



The International Institute of St. Louis stands in solidarity with the Black American community, stating unequivocally that Black lives matter. The deaths of George Floyd, Manuel Ellis, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and the many others whose names are not as well-known, represent only the most recent flashpoints in our nation's problematic and complex history of Black oppression.

We at the International Institute of St. Louis grieve for all those who have lost their lives as a result of systemic and pervasive racism. As we have watched the events of the last few weeks unfold across the United States, we acknowledge a shared and profound sense of loss and pain that many of our staff and community members are feeling.

We support the protests that are taking place in our community and encourage the free exercise of the constitutionally-protected rights to speak freely and assemble peaceably. We acknowledge the Black community's leadership and longstanding history of advancing civil rights for all people of color and other marginalized populations, including immigrants.

The mission of the International Institute is to build a more connected and productive society to benefit immigrants, their families, and the wider community. Our vision is for a diverse, inclusive and thriving community. Neither can be fulfilled as long as the systemic racism that has led to the deaths of so many Black Americans continues to exist.

The International Institute therefore commits to helping to actively engage immigrant communities in this work and providing opportunities for foreign-born residents to learn more about and connect with the experience of Black St. Louisans. In the coming days and months, expect the International Institute to:

- Listen: We will convene virtual listening sessions with staff, our immigrant and refugee clients, and the broader community.
- Adapt: We will be adapting our messaging, including commonly used statements, such as "we are nation of immigrants", to more accurately include the realities of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and treatment of indigenous populations.

- Commit: We will be taking a hard look at our current programming, policies and procedures to expand our own anti-racism initiatives. We commit to further action and adaptation based on our learnings, and we will share our progress.

Today, we are moving forward with hope – hope that the current and painful efforts that so many are undertaking will help our nation grow, heal, and become the fullest embodiment of the values all of us have for so long professed to hold. We join with our brothers and sisters of all colors so that through hope and such great struggle will come great change, so that one day every man, woman, and child can expect equitable and humane treatment, regardless of the color of their skin.

Please join us,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna".

Anna E. Crosslin
President & CEO