

# Into Daybreak: Recommendations

**A**nd *Still I Rise*, above all else, is a call for greater investment in organizing more black women into unions and community organizations focused on economic justice and workers' rights. While not the whole solution, that call must continue to be a critical component of strategies to advance three important objectives.

First, **organizing more black women into unions will help improve the economic prospects of African American families and communities.** As black women continue to experience the highest union advantage over their non-union counterparts, organizing black women into unions continues to be an effective way for black women to earn higher wages and gain access to benefits such as healthcare and retirement.

Second, **organizing more black women into unions has great potential to contribute to rebuilding and revitalizing the labor movement.** Based on research that shows black women and other women of color have the highest union election win rate among all workers—especially when organized by other women of color—black women are likely the most receptive workers to organizing and the workers most capable of ending organizing campaigns with a victory.

And third, **organizing more black women into unions continues to supply a leadership pipeline capable of uniting the labor, women's, and civil rights movements more effectively around a unified economic justice agenda.**

As the Institute for Policy Studies' *National Survey of Black Women in Labor* shows, more than 65 percent of black labor women believe that their unions invest in their leadership. And from the women profiled in the report, we see the return on this investment as evidenced by the expertise and skill of these women as organizers; important partners and workers' rights champions outside of the traditional labor movement; elected officials and policymakers; and elected leaders and senior staff members within labor unions. Because of their unique position at the nexus of a number of progressive movements, black labor women have the potential to play an even broader role in uniting the labor, civil rights and women's movements in ways that build and aggregate power and accelerate the advancement of a progressive economic policy agenda.

It is with these objectives in mind, that we offer the following recommendations in the areas of leadership, organizing and advancing economic justice policies that benefit black women and working families more broadly.

## LEADERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create a leadership cohort for black labor women** to pursue and achieve their personal and professional development goals through retreats and access to executive coaching.
- **Create a pipeline project for the recruitment of black labor women to key staff positions and boards of directors** of women's groups, civil rights organizations, foundations, labor unions and other progressive organizations. The pipeline project would include, as a core component, racial and gender equity training programs within progressive organizations to help create the climate and culture receptive to greater leadership opportunities for black women.
- **Add resources to existing mentorship programs and create new mentorship opportunities as needed:** (1) to foster greater opportunities for black women to connect and support one another; (2) to foster and encourage those in existing leadership positions within labor to use their positional power to open doors for black women; (3) for black labor women to mentor and support the leadership and professional development of black women outside of the labor movement.
- **Launch a project to position black labor women as thought leaders and strategists** in the media and within progressive spaces where long-term strategies for the advancement of progressive agendas are crafted.

## ORGANIZING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Craft public education strategies that expose black women to labor unions, worker centers and other community-based economic justice organizations** for the purpose of stimulating interest and a demand for more organizing.
- **Create collaborative pilot organizing projects between labor, community groups and women's organizations focused on black women** in support of existing or new organizing campaigns. Such projects would be designed to increase opportunities for black women to lead and shape the projects and to foster greater collaboration among and between these institutions around community interests.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **A series of convenings to build greater mutual support between black women and women's organizations.** These gatherings would be designed to break down barriers to deeper, collaborative work.
- **Creation of a shared women's economic policy agenda among labor, women's organizations and civil rights groups.** In addition to supporting existing efforts among and between these groups, this effort would seek to build bridges between organized labor and young civil rights activists leading efforts around police brutality. These efforts would be led by black labor women.