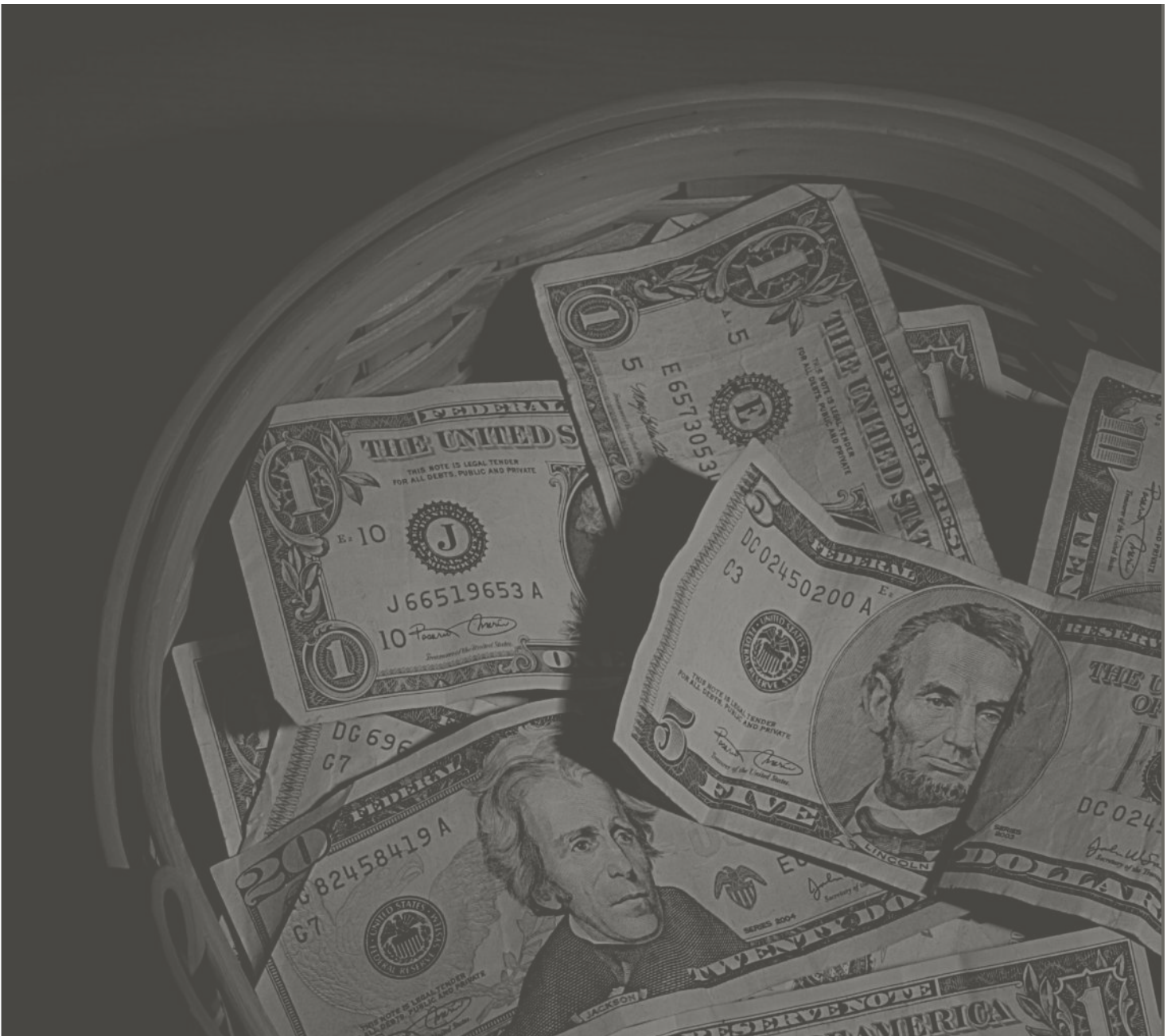
Nonprofit institutions will commit to adopting an approved racial equity framework for services and investments.

