



ANTIRACIST RESEARCH
& POLICY CENTER

ANNUAL

REPORT

2024-2025

ABOUT ARPC

At ARPC, every initiative and project we undertake is rooted in our mission and guided by our core tenets and beliefs.

OUR MISSION

The Antiracist Research & Policy Center is an interdisciplinary hub for the research and practice of racial justice and intersectional liberation.

We bring together scholars, educators, community organizations, and policy advocates in equitable collaborations for change.

Together, we create new knowledge and forge shared tools and resources, with the goal of creating a racially just society.

OUR BELIEFS

- Intersectionality is central to our mission and analysis.
- Our histories and struggles are interrelated.
- Racial Justice is a transnational project.
- We seed and root locally to grow change globally.
- Producing knowledge is a vital tool for social change.
- Culture is a crucial terrain of political struggle.
- Academics need to 'touch grass.'
- Liberation is both a goal and an everyday practice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 Letter from the Executive Director

5 2025-2025 Goals

6 Year At-A-Glance

7 Bringing it all together

8 Collaborative Research Initiatives

15 Public Educational Resources

19 Supporting Transformative Scholarship

23 Conclusion

24 Center Staff

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the four years since I joined the Antiracist Research and Policy Center team, we have relentlessly pursued three key objectives: first, to foster innovative, rigorous, and nuanced **research** on race, racism, and racial justice; next, to put that research into **action** through impactful initiatives that bring together scholars, policy advocates, and community changemakers in collaborative work for racial justice; and finally, to amplify the impact of this work through accessible, actionable **public information resources**. In 2024-25, with the completion of two multi-year collaborative research initiatives, the expansion of our far-reaching and impactful public education resources, and the remarkable research achievements of our faculty fellows, **we can proudly say that we are successfully putting “research in action for social change.”**

This April, **Abolition Everywhere?**, ARPC’s two-year collaborative research initiative on abolitionist approaches to racial justice, culminated in a **historic national conference**. Over a hundred scholars, public intellectuals, community-based organizations, and grassroots movements for racial justice gathered to explore abolitionist theory and praxis as a method for understanding and undoing all systems of racial unfreedom—from immigrant detention, policing, and prisons to reproductive injustice, militarization, and gender-based violence.

Our three-year collaborative initiative on **Pointing the US Farm Bill toward Racial Justice** also expanded its national reach and impact this year, starting with a summer/fall **rapid-response webinar series** on racial, economic, and climate justice in the 2023 – 24 Farm Bill reauthorization struggle. This spring, we achieved our longstanding goal: the launch of **FarmBillFairness.org**, an innovative website where researchers, policy advocates, and community-based changemakers working for racial and climate justice through agricultural policy can share knowledge, build networks, and strengthen capacity. Now that it’s launched, FarmBillFairness.org will continue to grow as a freestanding initiative housed in AU’s SIS.

Alongside this growth of our collaborative research initiatives, we’ve continued our mission to advance independent research on race, racism, and racial justice through our **faculty fellowships and research seed grants**. These faculty research awards provide AU scholars much-needed funding for **innovative and transformative antiracist research**, as well as the opportunity to share that work with an interdisciplinary cohort of scholars in the field. With this support, our faculty recipients have published field-changing research, staged powerful cultural productions, and won competitive external fellowships and awards.

Right now, it’s an especially important time to celebrate this growth of **racial justice research in action**. Nationally, the core tenets of higher education—rigorous scholarship, independent research, and the importance of interrogating norms and beliefs—have come under attack by the federal and state institutions charged to uphold them. In this critical moment, ARPC has not backed away from our fierce commitment to providing **timely and usable insights on critical racial justice issues** as they emerge—from livestreamed **expert panels to action-resource guides** that distill antiracist research and analysis into accessible, usable educational tools for students and the general public. This year, we focused on educating the public on the racialized history and implications of free speech crackdowns on college campuses and the role of race in the 2024 election cycle and its aftermath.

I complete my tenure as ARPC’s Executive Director proud of its success in supporting research-backed racial justice scholarship; fostering equitable collaborations between community changemakers and scholars; and providing resources that matter outside of the ivory tower. Built on this strong foundation, I know the Center will not only weather the storms ahead, but continue to grow.



