

28th Annual

Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit

Building Community for Lasting
Democracy & Racial Equity



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We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the anonymous donors whose generous support helps make the Summit a success. Your contributions have made a significant impact, enabling us to bring together thought leaders, activists, and community members to engage in meaningful dialogue and advance racial justice.

Welcome!

As founder of the Black & White Reunion, it is my honor, on behalf of our Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit Planning Committee, to thank all of you who have chosen to be present at this year's 28th Annual Racial Justice Summit. Little did I know when as President of the NAACP Pittsburgh Branch, we called upon citizens of the Pittsburgh Region to respond to the tragic and unnecessary October 12, 1995 death of 31 year old Black businessman Jonny E. Gammage at the hands of white suburban police officers, that those requests, and protests that followed would lead to the initiation of the Black and White Reunion (BWR) which in turn led to the creation of the Summit Against Racism, now called the Racial Justice Summit, and now covering a wide range of subjects impacting justice and equality. We are now challenged across America with an administration drunk with power showing total disrespect to the U.S. Constitution, and to diversity, equity, inclusion & justice.

My hope as the founder, and the hope of our entire planning committee, is that all participants will be inspired by something that they hear or witness, and will leave with a renewed commitment to make a positive difference in the Pittsburgh Region and beyond.



Tim Stevens

Founder, Black & White Reunion,
Founder & CEO, The Black
Political Empowerment Project

Code of Conduct

Our conference is dedicated to providing a harassment-free conference experience for everyone. Harassment is any unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be perceived to cause offense or humiliation to another person.

Harassment includes personally abusive verbal or written comments related to a person's identity (gender, age, sexual orientation, abilities, appearance, race, ethnicity, religion or lack of religion, technology choices, etc.). Harassment includes behaviors that demonstrate deliberate intimidation, unwelcome sexual attention, following/stalking or sustained disruption of activity.

Behaviors that are not considered harassment are those that arise from a relationship of mutual consent. Harassment does not include disagreements on ideas, practices or frank discussion of controversial topics. If a participant engages in harassing behavior, our policy will be to give one warning to the person making harassing comments. If a second incident occurs, the person will be removed from the conference.

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact a member of the conference team immediately.

A participant should never knowingly make a false or misleading claim about harassment or unwelcome conduct.

Schedule

10:00-11:00	Opening remarks, Keynote by Monica Ruiz, Exec. Dir., Casa San José (Auditorium)	
11:00-11:15	<i>Break</i>	
11:15-12:30	Workshops - <i>See Workshop Handout</i>	
12:30-2:00	Lunch (Cafe)	12:45- 1:45 Justice Jam (Auditorium)
2:00-3:15	Workshops - <i>See Workshop Handout</i>	
3:15-3:30	<i>Break</i>	
3:30-4:30	Inter-generational Panel (Auditorium)	Workshop facilitators will discuss the importance of community engagement in racial justice work and reflect on the day's insights.

The Auditorium and Cafe are on the 2nd floor of the Foerster Student Services Center.

Visit the Community Tables during the breaks and at lunch! They are on the 2nd and 3rd floors in the Foerster building

The Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse art workshop is in the lobby outside the Auditorium all day long.



Keynote Speaker

Monica Ruiz

Executive Director,
Casa San José

Casa San José is a Latino-serving nonprofit organization based in Pittsburgh, with additional offices in Washington, Beaver, and Westmoreland counties. Founded in 2013 by The Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, Casa San José supports and advocates for and with the Latino community in Western Pennsylvania.

Monica is a tireless advocate for the Latino community and other marginalized groups. Her leadership has garnered numerous recognitions, including the 2019 Women of Influence Award from the Pittsburgh Business Times and the 2019 César Chávez Community Heroes Award. She was also honored with the 2018 New Person of the Year award by the Thomas Merton Center, and the 2018 Rising Star distinction from the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. Most recently, Monica received recognition from the Iota Phi Foundation for her exceptional work in building Black-Brown unity among youth in Allegheny County.

Her dedication to public service extends to leadership roles on local and state boards. Her academic foundation includes a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and a Master's degree in Social Work, specializing in Community Organizing and Social Action, both from the University of Pittsburgh.

