



COMMISSION ON RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Mayor-President
Sharon Weston Broome

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

2020 / 2021

**COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**THE ONLY WAY FOR US TO MOVE
FORWARD AS A COMMUNITY OF PEACE,
PROSPERITY, AND PROGRESS IS TO
GROUND OURSELVES IN RACIAL EQUITY,
SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND SOCIAL COHESION
WITHIN THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF OUR
GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS AND OUR
SOCIETY.**

MAYOR-PRESIDENT SHARON WESTON BROOME

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Neighbors and Friends:

It is with great honor that I serve our City-Parish as Mayor-President. As Mayor-President, it is my mission to create a community driven by peace, prosperity, and progress for everyone. Without equitable systems, marginalized communities face barriers when seeking basic opportunities for security and advancement. Consequences of these inequitable systems were revealed this past year. This push for equity has been my mission long before I held this office, and it is my intent to ensure it remains long after.

The Coronavirus pandemic illuminated prevalent racial injustices our country has suffered from for centuries and showcased the need for reform. At the forefront of the call for change were our friends, neighbors and fellow residents. Following the death of George Floyd, Baton Rouge stood in solidarity with his family and movements around the nation by organizing peaceful protests. It was the voices of our own that personally inspired me, and prompted the creation of the Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion (COREI).

The purpose of COREI is to instill accountability, racial equity, and inclusion throughout City-Parish. COREI provides an opportunity for open, honest, and continual dialogue between community members, public and private sector leaders, and other community stakeholders. Utilizing the diversity amongst us is key to strengthening our city, and vitally important to building a more unified society.

Progress takes intentionality, dedication, and collaboration. Members of the Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion lay the foundation to create the path to a more equitable future. The only way for us to move forward as a community of peace, prosperity, and progress is to ground ourselves in racial equity, social justice, and social cohesion within the infrastructure of our government systems and our society.

As we move towards a more equitable and inclusive future, we will choose faith over fear for it is the only path that will bring about the transformative change we so desire. While we celebrate our strides toward greater equity, we also acknowledge that now begins the hard work. I invite you all to join us on this path towards greater racial equity and inclusion.



Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome

2020 Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion 2020

Arts, Culture, and Community Non-Profits

Sarah Cortell Vandersypen
Maria Harmon

Patrick Lawler
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Community and Economic Development

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Education, Health & Human Services

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Government Entities

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Historic Recognition and Physical Expression

Tara Mitchell
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Office of Mayor-President Advisory Team

Courtney M. Scott – Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Dr. Pamela Jones – Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Veneeth Iyengar – Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Jared Hymowitz – Director of Healthy BR
Helen Frink – Special Assistant
Talasía Jones – Community Partner Management VISTA

Special Thanks to Our Institutional Partners: Casey Phillips, Karron Alford, Sam Sanders, Jerry Jones, Andrew Fitzgerald, Janet Simmons, Dr. Reva Hines, Corey Wilson, Sherreta Harrison, Raymond Jetson, Kevin Newman, Judge Gail Grover, and Dr. Monique Fondren Cain

Executive Summary

In the midst of a global health epidemic, the United States was plagued with major civil unrest centered around race, police policies and community relations. At the epicenter of the unrest was the death of George Floyd which sparked protests across cities, the country and eventually the world. Baton Rouge was no different. Baton Rouge residents stood in solidarity with George Floyd and the City of Minneapolis to urge our city officials to look at policing practices and race relations. In response to the civil unrest, Mayor Broome created a Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion (COREI) with the intentions to improve equity in Baton Rouge.

Upon the announcement of COREI, our office received an overwhelming response from the community resulting in 198 applicants. These applicants were from all walks of life, some were lawyers, professors, students others were mothers, event planners, but each was a concerned resident. Although only 24 applicants were selected, their engagement reflected Baton Rouge's desire for racial equity and eagerness to transform the city for the better.

The 24 members were tasked to learn and evaluate city practices and policies in 90 days to present recommendations that will improve racial equity. Those 24 members were separated into 5 different work groups: Historic Recognition and Physical Expression; Arts, Culture, and Community Non-Profits; Education, Health, and Human Services; Government Entities and Community and Economic Development with the purpose of analyzing major segments that make up the fabric of our society.

Members met for the overall Commission every other Thursday and each work group met once a week. At first work groups were overwhelmed with the amount of avenues to change. Once members spoke to leaders from local organizations, delved into research, created asset maps, and completed a strength, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of their work group topics. The workgroups decided that increasing awareness and knowledge about what racial equity is will be most impactful for the City of Baton Rouge. Additionally, each group agreed on the immediate need for predominantly minority organizations to be more seen, heard, and funded.

Going forward, the Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion will be established as an ongoing commission. It will serve as an advisory group on policies, practices, and other matters as it pertains to racial equity, addressing racism, and promoting racial justice and racial equity in City Parish.

COREI will exist as a collaborative partnership between Healthy BR and Office of Community Development. This allows for members to approach racial equity through the lens of health to build and sustain equity for the entire parish. Work groups in the Commission will address concerns of Equity, Cultural Awareness, Economic Development, Social Justice, and African American male achievement while simultaneously pushing forward implementation of their recommendations in the equity, cultural awareness, and community/economic development area.

For the next year, members will focus on the recommendations:

- Increasing the number of women of color who receive an annual well-woman visit and mammogram.
- Creating a coalition of hospitals and clinic administrators, healthcare providers, researchers, and community residents that will identify and analyze racial disparities in healthcare for people of color in Region 2.
- Assisting Disenfranchised Business Enterprises (DBEs) in qualifying for Main St. Recovery and other funding programs by collaboration with and utilizing local educational institutions to bridge the entrepreneurial knowledge gap.
- Creating expressive platforms about race in Baton Rouge to open avenues for exploration, conversation, and introspection, allowing us to amplify perspectives on race in our community.
- Hosting facilitated discussions to educate on inclusion and the importance of understanding in historic recognitions and physical expressions.

At the completion of the year, COREI will provide an annual report about the City's progress in addressing racial inequities and closing racial disparities.

Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion Recommendations:

Arts, Culture, and Community Non-Profits

1. Create capacity in nonprofit organizations led by people of color by providing equal access to knowledge, training, and funding
2. Coalition building around targeted projects that address systemic exclusion and community building while centering and including nonprofits led by people of color
3. Increased development in a cultural economy that engages individuals from communities of color and other minoritized populations in an effort to attract greater economic investment while promoting equity in East Baton Rouge Parish

Community and Economic Development

1. To assist existing MBE/DBEs (Minority Business Enterprises and Disenfranchised Business Enterprises) in qualifying for Main St. Recovery and other funding by collaborating with and utilizing local educational institutions to bridge the entrepreneurial knowledge gap.
 - a. Make entrepreneurial education and mentoring more accessible, for example utilizing the LSU's Mobile Classroom Southern University's Mobile Technology Unit and;
 - b. Virtual Counseling via LSU College of Business, Southern University College of Business, Southern University Law Center, Tech Park, and Baton Rouge Community College;
 - c. Partnership with Louisiana State University's Entrepreneurial Bootcamp Program and Louisiana Small Business Development Center – Southern University

2. Propose a “One Stop Shop” for Non-Federal Certification Procurement Program. Assist in the certification process for DBEs to do business with LSU’s Supplier Diversity Program, Southern University, City-Parish, etc.

Education, Health, and Human Services

1. To identify funding through private, public partnerships to increase access to head start and other early childhood educational opportunities for children age 0 to 5 living below the poverty line.
2. Increase the Cradle 2 K program to include a diverse group of stakeholders who are coming together to share information and increase coordination between organizations that serve children of color from birth to five.
3. Increase the number of women of color who receive an annual well woman visit and mammogram by partnering with residency programs, federally qualified health centers, Woman’s Hospital and the LSU Health system.
4. Increase the number of adolescents of color who have usual care providers and receive annual checkups and vaccinations by partnering with local hospitals, clinics and pediatricians.
5. Create a coalition of hospitals and clinic administrators, healthcare providers, researchers and community residents that will identify and analyze racial disparities in healthcare for people of color in Region 2.

Government Entities

1. Create a full time position that will oversee racial equity and inclusion work and polity in the City-Parish.
2. Establish an ongoing Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion for the City-Parish.
3. Request a report issued quarterly on the Bridge Center and the Crisis Intervention teams to the Mayor and the Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion tracking data on the benefits to the community.

4. Increase training for all City-Parish employees on crisis intervention and racial equity and inclusion.
5. Explore expanding Crisis Intervention Teams, modeled after CAHOOTS as a force multiplier for First Responders.

Historic Recognition and Physical Expression

1. Create expressive platforms about race in Baton Rouge that opens an avenue for exploration, conversation, and introspection. These dialogues will be used to amplify perspectives on race in our community.
2. Host a facilitated discussion to educate on inclusion and the importance of understanding in historic recognitions and physical expressions
3. Develop an educational toolkit that tells the story of racial inequity and injustice over the years in Baton Rouge; a guide on how to make changes to current legislation around holidays, buildings, street names, and monument names.

Work Group Final Reports

Arts, Culture, Community Non-Profits

Members: Sarah Cortell Vandersypen, Maria Harmon, Patrick Lawler, Jahi Mackey

Executive Summary

Baton Rouge, nicknamed the Red Stick, has always struggled with the issue of race; Showcased by events such as The Baton Rouge Bus Boycotts of 1953 or more recently the death of Alton Sterling. This has hampered the city from achieving its potential and providing opportunities for all citizens. Minority populations in Baton Rouge have experienced constant barriers to full participation through policies such as redlining, unequitable access to resources, and inequities in the justice system. Geographical segregation and infrastructural inclusion have also hindered the ability of citizens to easily move across the city, further isolating the less affluent, primarily Black northern part of the city from the southern, more affluent and primarily White part of the city. In a very tangible way, this illustrates the resource divide that hinders residents as well as the work to address the issues plaguing Baton Rouge. This racial segregation and inequality is not limited to certain sectors, impacting the local arts, culture, and nonprofit sector of our community.

To address the many challenges this city faces, there are dedicated arts, culture, and community nonprofit organizations working to create progress and promote equity. These organizations often find themselves working in silos, failing to collaborate with other organizations doing the same or similar work. Many smaller organizations led by people of color struggle to compete with established white-run nonprofits when it comes to funding opportunities and resources. Smaller organizations do not have the capacity or connections needed to obtain the resources needed to support their current work. Meanwhile, the same group of nonprofits receives funding year after year by the same funders, including through non-competitive grants in the Mayor's budget. Capacity building, which includes technical assistance, information sharing, informal networking and formal mentoring programs, can assist smaller nonprofits in building the capacity they need to compete for resources with larger organizations.

The lack of resources creates an environment that can prevent collaboration as organizations compete for the same small pool of funders. We find that this is deeply problematic, recognizing

that issues impacting people of color, low income citizens, and other marginalized communities are intertwined. For example, the issue of living in a food desert is further exacerbated when people lack the necessary transportation to travel to grocery stores that are beyond walking distance. Collaboration can allow nonprofits to leverage their strengths and create diverse coalitions that address the needs of the intersectional issues facing Baton Rouge.

Another issue that Baton Rouge struggles with is a perceived lack of identity, despite having a rich history and its status as the capital of Louisiana. The Baton Rouge Bus Boycotts of 1953 inspired the Montgomery Bus Boycotts that took place two years later. Blues music has had great popularity historically in Baton Rouge despite the small numbers of dedicated blues venues in the city today. Often it seems that Baton Rouge is simply a ship without a rudder when it comes to creating the identity it wants to be. Louisiana is a state with a unique culture, with Lafayette and New Orleans serving as two strong examples of this. Rather than try to be both of those places, our goal should be to highlight the unique history, culture, and natural assets of Baton Rouge, the state capital and home of two major, nationally recognized universities, Louisiana State University and Southern University and A&M College. By doing so, and in collaboration with the experiences and perspectives of marginalized and minority communities, we can create a strong identity that attracts people across the nation and world to further progress our community.

