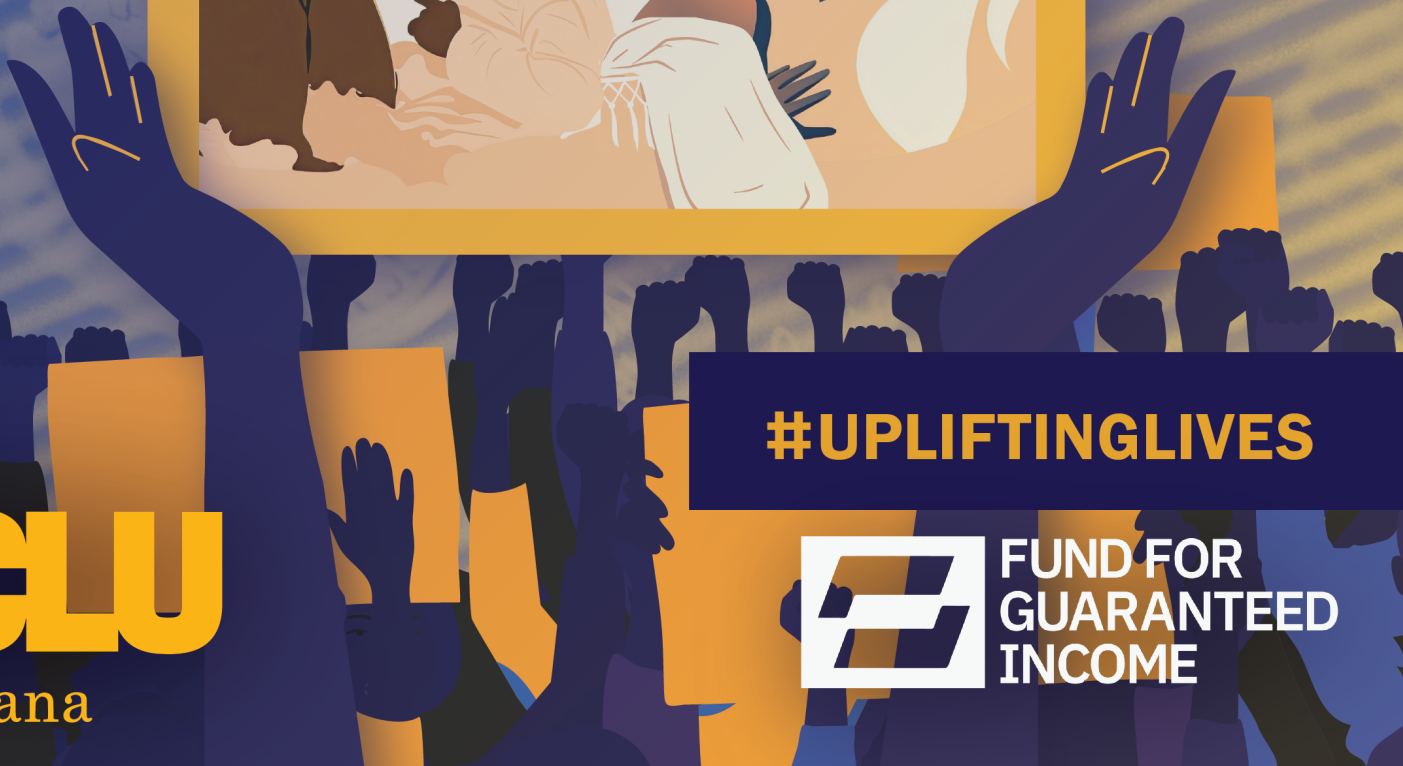


TRUTH & RECONCILIATION PROJECT

SIX MONTH REPORT



#UPLIFTINGLIVES

ACLU
Louisiana



**FUND FOR
GUARANTEED
INCOME**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ACLU of Louisiana and [Fund For Guaranteed Income \(F4GI\)](#) have partnered to create the [Truth and Reconciliation \(T&R\) Guaranteed Income Program](#) – the first in the country to focus specifically on those impacted by police misconduct.

