

Black Lives Matter: Our Collective Commitment to Racial Justice

Californians from every background and generation are braving a global pandemic to march for racial justice. All across the Golden State, we are saying the names George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and too many more Black Americans who have been unjustifiably killed by police.

California's United Ways share in the deep sorrow and anger of our neighbors, and we stand in solidarity with those demanding justice and change in order to overcome the continued loss and devaluing of Black lives, rooted in a deeply painful history of violence and police brutality against our communities of color, particularly our Black communities.

United Way's mission is to fight for the education, health, and financial stability of every person in every community. Everyone deserves the opportunity to be healthy, to learn, and to live with dignity. Our society has an obligation to work to remove barriers for and provide support for all people. We must work for concrete changes in policy and policing to reduce risk to Black and Brown lives. We must fight for equity, recognize that our communities of color deserve more than life, they deserve hopes and dreams, the right to access quality schools, safe and affordable neighborhoods, jobs and careers with economic mobility.

We have the power to end poverty, to dismantle racism, and to create a just nation for all. But it will require great change, and it will require all of us to use our voices, platforms and relationships to stand up for each other and for justice. As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, we have always worked with and formed coalitions among sometimes unlikely allies—corporations and small businesses, philanthropic and charitable institutions, elected and unelected leaders, service providers and community advocates—to tackle complex challenges like poverty and inequity, including disparate access to health care starkly revealed by the pandemic. Moving forward we will do so in a manner that is much more intentionally aligned with racial justice and intersectionality.

The word "United" in our name means something. How we "Live United" matters. Americans disagree on many things, but we all must agree that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, and that we are better as a nation when we pull together to confront our crises, rather than let those crises divide us. As Dr. King noted, we do not seek the absence of tension. We seek the presence of justice, in every institution, in every aspect of daily life, and in every plan we make for the next seven generations.

We invite all those who receive this message to join us in this work, and help us hold accountable our society, our institutions, and ourselves.

California United Way CEO's

Manuel Alvarado, Chief Executive Officer, United Way of Merced County
Kristen Birtwhistle, President & CEO, United Way of San Joaquin County
Stephanie Bray, President & CEO, United Way California Capital Region
Keisha Browder, Chief Executive Officer, United Way of Santa Cruz County
Elise Buik, President & CEO, United Way of Greater Los Angeles
Phillip Burch, President & CEO, Central County United Way
Lindsay Callahan, President & CEO, United Way Fresno and Madera Counties
Lisa Carreño, President & CEO, United Way of the Wine Country
Rosemary Caso, Executive Director, United Way of Tulare County
Katy Castagna, President & CEO, United Way Monterey County
Francine DiCiano, President & CEO, United Way of Stanislaus County
Shirli Driz, Interim President & CEO, Inland Empire United Way
Kristal Granados, Executive Director, United Way of the Desert
John Gregg, Executive Director, United Way of Mojave Valley
Robert Harlan, Executive Director, Yuba-Sutter-Colusa United Way
Eric Harrison, President & CEO, United Way of Ventura County
Bill Kitson, Interim CEO, United Way Bay Area
Rick London, President & CEO, United Way of San Luis Obispo County
Pete Manzo, President & CEO, United Ways of California
Larry Olmstead, President & CEO, United Way of Northern California
Steve Ortiz, President & CEO, United Way of Santa Barbara County
Sue Parks, President & CEO, Orange County United Way
Mari Perez-Dowling, President & CEO, United Way of Kern County
Gwen Rodgers, Interim President & CEO, Arrowhead United Way
Alia Rodriguez, Chief Executive Officer, Corona-Norco United Way
Nancy Sasaki, President & CEO, United Way of San Diego County
Eddie Taylor, President & CEO, Northern Santa Barbara County United Way
Megan Timpany, Chief Executive Officer, United Way of Nevada County
Nanette Villarreal, Executive Director, Kings United Way
Lisa Wright, President & CEO, United Way of the Inland Valleys
Ken Wuytens, Executive Director, United Way of Imperial County