

# Progress With Purpose

BUILDING AN  
EQUITABLE SOUTH 2024

E PLURIBUS UNUM

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## About E Pluribus Unum

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Our nation's founding motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, reminds us that from many, we are one—interconnected and interdependent. It is a profound statement of hope and shared humanity. Yet, throughout our history, we have often fallen short of this ideal, allowing fear, division, and mistrust to undermine our collective potential. These fractures carry a deep cost—not just to individuals but to the promise of America itself.

We cannot achieve the prosperity and fairness that all deserve if we remain divided. The path to a brighter future for everyone begins with recognizing our shared humanity—seeing the power in our collective identity that grows from the richness of our individual stories and experiences. From this foundation, we can build opportunity, foster belonging, and work toward a vision of the common good.

E Pluribus Unum was founded in 2018 by former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu with a mission rooted in the belief that facing what divides us is essential to building a more united future. Today, EPU continues to lead the way, developing innovative programs and initiatives that cultivate leaders who bring people together across differences. Together we are rewriting the narratives that perpetuate division and are creating environments where everyone has a fair shot at success.

Through bold actions and policy shifts, EPU is helping communities across the South rise to meet today's challenges while building a foundation for shared prosperity. Together, we are fostering a sense of belonging and creating spaces where hope flourishes, fairness prevails, and progress is shared by all.

This is not just work for today but a vision for the future—a future where our interconnectedness becomes our strength, and the promise of *out of many, one* becomes a reality for all.



When historians look back, they will remember how we, in this moment, in this time, came together *to do what was hard for the sake of doing what was right*, and gave light and freedom, goodness and life, to those generations we do not yet know.

—Mitch Landrieu



# Where We Make Change

## Introduction

America stands at a crossroads, a moment both challenging and full of possibility. Toxic polarization and threats to our democracy have sown mistrust and fear, leaving many feeling isolated and disconnected. Yet, within this struggle lies an opportunity—to rediscover the shared values and aspirations that have the power to bring us together. By working toward a collective vision grounded in hope, fairness, and belonging, we can begin to confront the forces that divide us and build a nation where individuals are respected, valued, and have a meaningful place in shaping our shared future.

2024 marked a turning point for EPU as we continued to refine and focus our programming. What sets EPU apart is our deep, data-driven understanding of the region and its people, combined with our commitment to applying behavioral science in ways that drive measurable progress. One of our most important lessons, though challenging, was the realization that true, transformative

results require engaging two levers of change simultaneously. By addressing **both individual behaviors and the larger systems in which they operate**, we aim to create a sense of **connection, understanding, and progress** that uplifts entire communities and the individuals within them.

In 2024, we worked toward this vision:

- **49 Unum Fellows are either leading or launching impactful community-focused initiatives** with the support of our team of policy advisors and learning partners.
- We announced two new cohorts of our Unum Academy, bringing together Southern college students from 12 states to cultivate the next generation of **collaborative, compassionate leaders**.
- We continued to curate and resource a network for **healing, collaboration, and shared understanding** through our Unum Alliance—a group of

over 60 community organizations, academic institutions, faith-based groups, and government-affiliated programs working toward **connection and opportunity for all**.

Our multimedia partner series with the award-winning media outlet *The Bitter Southerner* continues to share powerful stories of transformation and how communities across the South are creating change through the work of our Unum Fellows. A new podcast, *Reimagining Us*, co-hosted by EPU's Eminent Scholar Dr. Nichole Argo and EPU Executive Director Scott Hutcheson, has quickly become an invaluable resource for audiences looking to bridge divides in their communities by exploring the science behind human behavior as a tool to address toxic polarization.

Our policy team also released EPU's 2024 Policy Priorities and Principles, which serve as an **educational guide to building systems of fairness, belonging,**

**and opportunity**. These include insights on 9 crucial legislative issue areas and 26 detailed issue briefs that provide a **blueprint for driving sustainable and meaningful change**. Additionally, through government relations programming and direct collaboration with policymakers, we've worked to advance these priorities on the ground. Between our visits and the efforts of our Fellows, we are fostering **progress rooted in purpose** across over 50 communities in 13 Southern states.

This is just a snapshot of EPU's work and success in 2024. Through every program and initiative, EPU is striving to build a South—and a nation—where **fairness, opportunity, and a shared sense of belonging** are a reality for all. Read on to discover the full impact EPU has had across the American South this year and what's ahead!



## Leadership Accelerators

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Groundbreaking leadership at the community level is the cornerstone of both our success and the success of sustainable change throughout our nation. Our research underscores a powerful truth: Southerners place profound trust in their local leaders. Through our three thoughtfully curated and transformative leadership accelerators—the Unum Fellowship, Unum Academy, and Unum Alliance—EPU is dedicated to empowering the leaders who rise to the challenge of driving real, lasting change and building a stronger,

better South for us all. In 2024 alone, 100 exceptional leaders completed EPU’s impactful leadership programs, and 18 of them have already used the skills they’ve gained to drive pivotal policy shifts across the South. We see supporting and investing in leaders as the bedrock of our work—these leaders are not only shaping policy but redefining the future of the region and our nation. Their work is essential.

# Unum Fellows

Through the Unum Fellowship, leaders expand upon their understanding of how to address inequities within their communities. Each Unum Fellow goes through a series of training modules led by nationally recognized experts, like the Harvard Kennedy School and HR&A, where they learn to design and implement capstone projects in their communities that receive funding support from EPU. These cohorts then become communities in themselves as sources for continued learning and collaborative opportunities beyond the fellowship.

In 2024, our fourth cohort of Unum Fellows, comprised of civic and community leaders focused on environmental and climate justice, implemented eight unique projects across six states. Ranging from retrofitting homes to be more energy and cost efficient to creating a community garden space for youth in Mississippi, these projects sought to build stronger communities utilizing the lessons learned during the fellowship. EPU also expanded the fellowship program in 2024 to include another cohort of student leaders working across Southern colleges and communities. This cohort will begin implementing their projects in early 2025.

In 2024, EPU hosted its third annual Leadership Convening, an extraordinary gathering that brought together all 5

cohorts of the Unum Fellowship and alumni from every Unum Academy class. This event was more than a moment of reflection; it was a powerful reinforcement of the ecosystem of interconnected, courageous leaders we are building—a network united by the shared goal of advancing our communities and transforming the South. During this convening, participants had the opportunity to engage directly with EPU Founder Mitch Landrieu to discuss the pressing challenges to our nation’s democracy. They also learned from EPU’s Eminent Scholar Dr. Nichole Argo about the value of bridging divides through behavioral science and strategic communication.