What is a racial equity framework?

A racial equity framework sees racism as both individual and institutional, both explicit and implicit—and everyone needs to share these understandings. Once everyone is on the same page, the organization can treat the issue as a top priority by setting goals, making a plan, and holding itself accountable.

Who can help me establish that at my institution?

There are a number of experts, consultants, and contractors in our community across the Commonwealth who are well-equipped to guide your organization on this matter. We will be happy to connect you with such persons who will help you reach this goal.



PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS

Capital. Culture. Who's in Charge.

PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTION TARGETS

Philanthropic organizations are nonprofit nongovernmental entities that utilize donated assets and income to provide social useful services. These institutions have helped to build the nonprofit industrial complex that pits organizations against one another and rewards some organizations for intent but not outcomes, which harms our communities. These entities hold significant sway in the business and government communities. Here are targets for philanthropic institutions followed by an explanation for some of the items below.

01

Philanthropic organizations will commit to reappropriating no less than 1% of their assets for the purchasing of land across the Commonwealth for Black and Indigenous farmers, residents, and business owners to develop, grow, produce, and manufacture goods, food, and services.

02

Philanthropic organizations will commit to reviewing and retooling how they partner with community organizations.

03

Philanthropic organizations will commit to developing an approved accountability system that measures the performance of nonprofit organizations based on actual outcomes from a community perspective.

04

Philanthropic organizations will commit to making seed investments in Black- and Indigenous-led philanthropic initiatives to create “starter endowments.” A similar commitment will be made to invest no less than 10% of their endowments in organizations that create wealth for Black and Indigenous communities.

05

Philanthropic organizations will commit to divesting all endowment funds from the prison industrial complex, fossil fuels, and other toxic assets, and reappropriate those dollars to a fund that will employ a community-led, participatory process to determine future investments by the end of 2020.

PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS

Philanthropic organizations will commit to reappropriating no less than 1% of their assets for the purchasing of land across the Commonwealth for Black and Indigenous farmers, residents, and business owners to develop, grow, produce, and manufacture goods, food, and services.

Why 1%?

According to data collected by the *Boston Business Journal*, total assets of just the top 25 foundations in Massachusetts surpasses \$10 billion. A reinvestment of 1% of these assets would ensure the ability to purchase and build on land across the Commonwealth. Land ownership is important as it helps to build and maintain wealth. Despite making up 13% of population, African Americans own less than 1% of the land. In contrast, white Americans own nearly 96% of land. If we seek to close the racial wealth gap, philanthropic organizations should aid our community in repurchasing lost land so we can begin to rebuild and reconstruct our communities.

Where would I divert the funds?

We are establishing a \$1 billion Reconstruction and Rehabilitation fund in order to support alternative economic institutions, grassroots organizations, small nonprofit organizations, business development initiatives, land repatriation, and Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses.

PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS

Philanthropic organizations will commit to reviewing and retooling how they partner with community organizations.

How can this goal be achieved?

While philanthropic dollars are important for the life of a community organization, few are able to meet the strict requirements to apply for or keep a needed grant. Philanthropic organizations should loosen their application criteria, remove burdensome reporting requirements, trust and invest resources directly in Black- and Indigenous-led organizations, and invest in the long-term operational and discretionary support of such organizations.

Why is this important?

