



Policing Blackness: Black Communities and Criminal Justice

Speaker Bios | August 18, 2016 @ 2:00 p.m.

Join the Conversation Before/During/After the Webinar: [#PolicingBlackness](#)

LaTosha Brown is the Project Director for Grantmakers for Southern Progress. Grantmakers for Southern Progress is a funder working group of NFG, comprised of Southern and national funders who are committed to advancing progress in the outcomes, conditions, and opportunities for those who are least well off socially, economically, and politically in the South. Ms. Brown is a native of the south and currently resides in Atlanta, GA. She brings to GSP deep experience in philanthropy and her life-long dedication to advancing structural change and empowering marginalized communities in her native South. Throughout her career, Ms. Brown has distinguished herself as a trusted expert and resource and expert in community organizing, rural development and special programming for a number of national and regional philanthropies. Previously, Ms. Brown helped to found and served as the first Executive Director of the Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors' Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health, where she oversaw the distribution of more than \$2.5 million in re-granting funds for Gulf Coast community and coastal organizations.

Anthony D. Smith is the Executive Director, Cities United - a national mayor lead initiative focused on eliminating the violence in American cities related to African American men and boys. Before joining Cities United, Anthony led the Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods for Mayor Fischer and the city of Louisville. Anthony is committed to creating positive outcomes for all youth, with a focus on young black men and boys. Throughout his professional career, Anthony has made it a priority to cultivate up and coming leaders. Anthony was born and raised in Louisville, KY – earned his BA from Northern Kentucky University. He is married to Devonya and has three boys – Kendrick, Haig and Chase

Alvin Louis Starks is the Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York where he creates and directs opportunities for philanthropic engagement, partnerships with organizations, and the creative expansion of public and private ventures to leverage strategic opportunities. He is a social justice executive that works in the fields of philanthropy, arts and culture, and racial justice advocacy to address issues of systemic inequality. Alvin has written numerous reports and strategy papers for donors and foundations exploring progressive activities to strengthen social change. For over 8 years, Alvin worked at the Open Society Foundation and in 2004 created and directed the foundation's Racial Justice Initiative. Building upon the legacy of traditional civil rights movement, the program focused on dismantling the structural and systemic barriers that perpetuate racial and class exclusion in our nation. In 2007, he led the creation of the foundation's black males initiative that addressed issues of de facto discrimination and growing social exclusion. Alvin formerly held the position of Senior Program Officer for Racial Justice and Gender Identity at the Arcus Foundation and served as Program Officer at the WK Kellogg Foundation focused on racial equity strategies in the United States. He has worked in the field of international advocacy in Global South and Brazil. He is recipient of numerous philanthropic and civil rights awards.

Nkechi Taifa, Esq. is the Advocacy Director for Criminal Justice at the Open Society Foundations, working to influence policy in support of comprehensive justice reform. Taifa focuses on issues involving sentencing reform, law enforcement accountability, re-entry of previously incarcerated persons, and prison reform. Taifa also convenes the Justice Roundtable, a Washington-based advocacy network advancing federal criminal justice reform. Prior to joining the Open Society, Taifa was the founding director of Howard University School of Law's Equal Justice Program, and taught popular seminars. She has also been an adjunct professor at American University Washington College of Law. Taifa has served as legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, public policy counsel for the Women's Legal Defense Fund, and as a staff attorney for the National Prison Project. She has also been in private practice, specializing in representing indigent adults and juveniles. Taifa has served on many different public interest boards, and currently serves as an appointed commissioner and Chair of the D.C. Commission on Human Rights. Taifa received her JD from George Washington Law School, and BA from Howard University.