This convening was a testament to the strength of our alumni network—an ever-growing community of leaders who are not only equipped with the tools to drive policy change but also deeply committed to reshaping our region’s future. At EPU, we are deeply committed to the long-term success of our Unum Fellows in their community-driven work. In 2024, this commitment was underscored through continuous, engaging programming designed to support Fellows in their ongoing efforts for justice and equity.

We also expanded opportunities for alumni to secure additional funding by



establishing EPU’s “Be Bold” Challenge Grant. This grant empowers leaders to sustain and amplify the impactful work they began during their fellowship and also competitively supports emerging projects among alumni from all of EPU’s leadership accelerators. We will also engage policymakers who are not Unum Fellows, but whose work in the South we are confident can have greater impact with a little extra support. These grants are a way to ensure that community leaders are equipped with the resources, knowledge, and network to create lasting, transformative change.

By continuously investing in the growth of our alumni, EPU is fostering a resilient ecosystem of leaders who will drive progress for generations to come. By bringing these committed leaders together, we create space for a powerful cross-pollination of ideas, collaboration, and solidarity, ensuring that each leader is supported, inspired, and empowered to tackle the urgent challenges our region faces. Through this network, EPU is building a South where leadership is not only shared but multiplied.

#### UNUM FELLOWSHIP LEARNING PARTNERS:

- GEMINI GROUP
- THE NEGOTIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION COLLABORATORY AT THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC LEADERSHIP AT HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL
- THE OPPORTUNITY AGENDA
- NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
- HR&A



## *Unum Fellows Cohort 4*

# Climate & Environmental Justice

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In 2023, EPU launched the groundbreaking Climate and Environmental Justice Cohort of our Unum Fellows, bringing together eight visionary public and civic sector leaders already driving impactful work on climate and the environment. These leaders were selected for their commitment to addressing the urgent challenges of our time—and for their desire to deepen their focus on issues within the context of environmental justice. Over the course of the fellowship, these Fellows engaged in intensive learning and development, equipping themselves with the tools to create more sustainable solutions in their communities.

By 2024, the Fellows in this cohort had not only completed the rigorous learning phase of the Unum Fellowship, but they also finalized and executed their community-based projects—projects that are reshaping the work around climate justice across the South.

At EPU, our commitment to these leaders extends far beyond the fellowship year. Through our funding support, we have provided the resources necessary to bring their projects to life and ensure their continued impact. EPU's investment in these leaders is part of our broader commitment to empowering our Fellows to make lasting change. By funding these innovative projects, we are not just supporting individual leaders—we are investing in the long-term transformation of entire communities. This support is a critical part of building an ecosystem where climate justice and a future of shared prosperity for all are inextricably linked, and where our Fellows can have the tools, knowledge, and resources to lead boldly and effectively for years to come.



## Letora Anderson

Assistant Professor, University of Texas Arlington  
*Arlington, TX*

Areas with extreme environmental issues of erosion and flooding in the Johnson Creek watershed are also located in census tracts with higher percentages of low-income residents. Letora's project sought to survey

residents about (1) their understanding of the environmental conditions affecting their communities, (2) the environmental impacts their households have experienced due to the degradation of this waterway, and (3) their preferences for mitigation strategies. The hope was to better understand the community's needs and to foster buy-in as the City of Arlington and the Army Corp of Engineers explored solutions for the flooding. The input she received informed the design of another pilot project that implemented technologically advanced green infrastructure (vegetation systems that allow rainwater absorption) to improve the Johnson Creek's water quality, stormwater management, and community connections to nature.



## Rob Burton

Co-Founder & Co-Executive Director, *SWEET Alabama*  
*Birmingham, AL*

To address issues of air pollution and energy burden, Rob piloted a community-led home energy retrofit program. The project targeted majority-Black neighborhoods in Birmingham that have a high concentration of dilapidated

housing stock and high poverty rates. Rob employed folks from within the community to staff a Home Energy Retrofit (HER) Street Team to complete no-cost home energy retrofits in their neighborhoods and conduct workshops to train residents to install effective weatherization materials using basic tools. Air sealing can reduce energy bills by 45%, eliminate unwanted drafts, and improve a home's air quality, but many residents can't afford to pay to fix up their homes. The hope was that these retrofits will reduce energy burden, giving residents more money to save or spend on other necessities.



## Jordan Campbell

Executive Director, Gateway Regional Arts Center  
*Mount Sterling, KY*

Mount Sterling, KY has seen increasing flooding in recent years due to climate change. The most impacted area, DuBois, is also the historic and cultural center of Black life, and more recently Chicano culture, in the county. As

folks move out of the area, there's a significant risk that the rich history and culture of those communities will be lost. Jordan's project gathered cultural artifacts, recorded oral narratives, restored and digitized photographs and paper documents, and created public art to preserve the images and history of the neighborhoods even as the climate crisis forces migration. The project aimed to: (1) create an accessible oral narrative collection housed at the DuBois Community Center and Gateway Regional Arts Center, with a free online version hosted by the University of Kentucky; (2) erect a permanent public art installation in the DuBois area that reflects the community's narratives; and (3) spark conversations on racial and environmental justice amid the relocation and out-migration of minorities from the area.



## Amanda Delperdang

Executive Director, Mississippi Delta Learning Center  
*Greenville, MS*

The Mississippi Delta Learning Center provides hands-on educational experiences, job training, and community regenerative agriculture focused on native plants.

Amanda's project launched a new Youth Growing Native

Food program to serve students (14 – 16 years old) who live in food deserts. As part of the curriculum on environmental justice, these youth connected to nature and learned about food sources and history through immersive, hands-on education. They grew, harvested, and marketed produce using regenerative practices that prioritize land stewardship and community well-being. Growing native plants like paw paws, black cherries, muscadine grapes, blueberries, and sunchokes not only provides healthy, accessible food options, it also allows the knowledge of the elders to be passed on to the next generation of Black youth, who will be at the forefront of reversing the negative effects of historical environmental injustice and food insecurity in Washington County, MS.





## Jesse Herrera

Founder & Executive Director, CoAct North Texas  
Fort Worth, TX

Jesse's project sought to reduce food insecurity in Fort Worth by facilitating the use of vacant and underutilized lots to support food production through urban farming. Over the past six years, his organization has supported

the creation of Tabor Farms. During that process, he encountered numerous administrative barriers at the local level that made the permitting process for the farm difficult, costly, and time-consuming. His project was to make the permitting process easier by clarifying requirements and procedures in the hopes of creating a roadmap that others can follow. In the long-term, he hopes this work will lead to improvements to the urban agriculture ordinance, including incentives for urban farm development. More urban farms would not only increase food access and resiliency in the city but could also serve as an economic driver to support developments like new restaurants, farmer's markets, and food cooperatives.



