



Joint Affinity Groups Statement on the Baltimore Uprising

The events in Baltimore Maryland unfolded right as many grantmakers in the field were engaging in the 2015 conference season. The killing of people of color, predominantly Black people, by police is a recurring concern. This is a not a new problem, just one that is more well known to us all given the presence of cell phone cameras and social media. As in Ferguson, New York, South Carolina and many other regions, funders in Baltimore are now faced with developing rapid response strategies in addition to their ongoing work.

At this time, the members of the Joint Affinity Groups ask that we stay focused on the conditions that led to the violent uprising in Baltimore. We do not condone the actions of young people who turned the planned peaceful protests into an all-out riot that set the streets of the city on fire. However violence leads to more violence. The violence didn't start with young people throwing bottles, it started when the police shattered Mr. Gray's spine. Beneath the surface are a set of conditions that resulted in the explosion:

1. Baltimore's poverty rate far exceeds that of the national average;
2. Black males regularly report being profiled and harassed by police and the city is known for its failed policing policies; and
3. The community groups closest to the ground in some of the poorest neighborhoods don't have the resources they need to organize powerful advocacy campaigns to address the policies and practices of systems (schools, police, justice, workforce, etc.) that oppress people across race/ethnicity; gender, gender expression and identity; sexual orientation; age and ability.

JAG calls on the philanthropic sector to do more and to stay focused on the structural and persistent issues that lead to the conditions for such uprisings. Foundation leaders should use their bully pulpits to speak out on issues of police accountability, invest in grantees and leaders who can build power within the most vulnerable communities in this country and move with urgency to make it happen.





Joint Affinity Groups Information

Founded in 1993, JAG (Joint Affinity Groups) is a network of collaborating affinity groups engaging over 20,000 professionals, who are committed to equity and social justice. JAG promotes a more just and equitable distribution of philanthropic resources to produce healthier communities with equal access to services and resources and equal opportunity for all.

JAG's vision is to advance, align, and activate work that pursues more equity for diverse communities.

Advance: JAG advances equity in philanthropy through cutting-edge analyses that draw upon its partners' experience, perspectives, knowledge, and values.

Align: JAG aligns the work of its partners and allies to build more equity for diverse communities by hosting convenings, pooling resources, developing intersectional strategies, and uniting upon shared interests.

Activate: JAG activates change in philanthropy and in diverse communities by collaborating, mobilizing partners and allies, and taking action that leads to equity.

The following organizations are members of JAG:

- Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP)
- Association of Black Foundation Executives (ABFE)
- Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy (EPIP)
- Funders for LGBTQ Issues
- Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP)
- Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP)
- Women's Funding Network (WFN)

