



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

President
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
Washington, D.C.

"The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, America's Black think tank, provides compelling and actionable policy solutions to eradicate persistent and evolving barriers to the full freedom of Black people in America."

The Opportunity

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (Joint Center) is America's Black think tank. It is a trusted forum for leading experts and scholars to participate in major public policy debates and promote ideas that advance Black communities. The Joint Center works to ensure fair representation of Black families in our democracy through research, analysis, convening, strategic communications, and solutions. As forces within the United States wrestle against the country's evolution to a multi-racial democracy, states adopt voter suppression schemes, and inflation and the pandemic continue to drive economic insecurity for Black families, the work of the Joint Center is vital: to remove barriers to the full freedom for Black people in America.

Under the leadership of Spencer Overton and with the support of the Board, the Joint Center has established itself as a center of Black excellence. It has secured its financial footing with over \$11mm in assets, elevated its impact, and built a foundation for future growth.

The Joint Center addresses issues not championed by other organizations, such as the racial makeup of Congressional staff. There is no other national organization focusing attention on the lack of staff diversity on Capitol Hill. Since the Joint Center took on that issue in 2015, the organization is recognized as the leading voice in this area creating a distinct role and voice for the organization among civil rights leaders. Similarly, race is now an essential factor discussed in future of work policy conversations thanks to the efforts of the Joint Center. Technology platforms are also being held accountable for providing fair and equitable practices.

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The Board seeks a President who is passionate and who thinks ambitiously about the work to take this institution to its next level of impact.

The work of the Joint Center is ambitious. Key priorities of the organization include:

- Empowering Black communities by converting protest into policy
- Providing thought leadership on emerging issues that will shape the future of Black communities
- Being the nation’s central resource on issues impacting Black communities
- Building Black expertise
- Exercising convening power
- Scaling the organization and its funding to drive increased impact
- Continuing the hallmark of expertise, rigor, excellence, accessible and impactful work

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The Organization

The Joint Center was founded in 1970 with the goal of increasing Black political participation. It brought together Black intellectuals and professionals to provide training and technical assistance for newly elected Black officials. This formed the foundation of much of the Joint Center’s work during the ‘70s and the ‘80s. When the Joint Center opened its doors there were 1,469 Black elected officials in the United States. Now, there are over 10,000.

As the civil rights era gave way to the era of “economic rights,” the Joint Center signaled its expanding focus on job creation and workforce development and changed its name to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

The Joint Center remains steadfast in the relentless pursuit of justice, equity, and excellence for Black communities. Poised for exceptional growth, the Joint Center maintains a focus on four key issue areas while calibrating as needed to leverage opportunities. Delivering top-quality content and convenings are the Joint Center's primary assets.

Key Issues:

- Economic Policy- identifies challenges and opportunities for advancing the economic status of Black communities.
- Workforce Policy- centers Black workers in policy debates concerning the future of work, workforce development, and access to good jobs.
- Tech Policy- empowers Black users to combat disinformation and hold platforms accountable, eliminate the digital divide, and promote AI and data fairness.
- Hill Diversity- analyzes staff diversity on the Hill and applauds Members of Congress with diverse staffers.
- Black Talent Initiative- is the largest database of Black talent in the United States for presidential appointments.

Recent accomplishments of the Joint Center include:

- Recommendations on pandemic relief for Black families passed into law in the American Rescue Plan which helped lift 18 million children out of poverty.
- Reframing the debate over the reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act by prioritizing the needs of Black workers.
- Recommendations for Broadband expansion and access for Black Americans in the Black Rural South became law in the \$65 billion



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broadband provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

- Research and recommendations led to legislation clarifying that social media platforms are not immune from civil rights laws.
- Holding the Biden Administration and Congress accountable for racial diversity, resulting in the historic appointment of scores of Black judges, agency officials, and congressional top staff.

To connect ideas and political action, the Joint Center relies on key partners. The Joint Center has close ties to the Congressional Black Caucus, the National Organization of Black County Officials, and the African American Mayors Association. The Joint Center works closely with many civil rights and economic development organizations, social innovation and technology organizations, millennial activists, community organizations, congressional staff associations, the National Association for Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, and several think tanks.

The Joint Center is a nationally-focused convener of Black intellectuals, data, and thought. Annually, the Joint Center hosts panel discussions, conferences, and discussions to gather, evaluate, and disseminate information and resources to improve Black communities. The Joint Center emphasizes high-quality data and analysis. The Joint Center advances solutions to complex issues around racial disparities by seeking input from community members, advocates, business and labor leaders, government officials, and academics galvanized by the brightest intellectual capital focused on improving Black communities.

