



Akron  
Urban League

# Urban Connection

On July 15, 2021, the National Urban League released the highly anticipated annual report, State of Black America. As we know, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the world and put a spotlight on racial inequities. The report stated that we can't go back to the "old normal" but we can build a better future. This year's report explores why an inclusive and equitable society is the only path forward.

Higher unemployment rates, lower household incomes and lack of access to health care left Black Americans more vulnerable to the Covid-19 pandemic and there is an urgency to address these structural inequities, according to the report.

The report titled "The New Normal: Diverse, Equitable & Inclusive," concluded that Black people are facing the burden of "three pandemics," which include racial inequity in health care, economics, and public safety.

There is a need for change and unity in our country. Courageous and moral leadership is imperative to bridge the divide in the United States. This year has been historic for many reasons starting with the intersection of the pandemic, which grossly highlighted health disparities in Black and Brown communities and the racial tensions that surfaced nationally with the police killings of one too many Black Americans.

Over the past 96 years, YOUR Akron Urban League has worked to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Summit County by advocating and facilitating programs that are economically and educationally transformational, impacting their lives and the lives of future generations.

The pandemic and the civil unrest highlighted the need for an organization like the Akron Urban League and generated a demand on our agency, one like I've never experienced in 27 years of non-profit work. As we move forward and prepare for the challenges that we will face uniting the country, we look forward to connecting to organizations and community members to educate, host, and bring together diverse groups of individuals who have different viewpoints and perspectives to gain a deeper understanding of one another to ultimately affect REAL change.

The staff and board of the Akron Urban League remain devoted in our work to impress upon corporate and community leaders, and elected officials, the urgency of confronting legislation and the wave of anti-voter tactics that is surging through state legislatures and the pervasive issue of racism that continues to be deeply imbedded into America's systems. We need our community at large to be in the fight with us, support our work with your time, talent and treasure and be our allies in the fight for equality. The link to the State of Black America report is <https://bit.ly/3hN6PUI>.

Teresa R. LeGrair  
President & CEO



A graphic featuring a pair of blue nitrile gloves, a stack of blue surgical masks, and a white hand sanitizer bottle. The text "Community PPE Distribution" is overlaid in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

## Community PPE Distribution

The Akron Urban League distributed over 1,400 personal protective equipment (PPE) kits to organizations in Summit County in April and May. The PPE Kits were made possible by the GAR Foundation in support of the "KNOW COVID Initiative." Each bag contained a 12 oz bottle of Purell hand sanitizer, a pack of 10 face masks, Lysol wipes, Kleenex, lotion, and literature. A special shout out to GOJO and Cleveland Clinic Akron General who donated all of the sanitizer contained in the kits. We also appreciate our dedicated interns, Cara Adams and Kevin Opoku, who were instrumental in the success of this initiative over the past four months.



## COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic



In partnership with AxessPointe Community Health Centers and the Akron NAACP the Akron Urban League hosted a vaccination clinic on site. Community members were able to speak directly with physicians and learn about the Johnson & Johnson vaccination and get vaccinated. A big thank you to AxessPointe and the Akron NAACP for their support and collaboration to ensure a successful event. According to Our World in Data to date, over 165 million U.S. citizens have been fully vaccinated or 50.4% of the population. Additionally, Ohioans make up 5.45 million of the fully vaccinated population or 46.7%. Click [here](#) for more details.



## 2021 Scholarship Fund

Unfortunately, we could not have our Annual Meeting and Scholarship Luncheon this year due to the pandemic. However, we were still able to provide scholarships to Summit County graduating seniors. The Akron Urban League, in partnership with corporations, foundations, community organizations, individual supporters, and schools in Summit County had the privilege of awarding 47 scholarships or \$255,556 in funds to local high school students.

There were five "full-ride" scholarships awarded to students: two from The University of Akron, two from Kent State University for four years each, and one to Stark State College for a two-year program.

In place of a luncheon, we published a scholarship awardee recognition video to YouTube and on our website the week of July 12th. We were delighted to revel with them and celebrate their outstanding academic achievements. Congratulations, class of 2021, you have earned it. One milestone down, so many more to go!





## Ignite - Keys to Business Ownership Celebratory Event

14 aspiring entrepreneurs completed an 8-week virtual training program titled "Keys to Business Ownership." This virtual training program began on April 7, 2021 and ended on June 2, 2021. The program participants met on a weekly basis to learn about the many areas of entrepreneurship, such as, funding and finance, marketing and branding, time management, business plan writing and more.

On June 2nd, all program participants celebrated their accomplishments with being awarded a certificate of completion from the CEO of the Akron Urban League, Ms. Teresa R. LeGrair. Along with receiving their certificate, they had the opportunity to listen to presentations from Kyle Julien (Development Finance Authority) and Chris Faircloth (Akron ECDI) regarding current loan and funding opportunities in the Akron area. Following the presentations, the program participants met with a business counselor from the Akron Urban League's Minority Business Assistance Center.



