



Young Men and Boys of Color Grantee Profiles

MISSISSIPPI

American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi Foundation Inc.

Mississippi

Title of Grant: Sunflower County Systems Change Project

Grant: \$1,000,000, 2015-2017

Purpose/Goals: The project is a statewide partnership of the American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi Foundation, the Mississippi Center for Justice, the Sunflower County Consolidated School District and the district's Community Engagement Council. They seek to create conditions where young men and boys of color can succeed, through a pilot program that promote racial equity in school discipline practices. The partnership will employ a community-based-model systems approach to restore racial equity. It will engage district teachers and administrators, municipal and county law enforcement, the juvenile justice system, local media, parents and students.

Collectively, they will identify policies that perpetuate the disproportionate practices that now harm young men and boys of color. Their goal is to present a framework for effective solutions to the Mississippi Education Department, and help dismantle long-standing systems of structural/institutional racism and bias.

Tougaloo College

Tougaloo, Mississippi

Title of Grant: Mississippi Action Network for Uplifting Promise among Young Men and Boys of Color (MAN UP)

Grant: \$1,000,000, 2015-2017

Purpose/Goals: The Mississippi Action Network for Uplifting Promise (MAN UP) is a multi-level intervention program that aims to address and end the "schoolhouse-to-jailhouse pipeline." It targets the unduly harsh school disciplinary measures that disproportionately affect students of color. Network partners include: Tougaloo College, One Voice, Mississippi Economic Policy Center and Southern Poverty Law Center.

MAN UP seeks to transform schools. To address the root cause of challenges faced by boys and men of color, MAN UP will identify and address individual and environmental risk factors. MAN UP will focus on research and outreach to transform school climates, leverage community engagement and advocate for local institutional policy change.



NEW ORLEANS

Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies

New Orleans

Grant: \$450,000, 2015-2018

Title of Grant: Creating Our Own Lens

Purpose/Goals: The Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies envisions a world where all people can live and create environments that value health, wellness and a higher quality of life. IWES's Creating Our Own Lens (COOL) collaborative project is designed to provide job skills for interns that will prepare them for employment in the growing New Orleans media and production sector. It will leverage Louisiana's strong film landscape, also known as the "Hollywood South." IWES will help interns develop concrete media and production skills that create new narratives about boys and men of color. Often, these youth are traumatized by violent situations of systemic poverty, implicit bias and over policing. The cornerstones of the COOL project will be skill building, on-the-job learning opportunities, effective mentorship and processes that address the traumas and obstacles faced by disadvantaged youth.

Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools

New Orleans

Title of Grant: Base Camp: Supporting Engaged, Active and Informed Youth –Creating Engaged, Active and Informed Communities

Grant: \$150,000, 2015-2018

Purpose/Goals: Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools advocates for New Orleans' youth and helps them develop leadership skills through education and student-centered programs. The Young Men and Boys of Color grant will expand Kids Rethink's youth-led programming. It will allow young people to help develop, design and facilitate programs for youth who are currently in the New Orleans criminal justice system.

The program will give youth leaders and participants a chance to think critically about the systems that influence their lives – and, how youth-led initiatives might change them. Participants will receive extensive training in leadership, community organizing, project design, implementation, management and program evaluation. They will use these skills to incorporate design improvements into phase two of the program.

Liberty's Kitchen Inc.

New Orleans

Title of Grant: Future Leadership Internship

Grant: \$450,000, 2015-2018

Purpose/Goals: Liberty's Kitchen provides disconnected youth with culinary arts and life skills training to help them become employed and self-sufficient. Through their Young Men and Boys of Color Initiative grant, Liberty's Kitchen will increase the capacity and reach of their internship program. The internship combines need-based training, the opportunity to serve as young ambassadors for Liberty's Kitchen and the chance to serve on the Liberty's Kitchen Youth Advisory Council.



As council members, interns will receive peer-to-peer mentorship and the chance to develop the council in a way that makes it central to Liberty Kitchen's youth-centered operations. Most importantly, YMVP interns will work to rewrite the narrative about at-risk youth in New Orleans and beyond. Through public outreach and what they learn at Liberty's Kitchen, YMVP interns will develop as community leaders and promote positive perceptions of youth to the media and local residents alike.

