

Loeser Avenue, P.O. Box 547
Somerville, NJ 08876-0547
Phone: (908) 575-8300
Fax: (908) 927-9010
Email: info@plannj.org
Web: www.plannj.org



PLAN/NJ Decries Systemic Racism and Vows to Develop New Programs That Better Serve Black People with Disabilities

“We are committed to taking action against systemic racism and to uniting with the disability rights community in New Jersey to remove barriers to high quality services for Black people with disabilities.” – *Ellen Ball Nalven, M.Ed., Executive Director, PLAN/NJ*

Dear friends and colleagues,

We work every day to serve and support the needs of all people with disabilities and their families. Black lives matter, and it is our obligation to speak out against and work to eradicate the effects that the insidious, systemic and indelible stains of racism and slavery have left on American life and culture. We find aggressive police actions against African-Americans intolerable, and we recognize these as symptoms of a chronic illness, a public health crisis for which we must find a cure.

We join the National Disability Rights Network, The Arc of the US, The Community Health Law Project, The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, The National Black Disability Coalition, and others who are decrying racism and discrimination in our health, housing and other support practices. We intend to gather, learn, listen, and discuss how we may create new, right actions to better serve Black people with disabilities in our state. We feel the urgency to individually and collectively commit to expanding outreach to underserved communities of color. Along with our board of directors and staff, we seek to collaborate with state and national experts and leaders to create more equitable and just fiduciary and social services systems for our field. We support the integrity guideposts from the Black Lives Matter movement as our own, including the following, which must be plainly stated:

- We acknowledge, respect, and celebrate differences and commonalities
- We embody and practice justice, liberation, and peace in our engagements with one another
- We work vigorously for freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension, all people

Further, we align with the National Black Disability Coalition, which is “dedicated to examining and improving community leadership, family inclusion, entrepreneurship, civil rights, service delivery systems, education and information and Black disabled identity and culture through the lenses of ableism and racism.”

We invite any and all interested parties to take this journey with us.