

**African American Leadership Forum
Education and Economic Policy**

**Partnership Guidelines for
Race Matters Policy
Strategic Planning**

**African American Professional Leaders
Boards of Directors
Universities
Hospitals
Non Profits
Municipal Boards**



A PLACE AT THE TABLE

Where are we now? African American leaders and professionals tend to be disconnected from major institutions, industries, and policy making dialogues. Despite the social, political, and economic progress made since the civil rights movement, African Americans still face numerous social and economic challenges, especially with respect to equitable resource allocation. This notion is perpetuated by a general inattention to Race Matters Policies by legislators, executives, and board officials. The philosophy of the **African American Leadership Forum for Education and Economic Policy (AALF)**, a coalition of leaders and experts from businesses, government, education, churches, and community organizations, has been to develop strong partnerships, especially with institutions of higher education, to address the issue of policy resource allocation by working to increase equity and access through dialogue. AALF was co-founded by and partners with **Manhattanville College** in these efforts. In addition, the African American Leadership Forum has recently established a partnership with **Pace University**, entitled the African American Leadership Forum/Pace University Institute for the Advancement of Equal Opportunity in Education that seeks to increase educational opportunity.

Pace University Study: In 2001, AALF initiated a study responding to the longstanding perception that African Americans are under-represented on boards, a belief that under-representation contributes to the exclusion of African Americans from policy-making decision and powerlessness in Race Matters Policy issues of equity and resource allocation, and a need to measure the extent of under-representation and identify its causes and remedies. The African American Leadership Forum employed Pace University's Edwin Michaelian Institute for Public Policy and Management to conduct the study. The respondents represented municipalities, nonprofits, hospitals, colleges and universities, African American opinion leaders and African American organizations. Cole Communications provided the summary of major observations, which included:

- ❖ Agreement by all respondents that **African Americans are under-represented** on policy making boards;
- ❖ A **“disconnect”** between how African Americans & board/municipal respondents view Race Matters;
- ❖ **Tokenism** and racial insensitivity cited by African Americans as causes of under-representation;
- ❖ A **growing number of African American experts** are available for board recruitment;
- ❖ A **lack of awareness** by municipal/board respondents of available African American experts to recruit;
- ❖ Agreement on the **need to increase representation**, but a lack of consensus on how to go about it; and
- ❖ African Americans prefer to be **active in organizations that directly address Race Matters**.

The study also raised the following issues:

- ❖ The belief that racial insensitivity is a significant issue highlights the need to address the “how,” “when,” “where,” and “with whom” questions to eliminate under-representation and shape effective partnerships;
- ❖ Municipalities have significantly fewer African Americans on boards than other respondents; one third of participating municipalities chose not to say if representation was “sufficient” or “insufficient;”
- ❖ A lack of awareness of the African American community's intellectual capital and its growing numbers of professional experts means the **recycling of the same African Americans already on boards**;
- ❖ The **absence of working partnerships** with African American organizations and joint strategies to work together to remedy Race Matters Policy issues of equity and resource allocation;
- ❖ **African Americans doubt the relevance of serving** on most boards in the County, preferring instead to be active in organizations that understand and address Race Matters Policy issues; and
- ❖ Boards “give, get or get off” policies and their **lack of appreciation for the non-financial contributions** that African American board members adds to under-representation.

The Disconnect: The Pace Study highlighted the “disconnect” between African Americans and policy-making procedures at the board policy and municipal levels. Simultaneously, board representatives and legislators have not tended to regard their missions as ones that should directly address Race Matters. Therefore, the first step in increasing representation and attention to Race Matters Policy is to **build partnerships and initiate dialogue**. Boards generally do not have strategic plans or accountability systems in place to chart racial problems or progress. Second, African American professionals are not connected to Race Matters Policy issues and have not realized that their experiences and expertise can greatly affect policy and social change. As a result,

a wealth of intellectual capital from African American fraternal, professional, and leadership organizations remains underutilized, which includes lawyers, doctors, social workers, educators, engineers, architects, scientists, real estate developers, and entrepreneurs, among others. As a result, there is reluctance among African American professionals to consider Board membership. The perception of tokenism often permeates and there is an understanding that along with Board membership comes a financial responsibility for the individual. African Americans also have shown a preference for volunteering for “their” programs, ones that serve the direct needs of other African Americans in the community over major institutions.