Sara Clarke Kaplan, Executive Director

2024-2025 GOALS

1 Culminate our 2-year initiative on abolitionist thought and praxis, **Abolition, Everywhere?** with a **national conference** of scholars and organizers, to build a new, multidisciplinary framework for racial justice and collective liberation.

2 Complete the next phase of the **Pointing the Farm Bill Toward Racial Justice** initiative with a livestreamed policy analysis series and the launch of **www.farbillfairness.org**, an online knowledge hub that brings together work on racial, climate, land, and farming justice.

3 Increase our **real-time critical interventions** into public debates and discussions of racial justice through **accessible digital resources** that draw on the expertise of our faculty + community partners.

4 Incubate cutting-edge research for social change by continuing **our racial justice faculty research awards** and evaluating the progress and impact of previous awardees' projects.

FY 2025 At-A-Glance

FALL 2024 - SPRING 2025



Third Cohort of Faculty Research Awardees

3 Racial Justice Action-Resource Guides



8 Fire Right Now Livestream Panels

Launch of Farm Bill Fairness Online Knowledge Hub



Inaugural Abolition, Everywhere? National Conference

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Over the past four years, ARPC has prioritized work in four areas we believe are crucial aspects of racial and social justice in the early twenty-first century. In each of these, we've sought to catalyze change through a combination of **community research collaborations, education, and public engagement:**

1 **Race +
Carcerality**

2 **Reproductive
Justice**

3 **Educational
Access + Equity**

4 **Climate, Land, +
Environmental
Justice**

We know, however, that these social issues are closely **interconnected**, and their solutions are often **interdependent**. That's why our most significant work cuts across our four focus areas, bringing together scholars, policy experts, and community partners from different fields to support our major public research and public education initiatives.

These **intersectional major initiatives** are highlighted in the following sections.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH INITIATIVES

This year, ARPC brought two major, multi-year research initiatives to fruition. These initiatives exemplify what it means to do **intersectional, collaborative action research**: they brought together ARPC-affiliated scholars, local and national policy experts, and community-based partners, each project explored the political and intellectual connections that cut across the Center's four focus areas; each drew on both academic research and grassroots experience to generate new analyses and models for change; and each produced collaborative action-focused research driven by the communities most affected by the relevant issues.

ABOLITION, EVERYWHERE? A NATIONAL CONVENING

The racial justice protests of 2020 brought new mainstream attention to **abolition** – a concept and praxis that many activists have engaged for generations to advocate for decarceration and decriminalization in service of collective liberation and well-being. This attention has prompted many major academic and philanthropic institutions to begin incorporating and appropriating the language of abolition.

At the same time, scholars and activists working across fields and social movements including **immigration, reproductive justice, climate justice, education, anti-militarism, and social welfare** have noted the **increasing infiltration of the carceral logics of militarism, surveillance, and punishment into all aspects of social life**. Accordingly, they are increasingly drawing on abolitionist thought and praxis in their own scholarship and organizing. These two shifts have expanded and complicated how scholars and practitioners understand the workings of carceral power across different sites and scales.

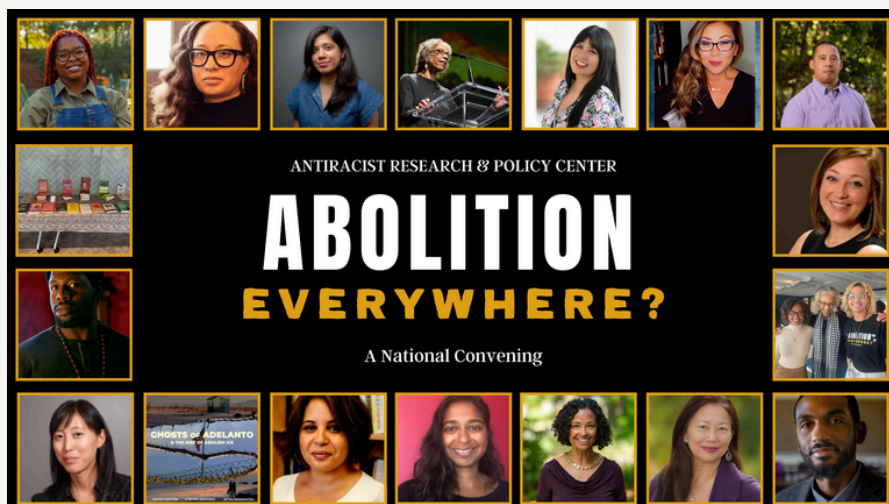
To examine this dynamic, convergent formation of abolitionist theory and praxis, ARPC hosted Abolition, Everywhere? A National Convening in early April 2025. The culmination of our multiyear research initiative of the same name, this historic conference brought together over 100 scholars and practitioners working to abolish the prison industrial complex with scholars and activists from fields and movements such as immigrant justice, reproductive justice, climate justice, education, food & land justice, anti-militarism, and social welfare who are exploring the importance of a theory and praxis of abolition to their work for transformative change.