## High Tunnel Grand Opening

The AUL High Tunnel official grand opening and open house kicked off on June 26th. Margo Sommerville, President of Akron City Council, Ward 3 and Veronica Sims, County Council Member, District 5, were there to officiate that morning.

Guests were treated to a live DJ, tunnel tours, a pop-up market with specialty foods available for purchase and a chance to win a \$50 gift basket! The first 50 guests also received a special event tote filled with surprises.

This season's harvest includes tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, lettuce, spinach, arugula, collards, kale, Asian greens, beets, turnips, onions, carrots, zucchini, squash, cucumbers and more. The Akron Urban League, with support from The Knight Foundation, partnered with Let's Grow Akron for the High Tunnel food production.



High tunnels are unheated greenhouses for all types of crops. The AUL's high tunnel is Ohio's 100th seasonal High Tunnel from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service and was constructed during former Congresswoman Marica Fudge's representation of Ohio's 11th District.



## The 2021 Gala

We're EXCITED to announce the return of our annual gala. This year's theme is **The Art of Renaissance - Designing the Change We Want to See**. We invite you to join us on August 28, 2021 at the John S. Knight Center for an evening of dinner, music, auctions and more.

All proceeds benefit Akron Urban League programs. This event fuels our ability to support our mission so that we can continue to do good work for the Summit County community.

**Date:** August 28, 2021

**Time:** 6 PM

**Event schedule:** Gala begins at 6 p.m. Dinner, dancing, drinks, music, auctions, and more to follow.

**Location:** John S. Knight Center, 77 E Mill St, Akron, OH 44308

**Cost:** \$175/ticket or \$1300/table of 8.

[Sponsorships Available](#)

[Buy Tickets](#)

[Donate](#)

## Target Circle

Target Circle, Target's loyalty program, gives shoppers votes when they spend money, and then allows them to spread their votes between 6 pre-selected nonprofits. At the end of each cycle, Target uses the proportion of votes to determine how much money each charity gets, and then begins a new cycle with different nonprofits. Our cycle is now over and because of your generosity in selecting The Akron Urban League while shopping Target you helped us raise over \$2,100!

## Amazon

Although Prime Day has come and gone, we ask for your continued support when you shop Amazon. Sign up for [AmazonSmile](#) and select Akron Community Service Center & Urban League as your preferred charity. Remember to shop for deals at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), or with AmazonSmile ON in the Amazon app, and AmazonSmile will donate to us at no cost to you.



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FOR  
US**



## New Board Members

Every year, when we elect and appoint new members to our Board of Directors, we are inspired by their excitement and willingness to serve. At our Annual Meeting January 28th, we welcomed four new board members: Barb Greene, Dallas Grundy, Tesa Salopek and Dr. Fedearia Nicholson-Sweval. Welcome, you are making change happen!

See all Board Members [here](#).



**Barb Greene**  
Owner,  
CommonGood  
Consulting, Inc.



**Dallas Grundy**  
Sr. VP & CFO,  
The University  
of Akron



**Tesa Salopek**  
AVP Commercial  
Relationship  
Manager, Fifth  
Third Bank



**Dr. Fedearia  
Nicholson-Sweval**  
Dean of Student  
Success, Stark  
State College



## Become an Akron Urban League Member

When you purchase a membership at the Akron Urban League, it allows you to support our life-changing programs. Your membership helps support programs like STEAM, the Akron Minority Business Assistance Center (MBAC), The Minority Contractor Capital Access Program (MCCAP), employment preparedness, placement services and more. Please help us deliver opportunities for individuals and businesses in Summit County by becoming a member.



### Types of Membership

Justice & Equality Giving Society - Membership starts at \$50

General Membership - \$25

Champion of Equality Membership - \$100

President's Circle Membership - \$500

Whitney M. Young Jr. Membership - \$1000

# Donor Spotlight

Without our donors, there would be no Akron Urban League. Because of the community's generosity, we continue to provide transformative programs to Summit County residents. Big-hearted people and companies like those mentioned below, give so we can provide free programs to the community. Here are a few recent donors. We hope that they will inspire you to give too.

## Individuals

- Alita A. & Richard S. Rogers
- Barbara and Todd Greene
- Bennett L. and Todd Williams
- Billy Taylor
- Dr. Rachel Talton
- Drs. Cynthia and Michael Kelley
- Julie and Steve Brandle
- Laura & Drew Engles
- Mr. and Mrs. William H. Considine
- Pam & Joe Kanfer
- Roxia B. and J. Stanley Boykin
- Sandy and Mark Auburn
- Teresa R. LeGrair
- Wendy and Michael Bolas

## Corporations / Foundations

- Akron Community Foundation
- Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan, and Arnoff LLP
- Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
- Citizens Bank
- County Summit
- Energy Harbor
- Fifth Third Bank
- GAR Foundation
- Giant Eagle
- Huntington - Akron Foundation
- Leppo Rents
- Robert W. Baird
- Rubber City McDonald's
- Synthomer Foundation
- The Corbin Foundation
- The J.M. Smucker Company
- United Way
- Westfield

*Thank you!*

FOR YOUR

**SUPPORT**

