

# INDUSTRY RESPONSE TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

## A+E Networks

- A+E Networks has produced “The Time Is Now: Race and Resolution,” which aired across all A+E networks in partnership with the NAACP and OZY (an international media and entertainment company which describes its mission as helping curious people see a broader and a bolder world).
  - This important conversation features influential social justice voices discussing the ways systemic racism, implicit bias, and economic inequality are afflicting our nation, and pathways forward to help achieve lasting change.

## AMC Networks

- AMC Networks has invited each of its 1,000 U.S. employees to identify charitable organizations that tackle issues related to racial inequality to receive a \$1,000 donation from the company (so, \$1,000 from EACH employee = about \$1 million).
  - The company’s goal is to have the donations be spread among organizations that employees already work with or support in other ways. (AMC Networks took a similar approach earlier this year in giving employees \$1,000 apiece to donate to coronavirus-related relief efforts.)
- The company also gave employees June 4 as a day off for a “Day of Reflection.”
- The company also observed a nearly nine-minute blackout on June 4 across its five cable channels — AMC, SundanceTV, IFC, We TV and BBC America; and, it hosted a company town hall to discuss social justice and inequality issues on June 5.

## Comcast

- Comcast Corp. unveiled a \$100 million plan to support social justice and equality.
  - Comcast Chief Executive Brian Roberts said that the company would set aside \$75 million in cash and \$25 million in advertising inventory to fight injustice against “any race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or ability.”
  - The funds and ad space will be distributed over the next three years.
  - Robert said business leaders across Comcast, NBCUniversal and Sky will “build programs, allocate resources and partner with national and local organizations to drive meaningful change.” More specifics about donations and partnerships will be unveiled in the weeks ahead, Robert said.
- Targets for funding and partnership will be wide ranging, according to Roberts. They will address the following segments:

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- **Social Justice:** Comcast will partner with, and provide significant grants to, organizations working to eradicate injustice and inequity. Organizations will include but not be limited to, the National Urban League, the Equal Justice Initiative, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Action Network and the Community Justice Action Fund.
- **Employees:** Comcast will accelerate efforts in all areas of Diversity & Inclusion, including advancement, hiring, and training. It will educate employees across the company to better understand race-related issues and through Town Halls, speaker series and mandatory anti-racism and anti-bias training. It will also provide additional financial support to Employee Resource Groups and invest in diverse talent, aiming to encourage racial sensitivity and eradicate explicit and implicit bias in the workplace at all levels across Comcast, NBCUniversal and Sky.
- **Awareness & Education:** Comcast will highlight Black voices and Black stories and educate viewers on diverse and inclusive cultures, perspectives, and experiences, by making anti-racism education and inequality awareness a priority. NBC News will host a series of Town Halls and will use the X1, Flex, Peacock and Sky platforms to promote and amplify multicultural content.
- **Digital Equity:** The company will deepen its commitment to addressing digital inequities. Over the last 10 years, Comcast's Internet Essentials has connected more than eight million low-income people to the internet at home. It will also scale up its pledge to provide digital skills training to young people and to upskilling adults with the aim of improving economic mobility. (Supporting organizations such as Black Girls Code, which empowers girls of color to become innovators in STEM fields, and BUILD, which ignites the potential of young people from under-resourced communities, are two examples.)
- **Small Business Opportunity:** Comcast will commit funds to help small businesses that have been affected by extended closures in the wake of COVID-19, allocating a substantial portion of those funds to businesses owned by people of color. The company's units will support businesses impacted by the events of the last few months and provide airtime and commercial production when they are ready to open. The company also will increase its commitment to, and investments in, diverse and female entrepreneurs.

## Cox Enterprises

- Cox Enterprises, parent company of Cox communications, has established a \$1 million fund "to help organizations that support social justice and civil and human rights."
  - The company will engage in open dialogue with employees through town halls and forums and gather feedback on appropriate organizations to receive the company's donations.
  - "We want to empower [employees] to go into their communities and forge new relationships, bring about positive change, and provide support for those brave enough to make a difference," Cox said.

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## Discovery

- Discovery has leveraged its pro-inclusivity “social good” initiative called RISE: Reducing Inequality and Supporting Empowerment, which is dedicated to supporting a more equal world, partnering globally with Save the Children to support basic human needs to lower the inequality gap.
- As one part of Discovery’s response efforts to recent tension and events, the company is making corporate donations under RISE to support organizations fighting for social justice and working to promote social mobility.
- Discovery also has launched a global PSA that says: “Discovery’s mission is to understand and share the world around us. We will always stand for mutual respect, equality, and tolerance. Our hope is for justice and peace for all. #BlackLivesMatter.”
- Oprah Winfrey hosted a two-night event in which she spoke with black leaders, activists and artists about systematic racism and the current state of America. “OWN Spotlight: Where Do We Go From Here?” aired on June 9 and 10, and as of June 15 it had attracted nearly 18 million viewers. It was simulcast across all of Discovery’s U.S. networks. Participants in the special included Ava DuVernay, Stacey Abrams, Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, Nikole Hannah-Jones, Rashad Robinson, Ibram Kendi, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, Jennifer Eberhardt, David Oyelowo and Charles M. Blow.

