



For immediate Release

June 19, 2020

“Nobody’s free until everybody’s free – Fannie Hamer.”

Dear ACCE members and colleagues,

We are all in a very important point in our lives and maybe in our human history. At no other moment in our lives have we been so aware of our shared responsibilities in the society we live and grow in. It is extremely clear that our society is confronting not only a global pandemic with COVID-19, but also a global pandemic of structural racism and inequality—one that continues to cost human lives in many ways. As a society, and as a professional organization, we need to take more action that demonstrates that black and brown lives matter. ACCE supports the eradication of institutionalized racism and intolerance in our society; and we stand with everyone across the globe peacefully protesting for positive change.

June 19th, known as Juneteenth, commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. The holiday symbolizes a freedom that was delayed and forcefully resisted. On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger read the “General Order, No. 3” in Galveston, Texas, announcing the end of Civil War and informing enslaved African Americans of their freedom. Granger's reading came two years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, declaring the end of slavery. However, the Emancipation Proclamation was not enforced in areas without Union troops, prompting many slave owners to move to Texas — an area isolated from Union influence.

Juneteenth has gained new significance in mainstream society in the United States as the struggle against police brutality and anti-Black racism has been highlighted in recent years. Today, as we reflect upon current events that underscore how much progress remains, we encourage you to learn more about the full context of these events on Juneteenth. We invite each and everyone to take 8 minutes and 46 seconds today to make ourselves a better-informed person, to become more educated about racial injustice and the holiday of Juneteenth.

And what can we do to help? In the words of Opal Lee, the 93 year old black activist from Texas: *If we would unify, if we would get together and do something about homelessness, and do something about people having decent housing, and decent food, and they would not only have a place to stay but a decent education. If we could just love one another, you know? If you could get past the color of my skin and love me like you do that boy next door to you.*

We thank you for being a valued member of ACCE and for your continued commitment to fight for racial justice and equity. We are here for you and we stand here to eradicate racism and intolerance!

- ACCE Board of Directors