

## **State of Black Women in California: Unapologetically Focused On Us**

Sistallect, Inc. in partnership with Sierra Health Foundation and with a coalition of Black Women leaders took on the task to look at equity for Black Women and Girls in California. This effort represents the first time this type of collective, conscious effort has been done in the state. Although Women of Color are progressing as a whole, Black Women in California are more likely to be single breadwinners, live in poverty and face significant barriers in regards to pathways to success economically, socially and professionally.

There are 1.1 million Black Females in California, which is the third largest population in the country, and makes up 52% of the Black population. However, there are more than 75% of Black households headed by single Black mothers and 80% of Black households have Black Women breadwinners.

The State of Black Women in California report out explores the way in which we can collectively work on addressing these issues and the impact that Black Women can have when there is an investment of time and resources.

The strategic platform and action plan is based on the data analysis and the outcomes identified at the forum.

## **Political Participation Recommendations**

- **Run Sista Run...**
- **Prepare Black Women for higher office by focusing on development and training those currently in office and planning to run using existing programs and supplementing with mentorship programs (e.g. Los Angeles African American Women for Political Action Institute, Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) and Emerge)**
- **Join statewide and local fundraising, educational and organizing organizations that provide support for Black Women candidates and those focused on issues impacting our community (e.g. BWOPA, Black Women Democratic Club, Black Women Institute of Leadership Development)**
- **Hold elected officials accountable on every level**
  - Produce annual score/report card
  - Secure inclusive riders, which is an agreement to hire Black women in critical leadership positions in their office if elected
- **Increase the number of Black Women delegates, commissioners and appointees**
- **Collaborate with Black elected officials on policy development, support and advocacy to ensure our collective voice and needs are elevated**
- **Conduct Get Out the Vote Campaign particularly to support Black Women candidates and those who support issues important to our community**
- **Establish a statewide Commission on the Status of Black Women and Girls to serve as resource to organizations, individuals, entities and agencies**
- **Advocate for more public and private funding to address disparity gaps on quality of life indexes**
- **Issue annual policy platform locally and statewide**

- Support the advocacy efforts for cannabis funding and push to allocate available funding to communities most marginalized by the criminalization of criminal justice polices and activities at every level using zip codes and other data points
- Create annual Black Women lobby day at every level of government to get maximum participation

#### **Employment & Earnings Recommendations**

- Support policies that bridge the gap between the living wage and the cost of living in California
- Develop a statewide land trust specifically focused on opportunities for single mothers to purchase home to alleviate the barriers that many Black Women experience especially in high cost living areas like Los Angeles and the Bay Area
- Join Black Women for Wellness' efforts to institute a 20% cap on interest rates payday loans and also limiting the times borrowers can refinance or re-borrow in a month
- Work with industry partners to develop and implement tools to bridge success gaps
  - Plug and play internships
  - Career planning and mapping programs
  - Information sharing tools
  - Mentorship and Sponsorship programs
  - Market analysis on positions annually that includes its impact on Women
- Call on state and county entities to track employment trends of Black Women
- Participate in Board development training programs
- Assess California companies on their efforts to hire, retain and promote Black Women and issue best places to work for Black Women report
- Launch Black Women's Meet-Up networking events for professional Black Women

#### **Work and Family Recommendations**

- Establish a Black Women's Oath
- Advocate for mental health services and training in the workplace that are culturally relevant to meet the unique needs of Black Women
- Continue to support paid family and medical leave and paid sick days as well as identify area of improvement for current policies that uniquely address single parents, sole providers and caregivers
- Develop a statewide workgroup with Black Women Human Resource leaders to review best practices and create cultural competency training toolkits for employers who are sole providers, single parents and caregivers
- Support Black Women for Wellness' recommendation to provide free training and classes for high tech jobs for low income families including computer coding, trainings on clean energy technologies, urban planning and engineering

- Focus on early education and addressing the achievement gaps to ensure girls are graduating prepared to compete in the emerging career options as well as prepared for college level courses are imperative
- Develop policies and identify a funding source to address the cost and availability of quality day care and after school programs
- Obtain funding to redefine the narrative of Black Women and Girls through a multilevel marketing campaign

#### **Health and Well-Being Recommendation**

- Track data on Black Women and Girls health care disparities to show funding and policy needs
- Identify state and local funding for community garden programs in designated food deserts and use as a micro enterprise opportunity for income generator for Black Women
- Explore private/public partnerships to enhance care delivery models
- Create innovative programs like Food Farmacies that link together community resources to address public health issues
- Mimic Black Child Legacy in communities with high African American Child Death Rates
- Garner more funding for educating communities with high rates of STDs
- Participate in community collaboratives focused on social determinants of health
- Develop statewide taskforce to address Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma to direct policy and funding opportunities
- Elevate the conversation on racial and implicit bias in the health care industry and its impact on health care delivery
- Work with health care entities to develop materials and opportunities to educate the Black community on health care and navigating the system including Black immigrants

#### **Poverty and Opportunities Recommendations**

- Require policymakers and workforce development leaders to adopt strategies that promote gender and racial/ethnic equity in access to higher-paid career training opportunities
- Push for economic development investments at every level
- Develop workforce development programs that recruit and train Black Women in specific skills to help them gain access to career ladders and services
- Create a California focused digital solution to provide resources and training on economic planning, credit counseling and wealth building
- Support equitable access to affordable and high-quality early learning opportunities (e.g. universal preschool)
- Advocate for breaking the relationship between ZIP code and school performance, so that a child's address does not determine his or her educational destiny (Ed Trust West)
- Push for more public resources to provide economic literacy in targeted communities and for groups

- Get involved in the fight for fair and just 2020 Census
- Establish partnerships to implement Independent Development Account programs

### **Violence and Safety Recommendations**

- Bail Reform is a must...focusing on the impact it has on the family particularly when a single, Black mother is involved
- Advocate to take willful defiance out of the suspension code with a focus on girls
- Fight for public funds to support trauma centers and resources for those who experience trauma
- Focus on getting the Victims of Crime Act funds out to the community
- Support Build.Black. Coalition
- Establish statewide resource database for victims of domestic violence (e.g. App, call center)
- Push the state to allocate funding for public awareness campaign on violence among youth
- Support effort on reductions in mandatory sentencing policies and prison terms
- Provide states with incentives to reduce incarcerated populations can also help achieve this goal and reverse existing incentives for incarceration.
- Commission a report on school to prison pipeline specifically for Black Women and girls in foster care
- Require mandatory domestic violence and sexual harassment training for middle school students
- Implement an implicit bias policy and training program for county social service workers and health professionals
- Assess current efforts and develop partnerships to elevate efforts
- Elevate Black Women survival stories