Intergenerational Panel

To close this year's Summit, we've brought together a group of youth and elders for an intergenerational dialogue to reflect on lessons learned and envision the future of racial justice in Pittsburgh.

Attendees will be invited into the conversation through online polls and Q&A with the panelists about how we can collectively build the connections needed for lasting democracy and racial equity.

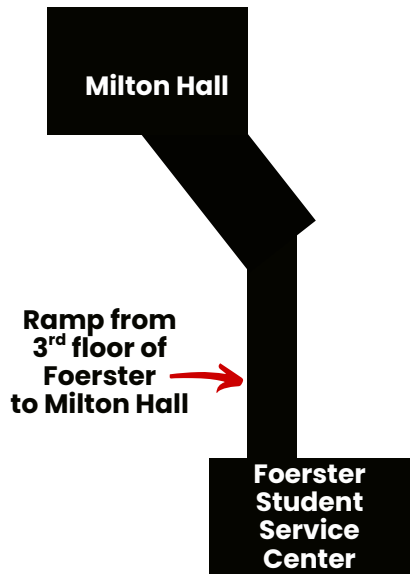
Summit Locations

Registration & Information, the Cafe, and Auditorium are on the 2nd floor of Foerster.

Workshops are in classrooms in Milton Hall.

The two buildings are connected by a ramp from the 3rd floor of Foerster.

Community group tables are on the 2nd & 3rd floors of Foerster.



Workshops

A Church Reckons with Our Ties to Enslavement: How History Informs Reparations

East Liberty Presbyterian Church learned of our ties to enslavement through an 1808 bill of sale for two women named Nell and Poll. The women were being sold by Jacob Negley, one of our earliest founders. We set out to learn as much as we could about the women's lives in the hopes of both restoring some measure of truth and informing our call to repair. In a year of research, we pieced together 30 years of Nell and Poll's family history across three generations in Western Pennsylvania.

After presenting our findings, we hosted the first in what will be a series of events, creating space for honest listening, new leadership, and thoughtful conversation about how we might continue our journey toward repair. In this session, we will present what we have learned and how this family's history is engaging our congregation in discerning our ongoing call to reparations.

Hollen Barmer, Dr. Beverly Harris-Schenz, Alex Payton

Workshops

A place to begin: Liberation genealogy in community

An introduction to Liberation Genealogy for people of African descent, with particular care for Black participants whose family histories are shaped by enslavement, displacement, and record loss. This is a living practice rooted in reconnecting with those who came before us while honoring these specific historical realities. You will learn how to begin genealogical inquiry, starting with what you already know, engaging living relatives, and orienting yourself to basic research tools—without pressure to “find everything.”

This includes guided reflection and small-group sharing for support and connection. Ancestral veneration is part of this practice. We honor ancestors through remembrance and acknowledgment, rather than as abstract history. This is not a ritual space. The session is for beginners who identify as people of African descent. DNA results are not required.

rev. yvette shipman, Autumn Redcross

This session has a maximum capacity of 12.

Workshops

Being an Advocate for the Conservation and the Environment

Learn about the different methods to engage your legislators – at any level – as well as holding them accountable to protect democracy and the environment. At the intersection of racial justice and environmental justice, we will delve into wins from communities everywhere. Led by the Allegheny County Civic Engagement team from PennFuture and Conservation Voters of PA, two environmental advocacy organizations, you'll get the opportunity to practice taking action and ask questions about environmental advocacy in the region.

Kat Marquez, Natalie Davidson

Building Movements for Housing Rights and Reparatory Justice

Urban renewal policies uprooted thousands of Hill District residents and destroyed a vibrant Black business district. The same forces have destroyed, rebuilt, and again uprooted the people of East Liberty, and this is the 10th anniversary of the displacement of residents of Penn Plaza. These tragedies inspire our work to end mass displacement and repair the harms to Pittsburgh's Black families and communities. Panelists will discuss efforts of housing justice coalition partners to make housing a human right through movement building that empowers tenants and expands alternatives to market-driven housing. text

Leeretta Payne, Jackie Smith, PhD, Randall Taylor, LaKeisha Wolf

Workshops

Cost of A Cop City In Pittsburgh: Implications for Racial Equity & Fascism

This discusses the community's response to a proposed public safety training center. We will address how this project will affect racial equity, its impact on the Black community, and the lack of community engagement by officials. We will cover the viewpoints held by the Black community, ranging from concern to support that is rooted in fears of community violence. Despite an estimated cost of \$87 million, no public meetings have been organized by officials. This workshop will illustrate how this reality reflects elements of both fascism and neocolonialism. We will explore what actions we must take to protect the community & democracy.