## Garrett Blaize

Treasurer, Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards  
Appalachian, VA

A legacy of extractive industries like coal mining and natural gas pipelines has degraded water quality, increased flood risks, and limited marginalized groups' authority over land management in Appalachia.

Mountaintop removal has exacerbated flooding, but at the same time much of the developable land outside flood zones is controlled by mine land holding companies and speculators, constraining affordable housing development opportunities for residents displaced by climate change. For his project, Garrett established frameworks, conducted research, and built capacity to equip marginalized communities in southwest Virginia to obtain formal rights in governing how vacant land assets could be sustainably developed to benefit residents. This included a feasibility study, visioning workshops with the community, training for community leaders, and the development of a potential structure ownership model. Ultimately, within the next few years he'd like to launch a community land trust.



## Diamond Spratling

Founder and Chair, Girl + Environment  
Atlanta, GA

Diamond's mission is to educate, engage, and empower Black and Brown womxn to stand up for climate and environmental issues in their respective communities. Her project launched a new program, the Protecting

Our Energy Project, which took a multi-faceted approach to pushing Georgia's Public Service Commission (PSC) to reign in rate hikes. She trained and funded two energy equity fellows to mobilize communities. She launched a digital campaign and toolkit to raise awareness and equip residents to actively participate in policy decisions. Finally, she established an energy advocacy network, bringing together over 100 folks from across Georgia, to initiate actions – like signing petitions, providing public comments, attending public hearings, and protesting – that will exert meaningful pressure on the PSC. Through these initiatives, Diamond strove to bring about meaningful changes in Georgia's energy landscape, ensuring affordable access for all residents.



## Clinton Woods

Birmingham City Council, District 1  
Birmingham, AL

Clinton's "Power of One" project was designed to tackle the pervasive issue of excessive littering, with a focus on areas of Birmingham that are facing disproportionate economic and environmental burdens. Through active

engagement and education, residents have built the knowledge and skills to make environmentally conscious choices and serve as influential advocates within their families and social circles. He also launched a Litter Champion program that hired neighborhood leaders to coordinate volunteer efforts, report incidents, and play a pivotal role in community education. The goal was to reduce litter by approximately 50,000 pounds annually to build towards a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable Birmingham.



## *Unum Fellows Cohort 5* **Youth**

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The Youth Cohort of the Unum Fellowship program is an exceptional group of 12 emerging leaders, aged 18 to 24, from 9 Southern academic institutions. These young leaders represent the future of the South—students who are not just learning in the classroom but are actively engaged in shaping the region’s social and political landscape. With a deep commitment to

those that surround them, they are already stepping up to tackle the most pressing challenges facing their communities and beyond. Through the Unum Fellowship, they are gaining the skills, knowledge, and networks to turn their passion into lasting change—empowered to lead with purpose and courage for years to come.



## Alonnie Celestine

*Xavier University*

Alonnie's project aims to secure support for budget additions to on-campus programs and processes, whether student or faculty-led, that provide essential aid and assistance in securing necessities, with a specific emphasis on menstrual products at Xavier University. By focusing on improving access to these vital resources, the initiative seeks to enhance student quality of life and ensure that all students can manage their health and well-being effectively.



## Toluwanimi Dapo-Adeyemo

*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

Tolu's project aims to enhance opportunities for young Black creatives in the Chapel Hill region by ensuring that arts students are exposed to a wider range of opportunities, similar to those available to their peers in law and medicine. By addressing the disparity in exposure and resources, the initiative seeks to empower Black students in the arts to explore their potential and navigate their career paths effectively. Ultimately, the project aspires to create a more inclusive environment that nurtures creativity and artistic expression.



## Sydney Denton

*Mississippi State University*

Sydney aims to establish an inclusive college preparation program that empowers first-generation and underrepresented minority students in Starkville, Mississippi, to navigate the higher education landscape successfully. Through free standardized test preparation, individualized college admission guidance, and essential life skills training, her project looks to equip students with the tools to excel academically and professionally.



## Amare Harris

*Vanderbilt University*

Amare's project aims to expand opportunities for Vanderbilt's Black business students by organizing career treks to major business hubs like NYC and the San Francisco Bay Area. By offering firsthand exposure to companies in finance, business, and tech, the program allows minority students to envision themselves in corporate roles and network with industry leaders.



## Wykendrick Jones

*Tougaloo College*

Wykendrick's project seeks to ensure equitable access to fresh, nutritious produce for Tougaloo College students, promoting a healthier relationship with food and challenging negative stereotypes about Black students' dietary habits. By addressing food availability disparities between HBCUs and PWIs, the initiative aims to provide Tougaloo students with the same fresh food options that predominantly white institutions offer, supporting students' well-being, academic success, and long-term health outcomes.



## Chris Khalaf

*Auburn University*

Chris' project aims to reduce food insecurity in Chambers County by connecting residents with local food pantries and increasing access to nutritious resources. It will provide residents with essential information about SNAP benefits and direct support from experts to assist with the application process. Ultimately, the project seeks to ease the financial burden on households striving to achieve adequate nutrition.



## Rotimi Kukoyi

*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

The goal of this initiative is to increase equitable access to higher education by providing FAFSA resources in primary care settings to low-income and underrepresented students. By utilizing the reach of healthcare spaces, the project aims to address the historic financial and systemic barriers that have long restricted college access for marginalized communities.



## Angel Lockett

*Wesleyan College*

Angel's project seeks to establish a supportive network at Wesleyan that offers mentorship, resources, and advocacy tailored to first-generation college students, empowering them to achieve academic and personal success. By fostering an inclusive environment, it also aims to address and dismantle systemic inequalities within educational institutions.



## Liv Schramkowski

*Duke University*

Liv will create a program to boost civic engagement among high students in the Durham community through a mock city council. It aims to create connections while empowering Durham students with resources and knowledge about the local government system, equipping them to advocate effectively for their needs.



## Jenna Smith

*Duke University*

Jenna's project is designed to center the experiences of system-impacted young women of color through a week-long enrichment and leadership development program designed to serve rising 9th–12th graders in Durham, NC, and its surrounding communities. With this initiative, she aims to create a supportive environment where students can build self-confidence, develop their unique leadership styles, and foster lasting friendships. Through academic and career development opportunities, the program empowers participants to pursue their aspirations and thrive as leaders in their communities.