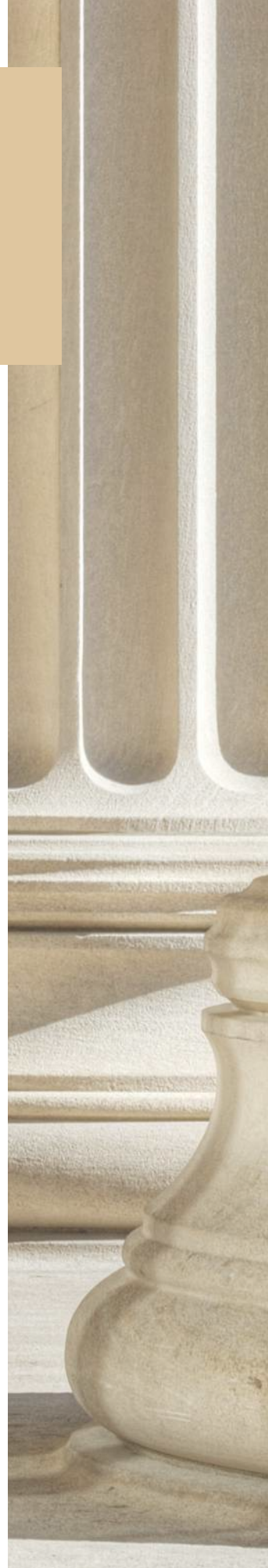
There are many organizations led by Black and Indigenous people that are positively impacting our communities with small budgets and an even smaller staff. Yet, there are other organizations with limited outcomes that receive annual support based on the trust in leadership and the few success stories that the financial investment gives the organization the ability to market. We have the shared goal of seeing the social ills in communities of color addressed in a substantial way. It is important that we invest in organizations that are committed to solving the problem, not perpetuating it so as to justify further philanthropic giving.

PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS

Philanthropic organizations will commit to divesting all endowment funds from the prison industrial complex, fossil fuels, and other toxic assets, and reappportion those dollars to a fund that will employ a community-led, participatory process to determine future investments by the end of 2020.

How can this goal be achieved?

We should invest in a sustainable future and develop a new vision for our economy. For a state that credits itself for achieving progress in the realm of criminal justice reform and believes strongly in the need to address climate change, where we put our public dollars betrays these progressive stances. We should divest from industries or causes that harm our communities. No less than 10% of divested funds should be reinvested in the new Reconstruction and Rehabilitation fund.





STATE GOVERNMENT

Prioritizing justice. Investing in community.



STATE GOVERNMENT TARGETS

This entity makes the laws that govern us all in the Commonwealth. Systems of oppression are both created and supported by this institution in myriad ways. There are also a number of boards and commissions that make crucial decisions for our everyday living that largely go unnoticed. These positions are appointed by the Governor. Here are targets for state government leaders followed by explanations of some of the items below:

01

The state legislature will commit to adopting, and the governor must commit to signing, H.4634, before the end of the 2019-2020 legislative session.

02

The state legislature will commit to introducing and adopting, and the governor will commit to signing, legislation that models the California Banking Act of 2019, enabling municipalities across the Commonwealth to establish a public bank, before the end of the 2021-2022 legislative session.

03

The governor and all state and quasi-state agencies will commit to awarding no less than 10% of their yearly and multi-year contract dollars to Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses on an annual basis. The governor will also commit to ensuring that no less than 40% of the state's executive leadership, management, and board/commissions are members of the Black and Indigenous community.

04

The state legislature and the governor will commit to divesting all pension funds from the prison industrial complex, fossil fuels, and other toxic assets, and reapportion those dollars to a fund that will employ a community-led, participatory process to determine future investments by the end of 2020.

05

The state legislature and the governor will commit to reducing the budgets of the Massachusetts State Police, beginning with a reduction of no less than 20% in the FY2021 budget, as well as further reducing these budgets by no less than 5% each year thereafter.

STATE GOVERNMENT TARGETS

This entity makes the laws that govern us all in the Commonwealth. Systems of oppression are both created and supported by this institution in myriad ways. There are also a number of boards and commissions that make crucial decisions for our everyday living that largely go unnoticed. These positions are appointed by the Governor. Here are targets for state government leaders followed by explanations of some of the items below:

06

The state legislature will commit to adopting, and the governor must commit to signing, S.453, S.464, H.761, H.826, H.2146, H.4264, and HD5128 before the end of the 2019-2020 legislative session.

