

Lepage Center announces recipients of Count the Costs research grants

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The [Albert Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation](#) at Tulane's A. B. Freeman School of Business has announced the six projects that will receive grants as part of its Count the Costs research initiative. From a funding pool of \$120,000, grants in the amount of \$20,000 will support projects that investigate barriers BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) experience in society, the economic costs of those barriers and viable approaches to addressing them.

The Count the Costs initiative was motivated by findings of the [2020 Greater New Orleans Startup Report](#), which pointed to significant racial inequities in access to

startup funding. This led to a Freeman-wide effort to understand inequities across the business community. After conversations and support from partners across the university, the Lepage Center expanded the project to highlight the BIPOC experience in a wide range of areas, such as public health, housing and criminal justice, to gain a more complete understanding of how racial inequity impacts the region's economy.

In March, the Lepage Center hosted a three-day workshop for researchers from Tulane and other institutions to develop research proposals on the economic costs of racial inequity. Following that event, the Lepage Center received 20 final grant applications, which were reviewed by representatives from a panel of evaluators. The panel included Jasmijn Bol, professor at the Freeman School; Adrienne Colella, professor at the Freeman School; Mark Diana, professor at the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine; Ted Fee, senior associate dean and professor at the Freeman School; Samantha Francois, assistant professor at the School of Social Work; Kelisha Garrett, vice president for operations and governmental relations at the Louisiana Chamber of Commerce Foundation; Kathy Jack, associate dean and professor at the School of Liberal Arts; Casius Pealer, professor of practice and director of Tulane's Master of Sustainable Real Estate Development; Jonathan Pritchett, professor of economics at the School of Liberal Arts; and Anneliese Singh, chief diversity officer of Tulane University.

The projects selected to receive grants span a variety of academic disciplines and research topics. Teams were also encouraged to collaborate with community organizations to ensure they incorporate diverse perspectives into their research.

The Lepage Center originally announced it would award five grants from a pool of \$100,000, but due to the outstanding quality of the proposals, it identified \$20,000 in additional funds.

"The issue of racial inequity was on the minds of our faculty long before we announced this initiative," said Ira Solomon, Freeman School dean. "It is our hope with these grants that we can support and advance their efforts to conduct meaningful research germane to the issue."

The six projects selected to receive grants are:

Behavioral Interventions to Improve Primary Care Access Equity

This research asks three basic questions: (1) How do healthcare providers discriminate against Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Indigenous patients seeking a primary care appointment; (2) what can patients do to mitigate this discrimination; (3) can providers be nudged towards more equitable treatment?

Brigham Walker, research assistant professor, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine; Janna Wisniewski, assistant professor, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine; Rajiv Sharma, professor of economics, Portland State University; Sarah Tinkler, professor of economics, Portland State University

Counting the Cost of Severe Maternal Morbidity Among Louisiana Medicaid Recipients

By examining Medicaid recipients with hospitalized birth in Louisiana from 2016 to 2020, this research seeks to determine the rate of severe maternal morbidity, disaggregate the rate of severe maternal morbidity by demographic characteristics including race and ethnicity, determine the cost to Medicaid of deliveries with severe maternal morbidity, and estimate potential costs saved to Medicaid by reducing racial inequality.

Kevin Callison, professor, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine; Madeline Woo, doctoral student, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

Breaking Through the Stress Barrier: A Technological Intervention to Mitigate the BIPOC Entrepreneurial Stress Differential

This project seeks to better understand how entrepreneurs, particularly BIPOC entrepreneurs, experience and deal with entrepreneurial stress and, by extension, the ways in which stress influences their entrepreneurial decisions.

Scott Kuban, assistant professor of strategic management and entrepreneurship, A. B. Freeman School of Business; Carmelo Turillo, lecturer, A. B. Freeman School of Business; Douglas Franklin, professor, ethical leadership, University of St. Thomas; Nicole Fuller, assistant professor of management, University of New Orleans; Shannon Younger, assistant professor of entrepreneurship, Texas Christian University

The Unintended Costs of Blight Remediation: Impacts on BIPOC Homeownership and Community Gentrification

Through a combination of historical background research and quantitative data analysis, this research examines the consequences of the city of New Orleans' current blight remediation program on processes of dispossession and displacement (i.e. gentrification) of households within BIPOC neighborhoods.

Christopher Oliver, professor of practice, sociology, School of Liberal Arts; AJ Golio, doctoral student, sociology, City, Culture, and Community Program; Y. Frank Southall, lead organizer, Jane's Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative; Isaac Hoeschen, junior, economics and urban studies, School of Liberal Arts)

Identifying and Describing Racial Disparities in New Orleans Cultural Funding: Consistent Disparities and COVID-Related Changes

This research investigates racial inequities within cultural funding opportunities in New Orleans. Cultural production theory suggests that there are cultural codes from the dominant culture embedded in arts institutions, and we hypothesize that this may help explain any potential disparities that we discover.

Patrick Rafail, associate professor of sociology, School of Liberal Arts; Miriam Taylor, interim director, Newcomb Art Museum, and doctoral student, urban studies, City, Culture, and Community Program; Alex Turvy, doctoral student, sociology track, City, Culture, and Community Program; Chelsey Sprengeler, doctoral student, City, Culture, and Community Program; Vicki Mayer, associate dean and professor of communication, School of Liberal Arts

Measuring the Cost of Juvenile Incarceration on Families in New Orleans

This project attempts to understand the economic consequences of juvenile incarceration to families, and how these costs have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Racially disproportionate treatment in the system leaves people of color with significantly more criminal justice debt.

Xiaojin Chen, associate professor of sociology, School of Liberal Arts; Genesis Calderón, doctoral student, linguistics, School of Liberal Arts; Jess Chanin, doctoral student, sociology, School of Liberal Arts; Florence Fleischer-Djoleto, program manager, Ubuntu Village NOLA; Ernest Johnson, director, Ubuntu Village NOLA

"We are thrilled to be a part of the Count the Costs research project," said Genesis Calderón, a doctoral student whose team was awarded a grant. "We are working

with a local organization, Ubuntu Village NOLA, to understand the economic impact on families in New Orleans of the intersection of two major public health crises: the COVID-19 pandemic and mass incarceration. The funds from Count the Costs will enable us to measure the associated costs of juvenile incarceration and court involvement during the pandemic, centering families' perspectives by training parent-researchers in the research process, from data collection to analysis and dissemination of findings.”

“Approaching the problems of racial inequity from an economic perspective will hopefully help to shed more light on these important topics in ways that will benefit all New Orleanians,” added Rob Lalka, executive director of the Lepage Center. “Throughout the coming months, we plan to support our grant recipients by introducing them to world renowned experts, hosting in-depth trainings and providing other opportunities to support them as they quantify the true costs of inequity.”

Due to the high caliber of grant proposals, the Lepage Center has also committed to looking for ways to assist even those projects that did not receive funding.

Grant recipients will present their findings to the community in the spring of 2022.