

Maine Association of Public Housing Directors and Westbrook Housing Authority Statement on Racism, Black Lives Matter, and the deaths of minorities through policing.

“Words cannot begin to express the horror we felt seeing the images from Minneapolis last week, seeing yet another Black man killed at the hands of the police. We cannot fathom why, in the United States, in 2020, George Floyd was needlessly murdered, or why Ahmaud Arbery would be killed while jogging, or why Breonna Taylor would be killed in her home. We cannot properly express the rage at the fact that this list could go on and on.

Racism and discrimination are all too prevalent in the current moment. Although here in Maine we are many miles away from Minneapolis where Mr. Floyd died, the Georgia town where Mr. Arbery was killed, or Ms. Taylor’s Louisville home, we know that our communities perpetuate racism and discrimination too.

As a result, we have a responsibility to speak out against hatred and discrimination. We condemn, as harshly as we can, the pervasive and systematic racism that lead to the deaths of these individuals and each and every person of color. As a housing provider, we try to put our words into action. We provide housing to people from all walks of life, people from all backgrounds, people of all colors. We are committed to building strong, diverse communities. We will not tolerate racism, discrimination, and hatred.

As a Public Housing Agency, we are keenly aware that housing and thriving communities are platforms that help families succeed. We are committed to providing housing to everyone, without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, national origin or familial status. And we take seriously our responsibility to provide homes to some of the most vulnerable members of our society. But that is not enough.

We commit, at minimum, to the following action items:

1. We commit to facilitating economic and social mobility for all while ensuring that current residents in our community are not displaced.
2. We will engage within our communities, have hard conversations, and support federal, state and local policy changes that eliminate racism in our institutions.
3. We will examine our internal policies and procedures, and update as necessary, to ensure they are inclusionary and eliminate barriers to opportunity. “