07

The state legislature will commit to introducing and adopting, and the governor will commit to signing, legislation that would end mandatory minimums for all drug-related charges by the end of the 2019-2020 legislative session. The governor will also commit to commuting all incarcerated people who are currently in the Department of Corrections system for cannabis-related convictions.

08

The state legislature will commit to rejecting, and the governor will commit to vetoing, any bill or budgetary line item that sets aside, borrows, reallocates, or apportions public dollars for the building of new prisons in the Commonwealth. A commitment will also be made to disallow the use of public dollars, goods, or services to aid private companies in the building of new private prisons.

09

The state legislature will commit to introducing and adopting, and the governor must commit to signing, legislation that would protect residential and commercial tenants from evictions, ban homeowner foreclosures, and provide support for landlords.

10

The state legislature will commit to introducing and adopting, and the governor will commit to signing, legislation that would declare racism a public health emergency. A commitment must also be made to adopt and sign S.247/H.443 and S.1877/H.2776.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The state legislature will commit to adopting, and the governor must commit to signing, H.4634, before the end of the 2019-2020 legislative session.

What is H.4634?

Introduced by Rep. Liz Miranda (D-5th Suffolk), this legislation would -- among other things -- provide emergency cash assistance to families impacted by COVID-19, as well as establish a fund to award grants of up to \$50,000 to qualifying small businesses,

The state legislature will commit to introducing and adopting, and the governor will commit to signing, legislation that models the California Banking Act of 2019, enabling municipalities across the Commonwealth to establish a public bank, before the end of the 2021-2022 legislative session.

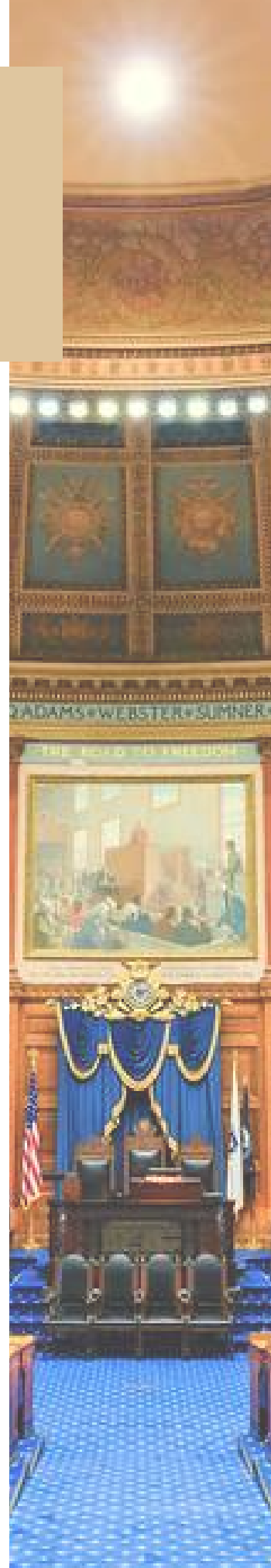
Why is this important?

Public banks can benefit local communities because they aren't driven by the need to seek higher profits for shareholders, allowing government agencies access to low-interest loans for projects that benefit the public. Public banks can partner with private banks to offer loans to businesses and students.

The governor and all state and quasi-state agencies will commit to awarding no less than 10% of their yearly and multi-year contract dollars to Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses on an annual basis. The governor will also commit to ensuring that no less than 20% of the state's executive leadership, management, and board/commissions are members of the Black and Indigenous community.

Why is this important?

The state spends billions of dollars each year on goods and services and yet a *WGBH* report found that only 1% of that spend has gone to Black-owned businesses. In a state where minority-owned businesses employ 125,000 people and contribute billions to the tax base, we deserve more. Representation also matters. The more seats we hold on important boards and commissions, the more equity will be the lens through which crucial decisions are made.



STATE GOVERNMENT

The state legislature and the governor will commit to divesting all pension funds from the prison industrial complex, fossil fuels, and other toxic assets, and reappropriation those dollars to a fund that will employ a community-led, participatory process to determine future investments by the end of 2020.

