

## 13

## actions you can take to advance social justice

### 1. Know your elected officials and their positions on the issues.

You can find out your federal and state elected officials at [mdelect.net](http://mdelect.net) if you live in Maryland. You should be able to find out your city/county elected officials by looking them up on your city/county council websites. Research their positions: what bills have they sponsored? How have they voted on issues? **Save their phone numbers in your phone and their email addresses in your contacts.** This will make it easy to contact them quickly and often.

### 2. Write your state elected officials and ask them how they are going to prioritize police, criminal justice, and systemic reforms in the upcoming legislative session.

We don't have bill numbers or specific details as our state's next session doesn't start until January 2021, but we encourage you to reach out to your senators and delegates in the interim and ask them how they plan to create more equitable systems next session. Tell them what issues are important to you and why, and let them know what you want them to do!

### 3. Work to create an agency where diversity of all kinds is celebrated, inclusion is practiced and discussed, and equity exists at both the interpersonal and organizational levels.

The agency's [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council](#) has created a number of resources and platforms to help us on our journey. The [toolkit](#) provides colleagues with tools for self-reflection and growth. [Inclusion Groups](#) are supportive environments for colleagues who come together around a common understanding or experience. Join an Inclusion Group or attend their events to learn more. Share your story or reflection with colleagues using the [DEI Voices](#) platform on the Vine.

### 4. Learn about your city's or county's use-of-force policy.

You can find most policies by going to [8cantwait.org](http://8cantwait.org). Data demonstrates that if cities adopt the eight reforms to their use-of-force policies, police violence decreases by 72 percent. Learn which of the eight your city has implemented already – and where they have failed to improve – and reach out to your mayor, county executive, and local legislative council to demand changes.

**5. Sign petitions to demand changes.**

Change.org has several petitions to end white supremacy and systemic racism, including the largest signed petition the site has ever hosted, [Justice for George Floyd](#).

**6. Donate to the Juneteenth and Father's Day Bailout.**

[Out4Justice](#), [Job Opportunities Task Force](#), and [BALT \(Baltimore Action Legal Team\)](#) have created funds to post bail for individuals currently incarcerated due to unaffordable bail.

**7. Sign up for The Justice League, Catholic Charities' advocacy network.**

We will keep you informed about the new House of Delegates workgroup to address police reform and accountability in Maryland as well as the Senate hearings on police reform. The first meeting hasn't been scheduled yet, but it will show up on [Maryland General Assembly's website](#) when it is scheduled.

**8. Watch documentaries and media that explain the history of racism and the brokenness of current systems.**

Some suggestions to get you started are "13th," "Just Mercy," and "When They See Us" (all on Netflix). The DEI Council also has streaming access to "Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity."

**9. Read books about white supremacy, systemic racism and other forms of oppression.**

There are many books on these topics and many lists online. "How to be an Anti-Racist," "The New Jim Crow," "The Color of Law," and "Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City" are just a few that are highly recommended. This month, the DEI Council will be hosting [book club](#) discussions on "Becoming" and "Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City."

**10. Create signs, artwork, and other materials that recognize the lives we lost, and affirm the lives of our community.**

Make your own Black Lives Matter sign that you can put in your window or in front of your house. Being creative can be healing, and you can use what you make for rallies, or just to add some affirmations to your own surroundings.

**11. Attend events, rallies, demonstrations, book clubs and other forums on ending racism.**

These can be virtual or in-person events as you feel comfortable and are able to do (no one should put their health at risk). If you are going to a protest, make sure you know who is organizing it, what their demands are, and what the expectations are. Catholic Charities [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council](#) has a number of [offerings](#). Please ensure that you follow Catholic Charities policies preventing any colleague preventing any colleague from acting in political capacities as a representative of the agency and/or its programs.

**12. Acknowledge the indigenous land you are living on.**

The land we work, live, study, pray and play on was sacred space for the indigenous people and tribes who occupied this land. Find out which indigenous cultures evolved from the land we are on [by following this link](#), and then research if and what local activism those groups are doing and how you can support.

**13. Vote.**

Voting is an important way to make changes. We just had our state's primary election, and we will have a general election in November. Once our state's election results are finalized next week and we know the primary winners, start reading up about candidates. Send them an email and ask them what they plan to do in office to address issues you care about. Go to a debate and ask them how they plan to make reforms to our criminal justice system. Then vote in November.

*Inspired by the Gospel mandates  
to love, serve and teach,  
Catholic Charities provides care and services  
to improve the lives of Marylanders in need.*

Suggestions and feedback are welcome. Please contact the DEI Council at [inclusion@cc-md.org](mailto:inclusion@cc-md.org) or contact a member of the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council](#) directly.