

Taking Action

Black Lives Matter. We did not send a message in June in response to the murder of George Floyd and the death of Breonna Taylor or Ahmaud Arbery before that. We did not send a message because we wanted our words to be accompanied by action. While we represent black women and men every single day, that does not mean we too have not taken part in upholding systems founded on white supremacy. Therefore, we as an organization have had and will continue to ask ourselves, “How can we advance the cause of racial justice and ensure that we continue to move the Black Live Matters movement forward?”

For now, here are the commitments we have made:

- Our staff and board partnered with [Service Never Sleeps](#) to participate in racial justice training including White Supremacy 101 and Microaggressions and Allyship.
- As a staff, we discuss weekly the question: What role can Amara play in achieving racial justice?
- Our annual No Show Ball fundraiser will focus on the effects of systemic racism in all of our practice areas and in our clients’ lives.
- We will ensure we make space for the voices of our black staff to be heard; however, we will not be relying on them for a solution to a problem they did not create.
- On the administrative level, Amara will continue to prioritize diversity in hiring by:
 - Using reserves to increase salaries to hire attorneys of color who may not be able to take positions at Amara due to current salary levels.
 - Slowing down hiring decisions to ensure that we have a diverse pool of candidates and advertising through HBCUs.
 - Prioritizing businesses of color when we are purchasing items and services.
 - Continuing to support and prioritize work with organizations led by people of color
- In our day-to-day services:
 - Paying clients for supporting our work (i.e. in providing feedback on our strategic plan or speaking to donors)
 - Creating a survivor involvement policy to ensure equitable treatment of our clients when they support and inform Amara activities.
 - Paying for consultants with lived experience to inform our work.
- On the policy level:
 - We will ensure youth voices are a part of the conversation and are highlighted.

- We are researching the need for legislation in DC and Virginia that prevents law enforcement from engaging in sexual contact with individuals in their custody. Currently, only Maryland has a criminal law preventing law enforcement officers from engaging in sexual contact with individuals in their custody.
- We are researching legislation to expunge “no papered” cases, especially for the racial justice activists recently arrested during the D.C. protests. Currently, there is a two-year waiting period to expunge these cases and in the meantime, criminal charges can affect opportunities for employment, housing, and education.

These are only the first steps we are taking as an organization and there is so much more work to do. We look forward to working with our staff, board, partners, clients, and supporters to ensure racial justice is not just the flavor of the month but continues to be at the forefront of our work.

Llamilet Gutierrez
Executive Director

Virginia Updates

Our Virginia attorney, Sidney McCoy, has been hard at work since she started last June. In the last year, she has co-led the Virginia Coalition Against Human Trafficking (VCAHT) meeting with over a dozen legislators to educate them about the importance of post-conviction remedies, specifically vacatur and expungement for survivors of human trafficking. She is currently monitoring the Virginia State Crime Commission in hopes of having them issue a favorable report on the need for comprehensive criminal record relief for survivors. To learn more about VCAHT, check out their website.

In the meantime, here are some positive outcomes from this legislative session for our client population.

Highlights include:

- Recognizing Election Day as a state holiday and removing Lee-Jackson Day as a state holiday
- Raising the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$9.50
- Prohibiting law enforcement from questioning the immigration status of a victim or witness to a crime
- Establishing driver privilege cards for non-citizens
- Issuance of protective orders for victims of crime when the defendant has been convicted of certain enumerated felonies for up to the entire life of defendant

- Removal of guns from anyone with a protective order against them
- Banning conversion therapy
- Providing name and gender marker changes on a variety of government issued IDs and documents



Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE
OCTOBER 11 5:30-7 PM EST

AMARA'S STAR NIGHT IN

STAR-STUDED BENEFIT CONCERT TO RAISE FUNDS FOR VICTIMS OF SEX TRAFFICKING AND THOSE WHOSE RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED DURING COMMERCIAL SEX.

FEATURING:
LISA LOEB
OH HE DEAD
IDAN RAICHEL
WENDY LIEBMAN
EMMY BLOTNICK

VISIT AMARALEGAL.ORG @AMARALEGAL

AMARA LEGAL CENTER

Amara Legal Center invites you to a star-studded music and comedy benefit show entitled Amara's "Star Night In." Enjoy an evening of live music, comedy, live auction, raffle prize give-a-ways, and a discussion about Amara Legal Center's mission and impact. The night's performers will include the Grammy award-winning singer songwriter [Lisa Loeb](#), BBC World Music Award nominee [Idan Raichel](#), the popular indie soul band [Oh He Dead](#), and comedians [Wendy Liebman](#) (Jimmy Fallon, David Letterman), and [Emmy Blotnick](#) (Colbert, Conan).

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

July 30th is [World Day Against Trafficking in Persons](#), a day recognizing the need for a

global effort to combat trafficking. Designated in 2013 by the [United Nations](#), this day is dedicated to raising awareness of the plight of human trafficking victims and survivors, and to promoting and protecting their rights. On this day each year, we “reaffirm our commitment to stop criminals from ruthlessly exploiting people for profit and to help victims rebuild their lives.”

Tune into our social media channels for updates as the day gets closer!

A Look Back

As our team works on our annual report, we are amazed at all that we have accomplished as a community. We look back humbly at the fundraisers where our supporters and partners have continuously shown up and supported us. We love reaching out and working with the community to spread knowledge and speak up on important issues. We look forward to seeing you all in person again but in the meantime we are organizing virtual training or using other safe methods to stay connected as our mission and efforts continue.

A banner with a white background and a blue wavy shape at the bottom. The text "Catalogue for Philanthropy" is written in a blue, sans-serif font.

Catalogue for Philanthropy

We're excited to share that Amara Legal Center has been chosen for the Catalogue for Philanthropy's 2020-21 class of nonprofits. They recognize the best community-based nonprofits in the D.C. region. We are so honored by our inclusion and look forward to partnering with you in the future! You can learn more about the Catalogue and this year's class at www.cfp-dc.org

Donations Under the CARES Act

We've shared this information before, but we know there may still be questions or concerns about how the Stimulus Package, also known as the CARES ACT, impacts your donations to Amara Legal Center and other organizations you support. If you do not itemize your taxes and choose a standard deduction, the bill allows up to \$300 in charitable contributions to be an above-the-line deduction, meaning you don't have to itemize to claim the deduction. Contributions must be cash donation(s) to qualified charities. This means donations of clothes may not qualify.

For those who do itemize when filing your taxes, the bill increases the cap on annual giving from 60 percent of adjusted gross income to 100 percent. For more information, please contact your tax advisor.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to support our work, you can donate to Amara Legal Center [here](#), or when you shop on Amazon using [Amazon Smile](#).



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