T&R uses guaranteed income to transfer economic power from the descendants of enslavers to those impacted by the current day vestiges of slavery, and create a template that can one day be replicated across the American South.

Six months into the program, participants report a greater ability to withstand surprise expenses, pay bills in full, find reliable transportation, and meet housing needs. Participants also report improvements in mental health and overall life satisfaction.

In this report, we provide background on the pilot program, review some key results, and outline next steps for the program.



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I. CONTEXT

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION GUARANTEED INCOME PILOT

The ACLU of Louisiana and Fund For Guaranteed Income (F4GI) have partnered to create the Truth and Reconciliation (T&R) Guaranteed Income Program – the first in the country to focus specifically on those impacted by police misconduct. The program is funded in part by a \$1 million commitment from Deacon Leroy Close and Gracie Close, two siblings who descend from the Springs and White families in Fort Mill, SC, who profited from the labor of enslaved people. The Closes have chosen to participate in a reparative justice program that empowers them to transfer their family wealth to those impacted by racist policing, mass incarceration, and the criminalization of poverty.



Read more about the Close family journey by reading the Newsweek op-ed, [“Learning the Past & Reconciling the Truth in the Deep South,”](#) (Nov. 29, 2023).

The ongoing pilot in Louisiana provides monthly payments of \$1,000 for one year to 12 individuals who experienced police violence and did not receive restitution through the courts. It is an extension of [ACLU’s Justice Lab](#), an intensive litigation and storytelling effort to challenge racially discriminatory policing practices and combat police violence against people of color.

POLICE BRUTALITY AND HARASSMENT IN LOUISIANA

Louisiana has the most prisoners per capita in the entire world. Residents of Louisiana, particularly those of color, face frequent, unconstitutional interactions with law enforcement that all too often escalate to violence. Over 200 lives have been lost to police violence in the past decade, yet instances of accountability are rare, leaving individuals with little hope for justice.

The impacts of police violence are traumatic and far-reaching. Significant legal, medical, and physical therapy bills can leave survivors in debt. Survivors are often saddled with a criminal record, hurting their ability to find and keep work. Moreover, the physical and mental toll of experiencing this violence can cause long-lasting impacts to quality-of-life and the ability to work.

Survivors of unconstitutional policing rarely find restitution in the courts. Since 2013, residents of Louisiana have filed over 3,000 civilian complaints about police misconduct, of which only 10% were ruled in favor of civilians. While advocates continue to push for institutional recognition and a radical reform of Louisiana’s policing and incarceration policies, today’s victims can only rely on innovative programs like the ACLU-LA’s Justice Lab for any form of justice.

The T&R guaranteed income pilot extends the ACLU-LA’s work in the courts and in the legislature by providing a template for economic reparations. Through a guaranteed income structure, the program sends funds from the ancestors of enslavers to those impacted by police brutality, a vestige of slavery that perpetuates those same oppressive systems of power. Six months into the program, pilot participants report greater financial resilience to surprise expenses as well as greater ability to meet monthly expenses while meeting key needs like reliable transportation and housing needs.

“Just have to emphasize the positivity of the program (...) It has the power to restore faith and hope in humanity. This additional money is a blessing.”

– T&R participant



II. BASELINE

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

The pilot consists of 12 survivors of police misconduct who did not receive restitution in the courts. T&R pilot participants were impacted by unconstitutional policing in the routine abuser districts of Jefferson and Caddo parishes. All T&R program participants have participated in the ACLU of Louisiana’s Justice Lab, which seeks justice for victims of racist policing through litigation and publishing community member narratives.

All T&R participants are African-American. This reflects the disproportionate impact of police violence on African-Americans in Louisiana and the United States. Participants are women and men representing a wide range of ages, income levels, educational attainment, and household sizes, showing how pervasive police misconduct can be for certain racial groups despite other demographic differences.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE BASELINE SURVEY

The baseline survey is the first survey that T&R participants take before they receive payments. It provides a snapshot into the lives of participants before the payments.

