



[This is PJI.](#) We are 14 people from across the United States. Black, Chinese and white. Young and young at heart. Queer and straight. Single and married. Parents and favorite aunts. We are deeply committed to pretrial justice and to each other.

We believe Black Lives Matter.

Like so many around the country, we are collectively grieving the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery and David McAtee—along with the unhealed wounds from losing Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin and all those who have died as a result of racial terror or police brutality in America. We condemn the militarized response to protests in support of Black equality.

When we began our [racial equity journey](#) in 2019, we knew that it would transform PJI. We just didn't know how much. Experiencing this historic uprising together, during a pandemic that disproportionately kills Black and Brown people, feels incredibly different than it would have during our first 42 years. Put simply: the connective tissue of this organization has changed.

But that's the point. When you *truly* engage in equity, diversity and inclusion, your work and workplace shift—driven by the leadership, lived experience and community obligations of people who are closest to the issues you're trying to solve. The desire to speak out becomes intensely personal.

We believe there is only one way forward.

All Americans—especially white people—have the obligation to understand the history of white supremacy in this country. The murder of George Floyd (and so many others) is the inevitable result of our failure to come to grips with our legacy of slavery, Black Codes, lynchings, Jim Crow laws, redlining, and the war on drugs.

For those of us who work in justice, it's time to acknowledge that most reform efforts have failed because of our fundamental unwillingness to name and address racism in the system.

Are you ready to finally do what's right? Us, too.

“Putting yourself on the line is like killing a piece of yourself—in the sense that you have to kill, end, destroy something familiar and dependable, so that something new can come, in ourselves, in our world.” —Audre Lorde

We believe there is no pretrial justice without racial justice.

Because 97 percent of criminal cases are resolved without trial, our community is essential to reversing the harm that incarceration and the justice system have imposed on generations of Black and Brown families.

We realize that each of you are in different places on your journey, with your loved ones, and in your communities. For some, fighting for equity has been a necessary and constant part of your lives. For others, it may feel new and daunting.

But you are not alone in this fight.

Here at PJI, all of our remaining 2020 programming will focus on dismantling racism in the pretrial setting. We'll also hold space for you in [our online community](#), where you can engage meaningfully with facilitators, peers and innovators around anti-racism.

**Stay tuned for a special invitation to arrive in your email next week.

Will it get messy? Yes. Will you face some criticism and pressure to keep things the way they are? Most likely. Will you sometimes feel like giving up? (You are human, after all.)

But we have a feeling you won't. Chances are, you got into this work because you believed in the promise of a just society.

And we believe in you.

Please share your thoughts with us at leaders@pretrial.org.



[ADDITIONAL RESOURCES]

- [PJI's Racial Equity Transformation Rationale](#)
 - [PJI's Updated Position on Pretrial Risk Assessments](#)
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