

STANDING IN UNITY

The Association of Fundraising Professionals - Massachusetts Chapter condemns the actions that led to the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and all others due to systemic racism, brutality, intolerance, and social injustice. In addition, the Chapter echoes the sentiments expressed by Mike Geiger, President and CEO of AFP Global, in his [message](#) of June 1. It has been a painful week filled with sorrow and suffering. My heart goes out especially to our members, colleagues, friends, and families in the Black community. I, like all of you, long for a healing process that will help us emerge stronger and even more resolved to end the cycles of senseless violence and allow us to focus on building a future of equality free from fear.

Our work in fundraising provides us with the essential skills to make a difference in a time like this. Empathy is key. We are taught to be good listeners, to connect with our constituents, and to seek common understanding so that we can, in turn, make the world a better place. We are trained to be resilient, creative, and passionate in the way we represent and talk about our causes. We commit our lives to improving the human condition and value the diversity of our world; we seek to unify in every aspect.

The Massachusetts Chapter has long been committed to integrating diversity and inclusion into its educational programming and annual conferences. The [Chapter's Diversity Fellowship Program](#) has provided important mentoring experiences to dozens of professionals of color and has made positive and lasting impacts in the growth of their careers. At AFP Global, the commitment to [IDEA \(Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access\)](#) has provided overall guidance for addressing the demographic imbalances in our profession. Yet, while progress has been made on these initiatives, there is much more work to be done.

We cannot bring back George, Ahmaud, Breonna, and the many others before them. We can, however, resolve to focus on breaking down the institutional barriers that led to these tragedies. I welcome your thoughts, ideas, and support in designing educational programming, strengthening our outreach to underrepresented minorities, and unifying our AFP community to live the values we hold dear. Together we can make a difference.

My best wishes to all of you. Be well, be safe.

Sincerely,
David A. Woodruff, CFRE
President
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