In order to choose the right course of action, the city must know where it wants to go and brand itself in a way that aligns with the vision it wants for the future. The destination will determine the directions. This image does not require creating things that are not local but rather celebrating the things that are already local while also encouraging investment, creativity, and trying new things that attract others to the Red Stick. An established identity will allow the City a tangible brand to sell that is rooted in the history, people, and natural assets that call Baton Rouge home, gaining the attention of national funders, corporations, tourists, and people looking for a community to call home.

Background and Vision

Our work group, Arts Culture and Community Non-Profits, convened in July 2020 as part of Mayor Sharon Weston Broome's inaugural Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion (COREI). We were tasked with developing recommendations to improve racial equity and

inclusion for arts, culture, and community nonprofit organizations. Through dialogue amongst commission members, community partners, and the Mayor's office, we discussed the current status of racial equity and inclusion in the landscape of arts, culture, and community nonprofit organizations in Baton Rouge. We completed a strength, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) Analysis of the local arts, culture, and community nonprofit sector, and a separate SWOT Analysis on one of the emerging issues - nonprofit capacity building. The work group reviewed the Mayor-President's Transition Report from March 2017, and the co-chair of the Arts, Culture & Leisure Committee was interviewed by an Arts, Culture, Community Non-Profits Work Group member.

Our discussions and research led to three major issue areas:

1. Lack of capacity (human, financial, connections) prevents many smaller, Black-led organizations from competing for resources they need
2. Absence of collaboration between nonprofit organizations
3. Baton Rouge struggles to maintain an identity that celebrates its unique diversity to attract artists, funders, employers, and tourists

The recommendation we have laid out below seeks to address these issue areas and enhance the impact of organizations working in the racial equity and inclusion space, in particular.

State of the Issue

Baton Rouge has a growing arts scene, and there are many culture and community-based nonprofits that address a variety of local social problems. However, the lack of interconnectivity, collaboration, and equitable access in resources threatens the growth of arts, culture and community nonprofits and stifles the growth of non-profits run by people of color.

Traditionally, nonprofits collaborate with those they already have relationships with, but Baton Rouge is often considered to be a siloed community, and working within these siloes limits the effectiveness of nonprofit work by reducing the scope and size of the work and initiatives these nonprofits can produce. They also limit the ability of Black-led nonprofits to develop relationships with other nonprofits that may be more established and better resourced. The lack of connectivity and collaboration further leads to a great disadvantage in access to training,

capacity building, and development opportunities that would allow for minority nonprofits to operate more effectively and at a larger scale.

There is also an imbalance in resources, representation and recognition among nonprofits in the Baton Rouge community. As a result of the history of structural and systemic exclusion, larger organizations and white-led organizations tend to be better resourced and funded than organizations run and supported by people of color due to systemic disadvantages. This is despite the fact that organizations run by people of color may be more innovative and knowledgeable about the social problems they seek to address than more established, white-led nonprofits. There are many resources available for nonprofit organizations to utilize in the community, offered by organizations such as the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations, Baton Rouge Area Foundation, and the local chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. However, many of these services are not specifically accessible to nonprofit organizations run by people of color. Such resources would allow for nonprofits to obtain opportunities for greater financial solvency, increased networking, capacity in fundraising, and greater efficacy. This is detrimental to ensuring that minority-led nonprofits are on the same playing field as white-led and larger scale nonprofits.

Issues that impact Black-led nonprofits are interconnected with systemic issues connected to the Greater Baton Rouge community. Outside of the arts, culture and community nonprofit sector, the larger community is extremely siloed and disconnected, and this “siloing” and disconnection is detrimental to the wellbeing of minority populations in East Baton Rouge Parish. Furthermore, the lack of talent development in our community for arts, culture and community nonprofits is also connected to the fact that Baton Rouge has not yet engaged in large scale investment in these industries as it connects to our economy. Our economy is ineffective at providing sufficient support for arts and culture nonprofits, and this leads to a fragmentation of resources and opportunities that are available to nonprofits run by people of color.

Despite these issues, there is a lot of knowledge, experience and interest in building up non-white artists and nonprofit professionals in this community. Tapping into this interest would require targeted initiatives and programs that are centered around empowering nonprofit leaders and artists of color and connecting them to available resources. In addition to this, white-run organizations or predominantly white institutions must also seek to build non-exploitative

relationships with communities of color, whether it be through collaborations and resource sharing that would expand resources to these communities or through

project-centered collaborations that would combine the resources of larger organizations with the community knowledge, ingenuity, and expertise of nonprofit leaders and artists of color.

Nevertheless, the issues that impact arts and culture nonprofit organizations run by people of color are also interconnected with systemic issues that impact the East Baton Rouge Parish community. If we are to create an environment where arts, culture, and community-based nonprofits run by people of color thrive, we must also create an environment where people of color themselves can thrive as well.

Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaboration

Through the work group's research, several organizations, funders, and educational entities who are currently involved in capacity building work were identified. Through a more coordinated effort, these current offerings and the expertise could be leveraged to achieve the goal of equity in the local nonprofit sector. These organizations includes:

- Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations - Annual Conference, LANO Connects networking, Executive Director Roundtables, Community Leaders, Community Coaches (pro bono projects), Board Chair Bootcamp
- Association of Fundraising Professionals - monthly educational meetings, mentoring program
- Baton Rouge Area Foundation - Development Fellows
- Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge - previously offered workshops for artists and arts organizations
- Forum 225 - Barton Leadership Program
- Career Center at EBRP Main Library - free seminars
- Southern University's Valdry Center for Philanthropy - workshops, webinars
- Taproot - pro bono project site sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana
- Dudley DeBosier Leadership Academy - free day-long workshop

Additional state-wide or national resources include:

- Community Development Works (The Rapides Foundation) - free workshops, webinars

- Greater New Orleans Foundation - free workshops, webinars
- Candid Learning (formerly GrantSpace) - live and on-demand trainings
- Grant Writing USA - has offered trainings in Baton Rouge
- National Science Foundation - grant writing workshops for federal grants

To promote coalition building across the nonprofit sector, the work group has identified the following potential partners:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ● Mayor's Office | ● Metromorphosis |
| ● Baton Rouge Gallery | ● Louisiana Organization For Refugees and Immigrants |
| ● Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge | ● Dialogue on Race |
| ● LSU Museum of Art | ● Big Buddy Program |
| ● Baton Rouge African American Museum | ● Baton Rouge Area Foundation |
| ● Capitol Park Museum | ● Capital Area United Way |
| ● Louisiana Art and Science Museum | ● Center for Planning Excellence |
| ● Humanities Amped | ● Step Up Louisiana |
| ● Poetry Alliance of Baton Rouge | ● Volunteers of America Greater Baton Rouge |
| ● Louisiana Folklife Commission | ● YMCA of the Capitol Region |
| ● Manship Theatre | ● YWCA Greater Baton Rouge |
| ● New Venture Theatre | ● Front Yard Bikes |
| ● Preserve Louisiana | ● Mid City Redevelopment Alliance |
| ● Swine Palace | ● Together Baton Rouge |
| ● Baton Rouge Youth Coalition | ● Urban Restoration Enhancement Corporation |
| ● Volunteer Louisiana | ● Youth Oasis Children's Shelter |
| ● BREC | ● Louisiana State University |
| ● East Baton Rouge Parish Library | ● Southern University |
| ● The Walls Project | ● Baton Rouge Community College |
| ● The Red Shoes | |
| ● Atlas Foundation | |
| ● The 821 Project | |

Fiscal and Budgetary Implications

As highlighted in the Mayor-President's Transition Report in March 2017, almost the entirety (96%) of the city's arts and culture funding is awarded to four large organizations.¹ No significant changes have been made to this non-competitive funding allocation. Given the current

¹ Transition Reports. Prepared for Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome by BR Transitioning. March 15, 2017. Pg. 66. <https://la-batonrouge.civicplus.com/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/335>

fiscal outlook of the city-parish government, it is unlikely that new government funding will be allocated to the arts, in particular. Instead, the city-parish should look to reallocate the current fund distribution to arts and culture organizations through a more equitable and inclusive way to achieve the recommendations in this report.

Additional philanthropic support, especially for capacity building initiatives, should be sought from local foundations including:

- Baton Rouge Area Foundation
- Charles Lamar Family Foundation
- Pennington Family Foundation
- Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation

Visit Baton Rouge updated its branding in 2018. As new marketing materials are created under the current campaign, and a new branding campaign is created in the next couple of years, arts and culture organizations should tap into that process to save on financial resources and lend storytelling expertise to elevate the identity of Baton Rouge.

Recommendations

Top Recommendations

1. Create capacity in nonprofit organizations led by people of color by providing equal access to knowledge, training, and funding
2. Coalition building around targeted projects that address systemic exclusion and community building while centering and including nonprofits led by people of color
3. Increased development in a cultural economy that engages individuals from communities of color and other minoritized populations in an effort to attract greater economic investment while promoting equity in East Baton Rouge Parish

Additional Recommendations

1. Form mentoring or sponsorship programs for people of color that provides leadership and professional development opportunities that are intentional in uplifting smaller, under resourced organizations led by people of color

2. Engage the arts and cultural community during the next rebranding campaign of Baton Rouge to fully reflect the diversity and richness of Baton Rouge

Community and Economic Development

Members: Carl Herrick, Dr. Sonja Wiley, Tiffany Theriot, Louis Bonneau

Executive Summary

The many causes of poverty are complicated and the subject of much debate. Education is one factor. Twenty-four percent of people without a high school education are currently facing poverty, as opposed to four percent of people with a bachelor's degree. We also know that where you live dictates what schools you attend and the opportunities you experience, and that poverty is intergenerational. If your parents live in poverty, you too will likely live in poverty. We recommend focusing on entrepreneurship for community and economic development.

So why entrepreneurship?

Not only does entrepreneurship remove educational barriers, it also leads to higher wages. When you control for education, ability, parental income, and more, entrepreneurs' incomes are higher than those of people working traditional jobs. This is especially true in low-income areas, where individuals who are self-employed and incorporated have the highest average income in a community, coming in at \$67,000 a year. - THE BRIAN HAMILTON FOUNDATION, JULY 2019

The Mayor's Commission on Race, Equity and Inclusion (COREI) Community and Economic Development work group was charged with identifying community and economic issues, exploring tangible and viable economic opportunities to assist East Baton Rouge Parish residents. After meetings with community leaders, institutional partners and local educational institutions, we discovered that many organizations and individuals were doing excellent economic development work. However, many are replicating work and are unaware of each other's efforts.

Their isolated efforts charged us with the idea to breakdown the "silo mentality." The "silo mentality" can be defined as a mind-set that is present when certain people, departments, organizations or sectors do not wish to share collaborate with others in the same organization or community. This type of mentality reduces efficiency operations, reduce trust and morale, and may contribute to the demise of a productive community culture.

Due to this, our work group's objectives were to develop strategies to help break down the silo structures and barriers surrounding community and economic development. By bringing together key representatives and stakeholders from institutions like Louisiana State University, Southern University, Baton Rouge Community College, Southern University Law School, Louisiana Small Business Development Center - SUBR, SJB Group, DOTD. RESOLVE, LEAP, BR Chamber (SCORE) and a host of other individuals and organizations we can break down silos. Continued research meetings will lead to vital communication, collaboration and ultimately – success.

Background and Vision

Our diverse work group convened in July 2020 under Mayor Broome's Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion (COREI). We were each assigned to the community and economic development work group based upon our work and life experiences, occupations, and passion. Our group discussed economic challenges that the City of Baton Rouge has faced in the past and the current unemployment crisis due to COVID-19.

Although we agreed that lack of education and poor quality of life are results of systemic racism, we propose that lack of education directly correlates to economic status. Understanding the impact of lack of education on community and economic development allowed us to identify tangible and intangible recommendations.