Response: In response to this study, the African American Leadership Forum has taken two specific and direct actions. The first action taken by the Forum was through the research, development, and publication of the **African American Resource Directory** (available on the United Way of Westchester & Putnam’s Website: www.uwvp.org) with the assistance of Delphi Consulting Group, Inc. This publication serves as a guide for institutions to “find” and recruit African American leaders and intellectual capital within Westchester County to increase the breadth of representation on boards. In addition, the African American Leadership Forum, along with **Marga Incorporated**, has published this brochure to address the disconnect head on, providing guidance to African American professional leaders, institutions, and the community that will lead to the development of more meaningful partnerships to address Race Matters Policy issues. This brochure aims to educate its readers on the context and environment that has led to the need for increased communication and partnerships around these issues as well as a step-by-step process and questions to consider throughout the development phase. The African American Leadership Forum and Marga incorporated will put this outline into action through a series of dialogues that will take an in-depth look into various industries and begin to formulate a strategic action plan to address the results of the Pace study.

At the Policy Level: Too often, solutions to these issues are aimed at the symptoms and not at the underlying policy that perpetuates racial disparities. Representation is essential if social changes and increased consideration for Race Matters Policy is to occur. To begin this dialogue, (1) **Race Matters Policy issues should become a priority** for the boards of major institutions; (2) boards should institute **a strategic plan and accountability system** to establish measurable goals and incentives; (3) officials on boards should **increase their awareness** of the wealth of African American expertise to be utilized. To increase representation, boards should:

Efforts to address disparities often fail due to the fact that they are aimed at the SYMPTOM and not the underlying POLICY that perpetuates inequity.

- ❖ Develop a specific recruitment plan; and
- ❖ Target individual African American experts from various sectors.

Step-by-Step: To begin, the most important step is to establish small “get to know” sessions, allowing leaders to network with board members. Further steps include:

- ❖ Define race issues relevant to the board’s mission;
- ❖ Review board membership for diversity and inclusion of African American expertise;
- ❖ Develop a strategic plan/accountability system;
- ❖ Collect data that documents Race Matters Policy issues that impact the board or institution;
- ❖ Identify African American experts in the area of the institution’s mission and service;
- ❖ Examine the diversity of senior/executive staff; and
- ❖ Host dialogues with African American experts to obtain their view of the “disconnect,” to identify race issues, and to provide recommendations.

Collaboration and buy-in are necessary from both African American professionals and board officials to achieve success in this effort.

What does this mean for your organization? Overall, partnerships bring significant opportunity to major institutions and African American communities. As a result of effective partnerships, we can begin to see increased resources being brought to bear in addressing some of the pressing policy concerns facing African

American communities. Simultaneously, we can see **major institutions enhancing their relevance** by applying their resources to critical needs and building relations with a significant and influential community. This can lead to **diversity in leadership, enhanced credibility, and an increased financial bottom line** as the pool of resources expands to include the African American community.

KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- ❖ Mutually beneficial goals should be expressed and understood;
- ❖ All stakeholders should be represented;
- ❖ Partnerships require honesty, respect, communication, and compromise;
- ❖ Successful partnerships are armed with all of the knowledge and data required to embark on a collaborative effort;
- ❖ **Community partnerships are an opportunity for institutions to enhance their relevance to society.**

Ongoing:

- ❖ Appoint leaders to task forces to continue the Race Matters Policy dialogue;
- ❖ Establish a system of accountability that identifies specific steps and strategy to deal with issues at the board level; and
- ❖ Implement a recognition/incentive system.

Develop a Plan for Your Organization: One of the most critical steps for any organization deciding to change fundamental policy is the **development of a strategic plan and an accountability or benchmark system** that measures goals and outcomes. In this instance, boards should develop a strategic plan for inclusion that focuses on the recruitment of African American leadership, resource allocation, and addresses Race Matters Policy issues related to the mission of the board.

Action Checklist

- Diversity assessment: Board and staff;**
- Resource allocation assessment;**
- Review of the mission & vision of the organization & determine Race Matters issues that relate to it;**
- “Gap analysis:” Determine where the organization *should* be in the future with respect to diversity and Race Matters;**
- Conduct research to benchmark the organization with other best practices;**
- Establish steps & alter policy to “close the gap;”**
- Establish a system of measurement & accountability;**
- Actively review & evaluate the plan; and**
- Reward successes.**

Race Matters Policies: The underlying goal of this guide is to help produce partnerships that will maximize the resources of various institutions and to collectively develop more thoughtful and inclusive decisions around “Race Matters Policies.” Race Matters Policies are decisions that explicitly acknowledge the racial dimensions of social issues, seek accountability from decision makers, and aim to address the root causes of institutionalized racism. Race Matters Policies vary by sector. The following is a list of examples of Race Matters Policies by sector:

- ❖ **Education:** With respect to education, there has historically been inequity of resource allocation, especially in the areas of modern technology, building upgrades and maintenance, teacher training, and a lack of attention to the learning patterns of African American students. Partnerships, dialogue, and increased African American representation on advisory boards will bring more attention to the inequality of resource allocation. African American teachers, administrators, and faculty in public schools and universities should be professional role models for African American and Caucasian students alike.

