

INTRO AND OVERVIEW

'Why apathy - when we desperately need moral energy? Why flabby spirits when we need iron strength?' - Lillian Smith, 1949 on the subject of white people's support of segregation

The call and demand that #BlackLivesMatter is a core Women's March value. A world where Black people, especially Black women both cis and trans, are safe, thriving and can care for themselves and their children without the constant threat of violence by the police, vigilantes or other state agencies, is a world in which all people will be safer.

This is why we are advancing the national call from the Movement for Black Lives to Defund The Police.

Supporting this call by supporting street protests and taking bold action is central to our resistance to this administration. Racism is baked into the DNA of this country and long precedes Trump's presidency, but Trump has intentionally stoked the fires of racism to support his authoritarian project: white supremacy fuels his administration.

As an organization born out of opposition to Trump and Trumpism, we support the second call from the Movement for Black Lives that #TrumpResign.

Defunding the police is a feminist issue because black, poor, immigrant and undocumented women are disproportionately targeted, abused and murdered by police. It's a feminist issue because resources that could otherwise be directed to support our communities ability to survive and thrive—housing, jobs, meaningful employment, and healthcare—is being funneled away from critical services to bolster the budgets of the police.

All of this is happening in the wake of the Covid crisis where we have seen racism pop manifested in the ways the Coronavirus has disproportionately impacted Black, brown and immigrant communities. What can we learn about an administration that couldn't mobilize to make masks and PPE available, or shut down to prevent the spread of Covid-19—but can mobilize military-grade weapons and impose curfews in an instant when people are protesting the murders of black people by police?

This toolkit provides a set of resources and tools for Women's Marchers across the country as we work to understand this time, contribute meaningfully, and do our part in to channel this energy into sustained organizing to bring about the new world we so desperately need.

1. **WHAT TO DO: DEFUND THE POLICE**
2. **WHAT TO READ: DEEPEN OUR KNOWLEDGE**
3. **WHAT COMES NEXT: DEFEAT TRUMP**

In this moment, we are confronted with the opportunity to live our values. Every day we are here we have another chance to get it right and be more accountable to changing our collective reality. We all have a role to play.

WHAT TO DO

We support the national call by the Movement for Black Lives to **Defund the Police** and **to fund or invest** in communities instead. We support the calls for resourcing the Movement has put forward.

We also specifically believe **women have a key role in the [replacement of police with alternative emergency services](#)**. Alternative services can intervene in conflict, public and mental health crises in a way that affirms the basic humanity and dignity of all people.

Women's Marchers can push and activate those who are less affected, or as yet unconvinced, that we can and should defund police and replace these systems with just systems. The system of policing in this country is very local with budgets determined by city and county governments; we can move our communities, local electeds, and loved ones to support this demand:

1. Support Black-led Bail Funds, Street Protest and Local Black infrastructure

- First and foremost! If you can, join the street protests as you feel able; we like this [tool](#) for tips on how to do so safely. These popular protests continue to make the impossible possible across the country!
- Donate to [local bail funds](#), provide food, water, materials and sanctuary to protestors.
- Check with local organizations about other ways to support protestors ie. distributing masks or water, providing food or donations etc.

2. Take Action to Defund the Police

Most states have coalitions fighting for racial justice and/or working to change laws around policing. If there's a campaign or coalition already active, figure out how you can support existing work.

If organizing to defund the police hasn't reached your town/community, organize an action yourself: hold signs and/or chant Black Lives Matter, DEFUND the POLICE, and the names of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade at busy intersections, or outside government offices or other public areas; place signs in windows; hand out info to community members or hold meetings about the disproportionate police funding vs public investment, and more. Need help? Email organizing@womensmarch.com

If you're not already connected to local work and protests, do some research. [Are there already organizations or groups looking for new activists like you?](#) If so, introduce yourself, join them, offer your time and talent, and follow their leadership.

Note: Expect different organizers to tell you different or even conflicting ideas about what you should do. That will happen. Your job is to listen and discern as best you can.

Remember, too, that all of us bring different legacies to the table, black communities included. History has taught leaders to be suspicious that you're only showing up while the mass street protests are happening and will disappear once they're done. This doesn't mean you don't show up or do the work; it just means showing up with humility and openness.

3. Speak Up, Speak Out & Make Your Support Heard

Use local media and public meetings to state and stake your positions and demand elected officials **DEFUND the POLICE and invest in alternative emergency services, [like the CAHOOTS program in Eugene Oregon](#) and [Dallas Texas also now dispatches social workers to respond to 911 calls](#).**

- Write a letter to the editor (LTE) or Op-Ed to your local/regional newspaper. Imagine newspapers across the country being flooded with letters/messages of justice!
 - Movement for Black Lives website has a [helpful list of demands](#) and messages that you can adopt for your own writing;
 - Check out [these different letters](#) —you can see that they can be very simple, personal, and to the point
- Testify + speak out at your City Council or County Commissioners meetings. Find your local city and county meeting calendar and bring your team! 'Speak even when your voice shakes' - now couldn't be a more important time to live into this mantra.
 - Check out [this video](#) and read [this article](#) about a recent LA police commission meeting as inspiration
- Use social media to share your thoughts & amplify Black voices M4BL [FB](#) and [Twitter](#). Check out the Women's March easy to use [social media toolkit here](#).
- Expect some opposition, Police Unions are highly organized and come out strong for all police reforms. They also prop up Trump and other right wing agendas.