In the baseline survey, 60% of participants were unable to cover a surprise \$400 expense and 70% of participants chose lower quality foods due to cost concerns.

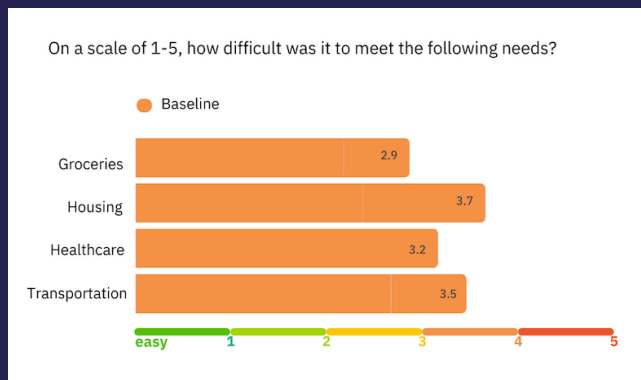
When asked how much money participants had to pay into the criminal legal system since experiencing police violence for legal fees, court fees, transportation, etc., participants reported they had spent between \$2,500 and \$150,000 in attempts to fight charges, pay court debts, and clear their names.

RESILIENCE AND FOOD SECURITY



“I got beat up by a bunch of undercover police... I’m still paying that bill and I didn’t do anything ... all I did was listen and so this really messed with my financials. I’d have more money to save/put away if this didn’t happen.”

DIFFICULTY MEETING NEEDS



“The racist policing has prevented me from achieving my career goals. Having a criminal record destroyed my chances to obtain the employment opportunities needed for financial freedom.”

Participants also shared the impact racist policing had on their ability to secure housing, employment opportunities, physical and mental wellness, and more. One participant described the impact of racist policing on economic opportunities, saying “The racism that I endured led to being overlooked for certain employment opportunities. In addition, I was denied housing as a result of being arrested under false charges.”

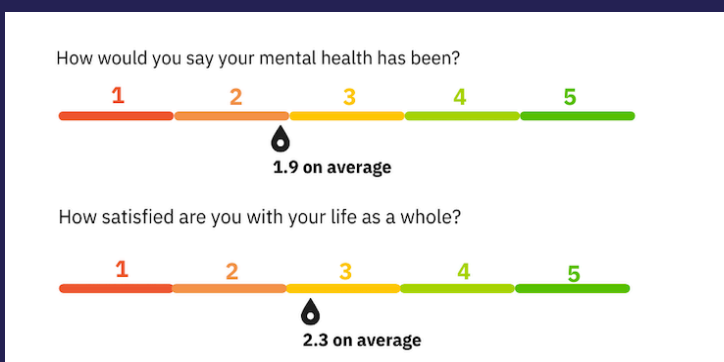
A participant added, “This last event (of police violence) has left me in constant pain and discomfort, unable to walk distances, unable to run, climb or swim. Which makes it hard to find or [perform] work in my chosen fields of employment. It has also made me not want to leave the house unless I am wearing a body camera and has caused me to put up cameras all around my house after having the police come to my house to [intimidate] me at all hours of the day and night.”

When asked what would be most helpful to them, participants said the following:

- Record expungement
- End to their prosecution
- Local acknowledgement of racist policing and its impacts
- Financial support
- Free mental health counseling
- Career services support

Finally, participants were asked to imagine their futures. Here, the answers were split. Some imagined themselves as “an advocate for change” and as someone “helping others understand their rights.” Others found it difficult to imagine a future at all. One participant said about their future, “Hard to imagine without a change in my mental, physical and financial support.”

