

Silence is assent. Inaction is complicity.

*George Floyd
Tony Robinson
David McAtee
Terrence Crutcher
Philando Castile
Kendra James
Michael Brown
Tyisha Mille
Eric Garner
Sandra Bland
Rekia Boyd
Sylville Smith
Michael Brown
Tanisha Anderson
Breonna Taylor
Tony McDade
Tarika Wilson
Jeremy McDole
Akai Gurley
Freddie Grey
Terrance Franklin
Dontre Hamilton
Shantel Davis
Walter Scott
Tamir Rice
Jamar Clark
Trayvon Martin
Alton Sterling
And far too many others . . .*

Forward Community Investments (FCI) stands with those protesting for justice, liberty, and life.

Black Lives Matter.

It is long past time to unwind the entwined threads of racism and violence that bind the lives of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people to the founding of this country. Theft and genocide claimed America. Violent abduction and enslavement built this country's wealth. Our social contract, institutions, and systems weave a coercive tapestry for denying non-whites humanity to maintain white held privilege, power, and prosperity.

We have allowed law enforcement and the justice system to be used to legitimately kill in defense of this nation's more Perfect Union, perfected for some through the oppression of many. The color of your skin has far too long determined which United States waits for you.

In 2020, this glaring truth dominates our news. Two countries. One for white people. One for Black, Brown, and Indigenous people. Our unjust social contract worked. As the pandemic spread, the systems and institutions of privilege provided healthcare access to some while decimating Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. They exploited the work ethic and economic fragility of low-income, disproportionately non-white workers to grasp at a quick economic recovery and return to prosperity for some. And two weeks ago, they callously continued the reprehensible legacy of state-authorized racial violence.

The armed systems of white privilege, power, and supremacy put their knees on the necks of Black people. They pointed guns at the heads of Black people. They reminded us all that Black lives have never mattered in this country.

FCI screams with the Black community. We cry with you. We join you in protest. Many of us are you.

Our staff team and Board of Directors join you in demanding that Black Lives Matter. We call for a new social contract, new institutions, and new systems – finally liberated from the oppressive, violent thread of racism.

FCI is not without its share of responsibility. Six years ago, FCI adopted a mission to invest, connect, and advise organizations and initiatives that reduce, social, racial, and economic disparities in Wisconsin communities. We adopted a value of racial justice.

We have long felt the tension, the dissonance between these principles, and our impact. FCI will continue to invest in communities of color by financially supporting institutions committed to racial equity and justice. We will also use this moment to listen, learn, and do better.

We commit to deepening our understanding of how FCI can actively and directly participate in the building of an inclusive and equitable Wisconsin. We will not remain silent in the face of racial injustice. We will use our privilege and power as a funder to challenge policies and systems that perpetuate the oppression of Black and other people of color.

We call upon all of Wisconsin to join us. From this moment on, silence is assent. Inaction is complicity. This is not Minnesota's responsibility, Madison's responsibility, or Milwaukee's responsibility. Regardless of how many people of color you see in your community, this is our shared responsibility.

We invite our partners, fellow funders, allied financial institutions, and Wisconsin communities statewide to stand against racism in all its forms. Uplift marginalized voices. Respect self-determination. Share power. Join the many voices – Black, Brown, Indigenous, and allied – uniting in solidarity to bring about the promise of this nation for all.

In community,

FCI