

COMMUNICATIONS / MEDIA / SOCIAL NETWORKS

CHICAGO 2016

Media and Communications play an enormous role in shaping local, national and international perspectives, conversations and agendas on economic, political, social, cultural and criminal justice policy and systems apparatus. Communication mediums shape public opinion—and ultimately helps decide what policy solutions are adopted.

To achieve parity in opportunity and outcomes in a hostile climate; the Black Community needs to broaden access as well as fortify communication mediums and content that engage, inform and frame relevant conversations. Black Communication mediums must engage in language and policy solutions that translate into smart, strategic and tactical, common-sense messages for our community, our representatives, our leadership and for campaigns of action.

Public Policy Recommendations

- Institutions in the communication business must be targets for substantive change. Media is an institution that shapes and reflects culture. It helps people form opinions about who is dangerous and who is not, what leadership is and who can be a leader and whether or not a policy being considered is likely to benefit particular groups and individuals. Traditional media reinforce and maintain the dominant culture. Thus, strategies that use the media to deliver different stories about people that challenge dominant assumptions are critically important.
- Advocate for and support net neutrality and privacy policies for telecommunications through federal government representatives and the Federal Communication Commission (FCC)

Community Strategy

- We must increase the number of mass Communication vehicles (television networks, radio stations, internet radio), controlled by Blacks, thus controlling the (Black Community's) message.
- Identify, nurture and lend financial support for next generation communications specialists from our community, whom are focused on courageously telling our story. Experts who will frame historical and current events and issues from a Black perspective and within a context informed by our community through all forms of media.
- Embrace and leverage current, decentralized media opportunities by engaging and mentoring youth in media to tell our stories.
- Develop and or support local performing art production and distribution media content that accurately represents and celebrates our diversity and experiences.
- Promote, educate and facilitate an understanding of 'Justice Framing':

Justice framing, “is a methodology that exposes structural inequity, emphasizes social responsibility and corporate accountability, and highlights the role of government and policy. Justice framing uses news coverage, policy, entertainment media, and all forms of communications to educate, motivate and mobilize public conversations toward a collective vision of progressive structural change.”

What the Community Can Do

- Communicate the concept of ‘Implicit bias’s to our and the larger community as well as elected representatives in order to inform the development of policy, policy changes and the assessment of policy impact on Black People.
- Develop tools to share our stories at the national and local levels, and amongst our Community.
- Promote, educate and facilitate (within our community) the use of Social Media as a set of tools for communication, framing and reframing, movement building, organizing, and promote life affirming positive cultural perspective. The bottom line is we're no longer at the mercy of the mainstream media. When we want to tell our side of the story, we don't have to beg the New York Times to cover it. We can tell our stories, ourselves, and put it out into the world for everyone to see.
- Engage in and or support alternative media outlets i.e. focused on progressive issues that impact the black community.
- We must increase the number of public policy institutes focused on the Black Agenda and controlled by us. There should be at least one major Black public policy institute in every major city.

What Individuals Can Do

- Take ownership of what is being communicated to our children at schools (both public and private) and in other public institutions, in our churches and in our homes. We must create a sense of community within our neighborhoods starting with our children understanding the richness of our history and the strength of our people.
- Start and or participate in community/town hall forums focused on community based solutions.
- Start and or support internet based radio/TV focused on PROVIDING urban dwellers information relevant to the community.
- Start a blog that focuses on issues and information our people have interest in.
- Willingly share information (political, social, environmental, performing art, health and wellness) etc., which can help others in the community.
- Retired media professionals lend your experience and skills to up and coming media entrepreneurs through mentoring and access to your rolodex/contacts.

What Leaders and Elected Officials Can Do

- Research, present and or support legislation that supports “net neutrality” and **free speech** of the community.
- Advocate for black media outlets in urban communities you represent.
- Create political information programming that educates the black community on the political process, proposed legislation and impact studies.
- Support media content that empowers black cultural perspective and actively repudiate content that disparages black people overtly or by subtle subliminal suggestions.