

ICMA Executive Board Statement Regarding Systemic Racism

We, like many in our communities, share in the heartbreak and anger over the murder of George Floyd, the spate of racist events and excessive force against protesters across the country, and the systemic racism that continues to exist in the United States. The murder of George Floyd has put the issue of systemic racism front and center on the world stage.

The weight of these recent tragedies falls especially heavy on us because we are in positions of leadership in cities, counties, and towns throughout the world. The local government management profession and ICMA were founded on a Code of Ethics and a Declaration of Ideals which demand that we serve the best interests of all, achieve equity and social justice, and act with integrity so that we may earn the trust of all those we serve. Addressing systemic racism is our ethical obligation.

As leaders, we must work to achieve fundamental change to break the system of inequality and oppression that has tarnished nations for generations and now, more than ever, in America by our history of racism. This inequality has been brought into sharp relief by the disproportionate economic losses and deaths of African Americans and people of color in the pandemic and horrifyingly so in the unjust murders of Black men and women.

We must stand in solidarity with the Black community, with those who protest in peace, and with those taking a stand for change. We must see racism as a public health crisis and a stain upon our humanity. “The fierce urgency of now,” as Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. stated, is long overdue. We are the ones who can forge real change in our own communities. As our cities, towns, and counties rebuild from the pandemic, we can create a new foundation that replaces white supremacy and racism with an aggressive respect for human rights.

Systemic racism is far reaching in society and goes beyond policing. We are committed to be the agents of change within our organizations to lead to a new future. As part of that change, we recognize the immediate concern is policing. We affirm our commitment to support for the professional officers and staff that serve our communities and will work with them to develop new ways to reflect ideals that value all people.

We are the ones who stand in the public square. As leaders in our own communities, it is up to each of us to make our voices heard, but more importantly, to listen, to learn, and to use our voices to amplify the voices of others.

Doing this successfully means that we will need to embrace new ideas, methods, and skills, and above all, courage to step into roles that we may have been uncomfortable with in the past. As leaders and managers, we must recommit to the highest ideals of just and effective local government and commit to take these initial action steps. [Click here.](#)

Great social changes often come from turmoil and we as local government leaders can lead that transformation. We can create the kinds of communities we envision, where everyone can flourish. And we begin now by acknowledging Black lives matter. **RM**