



Timely Issues

Sometimes as Memphians we forget all the things we have done to change our city and the world. Of course, there is the great legacy of the blues and our barbeque, but also so much more. Even in the places where we face our most difficult challenges there are minds innovating and creating to bring powerful ideas and solutions into reality. We love Memphis because hope lives here, ideas are born here, and change happens here – and that legacy has spanned generations of Memphians, living on through the collective soul that continues to inspire our communities every day.

Yes, we have work to do – and it is time for Memphis to create change yet again.

Here are some recent examples:

- In December 2017, innovative leadership from our city government led to the sale of the two city parks where confederate statues were located, effectively bypassing a state law that prevented them from being taken down. Following this act, the confederate statues were taken down immediately.
- The number of black-owned firms in Memphis has grown 15% from 2016, resulting in over 40,000 Black-owned businesses in the area. This is in large part thanks to the work of organizations like the Black Business Association, Minority Business Council Continuum, and city government policies that promote and provide assistance to minority-owned businesses.
- Countless safety initiatives, including the Safeways program, JIFF program for juvenile offenders, and GRASSY anti-gang program have reduced crime and recidivism and improved safety in our most vulnerable communities.
- In 2020 and 2021, Memphis' Hospitality Hub, which works to provide trauma informed spaces and services to Memphians currently experiencing homelessness, increased their services and spaces to assist more people in the community. Their additions include the Hub Hotel, Hub Studios, as well as a new shelter and plaza.
- Memphis 3.0, the first comprehensive city planning effort in more than 40 years, is

currently working to ensure that the sprawling growth of Memphis promotes inclusivity over segregation and counteracts gentrification. These development efforts are all focused on a common goal of breaching both economic division and color lines within our communities.

- Hundreds of organizations in Memphis are tackling educational issues for children in Memphis, and some have been nationally recognized for their disruptive solutions and effective methods, including LITE Memphis, Bridges, and Memphis Teacher Residency.
- The City of Memphis announced their Accelerate Memphis plan which will invest \$200 million into neighborhoods across the area.
- Memphis' creative community has added some soul into the national spotlight. Local influencer Carmeon Hamilton will host her own design show after winning HGTV's *Design Star*, Chef D Arthur was featured on Food Network's *Chopped*, and musician Mononeon received a Grammy for his work as a bassist on Nas' *King's Disease* album.