



institute on race & poverty
Research, Education and Advocacy

*Providing a
policy perspective
on racism
and poverty*

OUR CHALLENGE:

Addressing barriers people face every day with strategic solutions

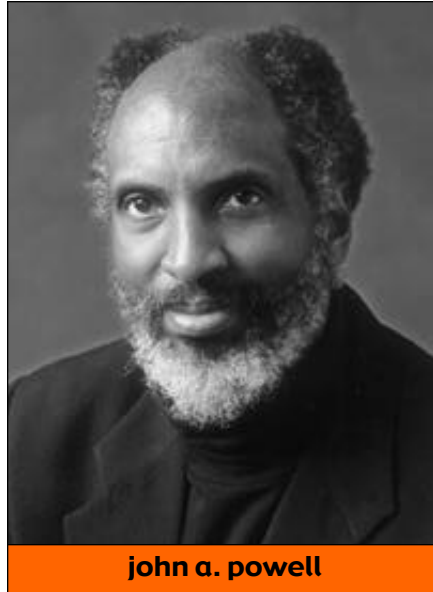
Research is at the heart of the Institute's education and advocacy work. When there are questions about how new and existing policies affect low-income minority people, IRP often investigates and makes recommendations to help ensure fairness and justice for all.

This fits wells with our mission, which is to identify and address problems caused when racial and economic discrimination combine to create barriers to opportunity for low-income communities of color. Our long-term strategic goals include:

- **Define** racialized poverty and its implications;
- **Advocate** multiple strategies, including research, policymaking, litigation and public relations;
- **Reframe** public discourse on race and poverty to improve conditions for low-income people of color;
- **Increase** opportunities for low-income people of color to participate in and transform our democratic processes and structures.

The Institute on Race & Poverty (IRP) was founded by john a. powell in 1993 at the University of Minnesota Law School. john powell is the Earl R. Larson Chair of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Law at the University of Minnesota Law School.

The Institute's ultimate goal is to change policies and practices that affect the well-being of low-income communities of color. This is not a goal that can be accomplished independently. Thus, the Institute collaborates with many advocacy groups and community organizations, national, state and local government officials, as well as



john a. powell

religious, philanthropic, and business leaders, and media representatives.

Few organizations focus on how the intersections of racism and poverty impact low-income communities of color. To fully understand and address these issues, we analyze communities where problems occur, as well as policies and practices at local, state, regional and federal levels, which are sometimes the sources of particular challenges communities of color face.

IRP's research strongly suggests that strategic solutions must address racism and poverty in a holistic manner. While low-income communities of color are capable of addressing many of their challenges, they cannot be expected to bear the full burden of repairing oppressive public and private systems and structures.

Policy makers and community leaders must each do their part to ensure fairness and justice for all.



Current IRP projects: research, education and advocacy in action

Strategies to Eliminate Racism in the Criminal Justice System—

IRP recently completed a report suggesting effective strategies to eliminate racism in the criminal justice. The report identifies and evaluates strategies being implemented throughout the country. Key components of the report include: an examination of racial profiling by the police as a civil rights violation and as an impediment to effective policing, a listing of best practices for legislation aimed at curbing racial profiling, summaries of sample programs across the nation aimed at eliminating racial bias in all stages of the criminal justice process, and evaluations of selected programs. The project was funded by the Open Society Institute.

Educational Desegregation and Integration—

The recently completed Educational Integration Initiatives Project (EIIP) shows that U.S. schools remain segregated and are rapidly re-segregating. Given the rapid and pervasive changes in national demographics, IRP believes that it is imperative for policy makers and educators to re-examine issues and benefits related to educational desegregation and integration. The Institute is planning a national communications campaign to share the outcomes from this research project, including: key elements and strategies for creating an integrated educational environment. This project was funded by the Joyce Foundation.

Racial Justice and Regional Equity Project—

This project analyzes traditional and emerging civil rights issues through a regional lens. It asserts that racial segregation and concentration of poverty have negative consequences in education, housing, employment, and transportation, and are caused by region-level forces, requiring region-level solutions. For a regional approach to truly further civil rights goals, it must maintain the political and social strength of communities of color and improve access to the tools that will improve life chances for people of color throughout the region. The ultimate project goal is to define ways to maintain local control over issues that preserve cultural and political power for low-income people of color, while increasing access to affordable, opportunity-based housing; effective public transportation; quality, integrated education; sustaining employment; and municipal resources. The project is funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Open Society Institute, and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Twin Cities Opportunity Mapping—

Research shows that there is a strong spatial component to basic social opportunities, such as housing, education and employment. This project seeks to map the “opportunity landscape” of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. IRP is currently mapping resources and barriers across the *entire* Twin Cities metro area. This project focuses on opportunities essential for socio-economic stability and advancement. The project also will examine structural barriers to those opportunities and recommend strategies for overcoming them. Major systems and markets will be analyzed, including: housing, employment, education/training, transportation, childcare, and health/health care. This project is funded by the McKnight Foundation.



Changing Public Discourse on Race & Poverty—

To make strategic policy changes, social justice advocates must address issues of racism in critical policy areas, including welfare, criminal justice, housing and economic development. Advocates need to understand the role that policy makers, media, researchers and other key actors and institutions play in creating this discourse, as well as tools and strategies that can be used to transform discourse. IRP plans to host a national meeting on this topic during the fall of 2001. The meeting will convene civil rights advocates from throughout the United States to discuss ways racial discourse has helped and hindered civil rights victories and to discuss successful communication strategies to aid current and future social justice efforts.

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