Fawn WalkerMontgomery, Erica Hugh

Create & Learn with Creative Reuse

Explore a unique array of materials and connect with community members through reuse art! This workshop will offer a space for folks to process what they have learned throughout the day and express themselves through art-making. Collaboration is always welcome and reinforces the overall mission of connection and relationship building!

Lia Kowalski

Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse



This is offered during both Workshop sessions.

Workshops

Dismantling Walls, Building "Casitas"

This workshop, "Dismantling Walls, Building 'Casitas'" is designed to move participants from passive observation to active, collective work by centering the lived experiences of our Latino students. Through discussion and an active learning experience, attendees will learn about how systemic issues impact the lives of Latino youth and their families as Pittsburgh's demographic landscape has shifted in recent years.

Nelson Ortega, Lisbeth Garcia, Casa San José

Drop In Session: Making drugs safer with PA Groundhogs

Abolishing the War on Drugs is racial justice. Undoing its harms is often a community effort led by those most impacted. In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn how to lessen these impacts with a compassionate opioid response training as well as how to use drug checking tools such as test strips, reagent panels, and laboratory analysis in an effort to destigmatize not just drug checking but people who use drugs as a whole.

Carter Graves, Grimm Criley, PA Groundhogs

Workshops

Engaging Teens in Civic Leadership with the Allegheny Youth Vote Coalition

More than ever, when mistrust and misinformation are rampant, political changes are rapid, and democracy is on the line, we need to ensure that young people are nurtured, supported, and accurately informed about the voting process and what is at stake in local elections.

The Allegheny Youth Vote Coalition (AYV) is a collaborative effort of eight nonpartisan nonprofits with a shared mission of welcoming students into civic engagement, supporting the next generation of informed voters, opening dialogues between youth and elected officials, and helping students realize the power of their leadership and their voice.

In this session, high school student and organizational leaders will share what they've learned from organizing conferences, mayoral candidate forums, and running peer-to-peer, student-led, school-based voter registration drives to ensure that young people develop the confidence, clarity, and curiosity to be actively engaged in our democratic processes.

Dr. Regina Holley, PA Votes
Heather Visnesky, NCJW Pgh

Free masks provided to the Summit by **Mask Up Pittsburgh**, a disabled-led mask distribution and COVID-19 info project in Pittsburgh. Support their work here:

<https://linktr.ee/maskuppittsburgh>



Workshops

Finding Voice, Creating Space, Making Change: SWPA Drug User Health CAB

Learn about the development of a Community Advisory Board made up of people with lived and living experience with drug use, the CAB as a community, what that means to individual participants, and the role the CAB in providing a voice for people impacted by drug use. We will address the way society treats people who use drugs. The session will prioritize the voices of CAB members and their perspectives on how to improve the opportunities for the promotion of community voices in research, practice, and policy making.

Malcolm Visnich, Alice Bell of Prevention Point Pittsburgh; James Egan, University of Pittsburgh

Justice Jam: Justice-themed open mic - share your poetry and song!



Come share your justice themed poetry, rap, song, and stories on the mic at the Summit! We have a PA system and a microphone, and we want to hear your songs of freedom! Piano accompaniment available by Joe DeFazio!

Sign up in advance or in person at the Summit! To email backing tracks in advance, please contact Phat Man Dee: phatmandee@phatmandeemusic.com

Phat Man Dee - host, Joe DeFazio - pianist, Gordon Gary - bass

Workshops

Know Your Rights: Community Resilience in the Face of Law Enforcement

As immigration enforcement strives to sow fear and tear our communities apart, it is more important than ever to equip ourselves and neighbors with the information and resources to protect ourselves.