Through our research and life experience our work group agreed a way to alleviate low income levels was entrepreneurship. Being an entrepreneur allows someone to control their time, efforts, and money as a way to raise their standard of living. We were privileged to speak with Jerry Jones, Jr. of the North Baton Rouge Development District, Sam Sanders, Mid-City Redevelopment Alliance, Andrew Fitzgerald, Baton Rouge Area Chamber, Janet Simmons, of Hope Ministries, Veneeth Iyengar, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer in Mayor Broome's administration, Kelvin Hill, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer in Mayor Broome's administration, and various members of the Baton Rouge community, about disenfranchised business enterprises (DBE's) and what it means to be a minority owned business. Those key stakeholder conversations helped steer our group. We identified a gap in access to entrepreneurial knowledge for DBE's such as compliance.

Through our continued research about strategies to aid DBE's to be compliant our group had the opportunity to have an online conference call and working session with the following individuals who provided invaluable guidance and advice for our workgroup:

Dean Donald Andrews, Southern University College of Business, Interim Dean Jared Llorens, LSU- E. J. Ourso College of Business, Dr, Pearce Cinman, Interim Chair of the Business Department at BRCC, Sarah Barlow - BRCC, Ada Womanck-Bell, LSBDC, John Pierre, Professor and Chancellor of Southern University Law Center. Considering all input received, we decided to recommend effort toward shoring up existing DBEs, and providing entrepreneurial education to economic startups in North and South Baton Rouge.

Our work group would like to utilize entrepreneurial education resources available at LSU College of Business, LSU Business Development Center, BRCC Department of Business and Entrepreneurship, Southern University College of Business and Law Center, and SJB Group such as LSU's Mobile Classroom, Southern University's Mobile Technology Unit and Louisiana State University's Entrepreneurial Bootcamp Program. We believe increasing access to these resources through a partnership between the Mayor's Office and local educational institutions will bridge the entrepreneurial gap that currently exists for DBE's.

State the Issue

According to the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, Baton Rouge is Louisiana's economic engine. As the most cost-friendly mid-sized city for business in the country (KPMG 2016), Baton Rouge is attracting global players with major operations to the area. Baton Rouge is also situated in the state with the No. 1 workforce training program in the U.S. and is home to one of the most productive workforces in the Southeast. However, there is an inequitable distribution of wealth and well-being in Baton Rouge. In January 2019, the United Way reported that 28% of Baton Rouge families live above the poverty level but below the bare survival budget. The United Way calculates the average person needs much more than the \$11,880 annual income that defines the federal poverty level. A person in East Baton Rouge needs \$20,856 to afford essentials like food, housing and healthcare, while a family of four with two young children requires \$58,572, the ALICE report states. What is ALICE? ALICE, is a demographic group identified by the United

Way as Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed: the working poor. These are families that may be under-employed or only able to find seasonal or gig work, often without benefits.

They earn more than the federal poverty level but less than what the nonprofit group considers a bare survival budget. ALICE residents are just one emergency away from disaster, like COVID-19 (UnitedWayAlice.org). Due to the severity of impact COVID-19 had on business owners and entrepreneurs who rely on gigs, we decided to focus our efforts on helping ALICE residents and other entrepreneurs to qualify for the state and federal funds available as an economic resource.

Our focus area will be addressing gaps in education and small business ownership compliance of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. We were made aware DBEs that did not qualify for Covid-19 funding. It was estimated that 40 percent of the Baton Rouge area small businesses that applied for the Main St. Recovery Grant Program that was available through the Louisiana Department of Treasury did not qualify. Many of the disqualifications were due to a simple lack of proper business protocol, and compliance with accounting and office management. These Louisiana disenfranchised, veteran-owned, women-owned and minority-owned businesses have lost an economic opportunity due to a lack of knowledge, specifically, entrepreneurial knowledge and organizational development. Additionally, we will address the educational and mentoring needs of startup businesses in the community.

Opportunities for Partnerships and Best Practices

Many of the outlined stakeholders should be engaged in this work either directly or in an advisory capacity. Below are a list of organizations we suggest the Mayor meet with or appoint to the various work groups, commissions and campaigns.

- Mayor-President's Office
- SCORE
- Louisiana State University – E. J. Ourso College of Business Entrepreneurship Program
- Southern University College of Business
- Southern University Law Center
- BRCC – Department of Business and Entrepreneurship
- BRCC Grants Resource Center
- Baton Rouge North Economic Development District (BRNEDD)
- Baton Rouge Chapter of Louisiana CPAs
- Louisiana Small Business Development Center- SU
- Metro Council members
- US Senators and Congressmen
- Baton Rouge AC
- Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF)
- Baton Rouge EC
- Mid-City Redevelopment
- Build Baton Rouge
- Downtown Development District
- The Office of Veterans Affairs

- Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport
- Gulf Coast Bank
- LEAP
- RESOLVE
- Nexus-LA
- Baton Rouge Bar Association

Fiscal and Budgetary Implications

- Identify current funding in the Economic Development budget
- Identify funding at LSU, Southern University, BRCC
- Apply for grants
 - Blue Foundation – Blue Cross Blue Shield Louisiana
 - Federal Government Grants
 - Baton Rouge Area Foundation
 - Center PEX

Recommendations

1. To assist existing MBE/DBEs (Minority Business Enterprises and Disenfranchised Business Enterprises) in qualifying for Main St. Recovery and other funding by collaborating with and utilizing local educational institutions to bridge the entrepreneurial knowledge gap.
 - a) Make entrepreneurial education and mentoring more accessible, for example utilizing the LSU's Mobile Classroom Southern University's Mobile Technology Unit and;
 - b) Virtual Counseling via LSU College of Business, Southern University College of Business, Southern University Law Center, Tech Park, and Baton Rouge Community College;
 - c) Partnership with Louisiana State University's Entrepreneurial Bootcamp Program and Louisiana Small Business Development Center – Southern University
2. Propose a “One Stop Shop” for Non-Federal Certification Procurement Program. Assist in the certification process for DBEs to do business with LSU's Supplier Diversity Program, Southern University, City-Parish, etc.

Education, Health & Human Services

Members: Latonya Brumfield, Maria Pons

Executive Summary

The community of East Baton Rouge parish is very diverse. However, when examining data on equity and health, disparities in outcomes and quality are prevalent for residents of color within our community. Due to these disparities, we performed a community assessment, that guided the development of this document. For the development of this report and the recommendations within, we performed a community assessment in order to evaluate racial equity and inclusion in the Baton Rouge community. Our group focused that assessment on the quality and outcomes for education and health for people of color, minority ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged residents (economically disadvantaged refers to students eligible for the free-and-reduced-price lunch program), and minorities with limited English proficiency.

As our assessment progressed, we chose to further concentrate our investigation in these three areas: 1) Increasing early educational programs for children from birth to 5 years of age as the first step in education with the long term goal to improve high school graduation above the national average, 2) Diminishing disparities in healthcare access for underserved community members for early diagnosis and management with a goal of all residents having access to a usual primary care provider, and 3) Promote a culture within our city that actively identifies, measures, and intervenes for racial disparities in health outcomes to provide a means of accountability to those who provide healthcare to the community members.

Our efforts have culminated into five priority recommendations for action. A summary of those recommendations are as follows: 1) Identify funding through private and public partnerships to increase the number of children who have access to early childhood education, 2) Increase the Cradle 2 K program to include a diverse group of stakeholders who are coming together to share information and increase coordination between organizations who serve children of color from birth to 5. 3) Increase the number of women of color and ethnicity who receive an annual checkup and mammogram. 4) Increase the number of adolescents of color who receive an annual wellness visit and vaccination. 5) Create a coalition of stakeholders that will identify and analyze racial disparities in healthcare.

Background and Vision

Our work group came together in July 2020 under Mayor Broome's Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion. We were each assigned to the work group titled "Governmental Entities". Our workgroup analyzed the East Baton Rouge Parish community through the lens of Education, Health and Human Services in an effort to make recommendations for actions to improve racial equity and inclusion for education and healthcare. Our work specifically focused on inequity and racial disparities in health and education for lower income communities within the parish. We identified the following areas to focus on: 1) quality education goals for minority children from birth to 5 years old (i.e. Head Start Program, Early Head Start, Pre-K), and 2) quality healthcare for low income insured and uninsured members of our community.

After reviewing baseline measurements, identifying assets of the community, and assessing the strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats to those assets, we developed short-term goals (STG) and long-term goals (LTG) to guide the formulation of our priority recommendations. Our vision in education is to increase the High School graduation rate to a goal number that exceeds the national average by focusing on early childhood education. Our vision for healthcare is to improve primary care access and evaluations for early disease prevention and early diagnosis for community members of color with low household incomes and/or who are uninsured in order to improve the overall health of the community. Our work group is presenting its findings and recommendations in the form of measurable outcomes, methods of ensuring greater accountability, and strategic community-wide collaborative efforts to achieve racial equity in our community.

State of the Issue

Our community is rich in assets. We developed an asset map (see Appendix A) and identified many resources within the community that can be tapped in an effort to begin achieving goals and working towards bringing the visions into fruition. Assets were sorted into five categories: Associations, Institutions, Economy, Individuals and Physical Spaces. Despite the wealth of community assets within Baton Rouge, disparities remain prevalent among education and healthcare quality and outcomes for people of color.

To describe the disparities in education within our community, one need only examine early childhood education and high school graduation rates. Almost a third of the children in our community are under the age of five (28,827 in 2018) and approximately two thirds of those children are non-white and/or Hispanic. However, when one adds funded head start enrollment capacity, daycare center capacity, and public school pre-kindergarten enrollment capacity in the community (an approximate total of 11,782), a significant deficit in access to early childhood education becomes apparent. Early childhood education has been shown to have a significant effect on whether at risk children graduate from high school.

The Early Childhood Education Act (Act3) of 2012 mandated increased quality in early childhood care and education. As the quality has gone up, so has the cost families pay for early childhood care and education. Tuition rose by 12% over 3 years. The number of publicly-funded Head Start and Early Head Start programs slots available in Louisiana only serve a small portion of eligible children. Less than 15% of low-income children under age four have access to ANY publicly funded program, including only 34% of three year olds, 11% of two year olds, 8% of one year olds, and 4% of infants. The number of children served has gone from almost 40,000 to under 17,000 today, including the new funds restored to the Child Care Assistance Program in 2019.

The Legislature and the Governor passed Act 639 of the 2018 Legislative Session, created a bipartisan Louisiana's Early Childhood Care and Education Commission, which was charged with developing a vision and framework for the future of early childhood care and education. The Commission released a plan, which recommended increasing access to quality early care and education for children under age four by investing \$86 million in new funding annually to increase the number of children able to be served from 22,000, as it is today, to 177,000 children under age four over the next decade.

In 2018, the EBR graduation rate was 71.7%, almost 10 percentage points lower than that of the state of Louisiana, which was 81.4%. It is extremely important to note that the graduation rate of White students exceeded that of African American students by 7.4 percentage points; and, economically disadvantaged students had a graduation rate of only 64.7%. The Urban League of Louisiana published a report in 2019 entitled "Advancing Educational Equity for Public Schools

in Baton Rouge”. Within the report, they outlined and described opportunity gaps (the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities provided to students and/or groups) and achievement gaps (refers to outputs-the unequal or inequitable distribution of educational results) within the parish. More often than not, opportunity gaps are present when achievement gaps are observed. In 2019, 65 percent of White students scored Mastery or above on the LEAP 2025 assessments (grades 3 through 8 and high school), however, only 25 percent of African-American students and 24 percent of Hispanic students scored Mastery or above. This is an example of a 40-percentage point achievement gap.