## Kailynn Williams

*Southern University and A&M College*

Kailynn's project aims to cultivate a generation of young advocates in the East Baton Rouge region who are well-informed about the impact of environmental health on their communities and empowered to drive meaningful change. Ultimately, it seeks to equip marginalized communities with essential resources and education to improve environmental health outcomes for a more just and sustainable future.



## Marrow Woods

*Wesleyan College*

Marrow's project aims to inspire a visionary future for Macon by blending its historical roots with speculative storytelling. It seeks to create a space to acknowledge, honor, and explore the often hidden histories of Macon's African-American community, fostering collective healing through historical truth-telling and imagined futures. Through art and speculative fiction, the project will reshape both the physical and imaginative landscapes of Macon, encouraging a deeper connection with its past and potential.



# UNUM ACADEMY

In 2024, EPU launched its work with the second and third classes of the Unum Academy, comprising 30 college students from 12 of our 13 Southern states. The Unum Academy leadership accelerator aims to foster the personal and professional development of college students in the South who have an interest in addressing policies, practices, and structures that create inequality. Over the course of their one-year experience, Unum Academy members not only receive foundational leadership education, but also practical training in the methods, frameworks, and tools used by Project Directors and other practitioners in the areas of

community building and organizational work. Academy members practice their new skills during an EPU-funded summer internship with an community-focused organization in their local area. These organizations then become members of the Unum Alliance, if they are not already, further building EPU's network.

# Unum Academy Class of 2023

In late 2023, our second class of the Unum Academy was announced, consisting of 15 students from colleges and institutions across all 13 Southern states. The 2023 Unum Academy cohort completed their equity-focused internship in the summer of 2024.



**Roxanne James**

Florida A&M University;  
Tallahassee, FL  
*Sheltering Grace*



**Gabriel Mosley**

Francis Marion University;  
Florence, NC  
*Goodwill Industries of Upstate/  
Midlands South Carolina*



**Kayla Nguyen**

University of North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill; Chapel Hill, NC  
*NC Coalition for Alternatives to the  
Death Penalty (NCCADP)*



**Telina Boyles**

West Virginia University  
Potomac State College; Keyser, WV  
*Children's Home Society of West  
Virginia - Parkersburg Site*



**Jewel Cross**

Talladega College; Talladega, AL  
*Children's Services Council of  
Broward County*



**Journey Davis**

Spelman College; Atlanta, GA  
*Chicago CREd*



**Janiah Noel**

Transylvania University;  
Lexington, KY  
*Seven Counties Services*



**Aarinii  
Parm-Green**

Xavier University; New Orleans, LA  
*Education Trust Louisiana*



**Simone Russel**

Wesleyan College; Macon, GA  
*Tubman African American Museum*



**Ashlyn Fox**

University of Arkansas;  
Fayetteville, AK  
*Dallas Truth, Racial Healing, &  
Transformation (TRHT)*



**Ashley Gordon**

Fisk University; Nashville, TN  
*University of Michigan Future  
Public Health Leaders Program*



**Diamond Green**

Winston-Salem State  
University; Winston-Salem, NC  
*Young Invincibles*



**Sedrick Thomas**

Prairie View and  
A&M University; Prairie View, TX  
*Empower Community Development  
Corporation - Cypress Location*



**Genea  
Washington**

Jackson State University;  
Jackson, MS  
*Mississippi Families for Kids*



**Ava Wilkes**

Washington and  
Lee University; Lexington City, VA  
*Louisiana Public Health Institute  
(LPHI)*

# Unum Academy Class of 2024

The 2023/2024 Class of the Unum Academy launched October 17, with 15 class members representing colleges and universities from all 13 Southern states.



**Yusef Hunt**  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, VA



**Iyani Jack**  
Loyola University  
New Orleans  
New Orleans, LA



**Amber Jordan**  
Winston-Salem  
State University  
Winston-Salem, NC



**Courtney Brooks**  
University of South  
Carolina  
Columbia, SC



**Jesus Cardenas**  
Alamo Colleges  
San Antonio, TX



**Keymoni  
Coleman**  
Dillard University  
New Orleans, LA



**Clemence  
Nyira-Mugisha**  
University of Kentucky  
Lexington, KY



**Joshua Pipkins**  
University of Memphis  
Memphis, TN



**Rachel Reed**  
University of North Florida  
Jacksonville, FL



**Ria Dubey**  
Georgia State University  
Atlanta, GA



**Sydney Evans**  
University of Arkansas  
at Little Rock  
Little Rock, AK



**Alice Harkins**  
Eastern Kentucky  
University  
Richmond, KY



**Jaelyn Stewart**  
Xavier University  
New Orleans, LA



**Colin Street**  
West Virginia University  
Morgantown, WV



**Hassan  
Washington**  
Virginia Union University  
Richmond, VA



# UNUM ALLIANCE

In 2024, The Unum Alliance, a network of community organizations, academic institutions, faith-based groups, and government-affiliated programs engaged in work around reconciliation and equality, continued to expand.

The Alliance aims to serve as a resource for research, tools, and relationships to support work that addresses inequities across the American South and beyond. The Unum Alliance was created in 2023 following a series of conversations with Southern-serving organizations and institutions, during which the organizations repeatedly voiced a strong desire to have a better understanding of

who else was doing this work, as well as to connect with similar organizations and programs for network building and collaboration.

In 2024, we deepened our relationships and held training sessions with five targeted Unum Alliance members who concentrate on community-wide Truth & Healing work. We have seen first-hand how truth and healing work conducted primarily within faith communities is a necessary frame in furthering efforts towards racial reconciliation. These communities, we believe, are poised to make significant progress in their area over the next few years.





