

EXPERTS OF COLOR NETWORK (ECON) CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

Since 2004, the [Insight Center for Community Economic Development](#) and the Ford Foundation have collaborated to bring the expertise of some of the leading thinkers and practitioners in the burgeoning field of asset-building together to draw national attention to the imperative of closing the racial wealth gap and to identify strategies to close it.

Since then, as part of the Insight Center's [Closing the Racial Wealth Gap Initiative](#), the [Experts of Color Network](#) has grown to over 140 experts of color mainly through the recommendations and referrals of leading asset-building experts, through collaborations with various non-profit organizations and groups, and through a series of gatherings on closing the racial wealth gap. Our most recent gathering in March 2009 had over 150 attendees, and included speeches by key White House economic team members, the House Majority leader, and the chairs of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and the senior Latino on the House Ways and Means Committee.

In an effort to continue building our strategic capacity for closing the racial wealth gap through the work of the Initiative and the Experts of Color Network, we created an advisory committee to help us devise and implement a set of criteria for membership to ensure that the process is consistent, equitable and transparent. All experts wishing to join the network should fulfill 1) the three "basic requirements," 2) the appropriate "sector/field requirements," and 3) accept the "responsibilities" outlined below that comes with membership (note: there is **no fee** associated with membership). *Please note: the final decision for inclusion into the network will lie with the Insight Center and the Experts of Color Network Advisory Committee.*

At our website, www.expertsofcolor.org, you will find a searchable database of all the ECON members and a listing of our publications, including the 2009 Experts of Color Directory (print) which features a selection of ECON members that we have distributed to the media, policymakers and advocates.

Experts of Color Network Advisory Committee Members

- [Kilolo Kijakazi, Ph.D.](#), Program Officer, Ford Foundation
- [Gena Gunn](#), Project Director, Center for Social Development, Washington University in St. Louis
- [Mark Winston-Griffith](#), Executive Director, Drum Major Institute for Public Policy
- [Christine McPherson](#), Managing Director, Indian Child Welfare Program, Casey Family Programs
- [Robert Wynn](#), Director, Asset Builders of America, Inc.
- [Keith Corbett](#), Executive Vice President, Center for Responsible Lending and Self-Help, Inc.
- [Aracely Panameño](#), Director of Latino Affairs, Center for Responsible Lending.

Criteria for Inclusion

I. Basic Requirements

All Experts:

1. Self-identify as a person of color;
2. Are committed to *closing the racial wealth gap* between all communities of color and whites, and ;
3. Have expertise in asset-building and economic security in general, and in particular how those issues affect one or more communities of color; the racial wealth gap; or racial disparities in an area that they correlate with wealth.

II. Sector/Field Requirements

In addition to having a network of experts that is racially/ethnically diverse, we also strive to have diversity in the sectors/fields that our experts work in. For that reason, we have outlined sector-specific criteria that we would like our experts to meet depending on the setting in which they work.

Academics:

1. Have a terminal degree,
2. Have published at least one peer-reviewed paper or a book, and
3. Have a position at the college or University level.

Practitioners:

Play a leadership role in an organization that successfully engages in asset building activities in communities of color (i.e. financial services, economic development, etc). We have divided practitioners into for-profit and non-profit.

1. Non Profit sector: engage in asset-building activities in communities of color. (e.g., provide counsel to rural landowners, develop affordable housing, engage in volunteer tax preparation, etc.)
2. For Profit sector: work with people of color in low wealth communities (e.g. provide financial education, appropriate lending products, small/micro business lending etc.).

Tribal leader and/or practitioner:

Work on asset building in Indian country, such as tribal management, land retention and use, financial education, etc.

Policy advocate:

Play a leadership role, or have deep expertise (i.e. consultants) in policy change related to asset-building, economic security, and/or the racial wealth gap at the national, state, regional, or local level.

Researcher:

Experienced researcher on issues related to asset-building or economic security in communities of color. and/or the racial wealth gap at a research institution, think tank, community organization or nonprofit; can be local, state or national .

Government leader:

Be a leader in a tribe or other government entity, or be an elected or appointed official substantially engaged in activities related to asset-building, economic security, and/or the racial wealth gap.

Philanthropic leader:

Have a program focus in, and can give funds to, asset-building, economic security, and/or the racial wealth gap or disparity reduction in a related area.

III. What the Initiative has done for ECON members

- *Media Placement: Placed experts in over 25 print, online, and radio outlets*
 - Including *CNN, NPR, Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, Reuters, Huffington Post, GRIT-TV, Politico's Arena* and the blogosphere.
 - Media exposure, including The Media Consortium
 - Board of Directors of *Mother Jones Magazine National Radio Project*
- *Briefings: Through the Initiative, ECON members have given briefings to the following:*
 - United States Senate and House Staff
 - The Association of Black Foundation Executives
 - An ECON member testified before the U.S. Congressional Joint Economic Committee.
 - Organized individual expert engagement with members of Congress
- *Organizations:*
 - Placed ECON members as “braintrustors” at the New Deal 2.0 Project
 - Placed ECON member on a panel at Netroots Nation
 - Secured numerous speaking engagements and panel discussions for ECON members to participate in.

IV. Responsibilities of ECON Members

1. Be responsive to requests from policymakers, journalists and other parties generated through the Initiative.
2. Include affiliation with the Experts of Color Network/Closing the Racial Wealth Gap Initiative in standard bio.
3. Submit at least 2 pieces of original writing, video or audio annually for the Initiative to place in media outlets, including our own. *Note: we recognize that some will be unable to fulfill this due to organizational/professional constraints, please let us know and we can work with you.*
4. Report to us any media, policymaker or organizational engagement when contacted through our network.
5. Update us on any new positions, projects, publications and changes in contact information.
6. Be willing to engage in relevant internal and external Closing the Wealth Gap Initiative activities such as participating on conference calls, webinars, speaking on panels, talking to media and/or providing information to policymakers.

V. The Initiative's Responsibilities to ECON Members

1. Keep experts updated on opportunities for engagement with Initiative, and help disseminate their work (related to the racial wealth gap) through our website, social media outlets and our other communications efforts.
2. Create opportunities for member experts to build relationships with each other
3. Create opportunities for member experts to engage with policymakers, journalists, and key organizations
4. Provide capacity-building opportunities for member experts, including on structural racism, and media training.
5. Ensure that the Initiative is viewed as a responsive go-to source for insight into the economy, race, and closing the racial wealth gap.

Contact us

If you would like to join the Experts of Color Network, or have questions regarding membership, please contact Victor Corral at vcorral@insightcced.org or 510.251.2600 ext. 113.