

2nd Annual Man-Up Resource Fair



Free Event – Scan The QR Code To Register Online

Building A Strong Community
Through Building A Strong Family

Resource Fair & Community Conversation

Whitehaven Community Center-Banquet Hall

4318 Graceland Dr, Memphis, TN 38116

Saturday August 15, 2026

2pm-5pm



Brought To You By
City Council Representative Pearl Eva Walker
& The Whitehaven Study Group

PANELIST PACKET CONTENTS

"The City of Memphis, A City of Problems & Promise..... 3

 Spiritual Principle..... 3

 Demographics and History 4

 Economic and Strategic Importance 5

 Natural Resources..... 6

 Current Challenges and Problems 7

Man-Up Panel Source Information & Discussion Questions 8

 1. The Memphis Profile: A Legacy of Disparity..... 8

 2. Structural Threats to Family Stability..... 8

 3. The Broken Economic Pipeline 8

 4. Resilience and the "Extended" Family 9

Conclusion for the Memphis Forum	9
Questions For Panelists.....	10
1. Countering Predatory Real Estate:	10
2. Repairing the Literacy Pipeline.....	10
3. Leveraging "Fictive Kin" for Support	10
4. Addressing Environmental Injustice	10
5. Closing the Liquid Wealth Buffer.....	10
6. Restoring the Father's Role via Re-entry	11
7. Holding Higher Education Accountable	11
8. Protecting Black Female Entrepreneurs	11
9. Overcoming the Mobility Trap	11
10. Demanding a "Fair Budget":	11

"The City of Memphis, A City of Problems & Promise

Spiritual Principle



Demographics and History



- **Largest Majority Black City:** Memphis has recently been declared the **largest majority black city** in the United States, a position previously held by Detroit.
- **Founding:** The city was **founded in 1819 by Andrew Jackson**, chosen for its strategic location on the Mississippi River.
- **History of Slavery:** By 1850, Memphis was the **largest inland market for enslaved black people** in the nation and the biggest inland cotton market in the world.

Economic and Strategic Importance



President's Island and the 5,500-acre **Pidgeon Industrial Park**.

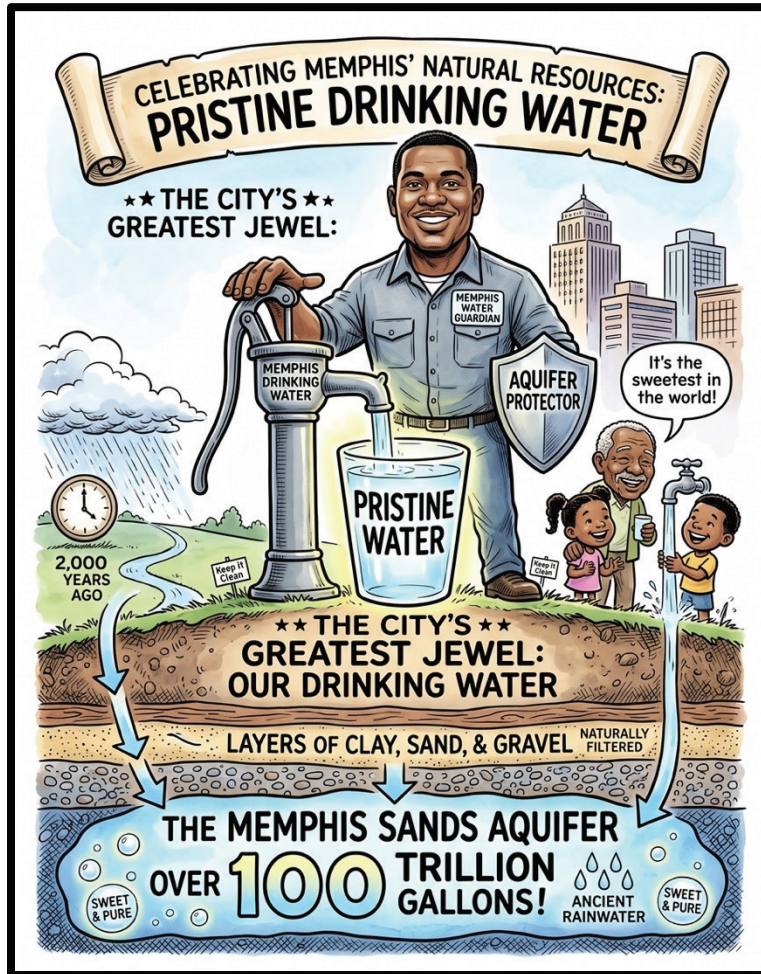
- **Logistics Hub:** It is known as the "**Logistics Hub of America**" and an "**aerotropolis**" where runway, road, rail, and river transportation merge.

