



DECLARATION OF INTENT

This document expresses the intent of the Truth Telling Project to work with citizens and organizations in Ferguson, Missouri along with a cross section of national and international persons to host and broadcast a series of hearings and programs entitled: “The Truth Telling Initiative for Ferguson and Beyond.” These community-based hearings and inquiries will be similar but not identical to those of truth commissions, which have been prominent in many locales throughout the world.

The Truth Telling Initiative for Ferguson and Beyond (FTI) will focus on sharing the voices of African Americans directly and indirectly impacted by police violence in the city of Ferguson, and beyond. The primary purposes of the FTI are:

- (1) To uplift voices of individuals who have encountered police violence.
- (2) To heighten national and international awareness of Ferguson residents and others who have experienced threat or harm as a consequence of the behaviors of law enforcement. We will do this by broadcasting their unedited stories directly, without media interpretation or filtering.
- (3) To garner national and international support for a more just and compassionate society in which African Americans do not live in fear of those designated to protect and serve them, and
- (4) To offer and support opportunities for members of civic, community and church organizations throughout the U.S. to positively impact police-citizen relationships in their communities through “*Watch, Exchange, Formulate and Implement*” (WeFi) gatherings where citizen groups host FTI Watch parties, Exchange ideas, Formulate a plan of action, and ultimately Implement that plan.

Given the historical and perennial nature of violent assaults and deadly encounters between police and African Americans in the U.S., it is urgent that the national and international community be given an opportunity to hear personal accounts directly from those involved. Giving voice to the voiceless through the power of storytelling will humanize persons in a manner that no Commission report, visual representation or media interview can.

Because the government of the United States has not fulfilled its commitment to address the consequences of the nation’s perennial and systemic racism, it is the position of the Truth Telling Project that addressing the legacies of structural and systemic racism and its consequences in the U.S. must begin with citizen actions to expose truths. Promoting truth will increase mutual understanding and respect, and lay the foundation needed for healing the long-standing wounds and by-products of oppression in our nation. Therefore, we are committing our energies to

working diligently and honestly with the citizens of Ferguson, MO to implement the FTI on November 13-14, 2015 in the city of Ferguson.

All persons wishing to participate in and/or support the FTI as Panelists who will hear testimony or witnesses who will share testimony are invited to contact Pastor Cori Bush at Pastorcori@thetruthtellingproject.org no later than Thursday, October 15, 2015 at 11:59 p.m. CST. All media and other inquiries should be directed to: Dr. Mark Lance at abuemma@gmail.com.

The Truth Telling Project implements and sustains grassroots, community-centered truth-telling processes designed to share local voices, to educate America, and to support reconciliation for the purposes of eliminating structural violence and systemic racism against Black people in the United States. We are a not-for-profit organization under the sponsorship of the Center for Educational Equity. For more information, visit: www.thetruthtellingproject.org.