This Know Your Rights training session will delve into constitutional rights education, the current state of immigration policy and practice, racial equity violations, and practical next steps to foster safe spaces during a turbulent political climate.

Jasmine Hunter, Casa San José

Navigating our Democracy to Secure Education & Environmental Justice

Learn about the ongoing challenges and successes that 412 Justice encounters while working to ensure environmental and education justice for all in the Pittsburgh region. Topics of discussion will include, but are not limited to, the state of Pittsburgh Public Schools and Air Quality in the Mon Valley.

Attendees will leave with an understanding of how to organize in a way that provides for the needs of all.

**Angel Gober, Paulette Foster, Natalie Foster,
412 Justice**

Workshops

Pollution to Power: Centering Justice in Allegheny County's Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Allegheny County's CAP will outline strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create benefits such as lower energy costs and healthier communities. This workshop invites participants into a reflective, community-centered conversation about the CAP, creating space to share lived experiences, identify climate burdens, and envision a just, healthy county—especially for residents disproportionately affected by environmental harm. Moderated small-group discussions will explore how racism, geography, and past decisions have shaped outcomes and consider ways the county can co-create CAP solutions that address them.

Alyssa P. Lyon, Anna Rosenblum, Brittany Prischak, Sarah Koenig

Power in the Seat: Reimagining Boards & Leadership for Racial Equity

This session uncovers what it truly takes to embed racial equity into governance—from recruitment and onboarding to culture-building and accountability. Using real examples from AALA's equity-centered leadership work, participants will examine how boards can move from performative inclusion to shared power and community-rooted decision-making. Through interactive discussion and small-group activities, participants will leave with actionable steps to transform their own boards and leadership structures.

Darcel R. Madkins, African American Leadership Association PGH

Workshops

The Role of Public Safety in Community Building

Learn how to approach difficult conversations about race, challenging unfair and biased policies that don't cater to people of color and to use inclusive practices to better benefit both parties. We will help attendees become better advocates for racial justice and creating positive, safe environments. Participants will also learn about law enforcement from an institutional perspective, including why certain policies, training practices, and engagement strategies exist. The goal is not to justify harm, but to promote transparency and encourage informed, respectful dialogue that supports reform and trust-building.

Yurron Arrington, Ceazia Lee, Maliyah Sanders

YES: Youth Enrichment Services

Understanding and Appreciating 4C Hair

Learn what textured, or 4C, hair is, the history of textured hair and the struggles that some people with 4C hair experience. The first portion of the workshop will be dedicated to educating participants with a brief presentation to ensure everyone has sufficient background to participate in the following activities. Topics include protective hair styles, common hair trends, and examples from media. Participants will have the opportunity to ask the presenters (who are teens that self-identify as having textured hair) questions about hair care, their experiences, or any other hair related topics. There will be 2 activities: braiding using doll hair, and making hair spray bottles for moisturizing.

Trevon Goggins, Amira Bogan, Junya Dorsey, Walker Michaels - YES: Youth Enrichment Services

Workshops

Understanding the Root Causes of Racism

Young facilitators will model and guide practices that center shared power, active listening, and collective responsibility. Youth facilitators will pause to name the purpose behind each activity, connecting it explicitly to racial justice principles such as equity, belonging, and voice. You will be encouraged to reflect on how these strategies can be adapted to your own communities, classrooms, or organizations. By practicing these tools and learning directly from people who actively use them, you will leave with both concrete skills and a deeper understanding of how community building can be a powerful vehicle for racial justice work.

Jade Hefflin, Jaden Hefflin, Isaiah Thompson

YES: Youth Enrichment Services

What does democracy mean in this moment?

We cannot elect our way to a just future nor can we say that electoral organizing is the sole tool for liberation. So what does that mean for democracy in a world with social unrest and genocide? What is the role of civic engagement politics when people want to show up and advocate for a just future for their community?

An immersive, interactive workshop where we directly confront our challenges in building solidarity, and work through how the limitations of electoral engagement require us to engage with each other. There will be a combination of presentation and a facilitated Q&A.