Other Recommendations:

Make a team: Organize like-minded people in your life onto a team with you; split up the work, embolden each other to take risks, and deepen your knowledge together. Think of this crew as your *Team of The Willing*. So many women's marchers are already connected to amazing networks - use them! Don't stress too much about 'naming your group' or becoming 'official'. Just focus on doing the work together.

Research: Find out basic information about how policing is resourced in your area. (Note: Police and law enforcement budgets are set at the local and county level; often the Police Chief is appointed by Mayors). This applies whether you're in a small town or a big city: policing *everywhere* is rooted in racism, sexism, and classism. No matter where we live or how homogeneous/diverse our surroundings, more resources should be spent on health, education, and social services—not the police. Organizing everywhere is how we transform the system from the bottom up.

WHAT TO READ

Regardless of our **individual** experience or training with police and law enforcement we must acknowledge and understand the **system of policing** in this country as racist in itself and do our part to transform the system of policing here.

As we show up in the streets to demand Black Lives Matter and heed the call to Defund the Police, this is a good time to be asking ourselves: *What was I taught about the police growing up? Why was I taught that? What was I taught about black lives?*

The recent incident with Amy Cooper who allegedly participated in a Women's March reminds us that none of us are exempt from internalized racism and biases. It is the fiber of this country and permeates our homes, schools and workplaces.

We encourage learning and reflecting not as a replacement for taking action, but to help you show up correct. You don't need to know everything to stand up and take risks, but all of us can invest in deepening our knowledge. If you can, [read these texts in community or with your team](#) to metabolize, reflect and engage with the content even when it's painful.

One way privilege manifests itself for those of us that are white is 'refusing' to deal with racism because it makes us feel really uncomfortable or icky or nervous. There are tons of amazing resources out there including [this list](#) and [this list](#) but below are some favorites.

LISTEN:

['Seeing White'](#) Podcast | ['Where Does It Hurt?'](#) Ruby Sales on OnBeing Podcast

READ:

[Ibram X. Kendi's Anti-Racist Reading List](#) | [White Fragility](#) by Robin DeAngelo

[The Iron Fist and The Velvet Glove](#) | [Unapologetic: A Black Queer and Feminist Mandate for Our Movements](#) by Charlene A. Carruthers

DEFUND THE POLICE:

[Freedom to Thrive Report](#) provides background on existing organizing pushing to Defund the Police and invest in health and safety locally | [Thenjiwe McHarris's recent NYT Op Ed](#)

Questions you can reflect on and discuss with your team and loved ones:

- What is it like to read or listen to this material? What was new information for you?
- Did reading or listening to any of this feel uncomfortable or scary?
- Did you feel defensive? Hopeful?
- What do these readings make you want to do? How do you want to take action, in your own life or in the public?

WHAT COMES NEXT

Racism didn't begin with the Trump presidency—it is baked into this country's DNA. But white supremacy and racism is one of the tools Trump uses to uphold his authoritarian administration.

The Movement for Black Lives has issued a demand for Trump to resign: as they say, the country is ablaze and Trump lit the match. We support and back this demand as we have fought for the end of the Trump administration since the day it began.

We know, however, that even as we march in the streets, write letters, speak up in meetings, talk to our communities, and deepen our knowledge today, we must also keep some of our attention fixed on November.

Defunding the police, ensuring that black lives matter, and defeating Trump in November are all part of our collective feminist future. To get us ready for the next three months, this July we're excited to be hosting the first ever **Women's March Feminist Futures Summer School**.

This exciting part-training, part-gathering, part-leadership development workshop is grounded in a model that feminist community leaders and organizers around the country have been building, from Wyoming to New Orleans—but shaped specifically around the goals and requests we've heard from you, the women driving this community.

Sign up and get more information here: [The Women's March Feminist Summer School](#)

The FFSS will include sessions on feminist leadership, the ways we can integrate race, class, and gender analysis in our organizing, plus time spent on concrete skills and Covid-friendly tools that we can use to canvas, persuade voters, and GOTV between now and November.

Please sign up for [The Women's March Feminist Summer School](#) today!

There is justice. There is injustice. There is no neutrality. No sideline. No bleachers. No exits.

We are all in the human rights struggle to save humanity from human tyranny. Black people, especially, are struggling for the right to live, for the right to breathe. - Ibram X Kendi