

A Primer on Positive Change Capitalizing on the Power of the Moment

We are at a turning point in our society. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said: *“We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right.”*

Many leaders around the League have inquired about how to begin down a path of meaningful change. It should be our collective goal to create master plans for inclusion – plans that first help black and brown colleagues within our own organizations feel a sense of belonging. Fostering this environment among your existing employee base is the best place to start and will inspire ideas and progress.

If you have not already done so, you must address three critical stakeholder groups:

1. **Your employees.** Senior leadership needs counsel, advice and education; Black and brown employees need tools and resources; White employees need an understanding of privilege and allyship.
2. **Your business partners and vendors.** Sharing information, employment strategies and engagement opportunities with the right partners can be beneficial to your D&I goals and even help deepen relationships.
3. **Your local community.** Understand who are the credible organizations locally making an impact; help spread their message and provide institutional support. These groups may include local chapters of larger organizations such as Black Lives Matter, Walking While Black, and NAACP. Don’t just donate to these groups; get to know them and their initiatives.
 - a. Consider how your platform can impact individual community members who do not belong to established organizations. For example, the U.S. Census determines how billions of dollars in federal funding flow into states and communities each year. It also determines how many seats in Congress each state gets. Local fans can be encouraged to respond to the [2020 Census](#) before the deadline (October 31).

Beyond those three steps, here is a suggested short-term glide path as you consider the many ways that your organization can expand and deepen its commitment to inclusion.

1. Leadership should educate themselves in the following areas: (a) systemic racism; (b) unconscious bias; and (c) the dynamics of power, equity and inclusion. While we will be putting together a more extensive resource library of literature and media on these topics, here are a few suggested places to begin.

- a. **Books:** [White Fragility](#) (Robin DiAngelo); [When Affirmative Action was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in 20th Century America](#) (Ira Katznelson); [The New Jim Crow](#) (Michelle Alexander)
 - b. **Movies and Documentaries:** [13th](#) (2016); [I Am Not Your Negro](#) (2016); [True Justice: Bryan Stevenson's Fight for Equality](#) (2019)
 - c. **Interviews and Keynotes:** Works by Jane Elliot and her mission of [One Race](#); [Kim Davis on Sportsnet Podcast](#); [Evander Kane NBC piece](#)
 - d. **Diversity and Inclusion Trainers:** [White Men as Full Diversity Partners](#); [Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality \(RISE\)](#); [Franklin Covey](#); [Korn Ferry](#)
 - e. **Online Resources:** [Race Matters](#) by Korn Ferry, [Talking About Race](#) by The National Museum of African American History and Culture, [Why So Many Organizations Stay White](#) by Victor Ray, [Theo Epstein vows to be better as Cubs executive, hopes others in baseball follow suit](#) by Jesse Rogers
 - f. **Classic Resources:** [A Gift of Love](#) by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; [Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community](#) by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr; [Let America Be America Again](#) by Langston Hughes
 - g. **Places to Donate:** The following organizations use donations to fight racial injustice by helping to support legal proceedings, research, events, and actions.
 - i. [Black Lives Matter](#)
 - ii. [Campaign Zero](#)
 - iii. [Equal Justice Initiative](#)
 - iv. [NAACP](#)
 - v. [National Urban League](#)
 - vi. [Race Forward](#)
 - vii. [Southern Poverty Law Center](#)
2. Leadership should organize and conduct a “Town Hall” style meeting with employees – where leaders show their vulnerability, authenticity and willingness to listen and engage.
- a. Share your personal commitment, and your organizational strategy, for what you have/will have in place to support black and brown colleagues.
 - b. Educate and inspire non-black colleagues on ways to be an ally, use their privilege, and work together in solidarity.

3. Leadership should assemble resource groups within their employee base, beginning with a group for black employees, or more broadly for employees of-color (if these groups don't already exist). These employee groups should meet with Senior Leadership regularly, and leaders should be prepared to listen, answer questions and empower the group.
 - a. Leaders must be willing to suspend judgment and be open to learning about the perspectives and experiences of others.
 - b. Leverage this group not only to inform internal practices, but as a sounding board and idea generator for community work and partnerships.

Remember that your work to build a culture of belonging is a journey, not a sprint. Progress may take years to measure, but we must remain committed, strategic and courageous as leaders.

***“Not everything that is faced can be changed,
but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”***
– James Baldwin