Louisiana Center for Children's Rights

New Orleans

Title of Grant: Youth Voices for Racial Equity in Juvenile Justice

Grant: \$450,000, 2015-2018

Purpose/Goals: The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights (LCCR) believes that every Louisiana child has a right to fairness, dignity and opportunity. It advocates and litigates for a transformed juvenile justice system that is fair, compassionate and promotes positive youth development.

LCCR is one of the nation's leading juvenile public defender offices and Louisiana's oldest advocacy voice on juvenile justice reform. Youth Voices for Racial Equity in Juvenile Justice responds to the disproportionate representation of young men of color in the New Orleans' juvenile justice. The LCCR approach puts young people at the center of system reform. Through this program, select young men of color who have been involved in the justice system will serve as LCCR interns. They will work to change the narrative about boys and young men of color by more accurately telling the stories of youth who fall into the juvenile justice system. The interns will make LCCR the nation's first juvenile defender to enlist youth in efforts to drive organizational policy and inform advocacy work.

Reconcile New Orleans Inc.

New Orleans

Title of Grant: Expanding Opportunities for Reconcile Alumni

Grant: \$450,000, 2015-2018

Purpose/Goals: Since 1996, Café Reconcile has provided life skills and job-training programs to support at-risk NOLA youth (out of school and unemployed, ages 16-24) who live in generational poverty. Café Reconcile also maintains contact with youth after they complete their training. With their Young Men and Boys of Color grant, Café Reconcile will increase support to its 1,500-member alumni network, especially those who still face barriers to long-term success. Café Reconcile's three-phase approach incorporates training, employment resources and leadership development. It also develops partnerships with employers and post-secondary educational programs for Café Reconcile interns.

Recovery Assistance Inc. (RAI) Ministries

New Orleans

Title of Grant: Leaders in Restoration

Grant: \$450,000, 2015-2018

Purpose/Goals: RAI Ministries works to restore faith, home and community through Camp Restore, a volunteer camp in New Orleans. Camp Restore aspires to introduce to



the nation and world a more accurate, youth-informed narrative of young men and boys of color. RAI Ministries will train, as interns, four disadvantaged NOLA youth (out of school and unemployed, ages 16-24). They will define their stories and share them through interactions with thousands of Camp Restore volunteers who come from across the country to help rebuild homes in NOLA.

The “Leaders in Restoration” interns will also jointly develop a documentary film that shares their experiences. The film project’s main goal will be to change negative narratives that surround young men and boys of color. The youth will gain skills in filmmaking and advanced storytelling through partnerships with the local film industry. Through community engagement activities, they’ll also gain exposure to potential careers in construction, social services, culinary arts and nonprofit management.

Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association (VAYLA)

New Orleans

Title of Grant: Streets Speak

Grant: \$150,000, 2015-2018

Purpose/Goals: The Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association (VAYLA) of New Orleans works to amplify the voices of youth of color by equipping its members with the confidence and skills to effectively speak for themselves. Primarily, VAYLA relies on grassroots organizing around environmental and educational equity and takes a multi-pronged approach to youth development. Located within a low-income, multi-racial and multi-lingual community, VAYLA’s members face iniquitable barriers to success.

Streets Speak will strengthen VAYLA’s leadership pipeline for young men. It will help them build skills to influence public discourse, and address the ongoing psychological trauma caused by racism at the individual and systems level. Streets Speak will bring together the Vietnamese American, African American and Latino communities that reside in the Michoud area of New Orleans East. Together, they will address experiences of internalized and interpersonal racism through healing circles and community forums, and help move the community from healing towards justice.

YOUTHAnasia Foundation Inc.

New Orleans

Title of Grant: Future ICONS of NOLA

Grant: \$150,000, 2015-2018

Purpose/Goals: Since 1997, YOUTHAnasia Foundation Inc. has worked to improve the lives of New Orleans’ teens and eliminate youth violence through service learning education, cultural arts expression and interactive youth leadership development. The Future ICONS of NOLA project, funded through the Young Men and Boys of Color grant, is an African-American male, youth-led initiative. It will identify “iconic” youth in New Orleans and invite them to tell their stories to a broad audience through social media, news outlets and events. YOUTHAnasia wants to focus attention on positive community stories, and rewrite the negative perceptions of New Orleans’ youth often held by the news media and society.