- **Cargo Airport:** Memphis boasts the **country's top cargo airport** and the world's second busiest, serving as the major hub for FedEx.

- **Rail and Road Connectivity:** It is one of only three U.S. cities served by **five Class 1 railroads** and is connected north-south and east-west by two national interstates, **I-40 and I-55**.

- **Inland Port:** The International Port of Memphis is the **second largest inland port** on the shallow draft portion of the Mississippi River and the fifth largest inland port in America. It manages the 1,000-acre

Natural Resources



- **Pristine Drinking Water:** Memphis is cited as having some of the **sweetest and purest drinking water** in the world.

- **Memphis Sands Aquifer:** This water is derived from a subterranean aquifer containing more than **100 trillion gallons of rainwater** that fell approximately 2,000 years ago. It is naturally filtered through layers of clay, sand, and gravel.

Current Challenges and Problems



- **Crime and Violence:**

The city faces significant issues with violent crime, including high rates of **homicides, robberies, and juvenile delinquency**.

- **Lead Crisis:**

Memphis has a major **lead poisoning problem**, which is linked to improper brain development in children and higher probabilities of facing juvenile detention.

- **Health Disparities:**

The **breast cancer mortality rate** for African American women in Memphis is higher than in 49 of the largest U.S. cities.

- **Environmental**

Hazards: Parts of the city, particularly South Memphis, suffer from **carcinogenic pollution**, including cancer-causing ethylene oxide gas.

Man-Up Panel Source Information & Discussion Questions

State of the African American Family: Memphis Forum Report (1965–2026)

This report analyzes the historical and modern condition of the Black family, specifically focusing on the transition from the internal "pathology" framework of the 1960s to the structural "dismantling" identified in 2026. Memphis, Tennessee, serves as a central case study for these shifting dynamics.

1. The Memphis Profile: A Legacy of Disparity

Historically, Memphis has been a focal point for documenting family instability.

- **The Moynihan Benchmark:** In 1965, the Moynihan Report singled out Memphis for having a **56% increase in “out of wedlock” births** between 1950 and 1962, a statistic used to argue that "family disorganization" was reaching a crisis point.
- **Modern Demographics:** Today, Memphis is the **largest majority-Black city** in the United States. However, this population faces severe economic headwinds; the city's **poverty rate is 23.1%**, which is nearly double the national average. Black residents are **2.8 times more common** than any other ethnic group in the city, but they also represent the largest demographic living below the poverty line.

2. Structural Threats to Family Stability

Current reports shift the blame for family instability away from internal structure and toward external, systemic assaults.

- **Dismantling the Dream:** The 2026 National Urban League (NUL) report argues that the three pillars of the American Dream—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—have been **"systematically dismantled"** for Black Americans.
- **The Housing and Wealth Trap:** In Memphis, the **homeownership gap** is a primary driver of inequality; only **44% of Black residents own their homes**, compared to over 74% of White residents. This is compounded by **predatory corporate investors** who have purchased thousands of single-family homes in the area to convert them into high-priced rentals, trapping families in a cycle of debt.
- **Environmental Injustice:** Predominantly Black neighborhoods in South Memphis suffer from **heavy industrial pollution**, including cancer-causing ethylene oxide gas, leading to high rates of asthma and medical debt that further destabilizes the family unit.

3. The Broken Economic Pipeline

The path to stable family formation is often blocked before adulthood.

- **Literacy and Education:** Nationally, only **17% of Black fourth graders** are proficient in reading, a systemic failure that "locks out" young men from the future workforce.
- **The School-to-Prison Pipeline:** Black students are **four times as likely** as their White peers to end up in correctional facilities. In Memphis, this pipeline is fueled by a **lead poisoning crisis** linked to improper brain development and higher probabilities of juvenile detention.
- **The Mobility Trap:** Research shows that parental affluence does **not protect Black boys from downward mobility** to the same degree it protects White boys, meaning even "stable" middle-class families face unique risks of intergenerational decline.

4. Resilience and the "Extended" Family

Despite these pressures, the Black family maintains a unique, expansive structure that provides emotional and financial buffers.

