

**WORD  
IN BLACK**

**RACIAL  
HEALING  
AND BLACK  
AMERICA**



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Prepared by  
**Word in Black**

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# Navigating Racial Healing

## Findings from Word in Black's reader survey



*The process may be difficult and involve surpassing significant barriers, but the goal is worth the struggle.*

On average, Black Americans trail their white counterparts in almost every available metric, from the amount of money earned for their labor to the number of expected years in their lives. And so it goes without saying that the grand majority of Black Americans would like to see an end to racism.

To better understand how the Black community thinks about racial healing, Word in Black's Insights & Research Division conducted a survey of 678 Black adults from December 12, 2025, to January 5, 2026, on their thoughts on racial healing. The respondents were predominantly older Black women. Just over 66% of respondents were women. Some 52% were over 65, and just over 24% were between 55 and 64. The socioeconomic background of respondents was almost evenly divided among income groups, and three-quarters had either a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or some other professional degree.

The publication of this report on the survey results coincides with the National Day of Racial Healing, which has been celebrated on the Tuesday after Martin Luther King Jr. Day since 2017.

# Our Findings



## What Is Racial Healing?

Our survey starts with a question as a definition, and it's important to begin the results in the same way, too, so that it's clear exactly what we're talking about.

Over 80% of respondents said that this definition resonates with them, with just over half saying that it resonates with them strongly:

“Word In Black is exploring the impact of racial healing — a process that restores individuals and communities, repairs the damage caused by racism, and transforms societal structures — on the Black community. This survey seeks to explore the perspectives of Black Americans on racial healing, including their personal beliefs, perceived barriers, and potential solutions. Does this definition of racial healing resonate with you?”