Miracle Jones, IHood

Honoring Tim Stevens

The Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit planning committee is proud to honor our founder Tim Stevens for his visionary leadership and lifelong commitment to community empowerment through the Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit, a multicultural initiative of the Black and White Reunion.

Tim Stevens has worked on our behalf for over 50 years. He was born in Pittsburgh, and raised in the Hill District. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and his Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Pittsburgh.

After the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Stevens took a larger role in his community. In 1970, he became Executive Director of the Pittsburgh branch of the NAACP. In 1986, Stevens founded the Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP), with a simple mission: encourage African-Americans in Western Pennsylvania to vote in each and every election.

Stevens also co-founded the Black and White Reunion, the Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence, and the Corporate Equity Inclusion Roundtable. This Summit was started after the death of Jonny Gammage and continues today, 28 years later.

We are all indebted to Tim Stevens, who has worked to improve our community, and is an inspiration to us all.



YWCA Greater Pittsburgh's Center for Race & Gender Equity

The Center provides training, organizes events, supports advocacy initiatives, and builds community around the vision of a world in which everyone has equal access to personal and professional opportunities.

Workplace Excellence Workshops

Our sessions for groups are designed to foster collaboration and problem-solving, leaving participants with practical insights to create a stronger workplace.

Support for Advocacy Initiatives

We help to advance economic security for women and families and promote workplace excellence by engaging with strategic advocacy initiatives.

Educational and Community-Building Events

Join us for virtual and in-person events that promote learning about social justice and advocacy while connecting community members together.

**Join us at
ywcaphg.org/crge**



A trusted partner for nearly 160 years, YWCA GP creates pathways to opportunity, strengthens economic stability, and promotes equity throughout the Pittsburgh area. Our programs provide high-quality education for children and youth, direct financial and housing assistance for individuals and families, and leadership in advancing systems change that fosters long-term well-being and economic security. Learn more about our efforts and how you can get involved at ywcaphg.org

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Our Social & Economic Justice Focus Areas

- Black-Led Movement Work
- Civil Liberties & Civil Rights
- Human Rights
- Reproductive Freedom
- Social Services
- Economic Independence
- Housing
- Tangible Aid
- Transportation
- Healthcare
- Other Safety Net Resources

Initial Applications due Jan 15 & Jul 15

Rapid response funding grants are available in partnership with the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Rolling applications reviewed monthly.





Proud supporter— every day!

CCAC is proud to support the 28th Annual Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit. As a partner, we're committed to fostering education, awareness and progress for racial justice in our community.



OUR GOAL IS YOUR SUCCESS.

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We work better when
all of us **work together.**



UPMC is proud to support **YWCA Greater Pittsburgh** and this year's **Black +White Reunion Racial Justice Summit**.

UPMC
LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE

University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

The Center on Race and Social Problems

Where Research Becomes Community Impact

Our Mission

The Center on Race and Social Problems conducts rigorous, interdisciplinary research on the most pressing racial and social challenges of our time.

As a bridge between scholarship and practice, we translate evidence into actionable solutions through meaningful community partnerships, policy engagement, and evidence-based programming. Our work advances racial equity and strengthens communities.



Get Involved

Whether you're a student, faculty member or part of the greater community, we invite you to connect with our Center!



University of Pittsburgh

Center on Race and Social Problems
School of Social Work

www.crsp.pitt.edu



VENTURE OUTDOORS

28th Annual Pittsburgh Racial Justice Planning Committee

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Janet Lunde
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Phat Man Dee
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to support the
Pittsburgh
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Feedback, please!

Please help the planning committee and our speakers improve by completing a survey about the Summit



Stay in touch!

Visit our Linktree to find our website, social media, or sign up for the newsletter.



Your generous donation supports our work and contributes to the Jonny Gammage Memorial Scholarship Fund for local law students with an interest in studying civil rights and social justice issues.

PayPal: @SummitAgainstRacism

Black & White Reunion, PO Box 4783, Pittsburgh, PA 15206
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PITTSBURGH
**RACIAL JUSTICE
SUMMIT**

A MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVE OF THE BLACK & WHITE REUNION