To illustrate the large disparities in health, a brief scrutiny of access to care, healthcare outcomes and the outcomes of infants and children speak volumes. In EBR, almost 22% of the residents lack a primary care provider. However, when you look at the data stratified by race you find that only 20% of white residents lack access, while 30% of black residents and 35% of Hispanic residents do not have access to primary care. In EBR, the percentage of black babies born with low birth weights is more than white babies. In addition, the mortality rate for black infants is almost triple the rate of white infants. The health of a mother is crucial to the health of her family. A mother who has a usual care provider would almost certainly work to ensure her child(ren) has a usual care provider as well. Consequently, the mothers having a usual care provider will create a ripple effect that will impact the health of future generations. It cannot go without mentioning the impact of health outcomes on educational outcomes and vice versa. A child with poor health will miss days of school, which could impact their education. Similarly, an adult with limited reading skills will have difficulty understanding and complying with written education or instruction provided by his or her healthcare providers not to mention reading and comprehending various forms at work or elsewhere.

Some of the assets identified were further explored with a SWOT analysis (see appendix B). We divided our SWOT analysis into three categories - Education, Outpatient/Primary Care, and Inpatient Care. This analysis allowed the group to identify priority areas for improvement, identify opportunities and threats and narrow down the selection of priority recommendations.

Opportunities for Collaboration

Below are a list of stakeholders for the health and education community:

- AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana
- Banks and Credit Unions
- Baton Rouge Clinic
- Baton Rouge General Hospital
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of La
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of LA Foundation
- BRG Physician Group
- Capital Area Human Services
- Chamber of Commerce
- Department of Human Development and Services
- East Baton Rouge Parish School Board
- Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University
- Grocery Stores
- Head Start Program
- Health Centers in Schools
- Lane Regional Medical Center
- Local Faith Organizations and Churches
- Louisiana Dept. of Health – Office of Public Health; Minority Programs and Office of Community Partnerships
- Louisiana Primary Care Collaborative
- LSU Health
- LSUHSC
- LSU Ag Extension Service
- Mary Bird Perkins Foundation
- Media
- Ochsner Clinics
- Ochsner Medical Center
- Open Health Care Clinic
- Our Lady of the Lake Physician Group
- Our Lady of the Lake RMC
- Pennington Biomedical Research Center
- Sickle Cell Association of South Louisiana
- Southeast Community Health Clinic
- Southeastern University
- Southern University and A&M College
- United Way
- Woman’s Hospital
- Woman’s Hospital Foundation
- YMCA
- YWCA

Fiscal and Budgetary Implications

There are many financial considerations to consider when planning to take action-or address the recommendations. First and foremost, we recommend the city invest in creating additional staff position(s), which will be responsible for coordinating activities directed at enacting the recommendations. We recommend the addition of at least four staff members to include a masters or doctoral prepared Registered Nurse, a masters or doctoral prepared educator, a public health professional and someone who has education and training in equity, diversity and inclusion (i.e. social worker, psychology graduate, or sociology graduate). Additionally, the city could coordinate with university public health or other graduate health programs to provide a venue for graduate students to work as interns on these activities as well as engage in research or graduate projects that can benefit the community. Each recommendation can be funded by grants; examples of grants are listed below with the recommendations.

Recommendations

- 1. To identify funding through private, public partnerships to increase access to head start and other early childhood educational opportunities for children age 0 to 5 living below the poverty line.**

Apply for grants from federal and private industries that promote early education programs. The early childhood programs that will be the beneficiaries of funding will be the EBR Head Start Program, YWCA Early Head Start, YMCA Distance Learning Program, private and non-profit daycare centers that serve minority and low income families of color (to support curriculums that can possibly be easily accessed online), and EBRPSS.

Examples:

BCBSLA Foundation- That promotes the wellness and wellbeing of Louisianans by supporting health-or-education-related causes.

- Special project grants program - includes **Angel Award** that motivates teachers to help minority children under poverty line with the goal to live healthy lives. The grant awards a \$25,000 grant for each Angel's nonprofit charity.
- Preschool Grants for Louisiana- Grants for early childhood programs, grants for childcare and daycare programs to promote literacy, nutrition & physical activity at preschools including food gardens, outdoor classrooms, and playgrounds.

Federal Grants - U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) the mission to enhance the health and well-being of Americans by providing for effective health and human services and by fostering sound, sustained advances in the sciences underlying medicine, public health, and social services.

- Healthy Tomorrows Partnership for Children Program (HTPCP) The opportunity to apply for funding. The purpose of this program is to support innovative, community-based initiatives to improve the health status of infants, children, adolescents, and families in rural and other underserved communities by increasing their access to preventive care and services. Goals to improve access to quality health services, achieve health equity, and enhance population health. The HTPCP builds on past program success facilitating the development of partnerships between pediatric providers and community partners that bring important health care services to rural and other underserved populations in a coordinated way. HTPCP will support projects related to a range of topical areas including, but not limited to, medical home or care coordination, mental and behavioral health services, child development and school readiness services, and promotion of healthy weight and physical activity.

2. Increase the Cradle 2 K program to include a diverse group of stakeholders who are coming together to share information and increase coordination between organizations that serve children of color from birth to five.

This recommendation involves a diverse set of stakeholders. It involves collaborating with both public and private entities...from barbers and beauticians to the local WIC offices. The goal is for the stakeholders to share information between one another and with the community, coordinating, bundling services and sharing spaces whenever possible in order to 1) ensure the public is aware of, has access to and receives available resources and services available for the health and education of our children from age 0 to 5 yrs. of age and 2) provide resources and support for the entities who serve those children.

Increasing community information on and access to programs such as the Early Steps Program, the Head Start Program and other programs for early childhood education and resources/services for health (i.e. WIC, LaCHIP). This can be done via the distribution of written pamphlets regarding programs and services, including Early Steps Programs and other programs to the parents utilizing being served by stakeholders.

- Collaborating with Barber and Beauty to inform the community
- Collaborate with the local WIC clinics and the Louisiana WIC office.
- Collaborating with the hospitals to educate new mothers on early childhood education
- Collaborate with pediatricians and community health centers
- Collaborate with Lactation Nurses/consultants Resources
- Collaborate with community (such as those listed above) to drive children identified with special needs to the EBRPSS for evaluation (developmental delays, speech delay, visual/hearing impairment, physical impairment) in order to ensure they receive early intervention

- Encourage daycares to enrich their curriculum via field trips, i.e. Knock Knock Museum
- Encourage daycare centers to include parental participation in the curriculum; provide flyers for them to distribute regarding services for the children (WIC, LaCHIP, etc.)
- Provide public recognition to daycare centers who are actively engaging their children in early childhood education

3. Increase the number of women of color who receive an annual well woman visit and mammogram by partnering with residency programs, federally qualified health centers, Woman’s Hospital and the LSU Health system.

Utilizing the relationships developed through the partnerships created by Healthy BR and coordinating efforts to transition women who are uninsured and/or receive Medicaid to begin receiving well woman visits on regular basis at Community Health Clinics or Primary Care Physicians and creating continuity in their medical care instead of utilizing infrequent screening and sporadic services. The proposal would allow the LSU Health System to focus their limited resources on urgent care and subspecialties medical care. The proposal will effectively distribute medical care, medical continuity, and medical rapport with physicians or nurse practitioners among providers outside of the LSU Health System. Women of color would have the opportunity to obtain the appropriate services depending on their medical needs.

The Federal Grant “PA-18-932 Increasing Uptake of Evidence-Based Screening in Diverse Adult Populations” could be applied for and utilized to fund the actions for this recommendation. This initiative is intended to support actions that enhance the screening process related to use: 1) in diverse populations, 2) in diverse clinical and community settings, and/or 3) with traditional, non-traditional and/or allied health care providers.

The collaboration is meant to ensure women receive “well woman” care, which will include pelvic exams, assessment for abnormal uterine bleeding, cervical early screens (Pap smear), breast exams, family planning, ovarian cancer screening, STD/HIV education, colon cancer screening, and vaccinations (HPV). Additionally, once the program is established, a media campaign, which will include television, print and social media, will target women of all ages, in particular women in the post childbearing category.

Additional Federal and Private Grants

- PAR-18-36 - Comprehensive Partnerships to Advance Cancer Health
- PAR-20-283 - NLM Information Resource Grants to Reduce Health Disparities
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Culture of Health Prize
- RWJF Community Solutions for Health Equity Grant

4. Increase the number of adolescents of color who have usual care providers and receive annual checkups and vaccinations by partnering with local hospitals, clinics and pediatricians.

Utilizing the relationships developed through the partnerships created by Healthy BR and new partnerships, a coordinated effort can be organized that will bring together Community Health Clinics (CHCs), Graduate University Programs (i.e. medical, dental, nursing, mental health, physical and occupational rehab), hospitals, CHCs and primary care physicians/pediatricians to collaborate in:

- Securing funding through public and private grants that would allow CHCs to provide more care to uninsured patients
- Providing graduate health occupation students with venues for research and practice
- Recruiting diverse and bilingual specialists to practice in the BR region
- Allowing more students to rotate within the CHCs

- Increasing the opportunities available for minorities to fill medical and dental resident positions with the region

Federal and Private Grants

- PAR-18-36 - Comprehensive Partnerships to Advance Cancer Health
- PAR-20-283 - NLM Information Resource Grants to Reduce Health Disparities
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Culture of Health Prize
- RWJF Community Solutions for Health Equity Grant
- PA-18-932 Increasing Uptake of Evidence-Based Screening in Diverse Adult Populations

5. Create a coalition of hospitals and clinic administrators, healthcare providers, researchers and community residents that will identify and analyze racial disparities in healthcare for people of color in Region 2.

Through the relationships created with stakeholders who are partners of HealthyBR the Mayor can open a dialogue with the leadership of healthcare organizations regarding the measurement of healthcare disparities. Activities to be taken would include:

- Determine if the organizations collect data regarding racial disparities in their outcomes
- Determine if the organizations have a system in place to address disparities
- Encourage the organizations to have transparency with the community on their outcomes
- Provide information and education on the benefits of diversity and inclusion on patient outcomes
- Provide information and resources on applying for grants directed at diversity and inclusion and diminishing racial disparities in patient outcomes
- Devise a digital venue to disseminate and share information between the organizations and with the community as a way to reward and encourage

transparency and foster a health competitive environment amongst healthcare facilities in which they actively engage in activities that diminish disparities.

One grant that is available that could aid in carrying out this recommendation is “PAR-20-243 Digital Healthcare Interventions to Address the Secondary Health Effects Related to Social, Behavioral, and Economic Impact of COVID-19”. This grant is directed at access, reach, delivery, effectiveness, scalability and sustainability of health assessments and interventions for secondary effects of COVID-19 that are utilized during and following the pandemic, particularly in populations who experience health disparities and vulnerable populations.

Additional Federal and Private Grants

- PAR-18-36 - Comprehensive Partnerships to Advance Cancer Health
- PAR-20-283 - NLM Information Resource Grants to Reduce Health Disparities
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Culture of Health Prize
- RWJF Community Solutions for Health Equity Grant
- PA-18-932 Increasing Uptake of Evidence-Based Screening in Diverse Adult Populations
- PA-17-246 Health Information Technology (IT) to Improve Health Care Quality and Outcomes (R21)

Goals and Additional Recommendations

In the following sections, measurable long-term goals (LTG) and short-term goals (STG) to gauge future progress and additional recommendations and opportunities for partnerships to consider will be offered. Some of these recommendations can be enacted utilizing Mayor Broome’s existing human services programs.

Education Goals

LTG: Expand head start eligibility and provide an opportunity for enrollment to all who are eligible

LTG: Increase high school graduation rate to a number that exceeds the national average

STG: Increase head start enrollment to 100% of available funded

Health - Outpatient Primary Care Goals

LTG: All residents will have access to a “usual primary care provider”. (Goal derived from HP 2030 objectives-AHS 3)

STG: Increase access to primary care (Well care, Screenings, management of chronic conditions, Dental, Ophthalmology, OBGYN) and specialty care (Nephrology, Neurology, Behavioral Health, Cardiology, Orthopedic, Oncology, Endocrinology)

Health - Inpatient Care Goals

LTG: Measurable healthcare outcomes from HP 2030

STG: Inpatients facilities will be actively engaged in collecting and sharing data on racial disparities in patient outcomes and have systems (committees/councils, policies, etc.) which result in an active engagement in decreasing disparities (i.e. research, PI, EBP).

