



## CASE STUDY THREE: GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY





## TYPE OF REPARATIONS:

- ☒ Services
- ☒ Policy change
- ☒ Investment in institutions
- ☒ Education

## MECHANISMS:

- ☒ Administrative

## TARGET:

- ☒ Georgetown University

## BENEFICIARIES:

Descendants of enslaved Africans held by Georgetown University who were sold by the university to prevent financial hardship.

## OUTCOMES:

- ☒ **Restitution:** Preferential admissions to Georgetown University for descendents of people sold by the university.
- ☒ **Memorial:** Campus building names changed: one to the name of one of the slaves that had been sold; one to a free woman of African descent.
- ☒ **Education:** Create a booklet called, "What We Know: Georgetown University and Slavery," which was distributed across campus and used in an on-campus teach-in.
- ☒ **GU272 descendant groups formed.** One group sought legal representation, others are interested in pushing the university to do more, others are interested in establishing a foundation.





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



- ☒ What do you think about the fact that the student body agreed to raise student fees to pay into Georgetown's reparations fund? Should those resources come from student fees? Why or why not?
- ☒ What do you think about Georgetown offering "preferential admissions" to descendants of the slaves it sold? Should those descendants receive any other supports?

## NOTES FOR DISCUSSION:



## WHAT HAPPENED?

In 2014, pressure from the student body pushed Georgetown University to publicly acknowledge that the university had held slaves and sold 272 people in order to save the university financially in 1838. In 2015, Georgetown established a working group that came up with the following recommendations:

- ☒ Establish a working group of faculty, staff, students, and alumni.
- ☒ Create a booklet called, "What We Know: Georgetown University and Slavery," which was distributed across campus and used in an on-campus teach-in.
- ☒ Establish a memorial for the 272 people sold by the university.
- ☒ Rename campus buildings currently named for the presidents involved in the sale.
- ☒ Establish a Department of African American Studies.
- ☒ Create the Institute for Racial Justice and a Center for the Study of Slavery and Its Legacies (still not established in 2018).
- ☒ Give admissions preference to descendants of people sold. This applies to about 7,700 people (similar to legacy students, and with no financial assistance offered to attend).

## CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED:

- ☒ Challenging to identify the descendants.
- ☒ Not all descendants have felt the reparations offered are sufficient.
- ☒ Some of the descendants wanted to play a larger role in determining the shape reparations would take, but they were not invited to participate in the working group; others want Georgetown to establish a foundation to support efforts of descendants and groups working to alleviate impacts of slavery; other descendants want support for family reunification; others think educational support for descendants needs to start during early childhood education so that people have a chance at even being competitive to take advantage of preferential admissions status.

**OPPORTUNITIES:** This model could be used as a starting place for other campaigns to demand reparations from private institutions.