## Alabama

- Athens State University Archives (Archives Equity Initiative)
- Interfaith Montgomery
- Southern Poverty Law
- Student Voice

## Colorado

- CHIC Denver

## Florida

- Committee for Justice, Equality, and Fairness of Walton County\*
- Children's Services Council of Broward County

## Georgia

- Feminist Women's Health Center
- Incentivize Greatness
- NAMI Georgia
- Sheltering Grace Ministry
- The Equity Center at Wesleyan College\*
- The More Than Numbers Program
- Tubman African American Museum

## Kentucky

- American Jewish Committee (AJC)
- Cultivating the Youth Experience Inc.
- Interfaith Paths to Peace
- Just Faith Ministries
- Seven Counties Services

## Louisiana

- Big Buddy Program
- City of Baton Rouge Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion (COREI)
- Dialogue on Race Louisiana
- Education Trust-Louisiana
- Family Service Center of Greater Baton Rouge
- I-STARRT
- Louisiana Public Health Institute
- Mission Reconcile
- Orleans Legacy Project
- Propellor
- Serve Louisiana
- St. Charles Center for Faith + Action\*
- The Power Coalition for Equity and Justice
- Urban League of Louisiana

## Mississippi

- Lafayette Community Remembrance Project\*
- Millsaps Truth Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Center
- Mississippi Families for Kids
- Southern Echo
- Springboard to Opportunities
- The Alluvial Collective

## North Carolina

- Beloved Community Center
- LGBTQ Center of Durham
- North Carolina Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty
- The Beloved Community Center of Greensboro
- The Reimagining America Project

\*SIGNIFIES GROUPS WHO ARE A PART OF OUR TARGETED TRUTH AND HEALING WORK.



## South Carolina

- Converge Collective
- Furman University's Seeking Abraham Project
- Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina

## Texas

- Empowerment Community Development Corporation
- Dallas Truth, Racial Healing, & Transformation

## Virginia

- Clergy for Racial Conciliation
- Cornelius Corps
- Destiny Community Church
- East End Fellowship
- Ida B. Robinson Institute
- Initiatives of Change USA Inc.
- Jerusalem Community Holy Church
- John J. Mitchell Program for History, Justice, and Race
- Radiate Social Impact
- Renewing RVA
- Richmond's First Baptist Church
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church\*
- Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities

## Washington, D.C.

- Young Invincibles

## West Virginia

- Children's Home Society of West Virginia
- Grace Bible Church
- Hope Community Development Corporation

\*SIGNIFIES GROUPS WHO ARE A PART OF OUR TARGETED TRUTH AND HEALING WORK.

# Community Engagement

EPU's community engagement efforts center on proactively seeking out and amplifying the transformational work of organizations and individuals across our 13 Southern states. We leverage this network to create synergy that can inspire others or support those who often do this challenging work in isolation. With the goal of creating a broad and strong ecosystem of changemakers, it is imperative that EPU is constantly analyzing the landscape of those engaged in this work.

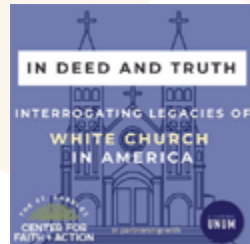
## New Orleans, LA

### *St. Charles Center - In Deed and Truth (IDAT) project*

EPU is now in full partnership with the St. Charles Center on the In Deed and Truth (IDAT) project. This is an expansion in scope of the current truth and healing program at the Center which is directed specifically for white Christian congregations. It will serve as a pilot for EPU's leadership development and equity education for faith leaders and congregations.

In Deed and Truth: Interrogating Legacies of White Church in America (IDAT) is a cohort-style program for Southern churches that have historically remained predominantly white for at least 50 years. Over the course of this

18 month program, a cohort of churches from across the South will be guided by experts in theological history, sociology, race, equity, and biblical teachings to support them in leading transformative processes for their congregations and communities. The inaugural cohort is composed of 6 churches representing 5 Southern states: Alabama, Louisiana, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. IDAT is funded by the [Henry Luce Foundation](#) and the [Baugh Foundation](#).



## Richmond, VA

### *Unum Alliance Truth and Healing Convening in Richmond*

In October of 2024, EPU traveled to Richmond, VA to host a gathering that centered on the remarkable and illustrative work of our Richmond-based Alliance members, their partners, and the communities they serve with the goal of deepening and advancing our Truth and Healing work across the South. We are currently in conversation with our partners to build out programming, modelled on Richmond's successes, that can be replicated and facilitated elsewhere across the Southern states.

### *St. Paul's Episcopal Church: Development Of Community-Facing Truth And Healing Work*

EPU's partnership with St. Paul's began in 2023 with the [documentation of their journey](#) through their History and Reconciliation Initiative (HRI) to change their reputation and perspective around race from the Cathedral of the Confederacy to a congregation dedicated to equity and racial reconciliation.

In 2024, EPU partnered with St. Paul's to create a case study exploring how white Southerners reconcile the region's painful

history with their faith. This collaboration is a pivotal moment in the ongoing work of healing and transformation in Richmond and in the South. Through this effort, EPU developed a comprehensive toolkit of promising practices that will serve as a vital resource for other faith institutions and community organizations committed to confronting their own histories and fostering meaningful reconciliation. The toolkit is a powerful, actionable tool that will guide and empower faith leaders and community organizations across the South to embark on their own journeys of reflection, accountability, and change. This work is a critical step in shifting the deeply entrenched narratives of the past and building a future rooted in justice, equity, and healing.



## DeFuniak Springs, FL

### *Committee for Justice, Equality, and Freedom (CJEF)*

EPU has continued to support the Committee for Justice, Equality, and Freedom (CJEF) as they advocate for the relocation of a Confederate monument and flag currently situated on the grounds of the Walton County courthouse. Despite their commitment and passion, CJEF had faced challenges in gaining local support for this critical effort. Recognizing the need for internal growth and stronger organizational capacity, CJEF turned to EPU for guidance on how to build the skills and strategies necessary to move forward successfully.

In 2024, EPU collaborated closely with CJEF leadership to develop and administer an internal survey aimed at gathering valuable insights from the organization's members. The survey, conducted in April, was designed to assess the current state of the group and explore how CJEF could evolve from being a single-issue community

organization to a more sustainable and multifaceted force for change. By May, EPU completed the survey assessment and presented the results to the CJEF members, providing critical feedback to inform their next steps.

To further support CJEF's growth, EPU facilitated a series of six, 90-minute organizational development workshops. These sessions were designed to help CJEF assess their structure, identify the most effective strategies for their ongoing work, and develop a clear action plan for long-term success. Through this organizational strengthening process, EPU is helping CJEF build the capacity and resilience needed to increase their impact in the region. This partnership not only enhances CJEF's ability to drive change but also amplifies EPU's reach and effectiveness in northwest Florida, positioning both organizations for greater success in the future.

## Oxford, MS

### *Statewide Gathering of Truth and Healing Organizations*

In 2024, EPU provided organizational development and thought partnership support to the Lafayette County Remembrance Project (LCRP) to aid their shift into a role of advisor and convener around racial injustice memorialization such as lynching sites. EPU partnered with LCRP on the 2024 Statewide Gathering, an event aimed to empower a statewide network of groups that are committed to truth-telling and healing around the lasting impacts of racist spaces, through programming development.

