



Arts and Education Council Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EIA) Framework For All Funding Programs

Introduction

2020 was a year of multiple, compounding and ongoing crises in the United States, in the form of direct and indirect effects of COVID-19 as well as the rightful calls for racial justice from communities across the country. Shifts in investment and giving practices, strategy development, or operations, has provided the opportunity for the Arts and Education Council to respond more nimbly to emerging needs and work towards longer-term equity goals. The diversity of America is one of its greatest strengths, however our society is challenged to overcome a complex web of inequities – racism, sexism, homophobia, classism and ableism among them.

Background

The Arts and Education Council is our region’s only united arts fund supported by private contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and institutions committed to the value and benefit of the arts to our community. We believe that a region rich with arts and cultural experiences is critical to creating and sustaining vibrant communities. Since inception, Arts and Education Council has raised over one hundred million dollars for the arts in our 16-county bi-state community.

Statement of Equity and Inclusion

“To support a full creative life for all, the Arts and Education Council commits to championing policies and practices of diversity, equity and accessibility that empower a just, inclusive, equitable region.”

Definition of Equity and Inclusion

Equity embodies the values, policies and practices that ensure that all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—are represented in the development of arts policy; the support of artists; the nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression; and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial and informational resources.

Acknowledgments & Affirmations

- In the United States, there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally such that inequity and injustice result and that must be continuously addressed and changed.
- Equity is critical to the long-term viability of the arts sector.
- We must all hold ourselves accountable, because acknowledging and challenging our inequities and working in partnership is how we will make change happen.



- Everyone deserves equitable access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society.
- The prominent presence of artists challenges inequities and encourages alternatives.

Modeling through Action

To provide informed, authentic leadership for equity and inclusion, the Arts and Education Council strives to...

- **Share a collective responsibility** to speak out against brutality, social injustice and racism.
- **Pursue cultural consciousness throughout our organization** through substantive learning and formal, transparent policies.
- **Acknowledge and dismantle any inequities** within our policies, systems, services, grants and programs and report organizational progress.
- **Commit time and resources to expand more diverse leadership** within our board, staff and advisory bodies.

Fueling Field Process

To pursue needed systemic change related to equity, we strive to...

- **Encourage substantive learning to build consciousness** and to proliferate pro-equity policies and practices by our constituencies and audiences.
- **Improve an equitable leadership pipeline** by creating and supporting programs and policies that foster leadership that reflects the full breadth of American society.
- **Generate and aggregate quantitative and qualitative research related to equity** to make incremental, measurable progress towards equity and inclusion more visible.
- **Advocate for public and private-sector policy** that promotes equity and inclusion.

The Arts and Education Council unites with you in fearless pursuit of sustainable, systemic transformation using art as a path to dialogue, change and community restoration. We invite artists and community members of all backgrounds and identities to join us in conversation around building a more equitable society through the arts. We are always open to feedback, thoughtful dialogue and ideas that will move this work forward. **To become a part of the conversation, email Cynthia Davis, director of grants and programs, Cynthia-D@keeparthappening.org.**