- Curricula should expand to include more theory and practice courses as well as competence training to provide young people with the skills they need to succeed in the “real world.” More collaboration between Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) should be a priority. All of these examples of change would improve access and equality of education.

❖ **Hospitals & Healthcare:** There is a history of lack of access to hospital staff and administrative positions for African American physicians and an absence on hospital advisory boards and research collaborations. In addition, there appears to have been minimal attention paid to policy and strategy to remedy the racial healthcare disparity.

❖ **Arts Organizations:** There is a general lack of support for African American arts committees and African American museums or centers. For example, there is no cultural destination in Westchester County for the African American community to collect and preserve history, art, and contributions while serving as an education entity for citizens of Westchester County.

Racial concerns penetrate all areas of society. For example, welfare policies do not provide relevant, adequate access to resources or technology training for betterment. Policy is needed to remedy the current penal system, which perpetuates the slavery syndrome and results in the imprisonment of excessive numbers of black males. Perhaps one of the most important, most frequently neglected concerns, is the **number of African American service companies and organizations overlooked by major institutions for contracts**. By increasing African American membership on the boards of major county institutions, corporations, and agencies, policy will be influenced that can produce system change and alleviate the symptoms of these issues within the community. A stronger African American voice will allow for greater access to capital and resources, better access to jobs, and increased participation by companies and leaders in the overall economy of the County. Only through dialogue, strong partnerships, incentive/recognition programs, legislation, and policy will we begin to increase the African American voice in decision making processes and lessen the effects of these issues and disparities on the overall community.

Next Steps: AALF and Marga Incorporated will bring together leaders and board officials from around Westchester County to address Race Matters Policy. The dialogues will be industry specific, focusing on institutions of higher education, healthcare, the arts, municipalities as well as nonprofit organizations, and target specific policies within each. The first dialogue to take place will focus on higher education, where policy has historically led to inequity in resource allocation and a lack of attention to the learning patterns of African American students, among other issues.

The African American Leadership Forum: The African American Leadership Forum for Education and Economic Policy is a volunteer organization and a coalition of African American leaders including:

- ❖ Civil rights, war on poverty, and corporate executive retirees;
- ❖ Presidents of two major community organizations and the United Clergy of Westchester;
- ❖ “Baby Boomer” advocates, administrators, and experts in education, economic development, industry, government, and community and professional organizations; and
- ❖ Emerging young leaders who bring new perspective to Race Matters Policy issues.

AALF concentrates its effort on the **elimination of the continuing vestiges of discrimination and prejudice, which contribute to the powerlessness, exclusion, and current inequalities** in the development of policy and in the allocation of financial and human resources. The Forum will carry out this mission (based on the acquisition of data) by means of consensus, the development of leadership partnerships, and collaboration, which transcends individual organizations and/or personal interest. The Forum is committed to the promotion of Race Matters Policies that address issues of equity and resource allocation for African Americans; increased participation of African Americans on policy boards and contracts with African American professionals and entrepreneurs; the development of leadership and policy partnerships with African American professional and community organizations; the support of African American organizations and the increase of resources with which to implement programs; and, the establishment of the African American Policy Institute for the study, analysis, communication, and tracking of Race Matters progress and remedies.

The Forum assumes that an entity, which will objectively acquire, analyze, and disseminate data, has the potential for enhancing the understanding of the underlying causes of the current African American issues in

the County and can bring focus to the lack of comprehensive planning by policy makers in government, corporate and community organization boards in the County and so develop the partnerships necessary to effect reform in educational and economic policy, strategic comprehensive planning and the public policy processes. As a result, the Forum studies Race Matters Policy issues and promotes leadership partnerships to search and develop strategies for remedies and policy solutions to the continuing Race Matters problems. A major focus of the Forum has been a “search” for the causes of the continuation of Race Matters Policies as well as a “strategy,” which would provide guidelines for a remedy and solution.

Marga Incorporated: Marga Incorporated advises, inspires, and informs leadership and direction that enhances the relevance of institutions and builds the capacity of people and communities. We do this through various modes of guidance and communications, including consulting services, publications, speaking, and seminars. **Marga is driven by finding common good among institutions, people, and communities, recognizing the interdependence between all of us.** As society becomes more integrated, and boundaries between sectors, nations, and industries blur, we are in need of companies that can navigate such complexity. Marga Incorporated specializes in forging the kind of partnerships that leverage the best of all worlds, drawing upon the strengths of various institutions and industries for a broader social benefit.