MENTAL HEALTH AND LIFE SATISFACTION



“Day by day dread of when and how they (the police) will finish their continuous assault against me”

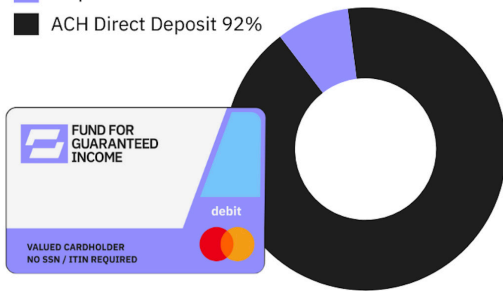
PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

T&R provides monthly payments of \$1,000 for one year to 12 participants who have been directly impacted by police violence. The Fund for Guaranteed Income (F4GI) has administered payments via its Payments Platform, which enables participants to choose between four payment methods – Direct Deposit, Prepaid Card, Venmo, and Paypal. Through six months, all payments have been disbursed to participants with a 100% success rate.

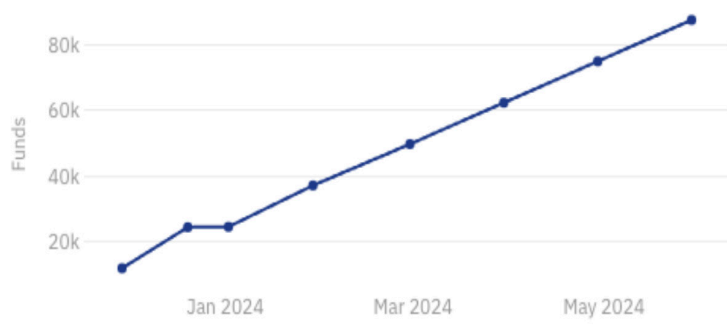
Reported Ease in Receiving Funds: 4.78 OUT OF 5 | Reported Program Satisfaction: 4.9 OUT OF 5

PAYMENT METHODS

- Prepaid card 8%
- ACH Direct Deposit 92%



FUNDS OVER TIME



The ACLU of Louisiana is also supporting participants with additional programs and services, in collaboration with partner organizations. Services, which were directly asked for during participant focus groups, include free mindfulness training, expungement services, financial coaching, and mental health counseling. Participants have the opportunity to share about their experience in voluntary monthly surveys administered by the Fund for Guaranteed Income. Every participant has completed the survey each month.

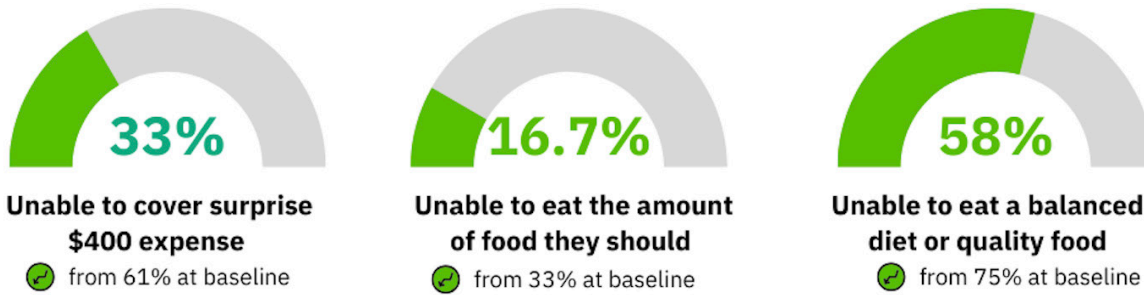


III. SIX MONTH PROGRESS

IMPACT OF GUARANTEED INCOME

Six months into the program, participants report a greater ability to withstand surprise expenses, eat a healthier diet, more easily access basic necessities like groceries, transportation, housing, and health care, as well as improved mental health and life satisfaction. Below, find the highlights from the mid-way point of our survey:

