**0123REPARATION**

**Arena**

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**Intro:** From the KBIA Newsroom in Columbia, I’m Rebecca Smith. Reparation efforts in urban area are [gaining national attention](https://missouriindependent.com/2022/06/17/reparations-for-black-americans-seeing-unprecedented-national-support-advocates-say/). But KBIA’s Kassidy Arena reports rural areas are taking their own steps toward righting historic wrongs.

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[nat sounds of street and crunching leaves] On the busy corner of Lafayette and Dunklin Street in Jefferson City, there are unraked lawns, a parking lot and a tennis court. But it used to be a booming Black commercial area with hotels, stores and restaurants.

70 year old Glover Brown used to live there.

*GLOVER1 (:16) “It was a home. It was a workplace. It was entertainment. And when I say that, it was for the Black community.”*

Due to [urban renewal efforts](https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/renewal/#view=0/0/1&viz=cartogram) in the 50s and 60s, their family was forced out of the area known as the Foot District.

*GLOVER2 (:15) “It came through Jefferson City like a storm coming over the horizon.”*

The safety net the Brown family had built was gone. Brown says they then moved to an area with intense racism–including an explosive being thrown at their house. And now, decades later, Glover and his brother Arthur are making sure this history–*their* history–won’t be forgotten. They recently got the Foot District designated as an [Official Historic Legacy District](https://www.komu.com/news/midmissourinews/jefferson-city-council-officially-recognizes-historically-black-foot-district/article_96097630-750a-11ed-a65a-3b303c99f9dc.html#:~:text=The%20foot%20district%20is%20a,one%20point%20a%20Black%20hospital.) *and* the city commissioned a plaque on the district’s border.

Glover says when a municipality recognizes an injustice and attempts to correct a past wrong, that’s reparations. Although he commends the city, he says what’s happening in Jefferson City and the Foot District right now might not fit a definition of reparations…

*GLOVER3 (:09) “Reparations can mean a couple of different things. Jokingly, we're still waiting on our 40 acres and a mule.”*

And Glover’s thoughts about what reparations means, is a microcosm of the same larger conversation around the country. St. Louis has been working toward financial reparations on a city-wide level with involvement and support from its [first Black female mayor](https://www.npr.org/2021/04/11/986234814/long-marred-by-racism-st-louis-elects-1st-black-female-mayor#:~:text=Ella%20Jones%20Elected%20First%20Black%20Mayor%20Of%20Ferguson%2C%20Mo.&text=Louis%20County%20Prosecuting%20Attorney%20Wesley,and%20Ferguson%20Mayor%20Ella%20Jones.) Tishaura Jones. It’s worth noting [Jefferson City has never had a Black mayor](https://www.newstribune.com/news/2022/aug/27/60-different-mayors-have-served-jefferson-city/).

*WARD1 (:05) “Including in relation to what reparations is, we need to talk more about transformative justice.”*

That’s Geoff Ward. He is the director of the [Wash-U and Slavery Project](https://slavery.wustl.edu/) at Washington University in St. Louis.

*WARD2 (:17) “I think the term is partly avoided now because it’s not clear what it means to many people. And it means different things to different people. We’re going to see, pretty soon I think, a lot of grappling with that question of the meaning of reparations.”*

Ward and others say, a vital first step in achieving reparations is for a state to formally apologize for its involvement in slavery. Of the [eighteen](https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/congress-must-officially-apologize-slavery-america-can-think-about-reparations-ncna1047561) slave states, Missouri is [one of nine](https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2008/04/04/states-lead-slavery-apology-movement) that has not apologized.

Ward says people in St. Louis and Kansas City, where both mayors are Black, may feel more comfortable pushing for financial reparations partially because of that political representation.

Ayanna Shivers is a test of that question in a rural area. She became Mexico, Missouri’s [first Black female mayor](https://www.kbia.org/news/2019-05-01/ayanna-shivers-is-making-history-as-mayor-of-mexico-mo) in 2019.

*SHIVERS1 (:18) “It’s about the power. And for true reparations to take place, there would have to be an exchange. And so my mindset is, don't ask somebody to give up their power, because that's like, you know, you asking a person when they're in the playoffs to give up their playbook to the opposing team.”*

So Shivers and other Black community leaders started making their own changes - There are free tutoring programs, a city [sustainability project](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064455085982) and nonprofits to support Black communities as they thrive. All of these programs have garnered support from the town of more than eleven-thousand.

*SHIVERS2 (:16) “Some of it is understanding we deserve the 40 acres and a mule. And that, to access it, we may not be able to wait on someone to hand it to us. We'll just have to acquire the skill set to do it ourselves.”*

Shivers says small town efforts like these are reparations–and can be just as impactful as those in big cities.

I’m Kassidy Arena, KBIA News.