Why is this important?

We should invest in a sustainable future and develop a new vision for our economy. For a state that credits itself for achieving progress in the realm of criminal justice reform and believes strongly in the need to address climate change, where we put our public dollars betrays these progressive stances. We should divest from industries or causes that harm our communities. No less than 10% of divested funds should be reinvested in the new Reconstruction and Rehabilitation fund.

The state legislature and the governor will commit to reducing the budgets of the Massachusetts State Police, beginning with a reduction of no less than 20% in the FY2021 budget, as well as further reducing these budgets by no less than 5% each year thereafter.

How can this be achieved?

According to Governor Baker's proposed FY21 budget, the MA State Police proposed budget is \$471,079,000, or 26% of the public safety budget. By slashing overtime and other expenses, like a \$250,000 earmark to the Boston Regional Intelligence Center, the state can achieve the goal of cutting at least 20% of the MSP budget for FY21.

The state legislature will commit to adopting, and the governor must commit to signing, S.453, S.464, H.761, H.826, H.2146, H.4264, and HD5128 before the end of the 2019-2020 legislative session.

What legislation does this represent?

S.453, S.464, H.761, H.826, and H.4264 deal with environmental justice. H.2146 and H.4264 are reform measures for state and local police.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The state legislature will commit to introducing and adopting, and the governor will commit to signing, legislation that would end mandatory minimums for all drug-related charges by the end of the 2019-2020 legislative session. The governor will also commit to commuting all incarcerated people who are currently in the Department of Corrections system for cannabis-related convictions.

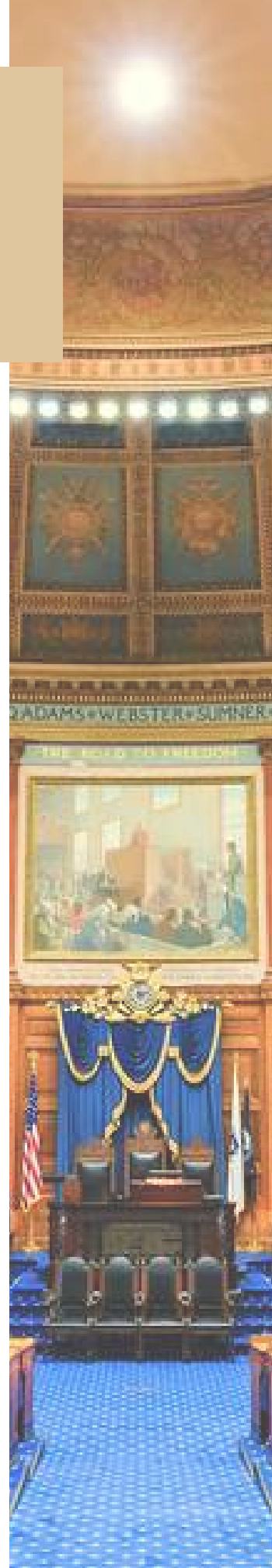
Why is this important?

The War on Drugs is one of the most devastating public policy initiatives to impact the Black and Indigenous communities in recent times. Prison populations across the nation have exploded, families have been destroyed, lives have been retarded, and communities have been left in turmoil as a result of this four-decade long failed policy. If Massachusetts wants to hold onto its title as progressive in the area of criminal justice reform, it should repeal all mandatory minimums related to drug charges. Since the state legalized cannabis, the governor should also commute the sentences of those who still remain in prison as a result of cannabis-related convictions.

The state legislature will commit to rejecting, and the governor will commit to vetoing, any bill or budgetary line item that sets aside, borrows, reallocates, or apportions public dollars for the building of new prisons in the Commonwealth. A commitment will also be made to disallow the use of public dollars, goods, or services to aid private companies in the building of new private prisons.

Why is this important?