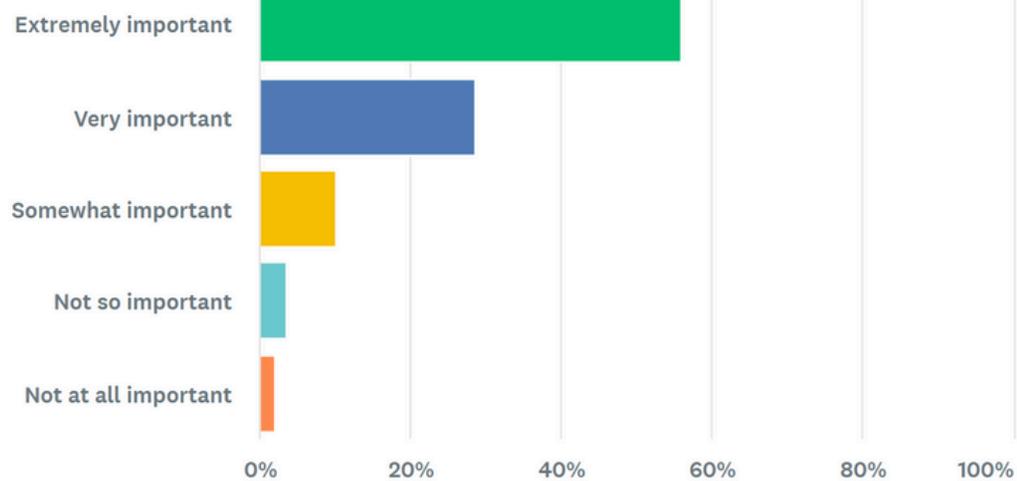
# Racial Healing Is Possible

**95% percent of respondents think racial healing is important**

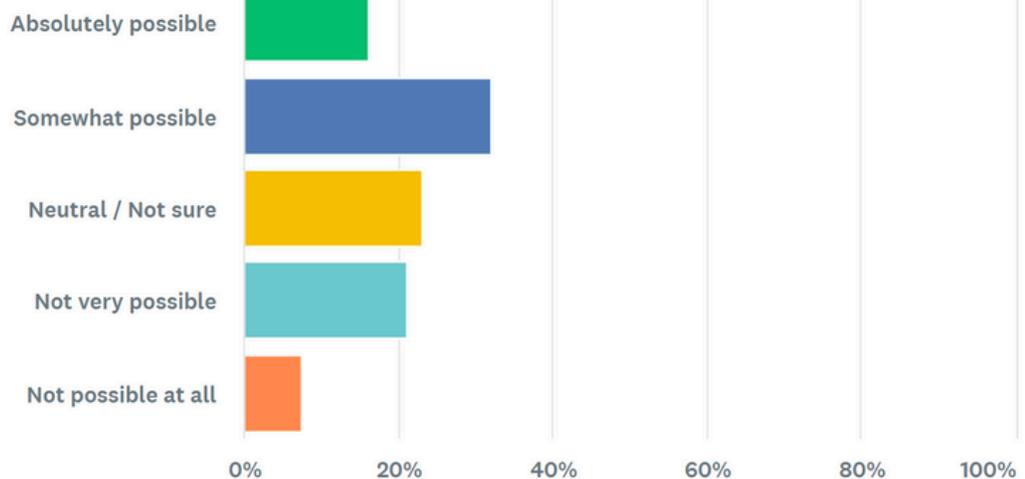
That includes nearly 56% of respondents who said that it is “extremely important.” But if on a personal level people think racial healing is important, the survey also showed that a majority — 84% — are less than certain that racial healing is possible in the United States.