David Maurrasse is the President and CEO of Marga Incorporated. Over the past few months, David has worked closely with the African American Leadership Forum, facilitating and participating in a series of dialogues and assembling the material for this guide. In addition to Marga and years of nonprofit consulting experience, he is also an Assistant Professor in the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University and the author of *Beyond the Campus: How Colleges and Universities Form Partnerships with their Communities*.

Learn More: This brochure is intended to be a beginning; a document to introduce leaders and board members to Race Matters Policy and to their roles in the process of reversing the trend of institutionalized racism. To learn more about **A PLACE AT THE TABLE** or to learn more about the upcoming dialogues, please contact Marga at: margainc@margainc.com or (212) 979-9770.

Acknowledgements: **Special thanks to Dorothy J. Orr**, Co-Chair of the African American Leadership Forum and retired Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility, AXA The Equitable for her guidance and expertise in the development of this brochure. In addition, both Marga Incorporated and the African American Leadership Forum would like to thank: President Richard Berman of Manhattanville College; Ralph Gregory, President of the United Way of Westchester and Putnam, Inc; Ernest Prince, President of the Westchester Urban League; Judy Matson of Fuji PhotoFilm USA; JPMorgan Chase; ChevronTexaco; the Westchester Community Foundation; Verizon; the Westchester Community Opportunity Program; Grace Baptist Church; and Winston Ross, Executive Director of WestCop for his work as a dialogue co-chair.

In addition, the Forum and Marga would like to thank and recognize the focus group participants who played a major role in commencing this brochure: Leandra Abbott, Earl Benjamin, Mack Carter, James Cobb, Barbara Holland, David Maurrasse, Leana Merchant, Dorothy Orr, Edgar Pyatt, Winston Ross, Sioux Taylor, Thomas Watkins, Barbara Wiggins, Frank Williams.

AALF Members:

Officers:

Rev. Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson, Chair
Dorothy J. Orr, Co-Chair
Ernest Prince, Treasurer

Hon. Ernest Davis
Douglas Dixon, Esq.
Rev. James Forbes
Barbara Holland
Delores Hunter
Sterling Jasper
Garrison Jackson
Harry Jefferson
Norma V. Mack
Andrew Maloney, Esq.
Dr. Josephine Moffett
Dr. Bettye Perkins
Rev. Wilbert Preston

Paul Redd
Ronald Ross
Winston Ross
Fenton Soliz
Brenda Smith
Dr. Fred Smith
Dr. Adine Usher
Blanche Walker
Thomas Watkins

Members:

Richard Berman
Symra Brandon
Dalla Bryant
David Cheek
Katherine Cintron
Lisa Copeland
Ronnie Cox

Dr. Hugh Scott –Director,
AALF/Pace U. Institute for the
Advancement of Equal
Opportunity in Education

For Further Thought: To begin down a path towards solid partnerships and open, honest dialogue around African American leadership on the Boards of major institutions and Race Matters Policies, Marga Incorporated has established a set of questions to stimulate thought and conversation:

1. In your opinion, what are the greatest Race Matters concerns in policy today?

2. What role does your institution play with respect to Race Matters Policies?

3. Does your institution have a strategic plan or an accountability system for results to address Race Matters Policies or the recruitment of African American community leaders to the Board of Directors? If so, what does this plan include?

4. What percentage of your contracts are local, minority-owned/operated businesses and in which industries?

5. What would you say is most noteworthy about your institution's relationship to the African American professional community? Where would you like to improve?

6. In what ways would stronger partnerships with African American professionals enhance your institution?

7. Identify two particular efforts or policies that your institution could begin to work on that mutually benefit your institution and the African American professional community. What steps would you take to make them a reality?

8. Looking at existing partnerships between your institutions and African American professionals, are there any that your institution should build upon, expand, or improve?

9. What steps can be taken to begin to contribute to existing partnerships?

10. Additional Notes.

Contact Information: Please feel free to contact us with questions or for additional information. **A PLACE AT THE TABLE** is also available at www.uwvp.org and www.margainc.com

African American Leadership Forum

c/o The Urban League of Westchester
61 Mitchell Place
White Plains, NY 10605
Tel. (914) 328-0585
Fax (914) 949-7338
Email: djoao583@aol.com

United Way of Westchester and Putnam, Inc.

336 Central Park Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606
Tel. (914) 997-6700
Fax (914) 949-6438
www.uwvp.org

Marga Incorporated

347 5th Avenue
Suite 1410
New York, NY 10016
Tel. (212) 979-9770
Fax (212) 979-0416
Email: margainc@margainc.com
www.margainc.com