The state has an obligation to spend public dollars wisely and in the best interest of all residents. Prisons are neither a wise investment nor a public good. Therefore, no budget should include the setting aside of taxpayer dollars for the building of new prisons or the support of private enterprises to do the same.





STATE GOVERNMENT

The state legislature will commit to introducing and adopting, and the governor will commit to signing, legislation that would protect residential and commercial tenants from evictions, ban homeowner foreclosures, and provide support for landlords.

What would legislation like this include?

Any legislation that is drafted, introduced, approved, and signed should include all recommendations from grassroots organizations like City Life/Vida Urbana. Such recommendations include, but are not limited to, canceling/banning evictions for rent due from the start of the State of Emergency through 12 months following its end, providing “Just Cause” protections to ensure tenants and foreclosed homeowners cannot be evicted for no-fault or non-renewal of leases for 12 months following the end of the emergency declaration, freezing rents at pre-COVID-19 levels, canceling/banning foreclosures for homeowners and landlords based upon missed mortgage payments due to COVID-19, expanding current mortgage deferment protections to landlords who own up to 15 rental units, extending current mortgage deferment protections for one year, and ensuring borrowers cannot be charged penalties for non-payment of mortgage.

The state legislature will commit to introducing and adopting, and the governor will commit to signing, legislation that would declare racism a public health emergency. A commitment will also be made to adopt and sign S.247/H.443 and S.1877/H.2776.

Why is this important?

If we are going to seriously address the impact of systemic racism on the Commonwealth, we should recognize the threat as it is: an epidemic. All available resources can then be marshaled by the governor to address the problem head-on. The attached legislation is a step in that direction as it addresses one of the oldest offenses the state has made: the racist motto and seal of the state as well as the offensive caricatures of Indigenous people in the form of mascots at public schools.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Prioritizing justice. Investing in community.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT TARGETS

This entity makes the laws that govern us in our cities or towns. Systems of oppression are also created and supported by this institution in myriad ways. Like in state government, there are a number of boards and commissions that make crucial decisions for our everyday living that largely go unnoticed. These positions are appointed by the Mayor or town administrator. Here are targets for state government leaders followed by explanations of some of the items below:

01

Cities and towns will commit to establishing standards for participatory budgeting that will begin with the FY2022 budget process.

02

Cities and towns will commit to reducing the police budget by no less than 10% in the FY2021 budget, as well as further reducing the police budget by no less than 5% each year thereafter.

03

Cities and towns will commit to establishing a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program that will begin collections in FY2022 and be governed by a community-led, participatory process.

04

Cities and towns will commit to adopting legislation that establishes equity in the cannabis industry using Boston as a model by FY2022.

05

Cities and towns will commit to awarding no less than 10% of their yearly and multi-year contract dollars to Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses on an annual basis.

06

Cities and towns will commit to removing police officers/public safety officials from schools and other educational facilities by the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT TARGETS

This entity makes the laws that govern us in our cities or towns. Systems of oppression are also created and supported by this institution in myriad ways. Like in state government, there are a number of boards and commissions that make crucial decisions for our everyday living that largely go unnoticed. These positions are appointed by the Mayor or town administrator. Here are targets for state government leaders followed by explanations of some of the items below:

07

Cities and towns will commit to adopting legislation prohibiting the use of facial recognition tools by police departments as well as measures that ensure greater transparency in the police departments' surveillance practices.

08

Cities and towns will commit to adopting measures that remove barriers to effective misconduct investigations & civilian oversight, keep officers' disciplinary history accessible to the police department and the public, and ensure financial accountability for officers and police departments that kill or seriously injure civilians.

09

Cities and towns will commit to establishing a police civilian review board with subpoena powers, the ability to recommend and carry out disciplinary actions, and whose makeup is majority members of marginalized and over-policed communities.

