

**Minnesota Now (MPR) | Minnesota Now Bush Foundation, Nexus Community Partners will give \$50M to descendants of slaves 01H28WTQCZTW677PQJ2J7VNJ05**

INTERVIEWER: The Bush Foundation, based in Minnesota, is giving away \$50 million to the descendants of slaves living in Minnesota and the Dakotas. The effort is believed to be the first of its kind in the state.

The Saint Paul Group Nexus Community Partners is running the program. Recipients could receive up to \$50,000. Grant applications will open June 19th. Jackie Statum Allen is on the line. She's the Grantmaking Director for the Bush Foundation. Jackie, welcome to the program.

**JACKIE STATUM** Oh, thank you so much for having me, Cathy.

**ALLEN:**

**INTERVIEWER:** If I recall correctly Jackie, 2021, Bush announced it would release, I think it was \$100 million to go toward Black communities and the Indigenous and Native communities in Minnesota and the Dakotas. Is this half of that commitment?

**JACKIE STATUM** That's right. Yes, this is half of that commitment. And we are so very proud of this work. And before you say

**ALLEN:** anything more, I would love to be able to just say how important it is to recognize that this community partners, they're the organization that is leading and operating the fund. And while it was the Bush Foundation's role to seed the fund with the \$50 million, and to identify an organization to work with, it really has been the leadership of Nexus, and their CEO Repa Mekha, and their Director, Danielle Mkali, and their team, that have really brought this work to life.

They have engaged community. And they've developed a definition of Black wealth. And they have developed a grant program that is relevant and true and really meet the needs and aspirations of individuals and Black communities across Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. So I just can't say enough about how much I admire what they have done.

**INTERVIEWER:** You mentioned building Black wealth. That is the goal of this the money? And how does that materialize?

**JACKIE STATUM** Yeah, this is the work of building Black wealth, because at the Bush Foundation we really feel that it is important

**ALLEN:** to make our region better for everyone. And because wealth is such a predictor of future outcomes and future success, we really felt that by addressing racial wealth disparities, this is a way that we can make our region better for others. And through the open Road Fund, individuals will be able to apply for grants up to \$50,000 for a lot of generational wealth-building opportunities, such as buying a home, or pursuing further education, or even healing from trauma, in order to put themselves and their families in the future on a better footing to build wealth for themselves.

**INTERVIEWER:** So this isn't necessarily reparations for slavery, because, of course, part of the news release that was out yesterday said that this would be for descendants of slaves. But you don't see this as reparations?

**JACKIE STATUM** No we don't say this. We don't see this as reparations. There has been a lot of talk, I think louder and bolder talk,

**ALLEN:** about reparations. And personally, I'm speaking for myself here, I'm really excited to see that movement happening.

But this is not reparations, because that is a much bigger concept. Well, \$50 million is big for our Foundation, and I think that it's going to have just an amazing impact for individuals in our region. It is not as big as what reparations would be. So instead, we think of this as reparative action, that this is a way for private organizations, like the Bush Foundation, can take a wall and acknowledging the long lasting impact of race-based US policy, and how that has harmed some communities, and how others have benefited from those same policies. And so this is our way of taking reparative action to acknowledge, and, hopefully, have families taking that first step towards addressing the racial wealth gap in building generational wealth for themselves.

**INTERVIEWER:** So individuals can apply. Can folks, say in a family unit, pull their money together, say, and buy land perhaps, or several houses.

**JACKIE STATUM** Yeah, well first I would encourage anyone who's interested on who should apply, or what the rules and eligibility

**ALLEN:** is, is to go to the Nexus Community Partners website in order to learn more of those specifics. But on their website, they do detail that there are opportunities for up to five applicants to pool their funds together in order to do something even larger, maybe invest and start a business together. Or perhaps for family members to pool their funds together to get even further in buying a home.

Nexus Community Partners, they have such a wonderful belief and thread throughout their Programming about communal wealth and building wealth together. And so I think this fund, the Open World Fund, really sticks true to that belief that we can go even further together.

**INTERVIEWER:** And applications start being taken on Juneteenth, June 19th, right?

**JACKIE STATUM** That's right, yeah, the program officially launches on June 19th, on Juneteenth, and there'll be so many more

**ALLEN:** details available then, and on their website as this program moves forward.

**INTERVIEWER:** Again, Nexus Community Partners. Jackie appreciate the time. Thank you so much.

**JACKIE STATUM** Thank you.

**ALLEN:**

**INTERVIEWER:** Jackie Statum Allen is the Grantmaking Director for the Bush Foundation.