

**A REPORT ON**

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**THE 2nd ANNUAL  
AFRICAN AMERICAN SUMMIT**

*"A Call to Action"*

***Sponsored by  
The Washington State Commission  
on African American Affairs***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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On November 18, 1995, the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs convened its 2nd annual SUMMIT on the campus of Evergreen State College in Tacoma, Washington.

The theme of this year's SUMMIT was -- *A Call to Action*. In constructing this theme, the Commission sought to go beyond defining problems and identifying needs. In bringing together a diverse group of professionals, organizational leaders and concerned citizens, the Commission hoped to facilitate the development of an **action agenda** that would gain the commitment of participants and address the many issues facing African-Americans in Washington State.

### **CREATING A BLUE PRINT FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

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The SUMMIT achieved its goals in several ways. Participants developed and adopted a blueprint for self sufficiency which called for:

- Developing a state-wide Law and Justice Center which would provide centralized research, pro-bono services and initiate class action suits.
- Establishing a League of African American Voters which would lobby, oversee public decision and election processes and organize a "Court Watch" on behalf of our communities.
- Developing a state-wide directory of African American businesses.
- Developing a Capital Bank to improve access to traditional financing and venture capital.
- Achieving 100% voter registration.
- Creating African American political action committees at state and local levels.
- Developing a community-based health education program.

**CREATING A BLUE PRINT FOR  
SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

*cont.*

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- Initiating mandatory K-12 health education.
- Conducting asset mapping of African American communities.
- Publishing a "How to Manual" on community development.
- Making an individual commitment to one ten-year-old.
- Improving the access of African American families to support systems.
- Assuring greater accountability for agencies and individuals which represent the interests of or serve African Americans.
- Developing a state-wide educational data bank.
- Taking an active role in block grant decision-making processes.
- Creating successful African American service businesses by directing youth into vocational as well as academic programs.
- Supporting and patronizing African American businesses.

Equally important, participants made individual and organizational commitments to help achieve this blueprint for self sufficiency. Pages 6 through 16 of this report provide additional detail on the recommendations and commitments made.

***NEXT STEPS***

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A final indicator of the success of the 2nd annual SUMMIT is that commitments extended into the future, recognizing that this action agenda would require consistency and follow-up. Participants agreed to reconvene in the Spring of 1996 in Yakima. At that time, we will review progress made and identify technical assistance and other resources or support needed to accomplish our goals.

## **VISION & GOALS**

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In convening this 2nd Annual SUMMIT, the Commission envisioned:

*Communities of empowered African-Americans throughout the State of Washington collaborating with one another to achieve economic and social self-sufficiency.*

SUMMIT goals included:

- Identifying new approaches to achieving individual and community self-sufficiency.
- Developing a strategic action plan that will complement the renewed activist mood in our communities and will define the roles we must embrace to ensure the survival and prosperity of our communities.
- Developing a blueprint for rebuilding the foundations of our communities so that African-American families can fully participate in the mainstream.
- Establishing networks and linkages among African-American individuals and organizations in order to enhance communication and coordination.
- Fostering an agenda which will serve all the citizens of Washington State by securing individual commitment to direct and indirect actions which will achieve the above goals.

## **SUMMIT FORMAT**

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Welcoming remarks from the Honorable Harold Moss and the Honorable Delores Silas reinforced SUMMIT goals for achieving economic and social self-sufficiency.

SUMMIT participants included more than eighty (80) individuals, representing a wide range of community-based agencies, organizations, churches and businesses from across the state. Eight workshops were scheduled -- four in the morning and four in the afternoon. Workshops were preceded by panel reports which established a context for workshop discussions.

The morning panel included James Kelly who presented the results of two recently released Commission studies which examined how affirmative action is practiced in state hiring processes and higher education admissions. Des Setta Smith spoke on behalf of Blacks in Government. She was followed by Virginia Taylor who analyzed media practices from an African American perspective. The panel concluded with a presentation from Eddie Rye on the implications of the Million Man March. The panel was followed by workshops on:

- Health Care
- Business & Economic Development
- Politics & Voter Registration
- Housing & Community Development

A catered lunch was held in honor of Joseph Zimbaye, owner of Blackbird Books. The Honorable Judge Judy Hightower was the keynote speaker.

