

History of Juneteenth

Juneteenth (short for “June Nineteenth”) is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day, commemorates the day federal troops took control of Texas in 1865. The Emancipation Proclamation was enacted two years prior in 1863, but slavery remained relatively unaffected in Texas, until June 19, 1865, when General Order Number 3 was issued to the people of Texas.

General Order Number 3 began most significantly with:

“The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer.”

On June 17th, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday.

Four Ways to Celebrate Juneteenth

Juneteenth is in the second year of being observed as a federal holiday in the United States, with festivities growing over the past couple of years. The following are five ideas for ways to celebrate Juneteenth this year:

1. Learn more about Juneteenth

The following are resources that offer learning opportunities around Juneteenth:



Discover the tastes, sounds and experiences of Juneteenth – Learn more about Juneteenth through a live and digital exhibit at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture. The exhibit can be accessed online at

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/juneteenth>



Learn more about the history of Juneteenth and access a list of celebrations being hold around the United States, visit

<https://www.juneteenth.com/>



The Juneteenth Foundation offers resources, opportunities for corporate engagement, Juneteenth Day projects, and scholarships. The Juneteenth Foundation also hosts an annual Festival to commemorate Juneteenth. More information is available at <https://thejuneteenthfoundation.com/>

2. Review or develop club/event initiatives that celebrate diversity

If your club, coaching business, or event organizing company does not have diversity initiatives in place, now is a great time to explore adding programs or initiatives to support Diversity and Inclusion. More information on USA Triathlon Diversity and Inclusion initiatives can be found at www.usatriathlon.org/thrive or you can reach out to USA Triathlon at diversity@usatriathlon.org.

3. Invite a keynote speaker to a club social event

Utilize professors from local colleges or Universities or Diversity, Equity and Inclusion professionals to talk about Juneteenth, its history, and why your club has chosen to celebrate it. These reasons will vary from one organization to another, but it's important to voice them so that employees understand their organization's commitment to supporting the holiday.

4. Support Black-Owned Businesses

Visit your local Chamber of Commerce or use the following resources to identify and support Black-owned businesses:

- [Black Business Green Book](#)
- [Shop Black Owned](#)
- [Chez Nous](#)
- [EatOkra – A Black Owned Restaurant Directory](#)
- [I am Black Business](#)

The Juneteenth Flag

The design of the Juneteenth flag depicts a bursting new star on the horizon. The star represents a new freedom, a new people, a new star. The red, white, and blue colors communicate that the American Slaves and their descendants were and are all Americans.

