

AFSCME Local 1857: Black Lives Matter

June 19, 2020

Local 1857 stands in support and in solidarity with our Black members and community. Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Dominique "Rem'Mie" Fells, and Manuel Ellis are only a few of the most recent victims in a long history of violence against Black people in our country. We acknowledge that libraries were founded in white supremacist culture¹ and we actively seek to undo that damage. We must take immediate, collective action to end systemic racism in our country, communities, and institutions.

As King County Library System employees, we support KCLS joining the Urban Libraries Council statement on Race and Social Equity and committing to end structural racism. As library workers, we are reinforcing that libraries should be inclusive and welcoming spaces for BIPOC (Black and Indigenous People of Color) employees and communities. Recognizing that systemic violence against Black people is intersectional, we also recommit to the understanding and protection of some of our most marginalized community members, particularly Black women, BIPOC trans people, and BIPOC with disabilities.

We will take these actions now:

- We will provide direct community support by donating to Black Lives Matter Seattle-King County, a grassroots, volunteer-run, social-justice nonprofit organization focused on the empowerment and liberation of Black people and other people of color through advocacy and direct action. (<https://blacklivesseattle.org/>)
- We call upon KCLS to issue a public statement stating that Black Lives Matter.
- We are calling upon KCLS to create, implement and communicate an action plan for diversifying KCLS' workforce, including advancement opportunities to leadership roles.
- We call upon KCLS to end use of armed security in community libraries, and develop appropriate staffing, training, and procedures so that library staff can manage library environments without relying on police.
- We call upon AFSCME and the AFL-CIO to support reforms that end police violence and militarization, and to hold police unions accountable for criminal misconduct.
- Local 1857 is in support of KCLS creating a full-time permanent position focused on internal DEI work, as recommended by employees in the DEI Strategic Focus workgroup.
- Local 1857 will actively seek out ways to elevate the voices of BIPOC members, and create space for DEI work within our Local and within Council 2.

As organized workers, we commit to the hard, difficult, uncomfortable work of ending structural racism in our workplaces, libraries, and communities. Black Lives Matter.

In Solidarity,

AFSCME Local 1857 Executive Board
King County Library System Employees

¹ <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2017/06/01/desegregating-libraries-american-south/>
<https://southseattleemerald.com/2018/08/22/people-of-color-especially-children-most-likely-to-be-asked-to-leave-seattle-libraries/>