

Theatre Bay Area
Anti-Racism Accountability Statement and Action Plan
March 25, 2021

Anti-Racism Frame

For more than 45 years, Theatre Bay Area (TBA) has been dedicated to serving Bay Area theatremakers, and in this moment, we are examining our approaches and seeking to ensure that going forward our services more explicitly include all theatremakers in the region, especially those who have been adversely impacted by systemic racism, cultural biases, and colonization.

We recognize that, even with the best of intentions, there are many times we have failed and caused harm to and/or been complicit or stayed neutral in causing harm to historically underrepresented members of our theatre community. We recognize that the American theatre has long been dominated by a group that is primarily white, largely patriarchal, neuro-typical, able-bodied, and gender-conforming, and that this has come at the expense or exclusion of all other groups. We recognize we have also been complicit and/or stayed neutral in upholding white supremacy culture, and white-settler colonialism.

During this time of great and necessary change, we commit to our individual and company members, staff, board, and community to actively practice anti-racism; incorporate decolonization into our core agenda; and uphold the tenets of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. We also commit to disrupting the patterns of white settler colonialism and racism within our own organization and externally in our theatre community and broader society.

Our board and staff have developed and approved a comprehensive plan of action to support this accountability statement, as well as work already happening, including internal organizational culture shifts and external EDI/anti-racist community initiatives.

Anti-Racism Action Plan

TBA plans a two-pronged action plan for accountability:

1. **Internal/Inward Change:** Work that focuses on Theatre Bay Area as an organization and TBA staff and board members as individuals
2. **External/Outward Change:** Work that benefits the community TBA serves and informs the national theatre and broader performing arts field

TBA will take an iterative approach to its anti-racism work, with the goal of generating a ripple effect throughout the regional theatremaker ecosystem. The process will occur iteratively and simultaneously, as follows:

1. Internal work leads to changes in the organization, influencing staff behavior and policies
2. These changes carry over into TBA operations and programs
3. Operational and programmatic changes model anti-racist approaches and language, which then affect and influence our members and our community

4. Internal and external iterative work will be done simultaneously and are interconnected, not exclusive.

Below is a breakdown of some internal and external changes TBA is prioritizing and plans to implement, with the goal of influencing and inspiring change throughout the Bay Area theatremaker community and ecosystem.

This list is not exhaustive, and TBA plans to add to and continue its anti-racism work as a core, foundational aspect of its service to the Bay Area theatre community and as a model to theatre communities around the nation and world.

<p style="text-align: center;">Internal / Inward change *focus on organization, staff, & board*</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">External / Outward change *focus on community & broader field*</p>
<p>Actively work to check our privilege as an organization and as individuals that comprise its makeup.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide anti-racist education & training to staff & board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be more explicit & intentional about sharing TBA's values, EDI, & anti-racism training when onboarding new staff/board ○ Staff participation in external anti-racism training ○ Curate and provide reading list of anti-racist materials for TBA staff, board, & community ○ Retain Black anti-racist trainer (Beatrice Thomas) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue anti-racist trainings for staff & board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prioritize working with Beatrice to lay out a training schedule so folks can make time in their schedules ● Work to decolonize organizational culture & processes & dismantle white supremacy-based structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ STAFF <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conduct an audit of TBA foundational documents – including employee handbook, bylaws, website, marketing collateral, etc. – to identify & dismantle systemic racist & colonial frames ■ Refine/reevaluate & document process for addressing internal incidents/grievances; make transparent to everyone working in organization ■ Document & post decision-making tree & clear structure of direct reports/supervisory roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Serve as a driver and leader for efforts to decolonize & address white supremacist lenses throughout the Bay Area theatre community & broader field. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HR & ADMINISTRATIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create Community Agreements based on TBA's values to be adhered to by all company and individual members ■ Support creation of & access to HR policy & structural templates, guides, & resources for individuals & small companies ■ Provide support for companies and individuals seeking to create a more equitable system. ○ PROGRAMS & EVENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Center BIPOC voices and issues in all programming and events ■ Amplify the creative work of BIPOC artists & companies ■ Support and amplify anti-racism efforts being done by others in our Bay Area community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● i.e. Accountability Work Group, Bay Area Seed Group, Chinese Progressive Assoc. ● Act as an advocate for members & other theatremakers in need of support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research & support the creation of an incident referral program ▪ Build a network of resources for reference & external support (ex: CA Lawyers for Arts)