**How important is the concept of racial healing to you?**



**Do you believe racial healing is possible in the United States?**

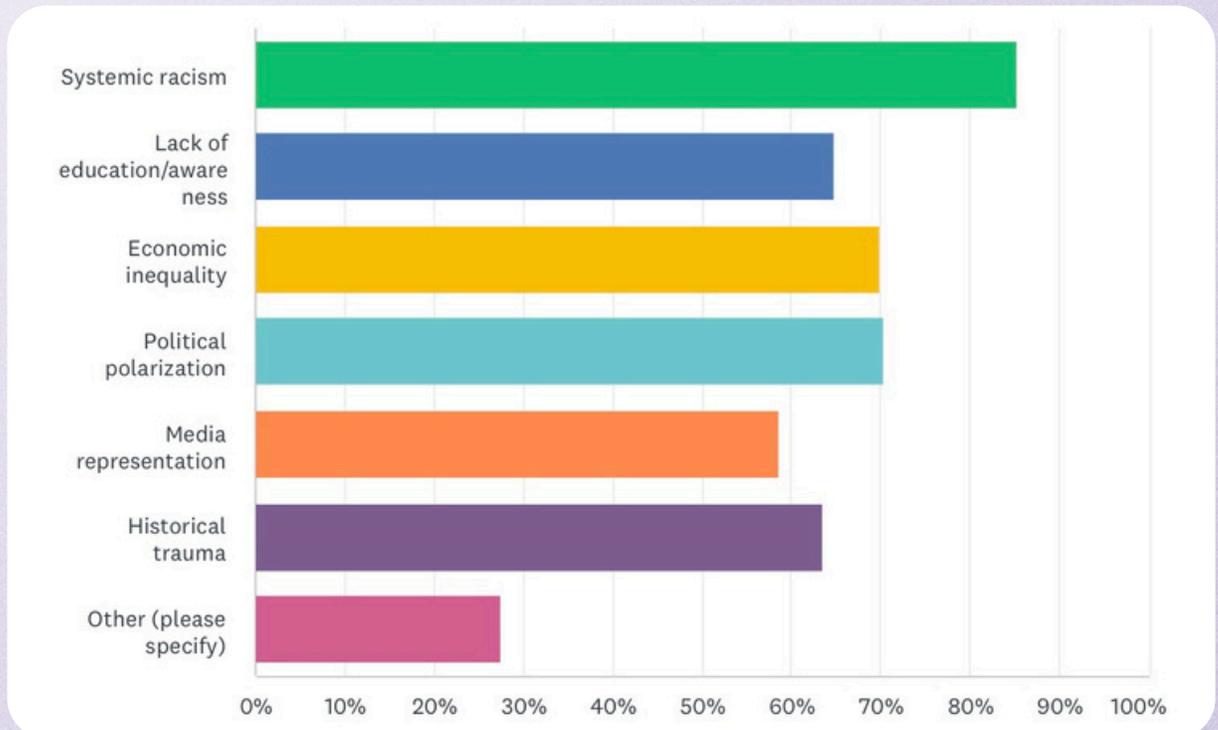


# The Barriers

There are, of course, significant hurdles to improving race relations in the United States, and those factor into the doubt around racial healing. According to the survey, systemic racism is the biggest obstacle, with 85% of respondents saying that it was a barrier to achieving racial healing. Around 70% said that both political polarization and economic inequality were barriers, too. Respondents were also asked to write their own short answers to a question on the topic:



**What do you think are the biggest barriers to achieving racial healing?**



Some respondents saw no real way forward for racial healing in our current moment.

**“I am clueless, not even hopeful, at this point. Perhaps a year ago I would have been hopeful but not now.”**

**“So far, we have gone backward.”**

**“We are still dying in the streets, poverty-stricken.”**

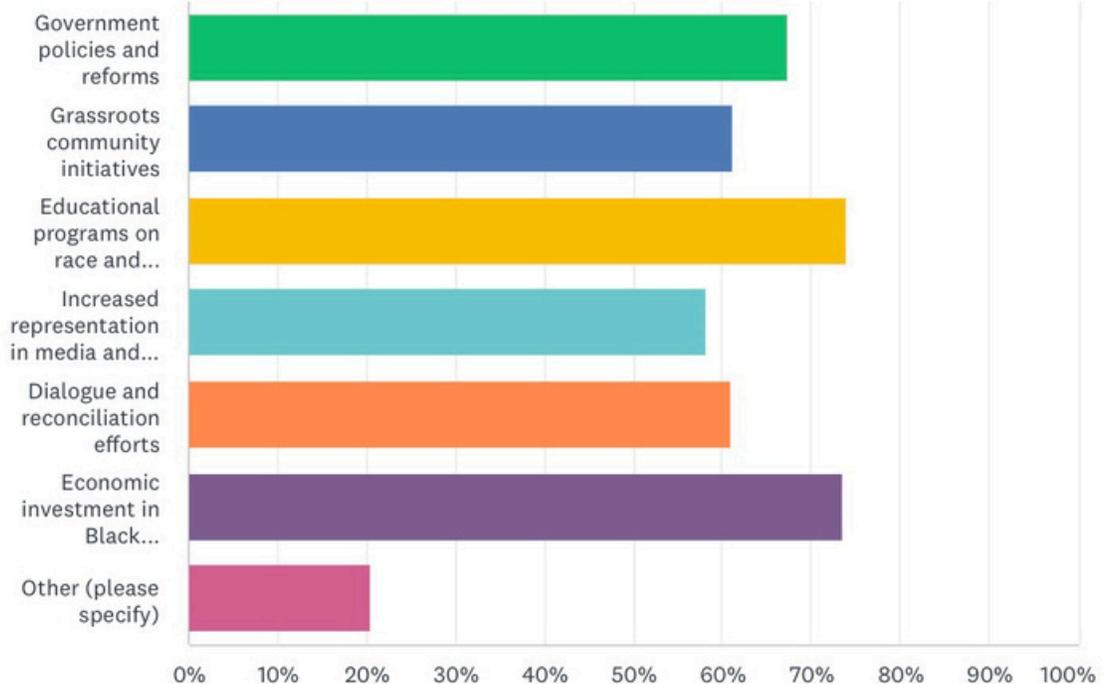


**“We definitely need racial healing but unless the oppressors are corrected of their mental issues and hate, will we ever heal? It seems like a never ending issue. Healing must start from where the trauma begins because it will never stop unless they stop. People of color are the oppressed. If they are healed, we are finally able to be healed.”**



**Which of the following do you think would contribute most to racial healing?**

On the flipside, nearly three-quarters of respondents said that “educational programs on race and history” and “economic investment in Black communities/reparations” would help to achieve racial healing. While those were the ways forward that the largest number of people agreed would be helpful, well over half of respondents agreed that all seven ideas mentioned would contribute to racial healing.