Additional Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaborations

Promote the direct involvement of financial institutions, businesses, corporations, foundations and individuals on programs that advance community development. For example, one opportunity would be to collaborate with businesses in employing high school students and new high school graduates by organizing job education programs and providing exposure to different career opportunities.

Another opportunity for collaboration that might prove beneficial would be to open a line of communication between the public and private schools systems. The mayor's office can collaborate by facilitating communication between EBRPSS and private schools. Ideas for collaboration could include developing student exchange programs that will allow students to be exposed to diversity. The exposure to diversity will prepare students for the more diverse university setting. Additionally, such programs could possibly provide an opportunity for both public and private school high school students to take coursework via online learning technology that they may not have access to at their home schools.

Another opportunity for collaboration would be with the professional organizations within the community. Mentor programs could be developed which would allow students who have chosen career paths to be mentored by professionals with whom they can personally relate. When students are able to see people who look like them with similar backgrounds be successful, it provides them an opportunity to see that it is possible for them as well. Students who are mentored are more prepared with background knowledge on what is needed to succeed in their chosen career path.

Additional Fiscal and Budgetary Implications

One of the largest implications will be providing organizations with resources about grants available and how to apply in order to secure funding. The mayor's office could create an educational database, which will include an extensive list of grants available, guidance on how to apply for each, and resources (individuals and/or organizations), which can offer additional assistance in the grant application process. At the same time, keep communication open with the organizations or individuals who secure grants with the assistance provided in order to provide a means of ensuring accountability in the use of the funds.

Additionally, with the mayor's leadership, organizations can be encouraged to allot a portion of their budgets specifically for activities and interventions which are directed at diminishing racial disparities in educational and health outcomes and promoting diversity and inclusion within their organizations.

Government Entities

Members: Audrey Wascome, John Lewis, Keith Jones, Frederick Douglas

Executive Summary

While Baton Rouge has often been at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement, the City-Parish still has challenges ahead. Unfortunately, in the last several years, Baton Rouge has received negative national attention surrounding race relations and law enforcement. At first glance, it would appear as if this is an issue that lies solely within law enforcement agencies, however, race relations is a city wide challenge spanning private and public entities. Upon further review, we recommend the following actions: create a full time position to oversee racial equity and inclusion work in the City-Parish, establish an ongoing commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion, request quarterly reports on the effectiveness of the Bridge Center for Hope for Hope and crisis response teams, and expand crisis response teams as a force multiplier for First Responders. Additionally, we strongly encourage engaging the public through community conversations on race, and increasing training for employees starting with the department directors and managers on crisis intervention and equity and inclusion.

Background and Vision

Our group first came together after being appointed to the Mayor's Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion (COREI) in July 2020. Each of us was assigned to the Government Entities work group based on skill sets, experience and interest. Our group began by looking at police reform. After initial research and interviewing subject matter experts, it became apparent racial equity in the City-Parish is much bigger than law enforcement. We decided to take a holistic approach and looked to the last Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), published in 2018.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 requires tax-exempt hospitals to complete a CHNA and Implementation Plan every three years. The City-Parish is unique in that all five health systems who serve East Baton Rouge collectively produced one joint CHNA document, agreeing to the Implementation Plan.

Based upon the CHNA, research and recommendations fall in line with number 7, Injury Prevention and number 8, Mental Health in the top 10 needs a citizen of the City-Parish has. In 2019, 63,517 calls were made to Emergency medical services (EMS). Out of the top ten impressions, 6,109 were related to mental health and an additional 1,845 to drug usage and/or overdose. Collectively these calls represent nearly 13% of the calls to EMS.

Baton Rouge is in a unique, national position. Working relationships and race relations have been stressed since the shooting of Alton Sterling in 2016. Contributing to this are several factors including, but not limited to, the inability of the Metro Council to settle with Alton Sterling's family. Baton Rouge's law enforcement once again received negative national attention when a White man, Jace Boyd, shot and killed a Black panhandler, Danny Ray Buckley, in the parking lot of Trader Joe's, who was questioned but released on the scene. Jace Boyd was later arrested at his home following an outpour of community questions and law enforcement challenges. By not providing closure, the citizens of the City-Parish are harmed because the costs of litigation in these cases are passed off to the taxpayer. Additionally, the economy's future in East Baton Rouge could be compromised if new companies believe Baton Rouge to be a risky investment.

We challenge the citizens of East Baton Rouge to reimagine public safety. We feel strongly that attitudes, behaviors, and hearts are changed by relationships, open minds and recognizing that we each come with our own individual lens of experiences. We must bear witness to the pain of the past in order for our community to move forward for not only ourselves, but future generations. While we acknowledge the submission of these recommendations will not fix nor erase institutional racism, this is a starting point on the guide map.

State of the Issue

With our pivot point being the Community Health Needs Assessment report, we focused on two sections of report: number 7 Injury Prevention and number 8 Mental Health.

Several key points within this report are:

EBRP has a homicide rate of 18 per 100,000 citizens; 50% higher than the homicide rate for Louisiana and 200% higher than the national rate. Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide rates in Louisiana have risen 29.3% from 1999 to 2016.

The Victims Assistance Program, a partnership between Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center and the East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney's Office, was formed to reduce intentional injuries and criminal recidivism associated with violent crime.

Locally, mental health in EBRP has been universally identified as a priority area by the offices of the Mayor, District Attorney, Chief of Police, Sheriff, Coroner and EMS. EBRP ranks 11 of 65 parishes relative to the lowest ratio of mental health providers as compared to incarcerated individuals at 469:1. Although several state or state-funded agencies, housed in Baton Rouge, also address mental health such as the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health and the Capital Area Human Services for example.

According to the CDC in 2018, Louisiana ranks 18th in death by suicide, accounting for 15.1% of the deaths. The 2020 State of Mental Health in America report indicates that Louisiana ranks 9th in prevalence of mental illness. Broken down further of higher prevalence of mental illness and lower access to care, Louisiana ranks 45th for adults and 21st for youth. Louisiana ranks 41st in overall access to care rankings.

The citizens of the City-Parish are underutilizing the skills of law enforcement. Because public safety agencies spend so much time responding to mental and behavioral health emergencies, we are unable to see the true benefit these agencies could provide by preventing and addressing crime. There is strong potential that if law enforcement had the ability to do this, crime would drop within the City-Parish.

Our community is expecting law enforcement and public safety agencies to do more than what they are committed to do — providing public safety — by asking them to also be mental health professionals during crisis calls. The implications of such an ask has a rippling effect — it costs the taxpayers more money, law enforcement and public agencies are stretched thin for resources, and contributes to the already stretched thin healthcare framework in the City-Parish.

We began by interviewing subject matter experts including Denise Dugas from OLOL-RMC Mental and Behavioral Health, Jared Hymowitz from Healthy BR, Charlotte Claiborne from the Bridge Center for Hope for Hope, John Nosacka from Capital Area Human Services, Captain Kevin Newman, retired Baton Rouge Police Department, Anne Larsen from Olympia, Washington Police Department, Benjamin Brubaker from the White Bird Clinic in Eugene,

Oregon, Deborah Giles and Sharon Williams from the Equity and Inclusion Department in Durham, North Carolina.

Chronic mental illness is an issue in the Baton Rouge market. After deinstitutionalization, there are sub-standard options for housing for patients. These patients need structure, as many are non-compliant. After state budget cuts and the closing of units within the Central Louisiana State Hospital in Pineville, problems with patients presenting with chronic mental illness intersecting with public safety concerns have increased dramatically.

There is a recurring issue with mentally ill patients being kicked off of Medicaid rolls because they do not have a permanent address. Significant man power is used to address this problem. Hospitals can retro bill Medicaid once the patient has a permanent address. The majority of these patients are Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

There is a lack of available beds for patients hospitalized for mental health needs. Patients can sit in the Eastern Louisiana Mental Health System in a ‘forensic bed’ (legally remanded to the facility) until a ‘civil bed’ becomes available. Healthcare facilities in East Baton Rouge can adjudicate the patient to DHH, but there is an 18-24 month waiting list for a civil bed. There is a needed connection of data with other mental health centers. There is currently not one system for patient information that goes with the patient to another mental health facility.

In 2018, nearly 7 out of 10 voters in East Baton Rouge voted “Yes” to approve a Mental Health tax, which will fund the non-profit Bridge Center for Hope, opening late 2020. It is estimated the Bridge Center for Hope will save the Baton Rouge Community \$3 million in its full year of operation and \$54.9 million over the first ten years.

The Bridge Center for Hope board contracted with RI International, a global leader in mental health with a proven track record of results to run the Bridge Center for Hope, a 25,000 square feet facility, located at 3555 Florida Boulevard, serving adults 18 years old and over.

When emergency services are called, Emotionally Disturbed Persons (EDP) is a code 68. With the rollout of the Bridge Center for Hope, a MRT (Mobile Response Team) will seek to stabilize an EDP in their environment. If needed, the EDP will be transported to the Bridge Center for Hope, where they will enter through the back public safety entrance. The Center operates under a

‘Crisis Now’ model, meaning they will be immediately assessed and not wait to be seen (as is often the case if they present to an emergency room).

A MRT is a two-person team on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week consisting of a Mental Health Professional and a Peer Support Professional. They will work hand in hand with EMS and law enforcement to respond to a crisis call. ViaLink and EMS currently handle all emergency crisis calls through 211 and 911.

Once an individual is at the Bridge Center for Hope and an assessment is made, there are multiple service options depending on their needs. These include a catchment area with no beds, a Mental Health Area (3-15 days), Substance Use Detox (up to 28 days), or Respite (short term housing for 10-15 days until there is a bed available in the appropriate treatment center). There will be a Medicaid application area within the Center and no one will be turned away. Once a patient leaves, the Center will provide case management for 30 days. As of now, VOA provides long term case management.

Since 2007, Capital Area Human Services (CAHS) has trained the officers of the Baton Rouge Police Department and other law enforcement agencies. Generally, these trainings are held twice yearly, in April and October, with the exception of this year due to the challenges of COVID-19.

Since 2015, CAHS has trained every incoming class of police recruits starting with the 81st class. Currently, this accounts for 398 of the roughly 600 officers employed by BRPD. CAHS provides 40 hours of training on Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) during the police academy. Additionally, anyone who is a part of community policing and hostage negotiations are required to go through the training. This training is available to all law enforcement agencies in the 7 parish area. Cultural competency is a core part of the training.

Additionally, during 2018 and 2019, ReCAST (Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma) Baton Rouge, in collaboration with the Baton Rouge Police Department (BRPD) Community Services unit and the Baton Rouge Children’s Advocacy Center, provided self-care and mental health training to law enforcement. These classes were mandatory as instructed by Chief Murphy Paul. ReCAST Baton Rouge provides services through the Office of the Mayor President with federal pass through funds awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

Also during 2019 and 2020, Family Service of Greater Baton Rouge and the Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center conducted a two-part training entitled Hope and Healing that featured crisis intervention team training and mental health awareness targeting law enforcement, first responders, court personnel, 911 dispatchers and others. Training also introduced the Active Postvention Model also known as LOSS Team (local Outreach to Suicide Survivors) to assist first responders and suicide survivors in providing assistance and resources to bereaved family members at the scene of a suicide.

Family Service also conducted outreach to collaborate with BRPD, the Coroner's Office, Crisis Team Members and local authorities in developing a Crisis Response Team to become available for deployment to support family members and individuals in need of immediate assistance and support in response to crime scenes and traumatic events. Lastly, Family Service continues to collaborate with ReCAST Baton Rouge in offering individual counseling to law enforcement in need of services following traumatic events.

Lastly, ReCAST Baton Rouge partnered with AmeriHealth Caritas of Louisiana and Eclectic Cognitive Behavioral Center to conduct Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for City-Parish personnel, including law enforcement. MHFA training teaches participants how to respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The training provides skills to provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis. During August and September 2020, law enforcement representing BRPD, the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's and Constables' offices participated in ReCAST Baton Rouge-offered training.