Over two days, we held three plenary sessions with nationally renowned scholars, and six concurrent panels presenting new cutting-edge scholarship on abolition research and praxis. Participants also attended a pre-release film screening of **“Ghosts of Adelanto and the Rise of Abolish ICE”** and a film talk with producers and co-directors Setsu Shigematsu and Cinthya Martínez.

The **keynote address, “Abolition? Everywhere!”** was delivered by **Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore**, internationally renowned abolitionist geographer, co-founder of Critical Resistance, and author of *Abolition Geographies*.

Together, the participants interrogated carceral logics, shared insurgent knowledges, and cultivated intersectional and cross-movement networks of collaboration and support.

This collective work was not an end point of the Center’s long-term focus on abolition, but a point of departure. The convening Program Committee is **continuing to work toward a broader initiative that will include a field-defining edited anthology, a panel presentation at the American Studies Association’s annual convention in November 2025, and other future convenings.**



POINTING THE FARM BILL TOWARD RACIAL JUSTICE

The U.S. Farm Bill is a sprawling piece of omnibus legislation with **tremendous impacts on the way we eat and grow food in the U.S., respond to changing climate conditions, and interact and trade with other countries.** While it has enormous implications for Black and BIPOC food sovereignty, health, reproductive rights, and land access, it is far too often overlooked as an important lever for racial equity.

This year marked ARPC's third year working at the intersections of racial equity, climate justice, and U.S. agricultural policy. Over this time, we have observed **a need in the movement for institutional and scholarly partners who can host cross-community convenings, provide access to research, and generate public education resources.** This past year, we've piloted two new models for responding to this need: a summer series of livestreamed expert dialogues, and a groundbreaking new online hub.

1. *THE FIRE RIGHT NOW* : FARM BILL SUMMER

In the Summer 2024, the U.S. Farm Bill had been long delayed for reauthorization and Congress had just started to turn attention back to the legislation. While the possibility of forward momentum was encouraging, the drafts coming out of both the House and Senate represented a significant step backward from the progress that many of ARPC's partners believed was possible in Spring 2023, when numerous marker bills connected to climate, racial equity, labor, and land access had been introduced.

In response, **ARPC activated our existing racial justice rapid response platform, *The Fire Right Now* live stream series, to mobilize key partners** from our 2023 Pointing the Farm Bill Toward Racial Justice Summit to share their analysis.

The result was ARPC's Farm Bill Summer, a collection of **public livestream events, instagram reels, Youtube posts, group watch parties, and social media reshares** which reached thousands of viewers including racial justice activists, farmers and farm advocates, and congressional staff, and helped to re-spark and solidify collaborative relationships between allies in the field.

The shared analysis offered up in the six episodes of the series highlighted several **concrete pathways to address corporate capture; diffuse racialized narratives of threat; increase climate justice; and support rural communities, smallholders, farmworkers and marginalized growers, alike**. These include setting aside conservation resources for farmers of color and smallholders; increasing SNAP benefits; and building a larger USDA farmworker support office.

Though Congress once again abandoned the Farm Bill in 2024, the political networks and analysis enabled by Farm Bill Summer **laid a foundation for further collaborations on policy analysis and advocacy in the future.**



Image: Fire Right Now Promotional poster with headshots of all speakers.