# So What Can We Do?

From supporting Black-owned businesses to the organizing work of Black activist movements past and present, from the Panthers to Black Lives Matter, respondents described an array of ways that can help us to move toward the goals of racial healing, many of which they're already seeing happening in their own communities.

**“Interracial dialogues, intra-racial dialogues, community protests against inequality, education about anti-Blackness.”**

**“Public gardens in Black neighborhoods.”**

**“Sports is the great equalizer. Sharing food and fun with people of different backgrounds.”**

**“Our church is involved in a project with a white Presbyterian church congregation to discuss racial biases, racial discrimination, and the misunderstanding of races that have plagued our society for centuries. We read and discuss books and provide opportunities for our races to engage with each other and get to know one another as humans – not colors of people.”**

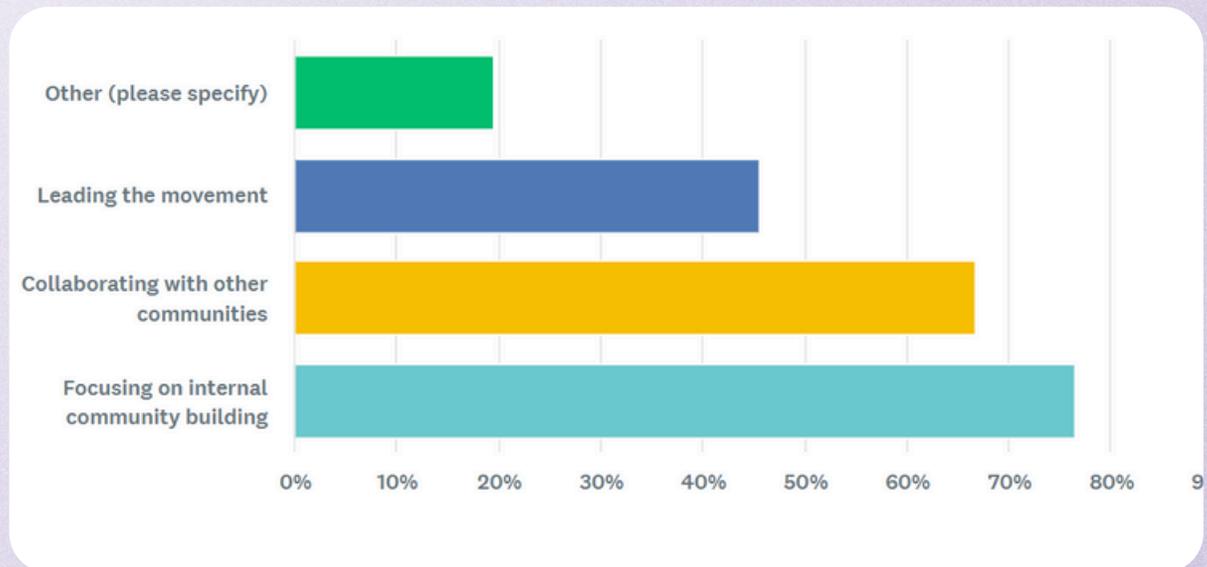
**“Educating our youth and providing opportunities for them to learn of their greatness and teach them the effectiveness of community organizing.”**

