

# AFP QUÉBEC STATEMENT

## Statement by the Board of Directors of AFP Québec with regard to its members

Montréal, May 17, 2023

We would like to address a recent situation that was brought to our attention regarding troubling allegations that were made in another AFP chapter in Canada, namely, Greater Toronto. The facts were recently made public, and the actions reported highlight the fact that even in the charitable sector, we are not immune from reprehensible acts, particularly racism against the black community.

It is paramount for us to be transparent with our members, to take concrete measures out of respect for the victims and to make sure that a situation like this never occurs again for AFP Québec's members and volunteers.

We are confident that AFP Global—the umbrella organization for the entire Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) representing over 30,000 members in over 240 chapters around the world, including the Greater Toronto chapter—will promptly and respectfully take the necessary measures to begin open dialogue with the victims in the spirit of reparation. This will help to ensure a more inclusive and equitable philanthropy sector in Canada.

AFP Québec is taking this situation very seriously. We understand that we all have conscious and unconscious biases and that systemic racism is still present in several spheres of our society. This is why we have explicitly integrated a pillar devoted exclusively to truth and reconciliation (TR), inclusion, diversity, equity and access (IDEA) in our recent strategic plan, which will be made public on our website in the next few days.

We know that we still have a lot to do in terms of truth and reconciliation as well as inclusion, diversity, equity and access. The position we have chosen to adopt is one of learning, openness and action so that every person feels not only welcome within our philanthropy community in Québec, but also wholly integrated as a full member.

From this perspective, we have already implemented a series of measures and will steadfastly continue in this direction:

- Whistleblower protection policy: We want all irregularities be brought to our attention and guarantee the protection of whistleblowers in this process.
- Policy for handling complaints: AFP Québec wanted to formalize and make its complaint handling process transparent for the benefit of its members. The policy is currently under legal review and will be made public soon.
- Code of ethics: We make sure to enforce our code of ethics at all times, particularly section 1 (“Members shall not engage in activities that harm the members’ organization, clients or profession or knowingly bring the profession into disrepute.”).
- Code of conduct: Beyond ethics, AFP Québec wants to go a step further and adopted a code of conduct at its last Board of Directors’ meeting. It is currently under legal review and will be made public soon.

- Strategic pillar dedicated to TR and IDEA: We have deliberately deployed a strategic plan that focuses on the actions we can take in terms of truth and reconciliation as well as inclusion, diversity, equity and access. We will make our strategic plan available in the next few days.
- Acknowledgement of territory: We know that this is just the first step, but we are fully aware that we are operating on many non-ceded territories and that we have a duty to memory, to education and to dialogue with Indigenous communities.

But these few gestures and actions are not enough. We want to engage in an ongoing process built on:

- Greater awareness and training: We will offer awareness and training programs for all members of the Board of Directors, in order to better understand the problems related to racism, unconscious bias and discrimination. We will also promote workshops and education sessions on truth and reconciliation as well as inclusion, diversity, equity and access for all our members.
- Creating an inclusive environment: We will work to create an environment where every voice is heard and respected. We will actively promote the participation of people from marginalized and minority communities in our initiatives, events and decision-making process. And we'll make sure that our internal policies and processes are fair and non-discriminatory.
- Active listening and reparation: We will adopt active listening mechanisms for victims of discrimination and racism. We will make sure that their concerns are heard, respected and handled appropriately. We will encourage open dialogue and transparency in the problem-resolution process, while ensuring the confidentiality of those involved. We will work closely with victims to identify the necessary reparation measures, while paying close attention to their needs and wellbeing.
- Responsibility and accountability: We will be transparent in terms of our actions and progress in promoting truth and reconciliation, inclusion, diversity, equity and access. We will implement follow-up measures in order to evaluate our advances and to keep our members regularly apprised of our results. We will take responsibility for our mistakes and make the changes needed to guarantee a safe and include environment with AFP Québec. In addition, we will make our policies public on our website to ensure greater transparency for our members.
- Mobilization of our members: We are calling on all our members to actively engage in this process. We encourage the participation of each and every one of them in our initiatives, our working groups and our committees devoted to these issues. Together, we can build a philanthropy community in Québec that is more fair, more inclusive and more respectful of everyone.

As the Chair of AFP Québec's Board of Directors, I personally promise to do everything I can to help create a philanthropy environment where every person is valued, respected and included. I am open to your concerns, your ideas and your suggestions, because every voice is important in this positive and lasting transformative initiative.

At AFP Québec, we firmly believe that individual engagement and collective responsibility are just as important as our concrete action plans in bringing about change. As we take on the challenges facing us, it is essential that we recognize the role that each one of us plays in accomplishing the changes we are seeking.

We must be prepared to question our own perspective, to actively listen to diverging opinions and to show empathy towards the experiences of others. This means that we must have the courage to engage in difficult conversation, address sensitive subjects and recognize our own privileges and prejudices. But talking is not enough. We must act. Every person must assume their share of responsibility and be ready to actively contribute to change.

Thank you for your trust and continued support. Together, we will build a strong and inclusive philanthropy community in Québec and Canada—one that respects each and every person.

Cordially,



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*AFP Québec recognizes the Indigenous nature of the many territories of Turtle Island where we work and reside. Many Indigenous peoples have lived in or on this territory for tens of thousands of years, and still live there today. As an organization at the heart of a sector devoted to the reduction and elimination of inequities and to vulnerable communities, we think it's crucial to understand the past and present consequences of colonialism. We must also recognize that the systemic challenges facing Indigenous peoples are not limited to the past and are still present today. As refugees, settlers, immigrants or their descendants, and as visitors, each and every one of us must educate ourselves and learn more about non-ceded territories and those ceded by treaty, and their history. As an organization and as individuals, we will continue to work on what it means to us to fight for decolonization, while continuing to act on the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, with the sincere hope of creating a more equitable future—together.*