2. BLACK FARMER KNOWLEDGE: INTERVIEWS WITH FEDERATION OF SOUTHERN COOPERATIVES/LAND ASSISTANCE FUND

The FSC/LAF is a vanguard civil rights organization, having worked for nearly six decades to serve Black farmers and landowners in the South. “Black Farmer Knowledge” is a series of **interviews with 32 FSC/LAF members** recorded in 2023 and released by ARPC and the Federation in Spring 2025. The series chronicles the knowledge of three prominent Federation leaders, as well as the visions of 29 other members who are working daily in states across the south and all the way to the U.S. Virgin Islands to create a better food and farming system.

The video series debuted and is housed on our new online hub – www.farmbillfairness.org.

3. FARM BILL FAIRNESS ONLINE HUB

Building on both the 2023 Pointing the Farm Bill Summit and the Fire Right Now: Farm Bill Summer, www.farmbillfairness.org, launched by ARPC in April 2025 is an online hub for **sharing resources and connecting advocates, organizations, farmers, farm workers, and scholars who are working toward racial equity and climate justice in U.S. and global food and agricultural systems.**

The site features pathways for users to “Get Briefed,” “Go Deeper,” “Hear from Farmers,” or “Build Connections” and includes the interviews described above; a digital archive of ARPC’s past presentations and events on the Farm Bill; our Pointing the Farm Bill Toward Racial Justice toolkit; a bibliography of scholarly and advocacy resources; as well as a directory of organizations working at the nexus of racial equity, climate justice, and U.S. agricultural policy.

At a time when backlash against racial equity and climate justice work are putting Black and BIPOC-farms and farm justice organizations under direct threat, the online hub supports the research, analysis, policy work, and network-building that is required for creating a coalitional movement that can continue working toward these goals during a deeply challenging time.



Image: Screenshots of various content featured on www.farmbillfairness.org

PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Over the last four years, ARPC has drawn on our collective research expertise in race and racial justice to provide intersectional antiracist analyses of national and global policies, debates, and events for a non-expert general audience. Previously, we have achieved this through rapid-response social media posts that examine the racial politics underlying current political events.

In 2024-25, we expanded our public education platform, creating a series of issue-based resource-action guides that disseminated information and analysis from scholars and policy experts in accessible, actionable formats. Paired with in-person and live-streamed expert panels, these guides are designed to educate a general audience and empower individuals to take informed action toward positive change.

2024 ELECTIONS AND RACE

Throughout this Fall's historical election cycle, ARPC worked to highlight the crucial role of racial justice in elections across the country, from the White House to local cities and school boards. In keeping with our mission to put research into action for social change, we created educational, actionable resources and convened critical conversations with the goal of empowering voters to make informed decisions.

1. PRE-ELECTIONS WORK

Leading up to the elections, ARPC released **Six Ways Racial Justice is on the Ballot... And what you can do about it**, an action-resource guide that looked at the racial justice implications of key election issues including reproductive justice, policing and incarceration, war and militarization, immigration, climate justice, and educational access and equity. It also pinpointed exactly where these issues were being decided in national, state, and local elections. As a compliment to the guide, our **Our Lunch 'n' Learn x Fire Right Now pre-election livestreamed panel** gave the American University community and a national virtual audience a chance to engage with experts from among ARPC's faculty affiliates on these critical issues, and to explore ways to mobilize before and after elections.

2. POST-ELECTIONS WORK

In the week following the elections, ARPC followed its tradition of shedding light on sites of political heatedness through our second election-related action-resource guide, **Six Election Takeaways... Through an Antiracist Lens**, which was followed by an **ARPC Fire Right Now Post-Election Instagram Live event in which a cadre of local and national scholar-activists** addressed key questions for the post-election moment, including the role of white supremacy in the elections and the fallacies of pinning the election results on the voting patterns of communities of color. Panelists also provided guidance and resources on next steps for academic institutions, grassroots organizations, and individuals committed to racial justice.



Image: Photo collage of pre- and post-elections resource guides and events.

