



Call to Action on Racial Equity

This Call to Action was developed by the Providers' Council's Race, Diversity & Inclusion Committee. These members of the association have pledged their support of this effort to bring racial justice and equity to our communities.

These past few weeks have witnessed an unprecedented reaction to an epidemic of violence and terror that has plagued communities of color for centuries. The savage imagery of George Floyd handcuffed and gasping for breath, while a Minneapolis police officer slowly snuffed out his life, is a disturbing reminder that America's original sin of racism still breathes death, destruction and hatred.

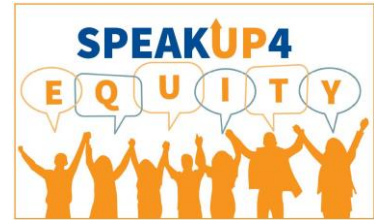
It was nearly nine minutes of abject perversity witnessed by the world, but merely a nanosecond in the timeline of racism and oppression experienced by African Americans. Since 1619, when the first enslaved African arrived on the shores of Colonial Virginia, African Americans have had to endure literal, cultural and institutional suffocation. What happened to George Floyd was no anomaly. Most recently we witnessed the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery being gunned down on a daily jog. Breonna Taylor shot eight times by police in her home. Sean Reed, Rayshard Brooks, Antwon Rose, Stephon Clark, 12-year-old Tamir Rice, Philando Castile, Michael Brown, and many other unarmed men shot by police. The list is long, unnerving and unacceptable.

It is a sin that has permeated every aspect of our society including Greater Boston, where non-immigrant African Americans have a median net worth of \$8 compared to white Bostonian's \$247,500. Nationally, blacks represent 13 percent of the population but COVID-19 hospitalization rates for blacks was five times higher than whites, including a higher death rate. You can look to virtually any indicator and it leads to the core issue: *We live in a society where racism will remain unless all of us – and in particular, those with white privilege – are courageous to live its creed as a nation for liberty and justice for all.*

As members of the human service community, an integral part of our nation, it is essential to have equity and justice for all people of color and for all people in need of support. For these reasons, the Providers' Council and our Race, Diversity & Inclusion Committee are calling on all providers, their staff members and supporters of the human services sector to action in working against oppression, being antiracist and bringing justice to our communities.

We *call to action* for our fellow human service providers to:

- **Listen.**
- **Educate** ourselves, our staff and our communities on systemic inequity and racial oppression.
- **Develop** an organizational strategy for combatting systemic racism and oppression within your organization with endorsement and support from your Board of Directors.



- **Institute** a diversity, equity and inclusion committee comprised of staff and executive leadership to discuss issues, press for change and advance the efforts of your organization on racial equity.
- **Support** the efforts of our staff, clients, consumers and communities in advocating for their rights and racial justice.
- **Work** to end all systems of oppression within our communities.

The time is long past due for justice. We in the human services sector fight for justice and equality every day, serving the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our Commonwealth. As change leaders we ask you to not only speak against racism, but also to be antiracist and actively work to combat racism and systemic inequality.

In the words of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., “Justice too long delayed is justice denied.” No longer can we wait for justice. No longer can we wait for equality. It’s up to us to lead efforts to bring about social justice. We must act now. **We don’t have any more time to wait.**

This Call to Action is endorsed by the following members of the Providers’ Council:

Member Organization	CEO Name
Children’s Services of Roxbury	Sandra McCroom
Justice Resource Institute	Andy Pond
North Suffolk Mental Health Association, Inc.	Jackie K. Moore
Communities for People	Joseph Leavey
HMEA	Jule Noack
The Home for Little Wanderers	Lesli Suggs
Advocates, Inc.	Diane Gould
Berkshire County Arc	Ken Singer
Toward Independent Living and Learning, Inc. (TILL, Inc.)	Dafna Krouk-Gordon



Member Organization	CEO Name
WORK, Inc.	James Cassetta
Bay Cove Human Services	Bill Sprague
Community Resources for Justice	John J. Larivee
Center for Human Development	James Goodwin
Square One	Joan Kagan
The Key Program	William Lyttle
Road to Responsibility, Inc.	Christopher T. White
Roxbury Youthworks, Inc.	Mia Alvarado
Victory Programs	Sarah Porter
The Edinburg Center	Patti Maguire
City Mission Boston	June Cooper
Fidelity House CRC	Brad Howell
Vinfen	Bruce L. Bird
Gandara Center	Lois Nesci
Casa Esperanza, Inc. and Affiliates	Emily Stewart
May Institute	Lauren Solotar
Gavin Foundation	John McGahan
Family Independence	France Neff
International Institute of New England	Jeff Thielman



Member Organization	CEO Name
G & S Lemberg Children's Center, Inc.	Howard Baker
Community Caring	Gerry Wright
WCI – Work, Community, Independence	Nancy Silver Hargreaves
Old Colony Y	Vincent J. Marturano
Piers Park Sailing Center	Alex DeFronzo
Tapestry Health	Cheryl Zoll
Bridgewell	Chris Tuttle
New England Village	Michael A. Rodrigues
Seven Hills Foundation	Dr. David A. Jordan
Institute for Health and Recovery	Dr. Norma Finkelstein
Hopewell, Inc.	Shaheer Mustafa
Doc Wayne Youth Services	David Cohen
Casa Myrna	Stephanie Brown
Health Resources in Action, Inc.	Steve Ridini
South End Community Center	Wesley Jackson
Tempus Unlimited, Inc.	Larry Spencer
Center for Living & Working, Inc.	Meg Coffin
Boston Center for Independent Living	Bill Henning
The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling	Marlene Warner