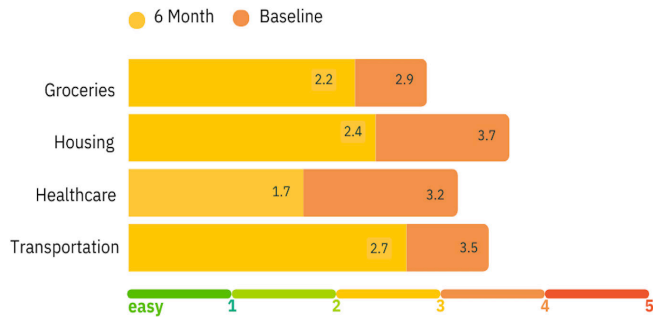
RESILIENCE AND FOOD SECURITY



“Paid half of my back taxes/property taxes. I was able to send money to my daughter and get her Christmas gifts. I bought quality food.”

DIFFICULTY MEETING NEEDS

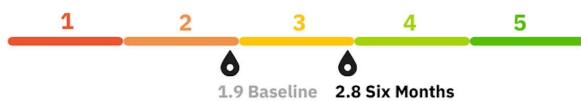
On a scale of 1-5, how difficult was it to meet the following needs?



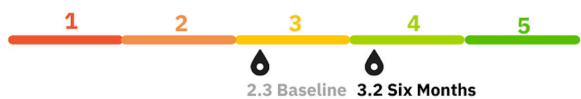
“I lost my job, and the money is going towards my mortgage. It would help my economic burden with the criminal legal system but I got to get another job because my first priority is having a roof over our head.”

MENTAL HEALTH AND LIFE SATISFACTION

How would you say your mental health has been?



How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?



“Made things less stressful, gave me a sense of worth. Hope, inspiration, boosts me spiritually and mentally.”

Spotlight 1: Phillip Hockett III



Baseline Survey

"I lost my job right before the holidays and my wife has been struggling to pay the bills by herself. We just bought a house and I've went 2 months trying to get unemployment and I'm currently waiting on them to make a decision."

Six-Month Survey

"I really appreciate this program. With the hardships I was enduring and losing my job, the program helped me a whole lot until I found a new job. Now it's helping me get the money I had in my savings account, back. I'm very, very thankful."

Impact of additional support



"It was good to be able to sit and openly talk about events, frustrations, the pain. It was nice to know you aren't alone in being wronged by the legal system. Bonding and sharing experiences, connecting, is all uplifting. It made a difference in the moment."

Spotlight 2: Anthony Morgan



Baseline Survey

"I am continually subjected to a vengeful, corrupt, illegal justice system intent on destroying/silencing me for having survived and reporting the grievous acts perpetrated against me."

Six-Month Survey

"[This program] provides another avenue to address some of the malfeasance of the police and legal system as a whole. Helps financially and provides relief, adds stability to living conditions. Mainly, it helps to have someone listen and try to correct some of the wrongs."

IV. CONCLUSION

The impacts of racist policing are severe and lasting. Participants have spent tens of thousands of dollars dealing with the ramifications of the violence they experienced. Moreover, many felt forgotten by the system and a sense of hopelessness for realizing justice. By the numbers, participants reported difficulty paying for surprise expenses, low mental health and life satisfaction, and significant difficulty accessing basic necessities like groceries, housing, transportation, and health care.

Six months into the Truth & Reconciliation Guaranteed Income Program, participants are still dealing with the ramifications of police misconduct but feel more resourced. Participants shared they have felt a newfound hope, supported in working to expunge their records, and better able to pay rent, legal bills, and support family. By the numbers, participants have reported improvements in their ability to handle surprise expenses, access basic necessities like groceries, housing, transportation, and health care, and improved mental health and life satisfaction.

No guaranteed income program can reverse the devastating impact of police violence. But through community-building, targeted workshops, and a consistent monthly payment, the T&R program has invested in people and provided resources for participants to better navigate the costly legal system, burdensome medical system, and income and work volatility.

THANK YOU

To learn more about the program, visit laaclu.org/en/trp and f4gi.org.

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