

NASCSP Statement of Action on Racial Justice

Half a century ago, leaders and activists had the courage to call for an end to poverty, a call that established the early roots of community action and weatherization. Today, we must show the same courage and moral clarity in calling for an end to racism. This is a commitment to work together as communities and organizations to dismantle racist systems to the root. Systemic racism is a structure built through institutions, policies, and practices that perpetuate racial inequalities. In dismantling this structure brick-by-brick, we create the opportunity to build equity and justice into the fabric of our communities and our nation.

At the National Association of State Community Services Programs (NASCS), our member states are dedicated to serving and assisting low-income individuals and families. In the United States, Black people are more than twice as likely to live in poverty compared to White people.¹ Our work cannot be separated from that fact, and our mission cannot ignore it. Black and Brown Americans today continue to face discrimination in employment and promotion practices, in education, and in other determinants of income.¹ To truly address poverty, we must also confront and deconstruct the systems that disproportionately trap Black and Brown families in cycles of immiseration. At NASCS, we commit to programs against impoverishment that are not race-blind, but rather ones that understand the central role race plays in poverty.

Our State and Territory members administer programs that provide housing, healthcare, and energy assistance, and these domains cannot be separated from the effects of racist systems. Following the murder of George Floyd in May of 2020, NASCS and many of our members released statements condemning racist violence against Black Americans. When our healthcare system results in a Black maternal mortality rate more than three times higher than that for White mothers, we must understand that as racist violence.¹ When Black Americans pay higher mortgage rates to live in lower-valued and less energy efficient homes, we must understand that as racist violence. When people of color live within a system that regularly disinvests and dehumanizes them, that must be understood as racist violence and it must be condemned just as strongly.

As a Network, we must take decisive action and understand the costs of inaction. That is why NASCS commits unequivocally to a mission of exposing racial inequality, understanding its role in our programs, and working to dismantle the racist systems that uphold it. Just as with ending poverty, ending racism will require time, investment, and the work of millions. We enthusiastically ask that you join us in this work.

¹ [The Economic State of Black America in 2020](#), Congressman Don Beyer, Vice Chair of the Joint Economic Committee.

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