STUDENT SPEECH, EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND COLLEGE CAMPUSES TODAY

In February 2025, ARPC released an action resource-guide connected to another contentious yet critical topic: Student Speech, Education Policy, and College Campuses Today. This guide provides an accessible **introduction to historical and ongoing policy debates on students' freedom of expression around Palestine, Gaza, Israel, and anti-Zionism**, as well as a list of resources for students, faculty, administrators, and free speech advocates wishing to go deeper on the topic or better understand their existing rights.

The guide is based on analysis presented by a panel of scholarly experts that ARPC and faculty affiliates convened on December 4, 2023 to discuss then-recent House and Senate resolutions regarding "antisemitic student activities," and their likely impact on student free speech, particularly for Black and brown students. As students across the nation face unprecedented penalties for speaking on Gaza, the history of these debates remains vital to know.



Cover of Free Speech Action-Resource Guide

SUPPORTING TRANSFORMATIVE SCHOLARSHIP

Antiracist scholars often face challenges in finding material support to pursue their research. This poses a particular problem at two stages of research: at the very beginning of a new, unproven project, and at the end, when time is needed to synthesize, write, and revise. ARPC's faculty research awards aim to fill these identified funding gaps.

ARPC's Racial Justice Seed Grants fund early-stage work on a racial justice research project that shows great potential, enabling recipients to complete preliminary research and apply for external funding. Made possible through a generous endowment by ARPC supporters, The Fellowship for Transformative Scholarship is designated for scholarly and creative projects close to completion that exemplify the Center's commitment to fostering transnational, relational, and intersectional research, the completion of which will significantly impact a scholar's professional trajectory.

2024-2025 FELLOWS

OMILADE DAVIS-SMITH

Dr. Omilade Davis-Smith was this year's fellow for transformative scholarship. Her book, **"Putting Africa in Her Place: Germaine Acogny's Modern African Dance Technique,"** is the first book-length study to explore the significance of Germaine Acogny's embodied engagement with Pan-African histories, politics, and traditions. The **book re-centers the centrality of African and African-American traditions and perspective in contemporary modern dance** as it examines the development of the dance technique to reveal intersections between embodiment in Africana dance, geopolitics in post-independence Senegal and modernism within a Francophone African context. Its primary questions aim to uncover the cultural and ideological values that inform the Technique's aesthetics, and identify the political or historical circumstances that enabled, restricted, or otherwise impacted its development.



The ARPC Fellowship supported Dr. Davis-Smith's efforts to complete her book manuscript and travel to Senegal for follow-up interviews. The book submission has now been approved by the University of Illinois Press and is in the final steps of the publishing process.

Image: Headshot of Dr. Omilade Davis-Smith.

SARAH IVERSON

Dr. Sarah Iverson was this year's racial justice seed grant recipient. Her project, **Writing about Race: College Essays after the Supreme Court Ban on Race-Conscious Admissions**, studies the **Supreme Court's 2023 ruling's impact on racial inequities in higher education with the goal of strengthening antiracist practices in college admissions**. While the decisions left the door open for applicants to write about their race in their essays, we know very little about how key actors – the applicants themselves, as well as essay advisement programs – have responded to the new guidelines. To build these understandings, Dr. Iverson is conducting two qualitative studies. The first uses interviews and content analysis of race concepts used during the essay writing process, comparing applicants who applied before and after the 2023 decision. The second study uses comparative ethnographic observations to analyze how college preparatory programs build understandings of race in essay writing workshops.



Image: Headshot of Dr. Sarah Iverson.

The ARPC fellowship has allowed Dr. Iverson to begin data collection with a research team. The pilot data collected during the fellowship enabled Dr. Iverson to apply and receive a pipeline grant from the Russell Sage and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This support has allowed her to expand the scope of her research with an eye toward securing more funds, publishing findings, and presenting the research to academic and non-academic audiences.

UPDATES

ON PREVIOUS AWARDEES

Our racial justice research awards' impact extends well beyond the initial award year. Previous awardees continue to make strides with projects funded and supported by their ARPC fellowships.

Kimberly F. Luchtenberg (2022-2023)

- Her project **“Does Homeownership Reduce Racial Disparities in Wealth?”** (with Ashleigh Eldemire and Matthew Wynter) was **awarded Best Paper** by the *Review of Corporate Finance Studies*.
- The project has led to several additional papers under review for publication, and multiple presentations at international conferences.