# Who Should Do the Work?

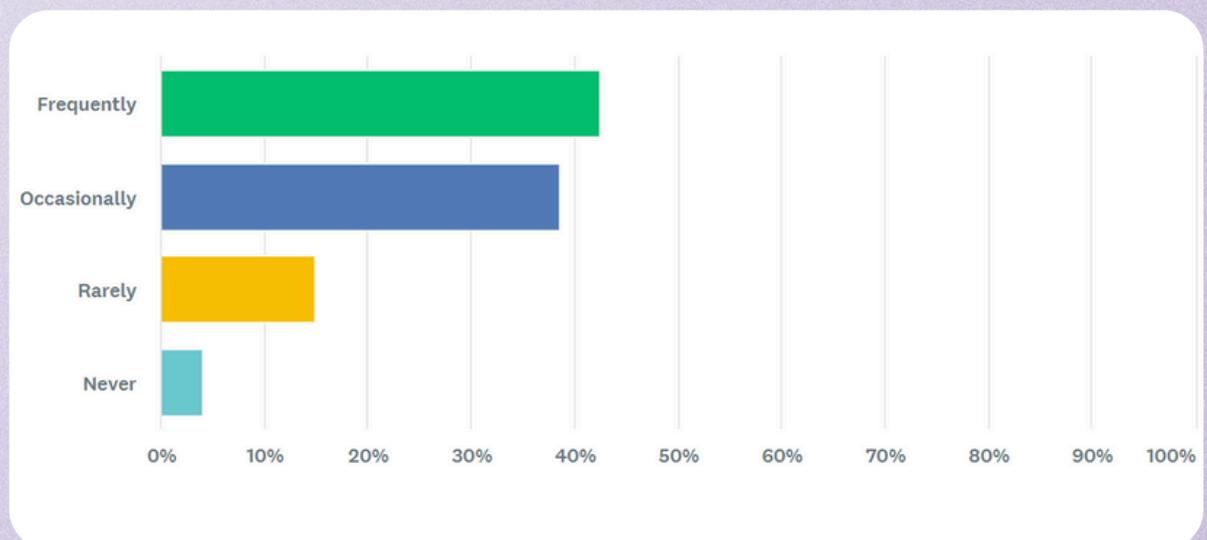
Racial healing is not a passive effort, but requires dedicated, oftentimes difficult work. So who should be engaging in that work? A pair of survey questions helps provide a better sense of the roles respondents believe the Black community has played and the kind of personal engagement, if any, they have had in racial healing.

Respondents see racial healing as a shared responsibility — but one that cannot fall solely on Black communities, especially when harm is structural and ongoing.

## → What role do you think Black people should play in the racial healing process?



## → How often do you engage in conversations about race or racial healing within your community?



# What Does Racial Healing Mean to You?

Among the open-ended questions asked in the survey was one broad one: What does racial healing mean to you? Here is a selection of the answers.

**"Of course healing as a community from the generational trauma we have collectively experienced due to the plight of our people in these United States. But also, placing the onus of the traumatic experience on those responsible and holding them accountable to make the corrections of their racially motivated problems as racism is not an issue that Black people need to resolve."**

**"The potential to uplift all racial minorities from white supremacy and give everyone the chance to heal from its scars."**

**"Healing happens when people actively work through that harm and systems change so it is not repeated. At its core, racial justice healing is about liberation – the ability to live, lead, and thrive without carrying the weight of historical and ongoing oppression. It is both a personal journey and a collective responsibility."**





**"The ceasing of systemic racism in EVERYTHING! White Americans and the government acknowledging its wrongs."**

**"The term represents virtue signaling by those who want to appear to want to address issues but don't want to confront issues within our community and imposed by our so-called leaders holding us back."**

**"Whites recognize, acknowledge, and sincerely apologize for slavery, discrimination...past and current, and support reparations...either in a lump sum or in monthly payments for 50 years which can be passed on in a will or trust."**

Taken together, these findings suggest that Black Americans are not resistant to racial healing — they are realistic about what it requires. Without accountability, investment, and systemic change, calls for healing ring hollow. But where action, truth-telling, and repair exist, many respondents see space for possibility.





# Word In Black's Commitment to Racial Healing

As 'Black America's Digital Daily,' Word In Black builds on the historical role of the Black Press in informing, empowering, and mobilizing our audiences across journalism, research, and events. Since 2023, we've elevated powerful, community-centered storytelling focused on healing and belonging. Through deeply reported stories, thoughtful commentary, and multimedia content, we have amplified lived experiences, surfaced local leaders, and highlighted the work happening every day to strengthen understanding and create a more just future.



Storytelling

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Word in Black

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