The statewide gathering launched LCRP's efforts to grow a robust community of practice around memorialization and historical memory work in Mississippi. Memorialization work provides a way for events that have traditionally been left out of the official narrative of a municipality or state to be brought to light. This work is particularly important

now, as there is increased pressure to eliminate certain books, terminology, and topics from academic curricula. Through partnerships with organizations such as LCRP, EPU supports the telling of a more truthful, more complete history which acknowledges the existence, contributions, and trials of community members whose voices were previously unheard.

The event brought together community groups, nonprofit organizations, and private citizens from across the state that were either currently working in, desired to start, or impacted by memorialization of historical events of racial injustice such as extrajudicial killings. Through this gathering, attendees were able to network, and share experiences and resources while also building technical skills and knowledge around the work. This approach aligns with EPU's belief that facilitating connections and creating alliances is key to minimizing barriers to equity.

A man in a blue suit and light blue tie is speaking at a podium. He has his hands raised in a gesture of emphasis. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The image is partially obscured by a large blue circular graphic on the left side of the page.

# Policy & Government Relations

EPU works in collaboration with partners at the federal, state, and local levels on a range of issues critical to advancing opportunity and shared prosperity for all in the American South and beyond. We identify areas in which we can marry our resources and capacities to communities' needs. While we know promoting equality through policy change is an uphill battle in our current political climate, the goal of our work is to elevate and support common-sense policy solutions for sustainable success in communities across the South and beyond, and we're making progress.

In early 2024, EPU's policy team put forth our *2024 Policy Priorities and Principles*, which serves as a guide for policymakers, stakeholders, and the public at large by outlining our stance on nine crucial legislative issue areas and offering a blueprint through 26 detailed issue briefs for creating meaningful and lasting change.

As in 2023, our Bi-Monthly Legislative Updates in 2024 continued tracking over 2,300 pieces of legislation from state

houses across the South and providing important analysis on how certain issues were being pushed forward or stifled through policy.

We also continued to build the scope of work that our Policy Advisors are able to offer to our Unum Fellows. With a focus on the lessons learned from the execution of community-based projects and legislative sessions, our Policy Advisors and Fellows have developed a series of toolkits that serve as resources for other legislators and policymakers across the South.

In 2024, we also continued to bring our policy tools and engagement strategies directly to policymakers. Our growing resource knowledge bank has proven to be a valuable tool introducing EPU and provoking engagement with lawmakers on specific issues, as well as opening up the idea of possibilities for their communities.

Read on for recent examples of our policy and government relations work across the American South.



EPU is growing relationships with key policymaker organizations such as the Democratic Mayors Association, Democratic Municipal Officials, National League of Cities, and the Council of State Governments. With the aid of these organizations, we seek to define and plan collaborative opportunities that directly highlight EPU and our mission through workshops and networking opportunities to stakeholders at their conferences.

## Florida



In Florida, EPU jumped into action with State Representative Anna Eskamani and allies following the movement of the “Historic Florida Monuments and Memorials Protection Act” (SB 1122 and HB 395). Simply put – the legislation would forbid local governments from relocating Confederate monuments. We provided comments against the harmful legislation to key state legislators on the assigned committees. Local public

comments further brought to light the true intent of the hateful bills during a Senate committee hearing. With pressure from many and including EPU, both the Senate and House companion bills officially died on March 8th.

## Kentucky



In Kentucky, EPU held in-person strategy sessions with lawmakers at the state capitol in Frankfort, Kentucky. For example, we worked with State Representative Kulkarni to advance economic equity and opportunity through her bipartisan proposed establishment of a Workforce Innovation Task Force in HCR 79. This is a first step to advance economic equity to historically untapped workforce populations in the state and is expected to move forward.

Also in Kentucky, we joined a coalition of legislators and allies in support of a state constitutional amendment to remove the slavery exemption in the state constitution. This was an excellent opportunity to utilize the toolkit created after Tennessee was able to remove the

exception. It is a very arduous task and one that a legislature and the effort’s supporters must be prepared for. Unfortunately, due to the late timing of this year’s effort, this amendment will not reach the ballot from this session, but we are well situated with the current players to determine how we can be supportive as they lay the groundwork from lessons learned for the next session. This will certainly be a long game considering the current political make-up of the Kentucky state legislature.



## Mississippi



In Mississippi, EPU provided virtual strategy sessions with lawmakers as they worked through new education legislation (with Education Trust input) to analyze the opportunities and challenges for disadvantaged children across the state, as well as informing on benefits from child tax credits. In Mississippi, EPU also appeared on a conference panel during the Lafayette

County Remembrance Project's convening with State Representative Zakiya Summers, Chair of the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus, State Representative Chris Bell, and well-known attorney and former elected official Kevin Frye to discuss advocacy with the audience of community leaders, nonprofits, and academia.

## North Carolina



In North Carolina, EPU is evaluating opportunities with Common Cause to support college-age voter registration and voter engagement with state-based

organizations, as well as continuing to support legislative issues (e.g., STEM education access) while the state legislature is in session.

## Tennessee



At the Tennessee state capitol, EPU held strategy meetings with legislators looking to neutralize harmful legislation and pursue viable approaches to reducing disparities. For example, we worked with State Representative Chism (HB 1602) and State Senator Lamar (SB 1577) to lead bipartisan legislation that will

require a video or audio recording when interviewing or interrogating a minor that disproportionately impacts underserved communities. The House moved to conform and substitute to SB 1577, then successfully passed both chambers, and was signed by the Governor on March 15th.

## West Virginia



In West Virginia, EPU provided needed information on health equity to Delegate Anitra Hamilton of Morgantown, West Virginia for legislation addressing health disparities, as well as more specifically maternal and infant health. Following strategy sessions with Del. Hamilton, she was able to successfully propose and pass an Amendment to include the Office

of Minority Health at Marshall University to the state Maternal and Infant Mortality Review Board. This was a critical focus to push the state to accurately evaluate the current health equity landscape and propose recommendations to improve. As Del. Hamilton told us, "You must have the conversations, to get to the 'Why's'" and this is an important step forward.



## 1890 Land Grant Institutions (HBCU Funding)

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In 2024, EPU worked with Central State University in Ohio and Southern University in Louisiana to support their efforts to increase their state funding match for the 2026 and 2027 budget years. Building off of the EPU toolkit which features the case study of Tennessee State University, we assisted them with research to determine what process would work best to increase their state match and who their legislative champions can be. We will continue to support them with research, messaging, etc. as they begin to create the case for their increases.