Sybil R. Williams (2022-2023)

- The play written and workshopped during her fellowship, **“Ethiopia”**, had its **world premiere in May 2025** as part of DC theater and opera company IN Series' 2024-2025 season.
- Ethiopia also will be part of a **site-specific performance** in 2025-2026 with community partner Ujaama Farms.

Mariam Durrani (2023-2024)

- Her workshopped book manuscript, ***The Imperial Optic: At the Intersection of Migration, Racialization, and Higher Education in the US and Pakistan***, is being finalized and submitted for publication.
- This work has been presented at numerous convenings including the Wolf Humanities Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

CONCLUSION

At a time when racial justice and the core tenets of higher education have come under attack, ARPC has been proud to uphold our commitment to racial justice research in action.

For a retrospective of the past four years of ARPC actionable resources, equitable collaborations, and research-backed racial justice analysis, **please continue on to our timeline, included as an appendix to this report.**

As the new academic year approaches, you can continue following and engaging with ARPC's upcoming projects under the leadership of our incoming Interim Director, Sarah Trembath. And we invite you to follow along as our newly launched free-standing initiatives—Abolition, Everywhere? and Farm Bill Fairness—continue to grow!

Thank you for being part of the ARPC community, and making our work for racial justice and freedom for all possible.

CENTER STAFF



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Assistant to the Executive Director



TINA DAO

Communications Intern

ANTIRACIST RESEARCH & POLICY CENTER

Fall 2021 - Spring 2022 Timeline

September '21

"Asian American Solidarities in a 'Post-' Pandemic World": Virtual Panel with the *Journal of Asian American Studies*



October '21

Pauli Murray Residency for Art & Racial Justice

- Artists' Talk: Danielle Abrams & Mary Ellen Strom on *Lincoln Gave Us A Beach* and art "of the place."



January-March '22

Faculty Affiliate Listening Sessions

Five sessions to solicit feedback on ARPC's future vision and strategy



February-April '22

Research Talk Series: Settler Colonialism

Five co-sponsored talks by scholars and experts on the global politics of settler colonialism, past & present.



March '22

Pauli Murray Residency for Art & Racial Justice

- *Artists Meet Critics:* Live Panel with Danielle Abrams, Mary Ellen Strom & ARPC Faculty on Art as Racial Justice Practice
- Exhibit Opening: WATERMARK – an art installation on the historic impact of segregation at Anacostia Pool.



June '22

Release of AU Library Subject Guide on the Influence of Slavery & Settler Colonialism on American University