Public safety officers place safety above everything else — for their community and themselves. At the end of the day, their priority is to make it home safely. The departments have systems in place to process witnessing chronic trauma on every shift.

Due to staffing concerns by all public safety agencies, an inquiry should be made into whether incentivizing working the crisis response teams would be beneficial to encourage taking on this role. Additionally, other cities with similar frameworks successfully place non-armed responders in the crisis teams who are reflective of the community they serve.

Next, we looked outside of Louisiana to successful programs with crisis intervention teams, starting in Washington state.

CAHOOTs model Crisis Response Units and Familiar Faces

Olympia, Washington

In 2017, the citizens of Olympia, Washington voted to approve a public safety levy. This levy bolstered funding for additional community/neighborhood policing, walking officers and a Crisis Response Unit. Additionally, they have a therapeutic municipal court aptly named ‘Community Court’. Housed within this building is a Mental Health court, Veteran’s court, Homeless court and Drug court, which are all ‘opt-in’ courts. This is based on crime inoculators as a way to reduce recidivism.

This Crisis Response Unit program started with stakeholder conversations, beginning with the business community where there were walking patrols. The business community wanted a simple number to call if there was an individual they recognized in need and additionally wanted a quick response time.

This unit is modeled after the CAHOOTs program in Eugene, OR after the Olympia, WA police chief worked with the program. This team is more expansive in scope than the MAT offered by RI International. This program helps with jail diversion and provides the police department and emergency medical system with direct savings on calls that are not specific to their primary skillset. It is important to note these people are not police officers, not uniformed as police officers, do not use police vehicles, and have no power to detain or arrest. This team patrols and stabilizes crisis situations and aids people in need. It is important to note that Olympia, WA is taking an inverse approach of what we are recommending. They do not yet have a facility that would engage in jail diversion like the Bridge Center for Hope, just as Baton Rouge does not have a CAHOOTs model Crisis Response Unit.

Out of this department, the Familiar Faces program was created. Familiar Faces was created for more intensive care and support for the people that the Crisis Response Unit and police officers were continually engaging with. Law Enforcement was anonymously polled and asked to name 10 individuals who were in need of frequent assistance. Familiar Faces started with 2 individuals they refer to as Peer Navigators in 2018, who had similar lived experiences as the 10 individuals

on the list. Peer Navigators have a criminal background, but cannot have a felony conviction. The downtown walking patrol would make the introduction to the Peer Navigator and then let them take over. The team carries backpacks with them on foot which include NarCan. A Peer Navigator in the simplest terms is an intense helicopter parent — anything you would do for a family member, you can do for the individual. They have drastically reduced the number of calls these people require, thus reducing costs while simultaneously improving their quality of life.

The most important part during crisis intervention with this model is not to call 911, as there is a serious mistrust of the 911 system. If someone sees one of these 10 individuals (now 20) who is in need of a Familiar Face, they contact the Peer Navigator directly.

Familiar Faces has grown to be larger than the CRU. Starting with two Peer Navigators, they are now employing six. Their on-site training is three months, including ride along/walk alongs. The program now has added mental health professionals to the program, meeting weekly for case management meetings for the clients. In all of these cases, their goal is to use jail as a tool, not a punishment. Bringing a facility similar to the Bridge Center for Hope can act as a form of jail diversion.

An example of the success of Familiar Faces two years in: An individual had been arrested a staggering 55 times in the two years prior to the start of the program and called 911 on an average of 3,000 times per month, approximately 100 calls a day. In the two years since he was paired with a Peer Navigator, he has been arrested 4 times and his monthly average of calls to 911 is 210, approximately 7 a day.

The intent in Olympia was to move away from a billable model. The startup costs for this department was \$110,101 for 6 employees, a transport van with plexiglass, 4 seats and wheelchair access. The CRU currently costs 497,022 for a team of 7 that operates 16hrs a day. They intend to expand this model over time. The Familiar faces program began with \$517,056 and has grown to \$805,124 for their next fiscal year.

White Bird Clinic

Eugene, Oregon

Next we looked to Eugene, Oregon, where this idea originated. The White Bird Clinic started in Eugene, Oregon in the 1960's, born out of a mistrust of mainstream institutions who would respond to crisis interventional calls. By 1969, they housed a crisis line staffed by volunteers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The need was so great, an extension of White Bird was created, Crisis Assistance Helping Out in the Streets (CAHOOTS). CAHOOTS began in 1989 with a station wagon and a tackle box of medical supplies. Teams comprised of a medic and crisis worker started going to fairs and the teams were solidified at the Grateful Dead concerts. White Bird has grown to be an umbrella encompassing a medical clinic, dental clinic, a substance abuse outpatient center (detox is done at an independent facility), and CAHOOTS, who employ over 200 employees. Oregon and Washington are working to scale this type of service throughout their respective states.

White Bird and its extensions are fully funded by law enforcement. Calls are received through police dispatch for CAHOOTS, which is a voluntary service and individuals have to 'opt-in'. When given the choice, 98% of individuals choose to be transported by the CAHOOTS van and team over being handcuffed by law enforcement. The CAHOOTS team is comprised of an EMT and a qualified mental health professional, who generally have similar lived experiences. They currently have 3 vans — two that run 24 hours a day and a third that runs 18 hours a day. They respond to over 20,000 calls a years in a mixed urban/metropolitan area with a population of approximately 200,000. The majority of these calls are initiated contact while they are on patrol.

White Bird has reflective indemnification, meaning if someone CAHOOTS deems is not a danger to themselves or others does end up hurting someone else or themselves, they bear the responsibility legally and therefore, financially, in cases of litigation. This reduces the costs of insurance for law enforcement agencies.

Department of Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance

Durham, North Carolina

In 2019, Durham, North Carolina expanded its Department of Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance, which handled contracts and procurements, into the Equity and Inclusion Department, which was passed by city ordinance. The change was prompted by the City Manager going through training with the Racial Equity Institute.

There are now six people in the department, called the Racial Equity Core Team. They teamed up with Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to develop the department. Their first year was spent developing a racial equity agenda under four topics: Contracts and Procurement, Communication and Engagement, Tools and Training, and Workforce Equity (Human Resources).

After interviewing subject matters experts within the City-Parish and outside of the state, we suggest building a consortium of partners to build an alternate plan of public safety, specifically addressing the mental and behavioral health calls. This would free up money within law enforcement agencies to prevent and respond to crime, creating force multipliers. Similar programs in other cities have proven over and over again of cost savings to the law enforcement agencies, health care providers, government entities and their taxpayers. Further savings would be had by law enforcement agencies by the potential reflective indemnification of partnering crisis response teams.

It appears that this may be the aim of Mayor Broome's *Safe, Hopeful and Healthy BR* initiative—to create peer navigators to divert those traditionally involved in a life of crime, while providing resources to assist them with mental health and other needs thereby reducing crime statistics and promoting improved quality of life.

Continuing the work of Racial Equity and Inclusion in the East Baton Rouge Parish

While public safety and policing are hot topics on the national stage the underlying issues of racial inequity and societal disparities are long lasting issues. Our Mayor and her administration have taken actionable steps towards making Baton Rouge better for all its citizens and businesses. If we are to continue this path, racial equity must be a long-term effort. Significant

work has been done by this commission in its initial 90-day charter. Our challenge is that 90 days of work and the work it may lead to cannot undo 203 years of these efforts not being a focus at the local level. If we are to start the disinheritance of this inequity and lead the way forward as the capital of Louisiana it must be a more comprehensive review of the existing structures in our parish.

To continue this work, we reached out to a recently established Department of Equity and Inclusion located in Durham, North Carolina. Their department was established in the 1970s as a Department of Affirmative Action and since then has been involved in the work of making the work of the city government more equitable. This is one of the oldest of such departments in the south although it did not explicitly have equity in its name until more recently as language has changed. We interviewed Deborah Giles, Director, and the Chief Equity Officer Sharon Williams who described their work, how they established it and the business need for it.

Through this department, they are following the GARE's model which is produced by Race Forward. This process starts by normalizing the language and understanding equity among city-government employees. They then follow this up with operationalizing and organizing over the long-term to ensure that the work is being done across the entire municipal government. This is important as structural racism permeates all areas of our society and we must understand it before we can begin to take steps against it.

The department with 5 staff members had a total budget of \$580,659.00 in fiscal year 2018-2019. In 2019-2020 fiscal year they expanded their budget to \$736,544.00 which includes salaries for more staff and a Chief Equity Officer. This includes the staff members, training, and other activities essential to this work. It is important to note that this department does more than just training and helping the local government move towards racial equity in its practices, it also supports ensuring disadvantaged businesses have opportunities to expand!

This department and its adjustments going forward were only possible with the City of Durham's Task Force on Racial Equity and Inclusion, a long-term task force that created a report on the overall state of Durham. Their first report was released after 21-months of work. This entity runs long-term and works with the Chief Equity Office and the Department of Equity and Inclusion to insure they are meeting goals determined by the citizens of their polity.

There are fiscal benefits to racial equity work, especially in the south as Louisiana ranks 7th in states with percentages of the population who are people of color. Improving outcomes for citizens, increasing employment, and supporting disadvantaged businesses are all measures that can widen the City-Parish's tax base. This is especially important as we are more reliant on sales taxes due to Louisiana's homestead exemption and thus more reliant on money spent in our polity.

Baton Rouge can also progress and maintain this path in the years to come as well. There are issues that need to be addressed across all areas of our parish and we hope to see COREI continue.

Additionally, we suggest creating a history timeline for the city of Baton Rouge with verifiable sources that encompasses the history of racial equity and inclusion in our city.

Opportunities for Partnerships

Healthcare/Mental Health Providers

- Baton Rouge General
- Bridge Center for Hope
- Capital Area Human Services
- East Baton Rouge Coroner's Office
- Healthy BR
- Lane Regional Medical Center
- Ochsner Medical Center
- Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center
- Surgical Specialty Center
- Woman's Hospital
- Family Service of Greater Baton Rouge
- Louisiana Department of Health – Office of Behavioral Health

Public Safety

- Baton Rouge Police Department
- Baton Rouge Community College Police
- Constable's Office
- EBR Sheriff including Crime Victims Reparations
- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire Department

- Baker Police
- Central Police
- LSU Police
- Southern Police
- Zachary Police
- State Police
- State Trooper
- Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement

Schools and Local Facilities

EBR School System

Central School System

Zachary School System

BREC

Outside of Baton Rouge

City of Richmond, VA

Olympia Police Department, Familiar Faces

White Bird Clinic, Eugene, OR

CAHOOTS, Eugene, OR

City of San Antonio, TX

City of Denver, CO

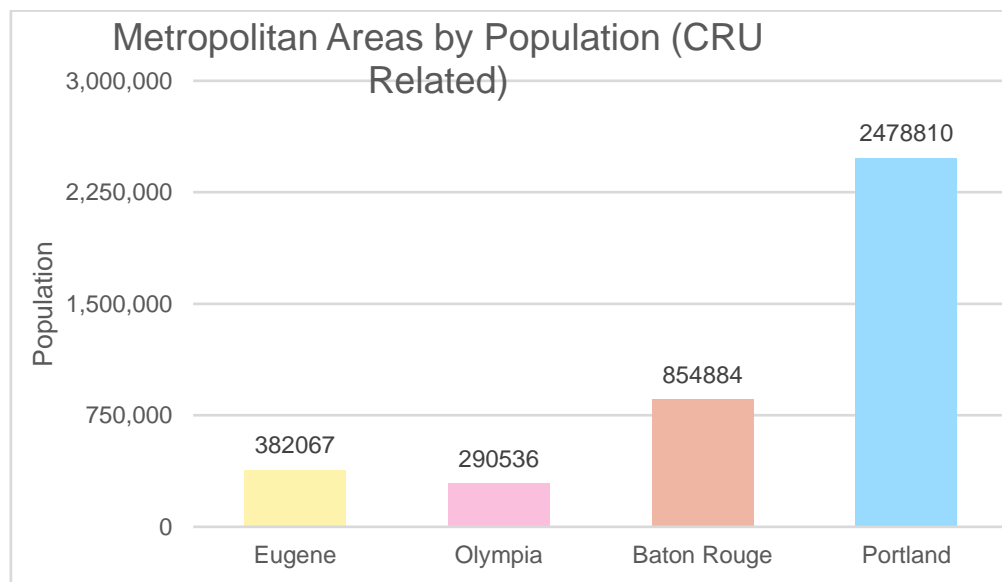
The Center for Hope, San Antonio, Texas

Fiscal and Budgetary Implications

Initial suggested funding sources: Metromorphosis, The Kellogg Foundation, Restorative Justice Grant, Bureau of Justice, Department of Justice, DOJ Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), Mental Health Grant, HRSA Grant, DCFS (Department of Children and Family Services), Education Grants, Lamar Foundation, BRAF, Huey and Angela Wilson Foundation and the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement.

