

## ***A Message from New Beginnings Staff:***

### **BLACK LIVES MATTER**

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we stand today was stolen from the Coast Salish people, the tribes and bands within the Duwamish, Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations. We honor the original stewards who have cared for this land since time immemorial. As guests, most of us uninvited, we must acknowledge both the past and present history of colonization that the Coast Salish people have experienced.

New Beginnings mourns the murders of Black community members both locally, including Charleena Lyles, Manuel Ellis, Shaun Fuhr, and nationally, including Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Nina Pop and so many others. **As New Beginnings staff, we stand in solidarity with Decriminalize Seattle and King County Equity Now and their articulation of a new vision for community safety as reflected in the call to defund the police by 50%.** This transformative vision would limit the scope of policing to critical law enforcement functions and invest in community solutions to prevent harm and offer an expansive toolkit of crisis intervention strategies. Such strategies are demonstrated, proactive approaches to reducing escalation and violence while increasing access to help and resources.

Racial violence, gender-based violence and state sanctioned police violence are deeply connected.

**Defunding the police is a crucial step toward ending institutionalized racism and creating more protective options for all survivors of domestic violence.** As has been articulated many times since the murder of George Floyd, modern policing stems from white supremacist origins, and continues to harm Black and Indigenous communities, and communities of color. Domestic violence survivors, especially Black, Indigenous and people of color, are consistently failed by the police and criminal justice system.

**The power and control exerted by police on civilians is directly connected to the power and control that enables domestic violence.** Through our many years of service to survivors, we see that the current system is not working well for most. Police intervention has saved lives in some cases—a likelier outcome for people with some form of privilege. And yet, many Black, Indigenous and people of color survivors won't call the police, fearing racial bias, unnecessary escalation and incarceration, or deportation. Further, a survey conducted by the National Domestic Violence Helpline on law enforcement responses indicates that 60% of all survivors did not want police involvement due to a desire for privacy. 44% feared retaliation by the abuser, or the abuser's friends and family; and 22% were fearful for their children.

**Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) have been reimagining community safety for longer than the police have existed.** As a leading organization in the anti-violence movement, it is New Beginnings' responsibility to follow Black leadership and help create these safer alternatives to police. What could this transformation of community safety look like in our current moment? It could look like investments in housing, health care, childcare, drug and alcohol treatment, mental health crisis responders coupled with ample behavioral health treatment resources, employment navigation and other supportive services. It could look like strengthened community capacity to prevent domestic violence and a mobile force of domestic violence advocates who can respond to survivors' needs every time 911 is called and connect them to plentiful services. It could look like ample treatment options for abusive people seeking help to change their behavior.

**In reallocating these funds, the City should prioritize BIPOC, and in particular, Black individuals and community organizations that are actively addressing these and other issues that destabilize communities and contribute to crime and violence.**

Bringing this transformative vision into sharp focus will take time and thoughtful planning. We urge City officials to further the work they have begun—such as plans for participatory budgeting that gives power to Black, Indigenous and people of color—with the right mixture of urgency, collaboration and intentionality to create sustainable change.

New Beginnings was born out of the white feminist movement nearly 45 years ago. Over the years our agency has benefitted from access to funding, policy makers and public platforms often denied to Black and Indigenous communities, and people of color through the many mechanisms of institutionalized racism. Despite our best intentions, our internal systems and program services have reflected systemic racism as well. In earlier years this included an over-reliance on promoting law enforcement and criminal justice solutions to domestic violence for survivors, which has not served BIPOC survivors well. **Over the course of our history we have not consistently challenged these manifestations of systemic racism as we should or could have. In not doing so, we have perpetuated harm.**

There is more work ahead to ensure that we live up to our anti-racist values within New Beginnings and through our community efforts. We pledge to do this crucial work through continued listening and learning, and a sustained effort to identify and implement concrete actions that will forward the cause of ending racism.

New Beginnings envisions a world free from violence and oppression, reflected in peaceful relationships and communities. We understand that this vision cannot be realized without organizations like ours that have benefitted from white privilege, taking a stand to end state sanctioned violence against Black communities. **It is our collective responsibility to take action against the violence of both interpersonal and institutionalized racism.**

Further Reading:

[Huffington Post – Don't Use Domestic Violence Victims to Derail Police Reform](#)

[Fatherly – Police Brutality at Home: Cops Abuse Wives and Kids at Staggering Rates](#)

[National Domestic Violence Hotline Survey](#)

[ACLU Survey](#) (esp. Page 29, “Survivors’ Goals Do Not Align With Those of the Criminal Justice System or How It Operates”)

[Medium – Slavery and the Origins of the American Police State](#)

[Autostraddle – Police and Prison Abolition 101](#)

[Color Lines – The USPS’ Lack of Support Will Hit People of Color the Hardest](#)

Resources:

[Sprout Distro – 12 Things To Do Instead of Calling the Cops](#)

[Bail Funds by City](#)

[Black and Pink National Bail Fund](#)

[Resources for Black Healing](#)

[Wired – How To Protest Safely](#)

[ACLU – Protesters' Rights](#)

[Seattle City Council District Map and Contact Information](#)

[Petition: Tell Congress to Save the USPS](#)

COVID-19:

[UW Medicine – How To Protest Safely During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)