- **Fictive Kin:** 77% of Black adults have at least one **non-relative they consider family**, such as a "play cousin". These broad networks reflect long traditions of sharing emotional and financial support beyond biological ties. Fictive kin refers to people who are not related by blood, legal adoption, or marriage, but who are recognized as part of a family. These chosen bonds carry the deep emotional support, trust, and shared responsibilities of a traditional family.
- **Financial Sacrifice:** Black Americans are more likely than others to provide financial assistance to relatives; **59% of Black adults** gave money to family members in the past year, even though **51% of those givers** say it created a strain on their own finances.
- **Collective Identity:** 58% of Black adults consider other Black people in the U.S. to be their "**brothers or sisters**," and 79% feel a personal responsibility to look out for the community.

Conclusion for the Memphis Forum

The condition of the Black family in Memphis has evolved from a 1965 focus on "crumbling" structures to a 2026 reality of **extraordinary survival** against a "vicious" world of systemic barriers. While the **wealth buffer** remains dangerously low—with the median Black household holding only **\$2,200 in transaction accounts**—the family unit remains the backbone of the community through its extended support networks and "fearless" younger generation.

Questions For Panelists

Based on the provided sources—ranging from the 1965 Moynihan Report to the 2026 National Urban League and John Mercer Langston Institute briefs—here are 10 questions for subject matter experts to discuss solutions for Black families in Memphis, TN:

1. **Countering Predatory Real Estate:** In Memphis, the homeownership gap is stark, with only 44% of Black residents owning homes compared to 74% of White residents. Given that outside corporate investors are purchasing thousands of single-family homes in Shelby County to convert them into high-priced rentals, **what municipal policies can Memphis implement to dismantle this "rental trap" and protect the ability of Black families to build generational equity?**
2. **Repairing the Literacy Pipeline:** National data indicates that only **17% of Black fourth graders** are proficient in reading, a systemic failure that serves as the "beginning of a failing economic pipeline". Drawing on the "Mississippi model" of structured literacy and teacher coaching, **how can Memphis schools and community anchors intervene immediately to ensure our boys are not "locked out" of the future workforce before middle school?**
3. **Leveraging "Fictive Kin" for Support:** Pew Research shows that **77% of Black adults** consider non-relatives, such as "play cousins," to be family. Since Black families already share emotional and financial support more frequently than other groups, **how can Memphis-based social services better integrate these "extended family networks" into formal support systems for youth and seniors?**
4. **Addressing Environmental Injustice:** Predominantly Black neighborhoods in South Memphis suffer from industrial pollution and a **lead poisoning crisis** linked to improper brain development and higher rates of juvenile detention. **What "equitable justice" measures are required to secure health parity and eliminate the medical debt that currently destabilizes these family units?**
5. **Closing the Liquid Wealth Buffer:** The median Black household holds only **\$2,200 in transaction accounts**, providing almost no buffer against unemployment. **What cross-generational strategies can Memphis leaders promote—such as "workforce housing trusts" or "estate planning education"—to protect families from slipping into poverty after a single job loss?**

6. **Restoring the Father's Role via Re-entry:** The reports advocate for **"Equitable Justice" and "clean slate expungement"** to remove barriers to employment. As historical research emphasizes that male employment is the primary driver of family stability, **what legislative steps must Memphis take to restore formerly incarcerated fathers to their families and the local economy?**
7. **Holding Higher Education Accountable:** Black male enrollment at HBCUs has dropped from **38% in 1976 to 26% today**. For a city with institutions like LeMoyne-Owen College, **how can we make Black male enrollment and persistence a "measurable institutional responsibility" rather than leaving it to individual chance?**
8. **Protecting Black Female Entrepreneurs:** Black women are the **fastest-growing group of entrepreneurs**, yet they faced massive job losses in late 2025. **How can Memphis create a local "economic infrastructure" that protects these resilient leaders from "economic assaults" while providing access to the next industrial revolution in AI and clean energy?**
9. **Overcoming the Mobility Trap:** Research shows that parental affluence does **not protect Black boys from downward mobility** the same way it does for White boys. **What unique "neighborhood conditions" in Memphis contribute to this gap, and how can we build a local "on-ramp" of mentorship and mental health support to counteract it?**
10. **Demanding a "Fair Budget":** Memphis has allocated 63% of its total budget to public safety, yet citizens remain concerned about the **dilution of Black political power** through redistricting. **How can multigenerational coalitions from Boomers to Gen Alpha demand a "Fair Budget" that treats diversity and family stability as "economic and democratic infrastructure" rather than a liability?**