New York Life’s Commitment to the African American Community:
A Heritage of Support and Empowerment

Funding Historical Research and Scholarship

*New York Life is committed to initiatives that study and explore the African American experience, with a focus on ensuring the horrors of slavery and Jim Crow will not be repeated.*

- In 2001 New York Life provided The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture with the original, 155-year-old company archival records of insurance policies sold to owners of slaves to help improve a greater understanding of slavery in America. The company also donated more than $1 million over four years to create the New York Life/Schomburg Center Juniors Scholar Program, which educates African American youth on African American culture and history.
- New York Life is a founding donor of Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, providing $1 million to help the museum open its doors in 2016.

Fostering a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

*Diversity and inclusion are among the company’s core values, and key to addressing the financial needs of America’s diverse communities.*

- As of 2015, nearly 1,100 of the company’s agents are African American, up 30% since 2010. African American agent recruits are up 33% over the same time period. African Americans comprise 14% of the company’s total employees (excluding agents).
- New York Life has had continuous African American representation on our Board of Directors for nearly 45 years. We appointed our first African American Board member in 1972 and our first African American female Board member in 1979. Gerald B. Smith, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Smith Graham & Company, is a current Board member and most recent past African American Board members include Conrad K. Harper and Frederick O. Terrell.
- In 2007 New York Life appointed George Nichols its first African American executive to the company’s Executive Management Committee.
- We support the next generation of African American leaders at New York Life by partnering with numerous career development and scholarship programs, including Corporate Counsel Women of Color, the Council of Urban Professionals, Howard University, the International Association of Black Actuaries, and the National Association of Black Accountants.
- Internally, New York Life sponsors in-house leadership development programs targeted to diverse talent, as well as an African American Employee Resources Group that serves as a catalyst for individual growth and empowerment.
- Our most recent Diversity & Inclusion awards and recognition include:
Making an Impact through Organizations Serving the African American Community

The New York Life Foundation has a longstanding record of supporting organizations that support African American communities, with $3.9 million in donations to these organizations in 2015 alone. Below are some key initiatives with organizations focused on African American constituencies.

- New York Life formed a partnership in 2002 with Rainbow/PUSH Coalition’s One Thousand Churches Connected to provide financial education seminars at community churches across the United States. In 2004 the company also partnered with the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition to launch a scholarship program benefiting disadvantaged college students.
- The New York Life Foundation funded the Schomburg Center Junior Scholars program, a Saturday enrichment program on African-American history and culture for African American youth.
- We have provided significant support to Higher Achievement to expand programs helping middle school students reach their full potential.
- We helped Eagle Academy Foundation embark on a network-wide expansion of its summer programming called Summer SOAR (Sustaining Our Academic Results) for middle school scholars, and engage a consultant to complete the planning phase of the Eagle Institute, which is designed to assist schools in other geographies with a similar mission.
- For the Brooklyn Public Library we provided support for The Brooklyn Connections program, an educational program that teaches 8th grade students in Brooklyn about the unique historical and cultural resources at the Brooklyn Collection. The 8th grade exit project is a New York City Department of Education requirement (Common Core) for successful completion of social studies coursework.
- We have donated to City Year to support a three-year initiative to innovate, standardize, and scale City Year’s middle school afterschool program, After-School Heroes.
- We helped Horizons National support its summer program for middle school students.
- For the New York Public Library, we supported the Middle School Innovation Labs, an afterschool program that helps teens acquire STEM skills, serving 400 students in three branches in Harlem and the Bronx.