The afternoon panel included Thelma Jackson on education, Barbara Butler on juvenile justice, Rev. Robert Jeffrey of Black Dollar Days and Shani Taha on children and family services. Panel presentations were followed by workshops on:

- Crime & Justice
- Children, Family & Youth
- Employment & Training
- Education

Each workshop was facilitated by one or more discussion leaders who are also experts in the field. Participants were charged with identifying two or three specific actions that should be taken to address each community issue. Participants were also charged with securing commitments from one or more organizations to take the lead in implementing each action.

The SUMMIT concluded with reports from each work group. Participants agreed to reconvene in the Spring, in Yakima, in order to monitor progress and identify technical assistance or resources needed to achieve our action agenda.

**OUR ACTION AGENDA**

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## **CRIME & JUSTICE**

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**Discussion Leaders:** Barbara Butler & Artee Young

**Question:** What steps or actions should be taken to eliminate the over-representation of African Americans throughout the criminal and juvenile justice systems?

**Action Plan:** Workshop participants committed to undertaking two major actions: the establishment of a *Law and Justice Center* and the incorporation of a statewide, for-profit *League of African-American Voters*. The purposes of the *Law & Justice Center* and the *League of African-American Voters* are discussed below.

*Develop a Law and Justice Center*

The *Law & Justice Center* will be a community based, law-related, educational, research and training facility. The Center will serve as a clearinghouse for federal and state, civil and criminal legal issues/information, and

Will provide pro-bono legal services to the African American community. It will also initiate class action suits on behalf of African Americans.

*Launch a League of African-American Voters*

The League will lobby local, state and federal governments on behalf of African American' interests;

Its members will oversee and monitor public meetings, i.e. the state legislature, city & county councils, schools boards, higher education, ports, etc.; Its members will organize an on-going district, municipal, & superior court watch; and,

The League will establish a newsletter which will inform the African American community on the above activities.

**Catalysts:** Kwami Taha in King County; Artee Young in Pierce County; Quincy, Yvonne and Glenda Tanner in Tacoma; Jackie in the Tri-Cities; and Joanne Scott.

**BUSINESS & ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

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**Discussion Leaders:** Leonard Berry, Nat Jackson & Frank Russell

**Question:** What steps or actions should be taken to assure the growth and stability of new and existing businesses owned and operated by African Americans?

**Action Plan:** Twenty-four workshop participants committed to undertaking two primary actions in order to support the development and awareness of African-American businesses, products and services. These are outlined below.

*Develop a Statewide Directory of Businesses & Services*

The Black Dollar Day Task Force and other groups publish directories of African American firms providing products and services in Seattle-Tacoma and other regions of the State. These independent efforts should be the basis for a consolidated state-wide directory published under the auspices of the African American Commission.

This business directory would be widely circulated and made available on Internet and other on-line computer services as appropriate. The directory should be published in traditional book form and be available in computer disk and CD ROM formats.

*Develop a Capital Bank*

The formation and expansion of African American businesses is often hindered by the lack of available capital within known, traditional lending sources. The goal of this recommendation is to provide access to capital and professional expertise for businesses that need venture capital, loans, equity partnerships and general financing, utilizing both traditional and non-traditional, creative methods of funding.

The control and lending criteria for the Bank would be developed by African American professionals with input from community oriented business sources. There are several economic development models that have been funded in other communities that, in part, may be duplicated to facilitate this goal.

**Catalysts:** Leonard Berry, working in conjunction with Leon Walker, Tony Hudson and George Stewart, will develop a conceptual plan for a Capital Bank to promote business development; the African American Commission, Black Dollar Days Task Force and other interested publishers will organize and help produce a state-wide business directory.