## Disney

- The Walt Disney Company pledged \$5 million in donations to support nonprofit organizations “that advance social justice.” Disney said it will begin by donating \$2 million to the NAACP. The company also pledged to match employee donations to organizations through its Disney Employee Matching Gifts program. Disney did not identify the other nonprofits that would stand to receive the remaining \$3 million but said the organizations would be those that focus on social justice.
- The company has posted messages of solidarity on its social media platforms. “We stand against racism,” the statement on the Walt Disney Studios Twitter page said. “We stand for inclusion. We stand with our fellow Black employees, storytellers, creators and the entire Black community. We must unite and speak out.”
- Disney also aired programming on June 2 to encourage a discussion of racism and oppression in the U.S., which included an ABC News special about the protests around George Floyd’s death, called “America in Pain: What Comes Next?,” and two episodes of “Black-ish,” with one episode focused on police brutality.

## Fox

- The Fox broadcast network aired a 12-second moment of silence and a message to its viewers amid nationwide protests over the death of George Floyd demanding racial justice. “We condemn all racism and discrimination and

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proudly support our Black colleagues, viewers, partners and neighbors,” the message said, “We stand with them and communities seeking inclusion and understanding. Black Lives Matter.”

- Lachlan Murdoch, executive chairman and CEO of the network’s parent Fox Corp, sent a memo to employees. “This is a time for people to come together in their grief, work to heal, and coalesce to address injustice and inequity in our country,” Murdoch wrote, adding that his Fox team “has been in my thoughts as we watch the tragic death of George Floyd continue to cause immense pain and spark important discussions around the country.”

## IBM

- IBM scrapped its facial recognition business over concerns about how it can be used for mass surveillance and racial profiling. In a letter to Members of Congress, IBM’s chief executive Arvind Krishna confirmed the company’s shift away from facial recognition software as it looks to “advance racial equality.” He wrote, “IBM firmly opposes and will not condone uses of any technology, including facial recognition technology offered by other vendors for mass surveillance, racial profiling, violations of basic human rights and freedoms.”

## Urban One (including TV One)

- Urban One held a virtual town hall on June 4 to discuss the current political and racial climate plaguing the African American community titled, *We Are One: More Than A Hashtag*. The one-hour virtual town hall streamed live on the digital platforms across the Urban One brands Radio One, Reach Media, TV One and iOne Digital.

## Viamedia

- Viamedia, the television industry’s largest independent local ad management company, launched #ChangeStartsRightHere, an initiative to foster positive conversations in local communities about the changes needed to help end racism.

## ViacomCBS

- ViacomCBS committed \$5 million to social justice causes; set a virtual community day for June 18; and is preparing to announce new members of its combined global inclusion advisory committee.
- CEO Bob Bakish said the company had donated \$12 million over the past two years to organizations promoting racial equality as part of an effort to create “a more equitable company, communities and countries. But we must do more and do better.”
- At 5 p.m. EDT on June 1, the company’s networks – including MTV, Comedy Central, BET and VH1 – aired eight minutes and forty-six seconds of breathing sounds with the words, “I can’t breathe.” That day, the company offered online counseling sessions for staffers.

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- BET launched a \$25 million campaign titled “Content for Change.” The initiative is being carried out by BET and various corporations, civil rights groups, and social justice organizations, with the intent to positively impact social justice outcomes for Black Americans. It will support the creation, distribution, marketing, and promotion of content aimed at ending systemic racism in America in areas such as education, healthcare, civic participation, and economic empowerment.
  - The initiative will begin on June 19, also known as Juneteenth, the nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States, with programming celebrating the resilience of the African American spirit. BET will premiere original short-form programming, including messages of inspiration, tenacity and hope from Black political leaders and activists. The network will also air the films “Selma,” “Marshall,” “Race,” and “Do the Right Thing.”
  - Furthermore, BET has crafted a message titled “Dear Black People.” The spot is meant to celebrate the beauty and strength of Black culture, the Black Experience and to affirm the network’s commitment to stand with the Black community in the demand for liberation.
- Paramount Network removed the long-running show ‘Cops’ from its schedule in the wake of nationwide protests and then cancelled the show altogether.
- Showtime has made a number of films and documentaries available to stream for free in an effort to help guide broader education on social and racial justice.

## WarnerMedia

- WarnerMedia said it will expand its content innovation program OneFifty with an additional \$500,000 to seed issue-focused creative ideas from communities who often go unheard.
- The company will donate commercial inventory to Color of Change and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.
- HBO Max has temporarily removed “Gone with the Wind” from its streaming library in order to add historical context to the 1939 film long criticized for romanticizing slavery and the Civil War-era South.
- The company also will continue releasing content that addresses social issues for free, building off its free download of *Just Mercy* announced earlier this month. HBO programs “Notes from the Field” and “Wyatt Cenac’s Problem Areas” are available on YouTube. The company said much more free programming will be announced shortly.
- Sesame Street held a town hall with CNN, “Coming Together: Standing Up to Racism,” to discuss racism with families and children.