



June 1, 2020

Justice for Ahmaud, Breonna, and George! Justice for all Black People!

The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion mourns the brutal and merciless murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and the most recent of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. While the tragic killing connects us to all the Black people who have been murdered since this country was founded, including Eric Garner, Philando Castile, Tony McDade, Aiyana Jones, Michael Brown, and Trayvon Martin, it has happened so often across America that it leaves our stomachs turning in knots removing the myth that we are living in a post-racial society. We are haunted by this ugly reality — We will not accept this ugly reality; we are determined to fight, to transform, this ugly reality. In our efforts to understand what seems to be an unending reality, we acknowledge:

- The murder of George Floyd was first plotted hundreds of years ago beginning with how settlers treated this lands' Indigenous People and then in the kidnapping of Africans brought here as slaves.
- The plan to murder George Floyd was put in place when we embedded white supremacist beliefs into our institutions, governments, court rulings, and policies.
- George Floyd's death was made possible by the unchecked racism of an officer and three accomplices, the racism within the Minneapolis Police Department, and the racism dwelling in every dimension of our lives.
- The death of Black Americans at the hands of police is an extension of this racism in the very air we breathe, suffocating life.
- The unique challenge faced by law enforcement as they seek to address the inevitable brutality perpetrated by their officers along with the racism embedded in the recruiting, training, and supervision of officers stamped in practice and procedures.

Mindful of this deep and pervasive racism and inspired by our mission statement to “empower individuals to transform communities and the workplace to overcome racism, discrimination, systemic inequities, and institutional and inherent bias,” we call for:

- **Learning** about this history of racism and present-day racial inequities;
- **Listening** to your colleagues and neighbors who are of different racial backgrounds and participating in community and workplace conversations as you become accountable for a change in your thinking and behavior;
- **Encouraging** your local law enforcement departments to become part of the [Detroit Metro ALPACT](#) (Advocates & Leaders for Police and Community Trust), a coalition of law enforcement and community members challenging the very practices attacking the lives of Black and Brown people;

- **Ending** repressive use of force by police and shifting funding priorities towards social justice restorative practices for community safety; and,
- **Going** beyond traditional diversity and inclusion training to transform not only the organizations you are a part of, but also the communities where you work and live so that Black people and other People of Color are seen as equal and treated with the justice they deserve.

We end this statement with a quote from Mark Fancher, staff attorney at ACLU of Michigan:

The solution will not be found in new policies and training. Ultimately, things will change only when a law enforcement culture deeply rooted in racism and violence changes. Only those in the law enforcement community can make that happen. It will happen only when every cop from the lowest-ranking patrol officers to the highest-ranking administrators become committed to purging from their ranks those who believe dark skin equals probable cause for searches, arrests, and brutality.

We continue on the journey to identify, confront, and end systemic racism with you.

In solidarity,
Michigan Roundtable for Diversity & Inclusion