

Our Name: Boston Music Film Sports and Law Foundation (BMFSL)

The Black community nationally has a distinguished legacy in music, film, sports and the law. These are some of the significant enterprises that have created wealth and opportunities for success and accomplishment for Black people. To mobilize more Black Americans to vote, we intend to incorporate new institutional and cultural opportunities for Blacks. We want to create initiatives that will mobilize the Black community and generate excitement and more active engagement in Black community life and, more specifically, mobilize Blacks to vote and commit themselves to civic engagement. We strive to create a movement, not just a moment. Our work will develop new and creative consistent messaging, programming, and targeted literature outreach to Black voters in Boston, and will mobilize the Black, Jewish, other faith communities, in addition to other critical allies, to collaborate with and strengthen relationships and partnerships for future initiatives and voter engagement.

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Our New Voting Initiative: Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel New Civil Rights Movement Black Voting Initiative

The BMFSL Foundation and its staff want to honor the work and lives of these two Civil Rights icons. These leaders are the connection to our historic success in partnering with other faith leaders. **Reclaiming and reenergizing these partnerships will create a better quality of life for Black Americans and develop a deeper trust among the Black, Jewish and faith communities as they work and collaborate on social justice issues.** Our innovative strategy-to educate Blacks about using their political power and to mobilize them to use their political clout at the ballot box-will be transformative. **When Black Americans vote, we can change the entire course of politics in this country. We finally will have a 'seat at the table' where our concerns and ambitions will be heard and honored!**

Our New Partnerships: Blacks, Jews and Faith groups

Blacks, faith and Jewish communities share historical commonalities because of the legacy of racism, antisemitism, and oppression, as well as love for their cultural heritage and religion. Our shared legacies will carry us into the future as formidable partners. We've shared the same battles for centuries, and its only common sense that we can use these legacies to forge a dynamic partnership for future success. This partnership will be the cornerstone of all BMFSL programming. Our programming-in music, film, the arts and the law- will ignite a new movement for Blacks to honor and rejoice in their heritage as well as promote greater voter participation.

The Civil Rights movement initiated by Black America was important in American history, because it not only stirred the conscience of the American public-of all races and cultural backgrounds-but also

welcomed diverse and committed constituencies to join this groundbreaking historical movement. Voting rights ultimately became the number one priority for this movement. The leadership of the Civil Rights Movement realized that Black Americans would never have equal opportunity in the United States without having the unfettered legal right to vote. It was and continues to be the keystone for Black political power. Black leaders knew that without voting access and participation, their voice and impact is diminished. Without exercising Black political power through the vote, Black leaders would only be tolerated, never truly respected and listened to. Politicians of all stripes know the common refrain that “when Black people don’t vote, then they can’t vote them out.” If Blacks fail to participate in this most fundamental right, why expect any respect or resources from the current power structure?

Our Strategy: Blacks investing in Blacks

While voting engagement is ultimately our goal, this can only be accomplished, first and foremost, if Black people invest in their own communities. It is time to think ‘outside the box’ and put to rest the past, ineffective strategies for getting Black people to vote in larger numbers. Quite frankly, these strategies haven’t been effective in mobilizing Blacks to vote in larger numbers. Our programming and outreach will target this crucial issue, so it becomes engrained in the life and consciousness of Black communities. How will our collaborators be convinced that Black Americans are a worthy ally without first fundamentally establishing a constituency with a strong commitment to civic engagement? The BMFSL Foundation has a solution to make this possible.

Our programming and outreach efforts will enrich Black community life in the following ways:

- Ongoing outreach in several ways to get Black Americans to the polls consistently that are fundamentals strategies in voting. We need to treat the voting process as a scientific and statistical endeavor, not a guessing game!
- Sports, music, film and the arts programming that will bring Black people together in the masses, through shared, enriching experiences to honor their heritage and accomplishments and to hear consistent messaging on voting; not just in an election season.
- A creative and diverse speaker series, online courses and innovative educational opportunities to appreciate the richness of the Black experience and the life-changing contributions to American life and culture, making them proud of their past and what the future will hold if they vote.
- Creative community get-togethers with neighborhood organizing as its focus and enlisting the participation of community leaders that have yet to be tapped into for this history making movement.

How and why our initiative will succeed

The Civil Rights Movement was the most successful social justice initiative of the 20th century, because its leadership cultivated a steadfast reputation for trust, a proven track record of successful organizing and impactful results. BMFSL leadership intends to use this model of organizing and community

engagement to achieve its mission of mobilizing Boston's Black community to take voting seriously. The BMFSL team has the expertise, community connections, and organizational know-how to fundamentally change how Black citizens use their vote.

The leadership of BMFSL has actively engaged the support of Boston's Black leadership as well as other faith and Jewish community leaders. Each of these constituencies have participated in local social justice initiatives that have blossomed into national movements. Their political organizing experience, understanding of the science of political campaigns and elections, civic engagement, community organizing and a 'boots on the ground' mentality have rallied and motivated their communities. They have been successful because they learned what strategies worked, have done scrupulous research and drawn upon their dogged determination to right societal wrongs.

The BMFSL leadership will bring all these allies to the table to participate in every aspect of its programming-entertainment, cultural enrichment, sports, political organizing, 'boots on the ground' initiatives, and education. Their outreach will be multi-racial and multi-generational to galvanize a broad coalition of community support and to energetically mobilize Black citizens of Boston.

A final thought: concern about the so-called 'suppression of the Black vote' is not an 'external' problem, about some nefarious actors denying Black people the right to vote. The truth is that by not voting in elections, the Black community suppresses itself! Blacks need to understand this profound truth and realize that their power to effect change is in their hands. Voting in much larger numbers is their true power. BMFSL leadership intends to motivate Black voters to fully embrace this power with a sense of purpose and resolve.

Going Forward: Our Next Steps

An often-unspoken truth is that Blacks need to accept accountability for their lack of civic engagement and stop looking for others to blame. Blame and shame accomplish nothing. The time for action is now! It requires us to think creatively and envision a new approach to solving the endemic problems affecting the daily lives of Black people. We need to unsparingly do the community-based work, with 'boots on the ground, with a sense of purpose and a commitment to finally solving intractable problems. It can be done and will be done! In so doing, our new movement will invigorate Black life and by doing so, we will decapitate the destructive effect of those who spew hatred and wantonly violate individual human rights. Rather than consistently talking about racist and antisemitic individuals and groups, we will take action overwhelming the negative spewing that interferes and derails our focus on more vibrant and balanced America for all.

Let's honor the heroic legacy of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel and other faith leaders who stood arm in arm in the struggle for freedom. BMFSL will forge a new path in Boston, revitalizing alliances and creating innovative programs that fundamentally reimagine Black life. Let's listen and learn from everyone. BMFSL needs partners like you to do this and to be part of

the new history making legacy of our generation. Learn more about our work and join us in our forward-thinking “new movement” at www.bmfsl.org