

June 3, 2020

Dear AWIS Georgia members, friends, and allies,

Our community is in great pain. We are all struggling with the police-driven murders of Georgia native Ahmaud Arbery, Minnesota native George Floyd, Kentucky native Breonna Taylor, and numerous others. People of color have suffered from senseless acts of violence, oppression, and systemic racism for hundreds of years. We recognize that our Black colleagues, neighbors, family, and friends are suffering on a level that cannot be fully understood by those of us who are white. **We see you, we hear you, and we stand with you.**

Our core values center upon upholding equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our mission. Please see the recent letter from national AWIS leadership that echoes these sentiments published online [here](#). We also want to make it unequivocally clear that AWIS Georgia stands as an ally with Black Lives Matter. Now, more than ever, we must unite against hate and bigotry. First and foremost, we must listen to and further amplify black voices. If you are seeking resources in this area, we encourage you to read a guide provided by our partner, 500 Women Scientists, entitled: "[Communicating your support for #BlackLivesMatter: Dos, Don'ts, and Resources](#)."

Because we are still in the midst of a pandemic, we urge those participating in protests to do so safely. If you are looking for alternative ways to support the movement, here are a few opportunities to consider:

- **Educate yourself about systemic racism, microaggressions, white privilege, police brutality, and other current issues at hand.** Bear in mind that this is your responsibility, not that of your Black friends. They do not deserve having this emotional labor placed upon them during a time when they are already distressed. The [Racial Equity Tools](#) website is a great place to start.
- **Reach out to Black members of your community and ask what they need.** Support can come in many forms, both tangible and intangible.
- **Speak against racism or misinformation spread online.** Silence does nothing but further suppress the marginalized, while simultaneously empowering the oppressor.
- **Donate bail funds.** The [Atlanta Solidarity Fund](#) is one good option among many.
- **Organize supplies.** Contact [Atlanta Black Lives Matter](#) for a list of needs. Also take the opportunity to ask how you can further assist them from afar.
- **Provide transportation and/or childcare for individuals who are protesting.** However, please be sure to follow [CDC guidelines](#) to decrease your risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- **Volunteer to be a protester's emergency contact.** In the event that the individual is arrested, this may include notifying their family and/or helping them find funds for bail.
- **Get involved in local police reform.** Visit the website for the [Urban League of Greater Atlanta](#) to learn about action plans and ways you can contribute.
- **Join the [AWIS Advocacy Network](#).** Explore best practices for contacting local representatives, drafting talking points, making phone calls, writing emails/letters, and holding face-to-face meetings.
- **VOTE.** Elect local, state, and federal officials who utilize their platform to work towards ending social injustice in any form. The Georgia primary election is June 9<sup>th</sup>, and the runoff will be held August 11<sup>th</sup>. The registration deadline for these elections was May 11<sup>th</sup>, but there is still time to register for other elections held later in the year (such as the presidential election scheduled for November 3<sup>rd</sup>). Visit Georgia's [My Voter Page](#) to register, confirm your voting location, peruse sample ballots, view upcoming election dates, and more.

We are living in a defining moment for our nation. Over the course of the next several months, we will be faced with challenges that threaten to distract, discourage, and divide our communities. Let us make the commitment now to maintain a united front, fighting alongside our Black colleagues until real, tangible outcomes are attained. We must always speak out when confronted by any form of discrimination or prejudice. Our future, and the future of generations to come, depend on it.

**We are resilient women in STEM, and we will continue to be a force for change.**

In solidarity,



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