



June 2020

## Statement of the African American Strategic Partnership on Systemic Racism and Oppression

A Second Chance, Inc.  
Amachi Pittsburgh  
Bible Center  
Brothers & Sisters Emerging  
Center for Family Excellence  
Greater Valley Community Services  
Gwen's Girls  
Healthy Start, Inc.  
Homewood Children's Village  
Macedonia FACE  
Mel Blount Leadership Initiative  
Partner 4 Work  
Project Destiny, Inc.  
Small Seeds Development, Inc.  
Neighborhood Resilience Project  
Three Rivers Youth  
Touching Families, Inc.  
TRAC Services for Families  
Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

As a collaborative of African American leaders, it is AASP's mission to positively impact community change. At the core of our mission is the bold and unflinching belief that we will work to eradicate systemic racism and oppression through collaborative efforts with our strategic partners, including those allies who dare to call out racism as not only a public health crisis, but also a crisis for our humanity.

The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery have given the world permission to call out the racism that has permeated our society. It demands we address the institutional and structural systems of oppression that are evident not only in the disproportionate interactions with the police and judicial system, but also in the inequitable access Blacks have to quality education, health care and wealth.

Many are asking, "Why now? What is different this time?" Certainly, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light that which has been systematically covered up through the violence of silence and pervasive complicity, due to the benefits of racism for some at the disadvantage of others. This systemic oppression has affected Black families and communities for generations. The wounds caused by racism run deep and our children, our families and our communities are hurting. The complex trauma they—WE—have endured has gone unnoticed despite cries against long-standing injustices. Why now? Perhaps Fannie Lou Hamer said it best: "We are sick and tired of being sick and tired." What is different this time? The global collection of voices screaming in harmony that enough is

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indeed enough. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “We may have all come on different ships, but we are in the same boat now.” We are witnessing the world daring to stand together in the “same boat” for change and the end of racism and oppression.

AASP stands against any form of racism and oppression. We join the disruptors who are calling for change in the systems that harm our children, youth, families and communities. We stand with the protestors and the designers of change and will not be distracted by the narrow rhetoric that seeks to redefine our narratives and our racialized experiences. Since the first ship of Africans made to be slaves arrived in North America in 1619, we have been on a long and tedious journey, but we will not give up now, because our change is coming.

We cannot allow the lives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless others to be in vain. Kahlil Gibran stated: “Life without liberty is like a body without a spirit.” Together in solidarity, we stand for what is right, what is just and what is ours—the freedom to live in a world that honors our humanity!

In solidarity,  
The Membership of the  
African American Strategic Partnership

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