

## **State of Black Pasadena - Press Release**

### **The State of Black Pasadena**

You may have been looking around lately and noticed changes taking place within your neighborhood and wondered “What is Going On?” Members of the Pasadena Community recently came together to have this discussion. The State of Black Pasadena shared data by the numbers on Blacks in Pasadena. Per the 2010 Census, the Pasadena population grew from 2000 to 2010, but the Black Population declined by 24.3% to approximately 10.5% from 14.45%. Estimates through 2015 indicate that this slide has continued into the current decade.

The event dug into these numbers to understand the underlying causes of this trend. Ultimately, it comes down to the cost of living in Pasadena, income levels and education. It costs approximately 21% more to live in Pasadena than the rest of California. Housing in Pasadena is about 190% higher than the rest of the country at an average home sale rate of \$763K and rental rate of \$2700/month. This means that you must have a degree or vocational skills (electrician, plumber, etc) in order to earn an income that is high enough to afford to live in Pasadena.

Currently, there is a gap among our Pasadena Black residents where approximately 33% are meeting this qualification and can afford to pay for a roof over their heads in the City of Roses. This reality means that Blacks are moving out of Pasadena/Altadena to more affordable places like Palmdale, San Bernardino County and other states. Unfortunately, we also have some people that are finding themselves homeless as they can't afford to pay for and live in the neighborhood they grew up in.

This economic disparity is taking place at a time when the economic outlook for LA County couldn't be brighter. Two professional football teams and the 2028 Olympics are driving unprecedented investment in the LA Area. This investment is anticipated to reach over \$350 billion over the next decade. The event highlighted that the Black population is falling behind. If we don't act now, Black people will miss out on the economic growth that has already started taking place.

What is the key to bending this curve? It starts with Education. You need to get a Bachelor's degree, Master's degree or complete a Trade School so you will have skills that someone will pay to gain access to. With the growing need in STEM fields and the on-going shortage of qualified people in these areas, it makes sense to focus on getting degrees or post-secondary training in these areas.

Pasadena has over 1300 non-profits that are ready to make a difference in this community. They hold their hands out, but in a city where there are so many people needing help, there is a gap in people taking advantage of these helping hands to close the disparity gaps that exist within our city. How do we do a better job of connecting the services with those in need to bend this curve?

There was an open discussion during the event that focused on potential solutions to start to make a difference. One solution is parent involvement in the education process to help advocate for their

children. A primary question to consider is how can the community rise to assist in the advocacy process for all of our children – blood related or not? Another question is do parents know the services that are available to help their children be successful? How do we help connect involved parents to the resources needed to navigate the process? Many solutions were offered during the day.

The conversation that started on Saturday will continue as people in the room understood that bending the curve starts with each of them. Committees will be formed to work in identified areas of Education, Jobs, Healthcare, Civic Engagement, and Housing. The vision is for these committees to take the many solutions offered on Saturday, vet them, expand them, and ultimately create actionable strategies to implement. It is through this process that we will make a difference and start to participate in the economic future of the LA area instead of continuing the downward slide and disappearing. If you are interested in getting involved in this community effort, send an email to [stateofblackpasadena@gmail.com](mailto:stateofblackpasadena@gmail.com). Please provide your name, area of interest and a phone number.

The State of Black Pasadena was sponsored by the Pasadena Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the City of Pasadena, Exceptional Quality Professional Development, Inc., the Pasadena/Altadena Ivy Foundation, and the Pasadena Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

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Founded in 1908, on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) is the oldest and first Greek-lettered organization established by African-American college-educated women. AKA's membership is comprised of nearly 300,000 distinguished women in 1007 graduate and undergraduate chapters in the United States and abroad who boast excellent academic records, proven leadership skills, and who are involved in the global community through advocacy and service. Dorothy Buckhanan Wilson is the 29th International President and will serve from 2014 - 2018. Her administration's theme is "Launching New Dimensions of Service." For more information, log on to [www.aka1908.com](http://www.aka1908.com). Carol R. Dixon is the Far Western Regional Director. The Far Western Region is comprised of the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Utah. For more information on the Far Western Region, log on to [www.aka1908.com/farwestern](http://www.aka1908.com/farwestern).