CAHOOTs Model Crisis Response Units: The budgets for fiscal year 2019-2020 for the cities of Baton Rouge, LA, Olympia, WA, Eugene, OR, Durham, NC, and Portland, OR were pulled as well as the cities' Comprehensive Annual Financial reports for fiscal year 2019. This was done to gauge the cities' current fiscal state for comparative analysis. It is important to note that Baton Rouge, LA occupies a larger geospatial area and has a much higher population for its metropolitan area than most of the other cities.

From our interviews with crisis response teams, their services have expanded due to people traveling into cities and city centers for services and goods. Even as our partner cities continue to scale their services it is important we keep in mind this could mean prices will not have an exact match for some of the intended services. As the City-Parish is facing a loss of gaming-tax revenue and other revenues as well as reductions in personnel, we consider it may be best to research in FY20 and move towards implementation in FY21 for implementation of CRUs.



Data sourced from Census Bureau Metropolitan statistical areas

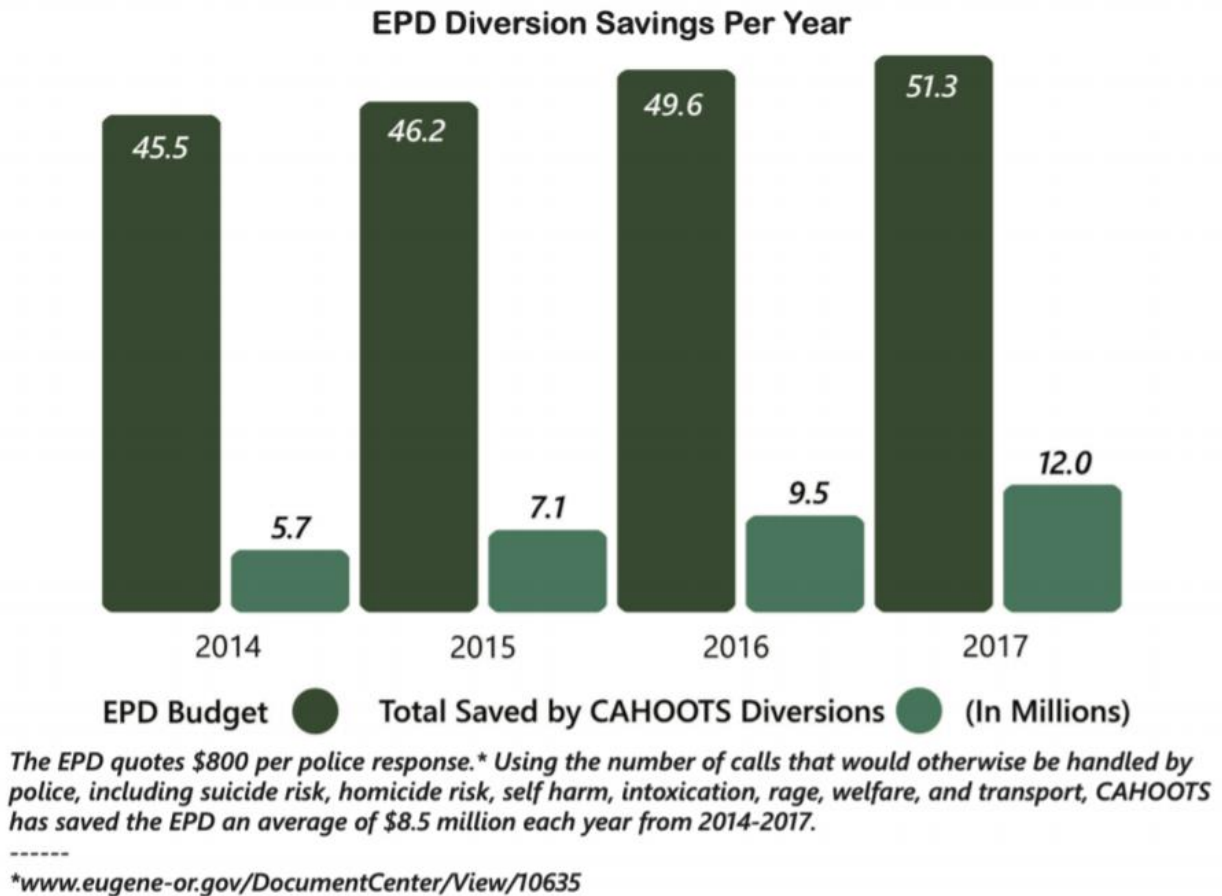
The Baton Rouge metropolitan area is much larger than most of the metropolitan areas that are currently serviced by the CAHOOTs model CRUs and Familiar Faces. However, we are not the largest city where this model is being implemented with intentions to scale. Portland, OR, with a

population of 657,100 (incorporated cities and towns for 2020)², is beginning one such program organized under their Emergency Medical Services. Named the Portland Street Response (PSR), the pilot for this team adopted in FY 2019-2020 pilot and research costs were \$182,847. This program was viewed as a success and has been given a boost in funding by its city council for FY 2020-2021. Given this, the low range for piloting research for one of these teams appears to be close to \$100,000 and the upper end even for a city of Portland's size is closer to \$200,000. Portland included a total of \$500,000 under its Bureau of Emergency Communications, 0.52% of its \$35 million dollar budget for Emergency Communications and Management.

Baton Rouge's Emergency Medical Services fund totals \$24 million dollars and it is estimated that establishing this research and pilot program could cost 0.75% of its budget if established under EMS. **The cost savings however on the 63,517 calls responded to in 2019 at the current scale based on data from Eugene, OR could equate to \$912 per call for the EBR EMS and close to \$800 per call for BRPD.** Please note these data points are not exact and based on the savings noted by the Eugene Police Department. Direct quotes and figures assistance on isolating a cost for Baton Rouge was offered by Benjamin Brubaker from the White Star Clinic. The time and resources needed for data collection for a more in-depth evaluation is not in the window afforded to this work group/commission. The savings to EMS were 14% higher than the savings for Eugene PD, where this estimate comes from.

The Bridge Center for Hope is predominantly focused on jail and Emergency Room diversion savings. A CRU would be focused on EMS and Law Enforcement Office (LEO) diversion. The Mobile Assessment Team (MAT) paired with the Bridge Center for Hope for Hope is also intended to serve as a backup to Police Officers when called. Part of this plan is ensuring BRPD officers are trained in crisis intervention. They would still be expected to handle the majority of the transports to the Bridge Center for Hope.

² www.macrotrends.com



Sourced from CAHOOTS Guide

Most costs associated with a CRU stem from their van and acquiring mental health professionals and EMTs. There are multiple paths towards examining what a pilot program would look like, so we are only offering an example of what the cost would appear to be for the purposes of this recommendation.

Based on the data we were given, we have noted that most calls happen after people have returned home or are in their free time during the afternoon and night hours. For instance, Eugene’s fleet of CAHOOTS vans operates with two vans during the day and 5 vans during peak time periods with another multi-van unit operating out of the other city in the metropolitan area. An ideal scenario for EBR would be 2-3 vans working in tandem with the Bridge Center for Hope’s MAT for a pilot. A total of \$75,000 per van and a team of 8 – 12 mental health professionals and EMTs. This would put the estimated total cost to run an ideal case in the first year displayed in the chart below. This data is based on the scaled budget from Olympia PD’s

CRU. It does not include additional overhead costs such as employee benefits, administrative equipment, and technology. The likelihood the pilot year for this program would be in excess of \$1.5 million dollars.

Item	Low #	High #	Cost per Item	Low Cost FY 1	High Cost FY 2
Staff					
Mental Health Professional	4	6	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 220,000.00	\$ 330,000.00
Emergency Medicine Technician	4	6	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 240,000.00
Program Manager	1	1	\$70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00
Materials					
Crisis Response Vans	2	3	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 225,000.00
Total Cost Fiscal Year 1				\$ 600,000.00	\$ 865,000.00

Comments and Discussion on funding a CAHOOTs Model CRU

As we advocate for the integration of the CRU concept in Baton Rouge, we must consider the implications of this recommendation. Portland, OR is included for this financial example due to current events involving police shootings having caused calls for redirection of funds. Portland does not have its CRU formed from within its police department budget, unlike the other cities whose units were formed before the Prison-Industrial Complex abolition movement came to the forefront of the national agenda. Our concern and reason excluding this is that including it could impact buy-in from BRPD and the EBR Sheriff's Office. A program of this nature cannot survive separate from nor in conflict with another First Responder. The primary argument for these services is that they reduce the number of calls and liability on our other first responders allowing them to focus on crime prevention and reduction and in turn lead to budget savings. Additionally, this saves taxpayers money and puts money back in the budgets of our Emergency Medical Services and our Law Enforcement Offices while addressing critical needs of impacted residents/citizens. Many of our interviewees expressed interest in helping Baton Rouge by offering to meet, have ride-alongs and offer data to support the growth of these services in Baton Rouge.

The existence of the MAT via the Bridge Center for Hope is an excellent step in the right direction. However, our interviews indicate this will not be enough. The CRU must operate out

in the streets, on patrol. Most of CAHOOT's calls, and Olympia PD CRU's calls are initiated by members of those units. This is similar to how most interactions of police officers are implemented by police officers. The CAHOOTs Act is also working its way through the United States House of Representatives and is seeking to provide funding for these programs in all states. This is similar to the expansion that occurred for EMS services in the early late 1960's and early 1970's. It is too early to gauge if this act will make it through to the Senate and the President's desk and what the Act will look like if it is to make it out of the House of Representatives.

Racial Equity and Inclusion Coordinator and Commission on Racial Equity

The price of this position and extending the commission is not very high. Some degree of funds will need to be allocated for training and a consultation with the Government Alliance on Racial Equity. Similar departments market these positions in a non-management position typically pay between \$50,000 and \$60,000. We would recommend this be a position that should grow over the long-term, similar to the growth of Durham's Department of Equity and Inclusion. As it currently stands, the Durham Department of equity and inclusion has a budget of \$736,433 increased 27% from their 2019 FY due to the expansion and inclusion of a team focused on Equity. We agree with their model of having a team focused on disadvantaged businesses and local government contracting bias, as well as a team focused on the outcomes for government employees and citizens.

Establishing a role focused on disadvantaged businesses may be more favorable with some constituents of the parish and incorporate with community investment initiatives already in existence. As it currently stands, the City and Metro-Council are oriented around business support. Proceeding along these lines first, then incorporating more human services would be the recommended route to follow. This is also how the program grew in Durham. However, our suggestion for the position to fall under Healthy BR –provided that this direction does not conflict with the entity being an independent non-profit and the need for the Mayor-President to “own” this work. There needs to be a human services orientation first. Regardless of the direction, the team will have to scale its membership and scope in either direction.

Assessments have been done noting financial losses due to racial disparity and the benefits of alleviating such disparities. Many of these correlate with direct healthcare savings costs on

employees and companies, as well as lost productivity. A Racial Equity Coordinator under Healthy BR could examine these social determinants and work with the annual Community Health Needs Assessment to derive savings for the parish from this work. Additional sources and research are needed in this area, however, the limited time of the commission prevents this.