**POLITICS &  
VOTER REGISTRATION**

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**Discussion Leaders:** Bill Covington & Charles Rollins

**Question:** What steps or actions should be taken to assure that African American interests are effectively represented in the political process?

**Action Plan:** Workshop participants identified two priorities. Fundamental to each priority is the recognition that African Americans need to be better educated about 1) the importance of the electoral process and 2) how communities can effect political process. Within this context, the following was recommended:

*Mount a Registration Campaign*

Our goal should be to achieve 100% registration of African American within this State. The NAACP's voter registration campaign should be supported. Businesses, community agencies, churches and individuals should keep voter registration forms available and should actively seek out individuals and register them.

Churches should register voters in communities where NAACP chapters don't exist.

Outreach efforts should include students on college campuses, black student unions and high school students. Students can help outreach to the community and should be the target of registration efforts.

*Create African American Political Action Committees*

PAC's are an important part of the political process. They can provide financing to prospective candidates and funds to incumbents who represent the interests of African Americans. No PACs exist in this state which speak to the issues and concerns of African American communities.

We should raise the funds needed to form viable, state-wide and/or local Political Action Committees.

**Catalysts:** Virginia Taylor and the Yakima NAACP for voter registration.

**Discussion Leaders:** Tom Hilyard, Linda Jones, Linda Kennedy & Shaunna Weatherby

**Question:** What steps or actions should be taken so that African American people of all ages live healthful lives in a healthful environment?

**Action Plan:** Workshop participants identified two action priorities. These priorities are outlined below.

*Initiate Legislative Change*

Our communities should identify, develop and/or support legislation which promotes mandatory health care education as part of the K-12 curriculum. Our goal is to develop an informed community who can effectively address individual and family health care issues in spite of the lack of culturally relevant services and a general distrust of the medical profession.

*Develop a Community-based Health Education Program*

Churches were identified as an instrument for supporting and developing local programs. The Washington State Black Health Care Professionals Association was also identified as a resource and a catalyst for this effort. Peer education was identified as an important program component which will assure that health education information reaches all parts of the African American community. The media can also serve to get information out to communities.

The goal is to develop informed citizens who can negotiate the complexities of the medical system and who place emphasis on preventative as opposed to curative medical practices.

**Catalysts:** Commission on African American Affairs; Washington State Black Health Care Professionals; Churches; Lillie Aziz; Arleen Roots; Sharon Smith; Brenda Sanders; Delores Brewer; Laura Egwuatu; Mary Mahoney

**HOUSING &  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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**Discussion Leaders:** Alberta Canada & Richard McIver

**Question:** What steps or actions should be taken to build/rebuild geographic African-American communities into attractive, dynamic and vital environments which reflect the strength and beauty of our culture, history and traditions?

**Action Plan:** Workshop participants identified two action items which would lay the groundwork for community development in African American communities state-wide. These action items are described below.

*Conduct Asset Mapping*

Participants will map the following African American communities by December 1996: I-5 Corridor communities; Yakima; Tri-Cities; and Spokane.

Asset mapping is an analytical tool which is used to identify opportunities for employment, business growth and the production of wealth. It helps community residents and leadership identify community strengths or "assets" which can be leveraged in community development efforts.

Community development goals included developing African American urban villages with inter-generational and multi-use housing.

*Publish How To Manuals*

Information should be distributed, statewide, which will help organizations and individuals capture the business opportunities associated with community development. The manual should address financing, putting projects together, conducting community mobilization, etc. Our goal is to increase the numbers of successful black developers and contractors.

**Catalysts:** Richard McIver; Alberta Canada; six participants

**CHILDREN, FAMILIES &  
YOUTH**

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**Discussion Leader:** Helen Mayfield

**Question:** What steps or actions should be taken to assure strong and healthy two parent, African American families capable of fostering responsible, caring and competent children?

**Action Plan:** Workshop participants identified three action items. In developing these recommendations, participants were guided by the African maxim - "It takes a village to raise a child." Their action plan is described below.

*Improve Access to Resources*

Many resources are available to support families and children. We need to centralize the collection of this information and disseminate it broadly throughout our communities.

