



Photo by Marion S. Trikosko. Colorized by Jordan J. Lloyd.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal."

ORIGINS OF MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service (MLK Day), observed on the third Monday of January each year, honors the civil rights leader's legacy. Its origins can be traced to the tireless efforts of civil rights activists and lawmakers who sought to commemorate King's contributions. MLK Day is the only federal holiday also designated by Congress as a national day of service, in effect, **"a day on, not a day off."**

The push for a holiday honoring King began shortly after his assassination in 1968. Steadfast advocacy by Coretta Scott King, King's widow, and countless supporters eventually led to the holiday's establishment. President Ronald Reagan signed the holiday into law in 1983, and it was first observed on January 20, 1986.

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

MLK Day holds profound significance as a day to remember King's tireless commitment to civil rights, justice, and equality. It serves as an annual reminder of his activism, his profound speeches, and his pivotal role in the civil rights movement. King's vision of the "Beloved Community" is central to the essence of this day. He dreamt of a society characterized by justice, equality, and brotherhood, where racial and economic injustices would give way to understanding, compassion, and the judgment of individuals by their character rather than their race. He believed that nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience were powerful tools to bring about this transformation. King's dream was deeply rooted in his Christian faith and his commitment to nonviolence.

MLK Day is celebrated with various commemorative activities, including educational programs and volunteer community service projects, where people of all backgrounds come together to reflect on the importance of racial equality, social justice, and the ongoing struggle for civil rights. King's enduring influence continues to inspire efforts to turn his dream of the Beloved Community into a reality, creating a more just and equitable society.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ENDING RACISM

MLK Day has important implications for the fight against racism. King's legacy of nonviolent activism and his impassioned calls for racial equality continue to inspire individuals and communities to work toward a more just and inclusive society.

The holiday encourages discussions about the enduring challenges of racism and inequality. It prompts individuals and organizations to engage in volunteer service and community outreach, fostering a sense of unity and collective responsibility in addressing these issues.

MLK Day emphasizes the power of nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience in effecting social change. It underscores the importance of peaceful dialogue and activism in the struggle against racism, offering a model for peaceful protest and advocacy.

Ultimately, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service is a cultural touchstone that celebrates the legacy of a great civil rights leader and inspires ongoing efforts to combat racism. It reinforces the values of equality, justice, and nonviolent activism, contributing to the broader movement for ending racism.



Scan the QR code to explore our digital calendar and learn more about significant dates in January.

Ending
RACISM USA

January 2025

Advocacy in Action

"Build Bridges, Not Walls." To honor King's legacy, volunteer at a local organization focused on bridging divides within your community. This could be a cultural center, a community service, or a diversity training workshop. Learn how you can contribute to fostering understanding and unity.

Visit <https://thekingcenter.org> for more inspiration.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 New Year's Day Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929)	16 Civil Rights Act of 1991 *	17	18
19	20 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

* January 16, 1991 - Civil Rights Act of 1991: This act amended and expanded the Civil Rights Act of 1964, strengthening protections against discrimination in various areas, including voting.