Additionally, EPU signed on to the Coalition for Human Needs' letter urging Congress to protect and expand access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the Farm Bill. More than 41 million people rely on SNAP benefits every month.

## Policy Priority Briefs

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As previously noted, throughout 2024, our [2024 Policy Principles and Priorities](#), gave our stakeholders and partners more insight into what we are focusing on as an organization in issue areas that can move the needle of progress in the American South. Our policy advisors and policy staff are working on strategies for the following policy priority areas: climate and environment, criminal justice reform, democracy, economic equity, education, health, housing, immigration, and infrastructure.

The goals of these briefs is to provide a deeper dive and better understanding of how EPU frames each of these focus issues, explain their status in the South, how progressive policies related to these priorities can advance equity in the South, and legislative efforts related to each priority that we've seen in the 2024 legislative sessions.

**To learn more visit:**

<https://www.unumfund.org/2024-policy-principles-priorities/>

Policy Priority Briefs have been published each of the following issue areas:

- [Climate & Environment](#)
- [Criminal Legal System](#)
- [Democracy & Voting](#)
- [Economic Equity](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Immigration](#)
- [Infrastructure](#)



# Narrative Change

Our data shows that it is often uncomfortable or difficult to discuss the impacts of systemic and interpersonal racism openly and honestly, and as a result of that many people lack an understanding of the scale of racism in America. People must be able to talk openly about the issues facing our communities in order to create change. Simply put, you cannot change what you do not acknowledge. EPU's narrative work continues to create opportunities for discussion on the lasting impact of our nation's history, on people and institutions and, as a result, moves the nation forward in its pursuit of opportunity for all.

In 2024, EPU's Narrative Change work continued to leverage behavioral science and human-centered design techniques in order to understand and change perceptions and beliefs around the issues of race and equity. Using data from all of our past research, EPU is developing new tools to engage neutral white audiences, aiming to inspire understanding and action among those most open to

becoming allies and advocates for a more inclusive and fair society.

EPU also spent 2024 diving deeper into how to use different forms of storytelling to reach new audiences. To do this, the EPU team collaborated with *The Bitter Southerner* to highlight the stories and impact of our Unum Fellows. Through the multi-media partner series, EPU has been able to amplify the work of our Unum Fellows and organization in new and engaging ways. All in an effort to illustrate the many ways that change is happening in the South.

As mentioned in our 2024 summary, our newest podcast, *Reimagining Us*, has seen substantial success in its first few weeks of launch, with over 120,000 downloads and 35,000 video views and counting. Hosted by EPU's Eminent Scholar, Dr. Nichole Argo, and our Executive Director, Scott Hutcheson, *Reimagining Us* speaks to narratives of toxic polarization and the country's democratic decline and asks "What can make our communities resilient?"

All of this narrative work has been amplified throughout the year across our social media channels and website. By utilizing a new strategic communications plan with emphasis on the integration of paid social media placements, in 2024 we saw incredible growth in our engagement with audiences digitally, increasing our engagement (likes, comments, shares) that year by over 700% over 2023 and

growing our overall digital audience to over 28,600 followers.

We know that in order to change systems, we must simultaneously change hearts and minds. We will continue to deploy bespoke and impactful narratives to move new and existing audiences, as we know that is the only way forward toward holistic change within our communities.



# EPU & The Bitter Southerner Partner Series

Between recent Supreme Court decisions, congressional gridlock, and gerrymandering, creating a better South feels challenging like never before. While national attention often focuses on the figures from our region halting progress, there are so many more people working to make big, positive changes from much smaller stages than D.C., but with no less importance.

In partnership with *The Bitter Southerner*, EPU has launched a story series turning up the volume

on the work done by student, municipal, and state-level leaders across the South building a more equitable and inclusive future through our Unum Fellowship program. Their stories prove extraordinary actions can come from anywhere and anyone—they just might inspire you to run for something in your community.

**See more:**

<https://www.unumfund.org/narrative-change/bittersouthernerpartnership/>



# EPU's Eminent Scholar

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As EPU continues its work to change harmful narratives in the American South, it is essential that we use a variety of messages and messengers to reach our new audiences. Our research tells us that finding and amplifying the voices of trusted messengers is the only way for our messaging to be impactful and lead to sustainable change. That is why we created the EPU Eminent Scholars program.

The EPU Eminent Scholars program platforms experts to advance narrative change and foster community dialogue that addresses systemic racism in America with Southern audiences. Dr. Nichole Argo was selected to be EPU's latest Eminent Scholar. Dr. Argo is the Founder and Executive Director at the TogetherUp Institute, a consulting firm

that leverages the science of social and behavioral psychology to: 1) advise, speak on, and provide trainings related to belonging and communication/ conflict transformation skills, and 2) provide research (surveys, focus groups, audience segmentation), messaging and program strategies, and impact frameworks for air-game and ground-game campaigns or interventions relating to diversity, belonging, bridge building, democracy, and countering polarization and hate.

Dr. Argo has long worked at the intersection of science and practice. From 2018-2024, she served as the Director of Research at Over Zero, a nonprofit working with leaders to build resilience to identity-based division and violence. Prior to that, she led



research/ implementation teams on national and international projects, such as: messaging and outreach related to HIV- prevention in Kenya; the efficacy of a paralegal program for tribal leaders in South Africa; and, the motivations for political violence in Israeli, the West Bank, and Gaza. Starting in 2022, to help address growing division and distrust throughout the US, Dr. Argo piloted the Needham Resilience Network, a municipal leadership model designed to bridge local silos, tool diverse leaders in skills to communicate across difference, and provide a process for co-creating inclusive solutions to local problems.

Her recent publications include: The Belonging Barometer: The State of Belonging in the US, The Science of Polarization and Insights for Bridge

Building, and several essays on how to communicate across differences that involve sacred values. Nichole sits on the Permanent Monitoring Panel for Conflict and Polarization at the World Federation of Scientists. She has published in leading political science and psychology journals and holds degrees from Stanford, MIT, and the New School for Social Research.

In the role of Eminent Scholar, Dr. Argo assists EPU in researching and reaching Southern men and women to help them better understand how to communicate across differences and promote belonging within their communities which are all steps needed to build true healing and resilience against continued racism and inequity.