*Make an Individual Commitment*

We must make an individual commitment to mentor and support children and families in crisis and/or in need of resources.

*Improve Accountability*

We need to hold groups and individuals accountable. If they are not supporting and/or do not serve our interests we need to help them do so ... by placing items on their agenda.

**Catalysts:** The African American Commission for resource information and dissemination; Conference participants made individual commitments to mentor children and families; the Black Child Development Institute in Seattle; the African American Initiative under the auspices of BCDI and Families for Kids.

## **EDUCATION**

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**Discussion Leaders:** Joy Hardeman, Maxine Mimms & David Scott

**Question:** What steps or actions should be taken to assure that African American youth are academically, technically and vocationally competitive?

**Action Plan:** Workshop participants recommended one action item which would facilitate a multi-faceted approach to education and achievement. Their action plan is described below.

*Develop a Data Bank*

The goal is to help communities and individuals gain access to successful educational strategies, tools and approaches. The data bank should include:

- Information on legislation, teacher certification standards etc.,
- Information about learning styles,
- The names of experts on Black child development,
- Sample curricula, and
- Scholarship information, etc.

Data bank information should be disseminated in a variety of ways -- via newspaper articles, through mailings and newsletters and via the Internet.

**Catalysts:** Evergreen College representatives will help pull information together; Larry Norman will organize the data received from workshop participants; the Commission can serve as a state-wide clearing house; individual participants agreed to forward the following information:

Maxine Mimms - Information on teacher training and certification  
Lorraine Hudson - A list of early childhood organizations  
Thelma Jackson - Current legislative drafts  
Brenda Walker - Pre-college program information  
John Donald -- School visioning concept paper  
Tony Hudson -- Economic resource development & advocacy  
Jennifer Roseman -- Community College & Voc. Ed. information  
David Scott -- Information on an algebra project that works  
Mel Stubberfield -- Community to work program information  
Arlene Roots -- Independent private schools information

## **EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING**

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**Discussion Leaders:** Henry Beauchamps, Norwood Brooks & Vernon Stoner

**Question:** What steps or actions should be taken to assure the full participation of African Americans at all levels of the workforce?

**Action Plan:** Workshop participants identified three specific actions. These actions are as follows.

*Influence Block Grant Decisions*

Our communities need to clearly indicate to the Governor that we want to participate in a meaningful way in establishing priorities for Block Grant funds. The Governor can make appointments to key committees to accomplish this.

We need to participate in both state and local information and decision-making forums.

*Youth Employment*

We must direct youth into vocational as well as educational jobs. Our goal is to create a cadre of successful African American service businesses.

*Create Jobs Via Self Support*

African Americans can increase the number of jobs available to youth and adults by simply supporting and patronizing black businesses. These businesses are most likely to hire community members. We must make a pledge to support our business community.

In this regard, we should also outreach and solicit commitments from other members of our communities.

**Catalysts:** Black elected officials; conference participants.

**CONCLUSION**

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## **A PERSONAL PLEDGE FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

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One SUMMIT participant authored and shared the following pledge as a personal statement of his commitment to the SUMMIT's goals for achieving economic and social self-sufficiency.

It is included here as a fitting conclusion to this report on the 2nd Annual African American SUMMIT -- *A Call to Action*.

*I start with myself and I take full and personal responsibility:*

- *To love and respect my children, my spouse, and my family as well as myself.*
- *To think of and support black youth and black people in general when it comes to my ability to offer advice, direction, training, employment and purchasing opportunities ... for there is nothing wrong with black people thinking first of other blacks and providing mutual respect and support.*
- *To never allow myself and those in my presence to condemn black girls, black boys, black women and men, for any reason, without my taking personal offense and intervention.*
- *To adopt and support a new and positive outlook about the phenomenal accomplishments made by my black people, against all odds. And, I shall trumpet these positives above all else.*

*I promise this moment, this day, to uphold and live by this pledge, so help me God.*

Nat Jackson  
November 1995  
Tacoma, Washington