

BLACK LIVES MATTER AND RACIAL EQUITY STATEMENT

In our Region and across the United States, Black Lives Matter.

We join the rest of the country in grieving the killings of George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless other Black Americans as inconceivable acts of violence. Richmond Region Tourism faces the hardcore reality that racism still kills, even today.

As we look in the mirror of our organization, we must change to fully realize our mission to be inclusive and stand against racial violence, injustice and exclusion. The Black Lives Movement moves us to a higher level of obligation accountability, verified with deliberate and determined actions.

Every day, we proudly promote the Richmond region to visitors. We welcome and embrace people with messages of diversity and inclusion. But it is impossible to do this work without acknowledging the inequities and injustices that unfairly target Black people. These practices must be stopped. Richmond Region Tourism is committed to helping end systemic racism and injustice.

Acknowledging that we have stood silent on this issue far too long, the Richmond Region Tourism Board of Directors approved a statement below supporting the removal of Confederate monuments. The board also reiterated the organization's commitment to inclusion and will take immediate steps to ensure our efforts are meaningful and impact real and sustainable change. Finally, we commit to putting our words to work with visible and impactful action.

We started by looking at ourselves. Richmond Region Tourism held a staff townhall meeting to talk about ways we can be better employers. The meeting also surfaced ways the organization can support our community, foster healing and promote equality. This is the first of many conversations.

Richmond Region Tourism has identified a consultant to assist us with an immediate goal of creating a diversity and inclusion strategic action plan to promote equity inside and outside of our organization. We will include staff, board, and community discussion to inform and guide the plan.

We will also build on the foundation of our existing BLK RVA platform to continue to support the prosperity of Black-owned businesses in our Region in an even more visible and engaging way.

In honor of Juneteenth, we have added today as a holiday for our team members and will continue to observe this important date as a holiday going forward.

We know there is ongoing work for our organization to do. Together, the Richmond Region Tourism team and board will listen, learn and use our voices and actions to continue to help positively change RVA.



MONUMENT REMOVAL STATEMENT

Among the foremost attractions of the Richmond Region are our historic assets, and as history is ever evolving, so is our story, a story that has been marked by heroics and heartache alike. Richmond's broad appeal to tourists and conventioners cannot and should not be measured by a handful of anachronistic monuments, irrespective of how they are interpreted. **We do not share the recent concerns expressed that the removal of these monuments will somehow suppress tourism.**

We are today writing a new chapter in our history. We support the removal of these monuments and welcome the opportunity to participate in the movement of healing and reconciliation within the Richmond community and beyond. We stand among those who are excited at the possibilities to showcase the best of who we are, and to do so with honesty, respect and pride.

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About BLK RVA

BLK RVA is a collaborative initiative between Richmond Region Tourism and more than 20 community leaders. The campaign promotes tourism by illustrating the Richmond region as a multicultural hub that specializes in four pillars: Arts & Entertainment, Food & Drink, Community, and History. BLK RVA sets out to increase tourism, engage regional residents, and support businesses by showcasing spaces that highlight the Black experience in the Richmond region. Black culture in Richmond is rooted in history yet rising in its future. For more information, visit visitblk RVA.com.

About Richmond Region Tourism

Richmond Region Tourism is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting the Region to meeting, convention and sports event planners, tour operators and leisure travelers. Richmond Region Tourism operates three Visitor Centers located at the Greater Richmond Convention Center downtown, the Robinson House at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Richmond International Airport, and a Mobile Visitor Center.

Every year 7.7 million people visit the Richmond Region, contributing \$2.6 billion to the local economy. Tourism generates more than 24,000 jobs in the Richmond Region. For more information, visit VisitRichmondVA.com.