

Statement from the AEA Board of Directors Regarding Systemic Racism

The American Evaluation Association denounces all racist behaviors, acts, and communications. The recent deaths of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless more victims of white supremacist violence and terror are a consequence of the historic structural and systemic racism that is a foundational building block of the United States. All of these deaths are manifestations of deeply rooted structural racism that has been allowed to grow and flourish in this country dating back to Jamestown in 1619, when the first enslaved women and men were brought shackled to these shores. The COVID-19 pandemic provides context which continues to highlight the effects of systemic racism on the health and well-being of Black and Brown communities.

However, words are not enough, actions must follow. We exist as an organization, and evaluation exists as a field, to improve conditions for all through the practice of evaluation. One of AEA's Guiding Principles is that evaluators strive to contribute to the common good and advancement of an equitable and just society. As evaluation professionals serving diverse communities worldwide, we must respond in a way that helps our communities feel heard, validated, and valued. It is our collective responsibility to turn the lens on ourselves as individual professionals and as a field, looking at the ways our field and our practice perpetuates injustice. We call on evaluators to do the individual-level learning that will help them recognize the ways that evaluation can cause harm. It is also our collective responsibility to step up and find ways to use our unique skills to dismantle racism and systems of oppression while creating healing and safe spaces to build bridges to a more equitable, democratic, and just future.

As a community, our membership reflects more than 6,000 individuals across all 50 states and 80 countries. All of our members are considered equal and we value your diverse opinions and experiences. This diversity and collaboration is what we as evaluators should strive for on a national and global scale.

Once again, the U.S. must come face-to-face with its racist origins and history. Our evaluation community has a responsibility to reveal systems and structures of oppression to help our society find a way to shared humanity, equity, racial and gender equality, and social justice for all. People with power, change the system. As evaluators, some of us have the power to make the changes occur. Use your power for good.

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The American Evaluation Association is a professional association of evaluators devoted to the application and exploration of program evaluation, personnel evaluation, technology, and many other forms of evaluation. Evaluation involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of programs, policies, personnel, products, and organizations to improve their effectiveness. The American Evaluation Association seeks to act in ways that embody our mission, vision, and values in pursuit of our defined policies and goals.