- Encourage & support staff who wish to volunteer their time toward this effort, including as activities during paid work time.
- BOARD
 - Commit to bringing BIPOC-identified individuals on board to at least 60% by FY2022
 - Reevaluate requirements to sit on board, including give/get minimums.
- Make our programming, resources, & services accessible to disabled, neuro-divergent/atypical, deaf & hard-of-hearing, & visually-impaired theatremakers & theatregoers
 - MEMBERSHIP
 - Modify membership intake form & profile fields to address “playable ethnicities,” “gender identity,” “pronouns,” & “disability identities”
 - Reformat membership intake form to include demographic identifiers, so we know whom we are serving
 - GRANTS
 - Publish grant eligibility requirements, selection criteria, & panelist selection processes
 - TBA AWARDS
 - Create awards review panel that centers BIPOC, disability, & LGBTQ voices to ensure the program best serves the community
 - Review the overall awards program to decolonize language, processes, & structure.
 - COMMUNITY SERVICE
 - Establish & publish an equitable compensation policy for all artists, speakers, panelists, & advisors contracted by TBA
 - Create internal affinity groups for BIPOC TBA staff & other affinities as requested
 - Post a public schedule of affinity group gatherings (i.e. “every other week”)
- Use updated organizational assessment from the Theatres Advancing Social Change (TASC) initiative as a guide for staff & board anti-racism work, training, and discussions.
- Share TASC concepts with wider Bay Area theatre community.

- Help TBA members connect with the social justice community
- Create spaces for our BIPOC & marginalized artists to heal
 - Host affinity groups for members & the community
- COMPANY MEMBERS
 - Provide assistance & resources for updating grievance processes & employee handbooks
 - Facilitate connections between companies doing or who want to be doing the work
- Serve as convener and touchpoint for the most up-to-date knowledge and approaches across the industry.
 - Commit to doing the research and compiling best practices for referring folks to a mechanism / process for holding the theatre community accountable
 - Provide anti-racist & social justice resources to the community (e.g. Black Lives Matter web page)
 - Use TBA’s influence & resources to promote anti-racism and social justice in for-profit sector and public sector
 - Provide platforms, such as online convenings & trainings, to address systemic racism in theatre community
 - Forge relationships with anti-racism, education, & social justice organizations (ex: J-Town for Justice)
- Pledge to make public TBA processes involved in grantmaking, awards, programmatic decisions, and other processes involving individual and company members.
 - GRANTMAKING
 - Make transparent our granting selection processes & provide documentation of stats on awardees & fund distribution
 - Evaluate grantmaking criteria with an equity-minded approach.
 - TBA Awards
 - Reevaluate adjudicator program and outreach to achieve a more diverse adjudicator pool:
 - incl: race, ethnicity, multilingual, age, ability, & gender identity
 - Implement demographic tracking
 - Evaluate scoring process

- Make financial contributions in support of equity-based work (ie: donations to land trust)

- Address issue of mispronouncing names during Awards Ceremony

Running glossary of terms

- BIPOC
 - Black, Indigenous, & People of Color. Black can refer to dark-skinned peoples of Africa, Oceania, and Australia or their descendants without regard for the lightness or darkness of skin tone, and who were enslaved by white people. Indigenous, here, refers to ethnic groups native to the Americas, and who were killed en masse by white people. People of color is an umbrella term for non-white people, especially as they face racism and discrimination in a white dominant culture. BIPOC is meant to emphasize the particular hardships faced by Black and Indigenous people in the US and Canada—especially because Indigenous people often get forgotten in social justice causes and that anti-Black racism is particularly virulent.

EDI

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Decolonization/Indigenization

- The action or process of a state withdrawing from a former colony, leaving it independent. Decolonization is the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. On the one hand, decolonization involves dismantling structures that perpetuate the status quo and addressing unbalanced power dynamics. Indigenization is a collaborative process of naturalizing Indigenous intent, interactions, and processes and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. This involves including Indigenous perspectives and approaches. Indigenization benefits not only Indigenous peoples, but all community members involved or impacted by Indigenization.

Paternalism/patriarchy

- Paternalism is the interference of a state or an individual with another person, against their will, and defended or motivated by a claim that the person interfered with will be better off or protected from harm. Patriarchy is a system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.

Decision Tree

Decision Making Options		Description
Designation	Type	
Legal	The law dictates the way to proceed	
Board	Members of the board communicate to leadership the way to proceed	
Leadership	Leadership of TBA makes decision	
Staff	Consensus of staff makes decision	Consensus: all can buy in on a compromise
Staff	Majority	Majority (we have an even number of staff tough!)
Designated staff	Staff (either individual or small group) identified through other process makes decision	
Joint Board/Staff Committee		
Advisory Group	Key advisory personnel (TSC/ISC)	
Membership	Consensus of membership makes decision	