

Three Demands From the HIV Leaders of Black South Rising

A collective of Southern Black activists issues a political agenda to renew the fight against HIV.

October 23, 2020 By [Trent Straube](#)

How can Black HIV leaders in the South better educate and mobilize their community against the epidemic? Answers are spelled out in manifesto issued by Black South Rising, a collective of advocates in the South focused on combating HIV through the lens of African-American experiences.

The group's logo Courtesy of BlackSouthRising.org

Titled "Future Is Now! A Political Agenda for Advancing, Building, and Sustaining Black HIV Leadership in the South," [the document can be read at BlackSouthRising.org](#). [A press release](#) from the group highlights three demands:

- Multi-year investment in funding and non-monetary resources from foundations and corporations made in support of Black leaders, and organizations that address societal ills and

wrongs.

- Resources that can be used to confer with Black Southern elected officials and representatives to develop innovative systems and programs that are culturally specific to the Black experience in America.
- The defunding or changing of systems and organizations exhibiting racism and bias—intended or unintended.

The introduction to the agenda notes that “The provision of funding, while helpful, is not the only answer.... The systemic racism toward Black people has undermined our ability to advance and prosper in a nation with an abundance of capital and expertise, which cannot continue. The existing narrative must change. The approach, strategies, and efforts must evolve to effectively address HIV, poverty, poor health, mass incarceration, and justice for the murders of Black men, women, and children by the police (public servants who are supposed to serve and protect). It is time to move from talking to action, from incremental change to full change, and from complacency to standing firm in the face of white backlash.”

It’s vital to renew efforts to battle HIV among African Americans because as a population group, they are disproportionately affected by the epidemic and similar problems. In the words of Black South Rising: “Despite the strength and resiliency—the ability to overcome life’s challenges—of Black people, the level of social and health disparities that have plagued this community is no longer acceptable. Black people represent 13% of the U.S. population. Still, we also represent 50% of all persons living with HIV, 46% of incarcerated individuals, and the criminal justice (injustice) system, 40% of the homeless population, and now there is higher exposure, infection, and death from Covid-19 among black people.”

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