



HEATHER MCGHEE

Heather designs and promotes solutions to inequality in America. Over her career in public policy, Heather has crafted legislation, testified before Congress and helped shape presidential campaign platforms. Her book *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* spent 10 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list and was longlisted for the National Book Award and Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction. The *New York Times* called it, “The book that should change how progressives talk about race.” and the *Chicago Tribune* said, “Required reading to move the country forward...”. It is a *Washington Post* and *TIME Magazine* Must-Read Book of 2021. The paperback version was released in February 2022 and the book was adapted into a Spotify podcast by Higher Ground, the production company of Barack and Michelle Obama in June 2022. A young adult readers’ version of *The Sum of Us* was released by Random House Children’s in 2023 and was selected as a Best Teen and Young Adult Non-Fiction book of that year by *Kirkus Reviews*.

Heather is an educator and most recently served as a Distinguished Visiting Lecturer in Urban Studies at the City University of New York’s School of Labor and Urban Studies. She has also held visiting positions at Yale University’s Brady-Johnson Grand Strategy Program and the University of Chicago’s Institute of Politics. She is the recipient of honorary degrees from Muhlenberg College, Niagara University, and CUNY Graduate School of Public Health & Health Policy.

For nearly two decades, Heather helped build the non-partisan “think and do” tank Demos, serving four years as president. Under McGhee’s leadership, Demos moved their original idea for “debt-free college” into the center of the 2016 presidential debate, argued before the Supreme Court to protect voting rights in January 2018, helped win pro-voter reforms in five states over two years, provided expert testimony to Congressional committees, including a Supreme Court confirmation hearing in 2017, and led the research campaigns behind successful wage increases for low-paid workers on federal contracts, as well as at McDonalds, Walmart and other chain retailers.

As an executive, McGhee transformed Demos on multiple levels. She led a successful strategic planning and rebranding process. She designed a [Racial Equity Organizational Transformation](#) which led to an increase in staff racial diversity (from 27 percent people of color to 60 percent in four years), an original racial equity curriculum for staff professional development and a complete overhaul of the organization’s research, litigation and campaign strategies using a racial equity lens. McGhee also nearly doubled the organizational budget in four years. A strong coalition-builder and trusted cross-movement leader, McGhee deepened Demos’ influence through new networks and collaborations inside and outside the Beltway.

An influential voice in the media and a former NBC contributor, McGhee regularly appears on NBC’s *Meet the Press* and MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, *Deadline White House* and *All In*. Her 2020 TED talk is entitled “[Racism Has a Cost for Everyone](#)”. She has shared her opinions, writing and research in numerous outlets, including the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Politico* and National Public Radio. McGhee’s conversation on a C-SPAN program in 2016 with a white man who asked for her help to overcome his racial prejudice went viral, receiving more than 10 million views and sparking wide media coverage that included a *New York Times* op-ed, a *New Yorker* piece and a CNN town hall. In spring 2018, Starbucks founder Howard Schultz asked McGhee to advise the company as it designed an anti-bias training for 250,000 employees in the wake of the unjust arrest of two black men in a Philadelphia store. McGhee [wrote a report with recommendations](#) for how Starbucks can apply a racial equity lens to their businesses, and how other companies both large and small can benefit from doing the same.

McGhee also played a leadership role in steering the historic Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, and was one of the key advocates credited for the adoption of the Volcker Rule.

She holds a B.A. in American Studies from Yale University and a J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley School of Law,. McGhee is the chair of the board of Color Of Change, the nation's largest online racial justice organization, and also serves on the boards of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Open Society Foundations' US Programs and Demos.

For more information, please visit www.heathermcghee.com and follow Heather on Twitter: @hmcghee and Instagram and Facebook: @HeatherCMcGhee