10

Cities and towns will commit to rejecting any legislation or budgetary line item that sets aside, borrows, reallocates, or apportions public dollars for the building of new prisons. A commitment will also be made to disallow the use of public dollars, goods, or services to aid private companies in the building of new private prisons. A further commitment will be made to reject or deny all current and future applications from private companies that wish to purchase, reside on, make use of, or rent public land for the building of private prisons.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Cities and towns will commit to establishing standards for participatory budgeting that will begin with the FY2022 budget process.

Why is this important?

Participatory budgeting is a powerful, innovative tool that is inclusive of the whole community and a way to hold government accountable. This type of public policy allows cities and towns to educate, engage, and empower residents while giving them a sense ownership and establishing greater communication between neighbors.

Cities and towns will commit to reducing the police budget by no less than 10% in the FY2021 budget, as well as further reducing the police budget by no less than 5% each year thereafter.

How can this be achieved?

The demands of hundreds of thousands of protesters is clear: the budgets of our police forces should be significantly reduced and the money reinvested in community-oriented solutions. Cities and towns can follow the lead of others by focusing first on overtime budgets and then disbanding units or departments that are perpetuating harmful behavior onto the community.

Cities and towns will commit to establishing a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program that will begin collections in FY2022 and be governed by a community-led, participatory process.

What is PILOT?

PILOT -- or the Payment In Lieu Of Taxes program -- is a voluntary contribution to a city each year by large nonprofits like universities and cultural institutions in the form of cash and community programs. PILOT contributions help offset the burden placed on taxpayers to fund city services for all property owners.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Cities and towns will commit to adopting legislation that establishes equity in the cannabis industry using Boston as a model by FY2022.

Why is this important?

The War on Drugs has failed. Because of this, Massachusetts residents voted to legalize cannabis with a framework for equity built into the legislation. The intent has hardly been matched by action, however. Boston took steps in 2019 to address the growing gap in equal access to resources in the cannabis industry. All cities and towns should establish similar legislation to ensure that we prevent the deepening of the divide between those who have been severely harmed by the War on Drugs and those who had resources to profit on either side of it.

Cities and towns will commit to awarding no less than 10% of their yearly and multi-year contract dollars to Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses on an annual basis.

Why are contracts so important?

Access to capital has been a longstanding barrier to the growth of Black- and Indigenous-owned businesses. In addition, access to commerce has continued to keep our businesses in a cycle of low-revenue generation. Contracts are key to generating this commerce, which leads to greater profits, certain sustainability, more employment opportunities, higher wages, and important benefits. Contracts impact not only businesses, but whole communities.

Cities and towns will commit to removing police officers/public safety officials from schools and other educational facilities by the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

Why is this important?

Students can only learn in a safe environment. The presence of police officers in public schools has a traumatic effect on students of color. Their presence also leads to their overuse in situations where conflicts between students of color and white students or staff arise.





LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Cities and towns will commit to adopting legislation prohibiting the use of facial recognition tools by police departments as well as measures that ensure greater transparency in the police departments' surveillance practices.

Why is this important?

We don't need more surveillance in our communities. Numerous studies have shown that this technology reinforces racial and gender bias. A study published by the federal government found that face recognition algorithms were much more likely to fail when attempting to identify the faces of people of color, children, the elderly, and women. We should invest in programs that build trust in our communities, not erode them.

Cities and towns will commit to establishing a police civilian review board with subpoena powers, the ability to recommend and carry out disciplinary actions, and whose makeup is majority members of marginalized and over-policed communities.

How can this be achieved?

Accountability is important. A civilian review board with the authority to properly investigate claims misconduct, and with the ability to hold those who violate their oath of office accountable, will go a long way to ward ensuring the relationship between police and the communities they serve are repaired.

Cities and towns will commit to rejecting any legislation or budgetary line item that sets aside, borrows, reallocates, or apportions public dollars for the building of new prisons..

Why is this important?

Cities and towns have an obligation to spend public dollars wisely and in the best interest of all residents. Prisons are neither a wise investment nor a public good. Therefore, no budget should include the setting aside of taxpayer dollars for the building of new prisons or the support of private enterprises to do the same.

