

Legal Aid's statement on events of the past week

Statement from Executive Director Steven McGarrity

Community Legal Aid stands in solidarity with our black and brown brothers and sisters, and with all who have experienced the oppression of inequity and injustice.

Our organization was founded nearly 70 years ago, in the dawn of the Civil Rights Movement, by a group of civic-minded lawyers who believed that having an attorney could make all the difference in the most tumultuous moments in peoples' lives.

This foundation has provided a platform from which we speak today, in recognizing this quintessential truth: **Where inequity lives, justice cannot.**

Racial inequity is an embedded part of our society, and any social issue we try to address without acknowledging that is nothing more than a Band-Aid. Every aspect of our advocacy work needs to be looked at through the lens of racial disparity.

Two years ago, we adopted a set of organizational values, including the value of diversity. But this values statement was just a first step on a long road for us. That's why we are committed to examining our own implicit bias -- as individuals, and as an organization -- to begin to break down the barriers that hold us back. And we applaud our community leaders and partner agencies who are doing the same.

We believe that all individuals deserve the same opportunities to control, improve, and enrich their lives and communities. And we believe that our legal system, flawed though it may be, but etched in the promise of justice for all, can and should be a force for making this vision a reality.

Now is the time for us to bring those words to life. Now is the time for action. And we at Community Legal Aid are committed to using our unique talents and skills as advocates to change our community for the better.

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[Print](#)

Table of Contents

NEWS

News & publications

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