



## **Workforce Alliance Affirms Commitment to Racial Equity**

Workforce Alliance denounces the unjust and racially motivated murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and countless other Americans of color.

We condemn the long history of systemic racism that has made violence and discrimination against people of color so prevalent in the United States.

We recognize the persistent inequalities that continue to impact Black communities, leaving them with higher unemployment rates, lower graduation rates, less income, higher poverty rates, and less wealth. The recent pandemic has magnified this issue as we've seen Blacks and Latinos getting sick and dying at disproportionately high rates and be much more likely to be laid off during the economic shutdown. The stark fact that 40% of those laid off earned \$20,000 a year or less lays bare the economic struggle so many already faced. Many individuals, even those working multiple jobs to make ends meet, found themselves ineligible for unemployment insurance.

Our mission to develop comprehensive and community-wide options that deliver employment solutions to South Central CT has never been more important. Like all government and non-profit entities that serve communities of color, we must do more.

### **As we begin our new program year July 1, we pledge now to do these 5 things:**

- Assess our operations as an organization both internally and externally to make changes and be accountable for them.
- Dedicate new outreach resources through our network of American Job Centers and increase our collaboration with our community partners to not only reach and serve more people of color with employment & training services, but also provide us with input so that what we do is meaningful and has impact.
- Urge the Governor's Workforce Council to put into action recommendations we made last year to remove barriers caused by poor transportation, lack of adequate child care and benefit cliffs which disproportionately affect minority populations
- Expand efforts to serve minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs through our Business Services unit. In addition, continue to provide guidance and strategies to employers on how to diversify recruiting and hiring.
- Expand and build upon the impact of our Next Steps for Ex-Offenders program that has helped over 2,000 people since 2003 to find gainful employment after incarceration – a systemic plague that has for too long impacted black and brown lives and livelihoods in South Central CT.

To move our region toward racial and economic equity, we will continue to place people into jobs that provide a fair wage and benefits. We need more jobs, more education opportunities, more affordable housing and more mental health resources. These resources combined with a workforce development system that works through an equity lens can build better communities for everyone.

June 19, 2020