The organization's 2022 budget is \$4.9mm, with a staff of 15. This represents significant growth relative to 2020 when the budget was \$1.7mm with a staff of eight. The current Strategic Plan forecasts continued expansion to a \$10.5mm annual budget by 2026-2027. Approximately 85% of the



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Joint Center's resources come from foundations, 10% from corporations, and the remainder from individuals, in-kind gifts, and other sources.

The Responsibilities

The President will be responsible for both planning and leading the Joint Center's future vision and ensuring its operational success. The ideal candidate will be an effective communicator and public representative, an experienced fundraiser, an adept and proven manager of people and organizations, and a strong leader of organizational culture. More specifically, the President will:

1. Guide the vision and strategy of the Joint Center and lead the organization with passion, purpose, and a clear focus on issues that impact the Black community.

The President provides the Joint Center with strategic leadership and oversees the development and execution of a compelling and relevant vision, mission, and strategic plan. In tandem with the Staff and Board, the President will ensure that key organizational objectives are met and find the balance between leading and responding to critical issues so that the Joint Center is both relevant and effective.

2. Drive operational excellence and continue to build and develop an organizational infrastructure that will enable the Joint Center to scale and thrive. The President will demonstrate effective leadership, anticipate emerging challenges and opportunities, ensure that the Joint Center finds and retains the right team, skills, and processes to advance the Joint Center's agenda, and create a superlative organizational culture. Further, the President is responsible for managing the financial health and sustainability of the Joint Center and maintaining and building on a strong,



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transparent, and healthy partnership with the Board and Board Chair.

- 3. Continue and advance the organization's reputation for rigorous, credible, and consistent research.** Consistent with the long-held reputation of the Joint Center as a center for research excellence, the President will bring a track record of scholarship and provide intellectual leadership to ensure that the Joint Center produces high-quality, rigorous, and well-researched quantitative and qualitative research that is credible, reputable, accessible, and impactful. The President will strive to constantly improve research standards and create an environment of research excellence that attracts and retains top researchers.
- 4. Be the face of the organization and a highly visible and credible champion of the Joint Center's work to achieve Black excellence and equity.** The President will enhance the Joint Center's policy impact, reach, and reputation through an actionable work product, strategic communications, networks, and outreach. The new leader will help the Joint Center build networks with key stakeholders, organize, and participate in key convenings and advance the reputation of the Joint Center as a credible, rigorous, smart, visionary, vital organization committed to the full freedom of Black communities.
- 5. Cultivate the relationships and resources necessary for the Joint Center to achieve its vision and maintain financial security.** The President will work with the Board and Staff to grow revenues and diversify funding sources so that the Joint Center has the sound financial base necessary to most effectively operate and advance its mission. The new leader will provide oversight of development strategy, development systems, and development efforts of the staff and the Board and the relationships



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between the Joint Center and donors and potential donors. The President will bring an enthusiasm for growing organizational sustainability and be able to make a compelling case for support across a spectrum of potential funders – all while maintaining institutional integrity, focusing on important outcomes and avoiding ambiguity regarding any potential conflicts of interest.

The Candidate

The ideal candidate will have a passion for the mission of The Joint Center and ambition for the organization's growth and impact. The leader will have a track record of relevant thought leadership and organizational management skills.

Professional experience:

- Demonstrated commitment to advancing the needs of Black Americans
- Evidence of intellectual thought leadership
- Conducted or commissioned high-quality research
- Experience scaling and effectively managing an organization
- Adept at recruiting, managing and inspiring knowledge workers
- Sophistication in raising funds from foundations, corporations and individuals

Personal assets:

- Commitment to excellence and intellectual rigor
- Strong organizational skills, including exceptional attention to detail
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills



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- Deep network in DC policy circles and a broad array of relationships across coalitions, think tanks and advocacy groups
- Sophisticated understanding of political dynamics and opportunities for action
- Bias for action over theory
- Comfort working with the private sector
- A team builder who inspires staff to work together in pursuit of a shared mission and holds them accountable for the accomplishment of objectives
- Unimpeachable integrity, self-confidence, a high level of energy, and a strong sense of humility
- Understanding of the unique role, opportunities, and challenges of think tanks and, in particular, a Black think tank
- The cultural competency and emotional intelligence to engage in relevant conversations around race and equity with a wide variety of stakeholders

Compelling candidates will come from a variety of backgrounds. Compensation for this role will be competitive and commensurate with experience and ability. The expected range for this role will be \$297,000 - \$333,000.

The Relationships

The President reports to:	Board of Directors
Manages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VP, Policy • VP, Communications • VP, Development • VP, Finance and Operations

The Location

The President will work at the Joint Center office located in Washington, D.C.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email

JointCenter@BoardWalkConsulting.com

or call **Crystal Stephens, John Sparrow, Cynthia Moreland, or Lysondra Sommerville** at 404-262-7392.