The recommendation for the Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion to continue or be established as a long-standing committee working in tandem with the Coordinator on Racial Equity should not add more overhead than the costs associated with other city-parish committees.

Recommendations

1. To create a full time position that will oversee racial equity and inclusion work and polity in the City-Parish.
2. Establish an ongoing Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion managed by City-Parish.
3. Request a report issued quarterly on the Bridge Center for Hope and the Crisis Intervention teams to the Mayor and the Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion tracking data on the benefits to the community.
4. Increase training for all City-Parish employees on crisis intervention and racial equity and inclusion.
5. Explore expanding Crisis Intervention Teams, modeled after CAHOOTS as a force multiplier for First Responders.

Additional recommendations

1. We strongly encourage an inclusive media campaign informing the public of how the Bridge Center will work. Additionally, include and inform the public who to call during a mental and behavioral health emergency. We suggest this be a joint campaign with invested parties (City-Parish, public safety agencies, health care institutions).

Historic Recognition and Physical Expressions

Members: Tara Mitchell, Frank McArthur, Rebecca Lunceford, Stone Cox, Dale Flowers, Jennifer Jones Bridget

Executive Summary

While the history of our city already demanded efforts for racial reconciliation, it is the culmination of recent events in 2020 that have reopened the need for community healing towards racial wellness in our city. When Baton Rouge made national news in 2016 for a police involved shooting, eyes turned toward the state of our divided city. It is not difficult to identify the gapping racial inequality that exists across the parish. As a result, the Mayor's Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion (COREI) Historic Recognition and Physical Expressions work group recommends launching platforms and facilitated discussion for the exploration of racial inequity that exists within our city with the purpose to understand the cultural differences that co-exist within our diverse community. We also recommend launching a toolkit that addresses and educates citizens on how to change the physical expressions of racism, systematic oppression, and implicit bias that are present in various forms through activism, policy, and legislation.

Background and Vision

According to Parker Cramer, a then LSU Student (Scott 2013, www.wafb.com), "The political climate in Baton Rouge in 1973 was not hospitable to blacks, most especially Black Muslims." This statement was made after Muslims were accused of inciting deadly riots in Baton Rouge months earlier in which several persons were killed in a gun battle with police resulting in WBRZ news anchor and reporter Bob Johnson being severely injured and spent the

remainder of his life in a nursing home where he died in 2011³. Additionally, during 1953, an eight-day bus boycott ensued where black protesters sought to integrate a divided racial (transportation) system. In 1956, the East Baton Rouge Parish school desegregation case was filed in response to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the matter of Brown vs. Board of Education. Four years later, the Federal District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana, housed in Baton Rouge, issued an order that prohibited the East Baton Rouge School Board from continuing to operate a racially segregated school system. The consent decree would last 45 years.⁴

These historical moments support the tale that Baton Rouge is “a tale of two cities.” This ‘tale’ references the division that continues to exist between residents of Baton Rouge. Division in Baton Rouge has always existed, but recent events around the country have provided an opportunity for pointed introspection. In particular, 2016, was a year of great civil unrest. The death of Alton Sterling as a result of police-involved shooting, an ambush and killing of law enforcement, and unprecedented flooding were a major contributing factors to this point. Consequences of these events included: collective trauma, major property damage, and increased racial tensions. Those effects are still felt today. Similar to 2016, 2020 brought unprecedented times upon the City of Baton Rouge, the United States and the World. A global pandemic, police brutality, peaceful and violent protest, and major civil unrest characterize 2020. For the United States, one of the most critical moments of 2020 was the death of George Floyd as a result of police brutality. His death exposed layers of systematic racism, revealed blatant discrimination, and aggravated race relations in the United States. The result was months and months of violent civil unrest.

³ <https://www.wafb.com/story20630626/scott/#>:

⁴ Davis v. East Baton Rouge School Board, 570 f.2d 1250, 1261 (5th Ci. 1978)

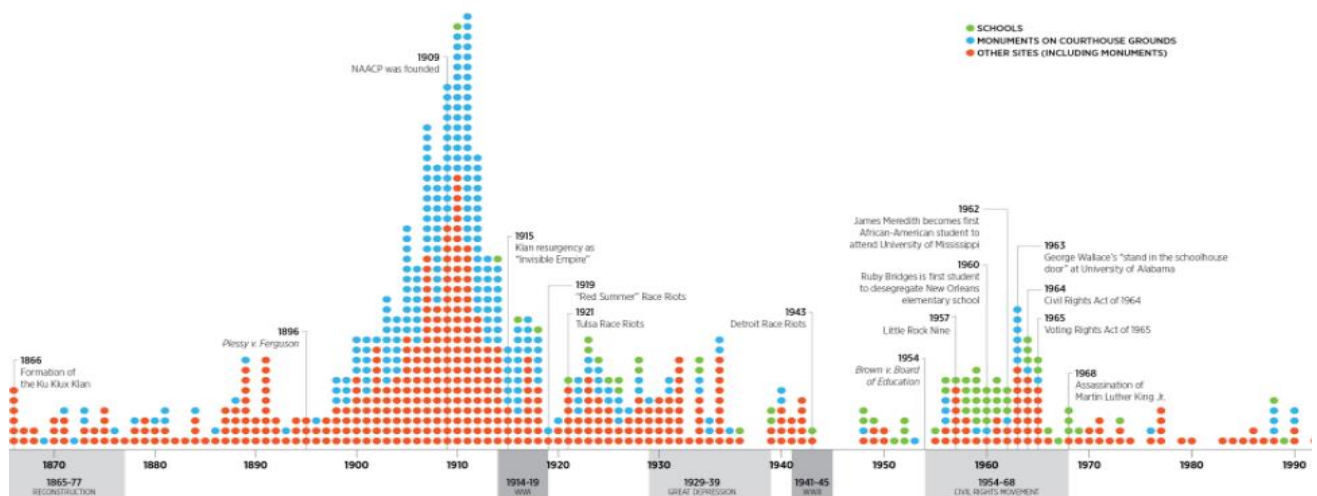
While Baton Rouge has not experienced the level of unrest seen elsewhere around the country, we have been affected by events nationwide. As the nation called for more accountability from law enforcement and city officials, Baton Rouge did as well.

Currently, Baton Rouge has numerous physical expressions throughout the city that praise “leaders” of the Confederacy. For example, Black and Brown children attending a school named after a confederate general who believed they were “2/5 of a man” is inhumane and perpetuates the belief that Brown and Black lives do not matter. Even though Baton has made strides to correct the tributes made to those “leaders” like renaming “Lee High School” to “Liberty High School” or Louisiana State University's student body petitioning the University Board of Supervisors, is it not enough. A city that praises individuals who believed half of its population was not people, does not progress. Not only is that detrimental to one’s psyche, it is not good for Baton Rouge as a city. These physical expressions are not culturally inclusive nor are they culturally sensitive.

At first our work group agreed that changing the names of physical expressions was only one step toward reconciliation. We sought out to find the process in renaming a building or other expressions. Through our research, we discovered the process is lengthy, complicated, and would most likely amass pushback. As a group, we decided our goal is to change minds and hearts through education and empathy. Although it is important to tear down physical expressions that create divisiveness, it is arguably more important to educate the masses about the “how” and “why” a physical expression is offensive.

State the Issue

In Baton Rouge, we have statues, street names, and other physical expressions named after “heroes” of the Confederacy. This glorification of individuals who have committed heinous acts against group(s) of people perpetuate the idea that one demographic is greater than another. The existence of Confederate and white supremacists monuments, holidays, signs and other expressions have existed since the Reconstruction ended in the 1870’s. The Southern Poverty Law Center published a comprehensive study of Confederate statues and monuments across the country. The below chart shows when most of these monuments and statues were erected. Most historians would agree that the monuments were not erected to honor fallen soldiers but “specifically to further ideals of white supremacy.”⁵



Although racist physical expressions erected at the end of the 1870’s, the erasure of other groups' historical relevance began prior to.

⁵ Parks, M., Confederate statues were built to further a ‘white supremacist future’, August 20, 2017

The lack of historic recognition in the United States has aided in the erasure of other cultures' accomplishments and relevance. This erasure is upheld by ignorance to the United States' true history. If people were aware in 1876 that the Supreme Court decreed that the Federal Government had no jurisdiction in crimes of racist violence by private citizens against other citizens then they would understand how deeply rooted violence against Black people are and why we saw major unrest this year because of it. Also, they would know this ruling allowed white supremacists freedom to continue their reign of terror against former enslaved people and their descendants. This ruling set precedents for the next decades like segregation, 'Black Codes', 'Jim Crow Laws', the 'KKK' and other entities in place that increased the racial divide. Without understanding history, one is bound to repeat it. Hence in 2020, we see the resurgence of the 'KKK' and other white supremacists groups. The United States history should be thoroughly taught to create mutual understanding and decrease the racial divide. This is no different for Baton Rouge.

The issue of ignorance to race or what some would dub as "unconscious bias" has caused a widening rift in our city. White apathy for Black people, fear of Black people, absence of awareness of the state of Baton Rouge and the lack of recognition of racism aid in the great divide that the city sees. We believe the remedy to these problems is to close the gaps in education. Educating Baton Rouge community members about the history of Baton Rouge, how other cultures contributed greatly to what we see now, and overall teaching cultural competence will help alleviate the divide we see.

Opportunities for Partnerships

Stakeholders are either engaged in this work directly or advisory capacity. Below is a list of organizations that we suggest the Mayor or Metro Council meet with or appoint for the execution of our proposed recommendations

Key Partners with Hosting Responsibilities and Investment

1. ThreeSixtyEight, a full-service marketing and innovation agency located here in Baton Rouge
2. Arts Council of Baton Rouge
3. Louisiana Public Broadcast System
4. Local Area NAACP

Other Key Partnerships

- Visit Baton Rouge
- Baton Rouge Area Chamber
- Baton Rouge Area Foundation
- Metromorphosis
- East Baton Rouge Public School System
- Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC)
- East Baton Rouge Metro Council
- Baton Rouge Community College Arts Department
- LSU Arts Department
- Louisiana Arts and Science Museum
- Southern University Music/Arts Department
- Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge
- Dialogue on Race Louisiana
- Diversity Dialogues (Cheli Roberson)
- Racial Harmony Commission of the Diocese of Baton Rouge (Ftr. Johnson)
- ReCAST Baton Rouge
- Catholic Charities Racial Sobriety (Ftr. Clarence)

Media

We suggest the Mayor approach these media outlets to cover the arts exhibit and open forums per our recommendations in their respective publications

- 225 Magazine
- Baton Rouge Business Report
- In Register
- The Advocate
- WAFB
- WBRZ
- WGMB/WVLA (BR Proud)
- Baton Rouge Weekly Press

Fiscal and Budgetary Implications

ThreeSixtyEight has offered to take on the media, advertising, and hosting responsibilities for these open forums similar to their previous “Assembly Required” seminars and partner with other stakeholders like Visit Baton Rouge and local media to promote attendance and participation as well as provide the venue and tech A/V equipment necessary to host a facilitated discussion about racial equity and inclusion.

A partner or additional funding would need to be secured if the Arts Council does not have the funds to establish the Implicit Bias room at their site or if the Mayor’s budget could not incur the costs. Either way, a budget and other costs would require research.

Recommendations

1. Create expressive platforms about race in Baton Rouge that opens an avenue for exploration, conversation, and introspection. These dialogues will be used to amplify perspectives on race in our community. (Suggest an example of an outcome that would result from these platforms might be appropriate here)
2. Host a facilitated discussion to educate on inclusion and the importance of understanding in historic recognitions and physical expressions

3. Develop an educational toolkit that tells the story of racial inequity and injustice over the years in Baton Rouge; a guide on how to make changes to current legislation around holidays, buildings, street names, and monument names.