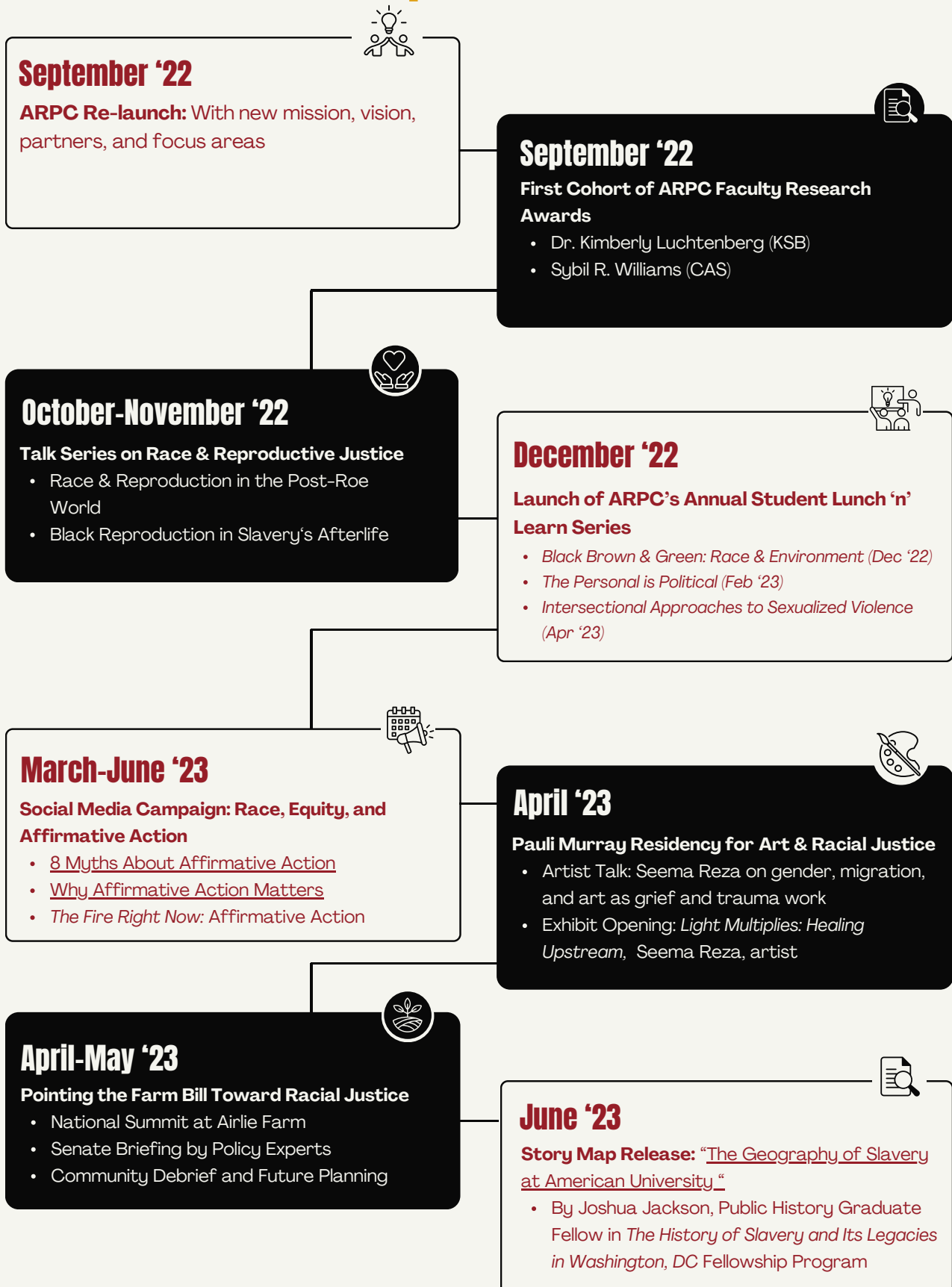
- By Mia Owens, Inaugural Public History Graduate Fellow in *The History of Slavery and Its Legacies in Washington, DC* Fellowship Program



Research in Action
for Social Change

ANTIRACIST RESEARCH & POLICY CENTER

Fall 2022 - Spring 2023 Timeline



ANTIRACIST RESEARCH & POLICY CENTER

Fall 2023- Spring 2024 Timeline



Research in Action
for Social Change

ANTIRACIST RESEARCH & POLICY CENTER

Fall 2024 - Spring 2025 Timeline

Summer '24

Farm Bill Summer: *Fire Right Now* Instagram Series

- The US Farm Bill & Racial Justice
- Food Sovereignty & Food Justice
- Gender, Farmworkers, & Race
- Climate, Conservation, Regenerative Agriculture & Equity

September '24

Third Cohort of Research Fellows for Racial Justice

- Dr. Omilade Davis-Smith
- Dr. Sarah Iverson

September '24

Race, the Farm Bill, and BEYOND: Live panel with Alcorn State Policy Center, Young Farmers Coalition, and Land and Liberation LLC.

October-November '24

Race & The Elections: *Fire Right Now* Instagram Series

- "Race & The Elections" Lunch 'n' Learn with AU Faculty Experts
- "Unpacking Race & the Elections" Livestream with Policy Experts & Community Organizers

October-November '24

Action Resource Guides: Race and the Elections

- [6 Ways Racial Justice is on the Ballot Resource Guide](#)
- [6 Election Takeaways Resource Guide](#)

February '25

New Action Resource Guide: "Student Speech, Education Policy, and College Campuses Today"

March '25

Launch of farmbillfairness.org: Online Knowledge Hub on Race, Climate, and Agricultural Policy:

April '25

Abolition, Everywhere? National Academic Conference

Research in Action
for Social Change