# Reimagining Us Podcast

*Reimagining Us* is not just another conversation series—it's a vital tool for healing divisions, designing our lives and communities for belonging, and empowering a movement of "builders." Hosted by two distinguished leaders from the fields of psychology and equity-building, the show takes a nuanced look at the forces that fuel division and highlights actionable paths toward reconnection. As the nation navigates a post-election landscape rife with challenges, *Reimagining Us* offers a

timely and necessary space for discovery, dialogue, and change.

*Reimagining Us* steps into the current moment with a clear mission:

- **Understand Today's Divisions:** The show unpacks the nature and causes of today's identity divisions, empowers listeners to think critically about how these dynamics impact their lives and communities, and suggests ways to counter them.

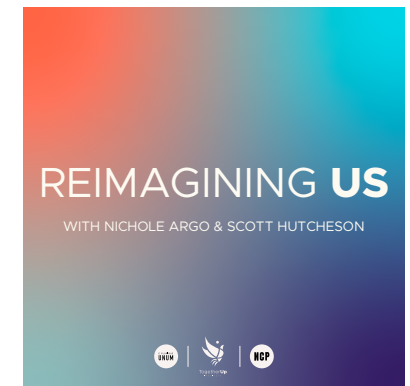
- **Rebuild Connection:** The show focuses on practical, proven strategies for cultivating a "builder" mindset, connecting across differences, fostering cultures of belonging, and pursuing equitable solutions to community challenges. Through expert interviews, real-world stories, and behavioral insights, it demonstrates how communities can rebuild trust and repair relationships across differences.
- **Drive Action:** Beyond conversation, the podcast provides listeners with tools and ideas for immediate action—whether in their families, workplaces, or broader communities.

*Reimagining Us* is more than a podcast—it's a movement toward understanding, healing, and building a society where equity and belonging thrive. At a time when many feel powerless in the face of polarization, it equips listeners with the insight, courage, and community they need to help reshape our shared future. Listeners will walk away feeling not only informed but empowered, ready to challenge identity-based divisions and

foster connections and collaborations across differences. As Nichole Argo and Scott Hutcheson remind us, the power to "Reimagine Us" starts with each of us. Together, we can create the conditions for connection and collaboration across differences.

Listen at:

<https://www.unumfund.org/reimagining-us/>



# Research

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What sets EPU apart is our deep, data-driven understanding of the region through methods of audience segmentation, combined with our commitment to applying behavioral science in ways that drive measurable change.

Since our launch, we've initiated 10 region-wide surveys and research reports to better identify where inequities exist, their structural cause, and the environments and conditions that perpetuate those inequities. EPU also conducts ongoing public opinion research to track attitudes on race, class, and equity, as well as pertinent national issues and policies, such as our annual *Survey of the South*.

Through our research, we've heard from individuals in diverse parts of the region, geographically, demographically, and culturally, giving EPU a unique pulse on a region of the country that is often left under-studied and under-invested in. We hope to lead the nation in this deep understanding of the American South and use our findings to not only create change for its people, but for our nation as a whole.



# Survey of the South

## *Survey of the South: Part 1*

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EPU's deep interest in audience segmentation led us this year to create a cluster analysis of the people who are most able and interested to move on our issue areas. This cluster analysis resulted in a grouping of white women in the South who with bespoke messaging campaigns and resources could be shifted to take action in their communities on issues of race and belonging.

In August 2024, EPU conducted a poll of these women through the firm Embold, to fill in gaps of our deep research on this group, and add to the body of data we have created through the cluster analysis.

## *Survey Summary*

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Just over half of respondents feel welcomed by their communities (54%), and when asked to identify shared values in their communities, respondents tend to point to helping and supporting each other. At the same time, many respondents (61%) feel that they would be ostracized for expressing different views, and that fear reveals itself as a central obstacle for getting involved in efforts for change.

Respondents have interest in getting involved in their communities, and substantial portions report being civically engaged or active in their communities. Moreover, nearly 8 in 10 respondents feel that they have the power to make a change in advancing racial justice. At the same time, respondents express feelings of overwhelm at the magnitude of the issues, or fear about backlash or ostracization from other community members, which hinders their ability to take further action.

## *Survey of the South: Part 2*

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In December 2024, EPU conducted its full annual Survey of the South. The survey consists of 35 questions that will be sent to 2,100 respondents in AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX, VA, and WV (split between white, Black, and Latino respondents).

Questions for this year's survey include some from previous surveys to continue to give us longitudinal insights into our participant's attitudes, as well as some

questions specific to the 2024 election and questions from our survey done in August that we are interested to see if similar findings carry over across broader audiences.

Results of Survey of the South to come in early 2025!

# What's Ahead for EPU

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It is often stated that when a community prioritizes a future of shared prosperity, then the entire community and its systems benefit. But to our knowledge, there is no Southern community that takes that holistic approach. In 2025, we want to challenge that concept and see if we can prove the point that this is in fact true and then scale across the South.

Through a unified, place-based model, communities will see local leaders, members, and policymakers aligned around shared issue-based goals. EPU will do this by concentrating a portion of our work into specific communities through the development of an "Accelerator Cities" model. Through this model, EPU hopes to concentrate our learnings and engagement at all levels of government and community to create that ecosystem where racism and inequity cannot thrive in the South.

At the same time, in 2025 we will focus our narrative change work to prepare unengaged populations to act on issues of inequality and belonging by finding not what motivates them politically, but personally and emotionally. We will use science and data informed approaches to target these audiences with digital campaigns that provide clear calls to action that we have already tested and

are confident in. These audiences across the South, once neutral or passive, will then begin to actively speak out against issues in their communities, workplaces, and public spaces, creating a cultural shift toward a Southern identity rooted in belonging, fairness, and shared aspiration.

In 2025, we will also make further investments in data and combine it with leading behavioral science to build tools that help people take action to address inequity in their conversations and spheres of influence. The tools we'll create, such as toolkits, learning platforms, and simulation tools, will be grounded in the very research and conversations from the people we seek to engage and motivate. By using insights drawn directly from their experiences and perspectives, we will ensure that our data-driven and behavioral science-based strategies resonate deeply. This will allow us to craft useful, valued tools that not only inform but truly empower individuals to take action in ways that feel authentic and impactful to them, driving real change in their communities.

Be sure to follow along as EPU continues to break down the barriers that have long divided us and build a better South for all.

## EPU: 2024 By The Numbers

- **49 Fellows** implementing equity-driven projects.
- **100 leaders** completed EPU's leadership programs in 2024.
- **2,300 legislative actions** tracked and analyzed.
- **100,000 podcast downloads** for Reimagining Us.
- **10 research reports** identifying systemic inequities.



[www.unumfund.org](http://www.unumfund.org)