

RACIAL JUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES

George Soros and the Open Society Foundations have supported the struggle for racial justice ever since the launch of his philanthropy in the United States in the 1990s. Many of our partners are now leading national demands for systemic change in the United States to address anti-Black racism and support the movement for Black lives. We will continue this work, adapting to the changing landscape of the struggle, and responding to new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

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- 1994** George Soros launched Open Society's work in the United States with efforts to reform U.S. drug policies that unfairly targeted Black people. These efforts soon expanded to the need for broad reform of a discriminatory criminal justice system, including the elimination of the death penalty.
 - 1998** The Foundations launched the Open Society Institute–Baltimore—an innovative effort to address three intertwined problems affecting the city's Black population: drug policy, high incarceration rates, and obstacles that impede Black youth in succeeding both in and outside of the classroom. To date, Open Society has invested over \$113 million in Baltimore.
 - 2003** Open Society created the Racial Justice Initiative in the United States, a new grantmaking effort to address systemic racial inequality experienced by historically marginalized communities of color. The program addressed such issues as voting rights, public policy reform, civil rights litigation, housing segregation, and community organizing.
 - 2007** The Foundations launched the Campaign for Black Male Achievement, investing nearly \$20 million over several years. The initiative connected local leaders and over 2700 organizations to share knowledge and resources aimed at improving life outcomes for Black men and boys.
 - 2011** Open Society helped develop Communities United for Police Reform, a New York City-based campaign to challenge—and substantially reduce—the police department's racially discriminatory stop and frisk practices.
 - 2014** The Open Society Foundations gave a grant of \$50 million to the ACLU to advance its efforts to reduce mass incarceration nationwide.
 - 2019** Open Society-U.S. invested \$25 million in multi-year grants to state organizations led by and accountable to people of color, and gave \$15 million to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund in recognition of its 80th anniversary.
 - 2020** Open Society announced investments of \$220 million to build power in Black communities, promote bold new anti-racist policies in U.S. cities, and help first-time activists stay engaged.

FOCUS AREAS TODAY

Criminal Justice Reform: Open Society was one of the earliest and largest supporters of criminal justice reform. Over the years, the Foundations have challenged the constitutionality of the death penalty and its racially skewed application, supported more humane treatment of those in the youth justice system, and funded efforts to challenge California's three-strikes law. More recent efforts have focused on correcting policies that have for too long ravaged communities of color.

Open Society continues to push for an end to punitive drug policies and sentencing practices that are unequally borne by people of color. In Louisiana, the Foundations are confronting post-Reconstruction policies explicitly designed to maintain racial control, such as non-unanimous jury verdicts that limit the power of Black jurors. We also continue to promote reforms to policing to address the gross disparities and violence affecting Black communities in particular.

Voting Rights: We continue to fight partisan efforts to exclude African Americans from voter rolls and from casting their ballot by supporting those engaged in grass-roots mobilization, voter education, and legal challenges, as well as initiatives to restore voting rights to those convicted of felony offenses. Open Society helped to create a multi-million dollar collaborative to respond to a Supreme Court ruling scaling back Voting Rights Act protections and is helping to lead a philanthropic partnership aimed at battling voter suppression and ensuring voters have safe and secure options for casting ballots in the midst of a pandemic.

Power Building: Open Society in 2019 made unprecedented investments in organizations led by and accountable to people of color including the American South, a region historically neglected and underfunded by philanthropy.

Economic Opportunity: Open Society continues to support efforts to eliminate barriers to economic progress that face Black Americans, including underfunded, dysfunctional schools.

Arts, Culture, and Narrative: Open Society continues to support artists and projects that address the complex issues of systemic discrimination. We are increasing investments in efforts to shape perceptions and attitudes to build an inclusive multiracial democracy, and to combat toxic narratives and disinformation about communities of color that perpetuate harmful policies and practices.

FOR THE RECORD

- The Soros Justice and Soros Equality Fellowships have supported over 200 emerging leaders over the past 20 years, engaged in a wide range of racial justice work. Among the many noteworthy Fellows: Michelle Alexander, author of the influential book *The New Jim Crow*; Hank Willis Thomas, an artist and advocate whose For Freedoms Initiative explored the relationship of systemic racism and democracy; and Norris Henderson, whose advocacy helped transform the justice system in New Orleans and later helped to restore the voting rights of returning citizens.
- Open Society supports Black journalists and journalism, through the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting and ongoing efforts to increase the ranks, retention, and profile of reporters of color.
- In 2011, George Soros gave \$30 million to support a New York City initiative to create programs helping young Black and Latino men with training, job placement, and fatherhood classes. He has also given more than \$60 million over the years to Geoffrey Canada's Harlem Children's Zone.
- Following the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Open Society provided resources to advocates seeking to reform local police practices, supported early convenings of the grass-roots movement for Black lives that emerged from that tragedy and has invested in a range of Black-led groups, including Law for Black Lives and Black Voters Matter.
- When hate crimes spiked following the 2016 elections, we invested \$10 million in a Communities Against Hate initiative, to help give communities under threat a place to report and share information, and build solidarity across racial, ethnic, and religious lines.
- Open Society has long supported Bryan Stevenson and the Equal Justice Initiative, creators of the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, and joined with other funders in 2019 to create the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, the largest preservation campaign ever undertaken on behalf of African American history.