

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement

Established Spring – 2020

At the Rockford Area Arts Council, a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace is one where all employees and volunteers, whatever their gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation or identity, education, or disability, feel valued and respected. We are committed to a nondiscriminatory approach and provide equal opportunity for employment and advancement in all of our departments, programs, and worksites. We respect and value diverse life experiences and heritages and ensure that all voices are valued and heard.

The Arts Council is committed to modeling diversity and inclusion for the entire arts industry of the nonprofit sector, and to maintaining an inclusive environment with equitable treatment for all.

To provide informed, authentic leadership for cultural equity, the Rockford Area Arts Council strives to:

- See diversity, inclusion, and equity as connected to our mission and critical to ensure the well-being of our staff and the arts communities we serve.
- Acknowledge and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and continually update and report organization progress.
- Explore potential underlying, unquestioned assumptions that interfere with inclusiveness.
- Advocate for and support board-level thinking about how systemic inequities impact our organization's work, and how best to address that in a way that is consistent with our mission.
- Practice and encourage transparent communication in all interactions.
- Commit time and resources to expand more diverse leadership within our board, staff, committee, and advisory bodies.
- Lead with respect and tolerance. We expect all employees to embrace this notion and to express it in workplace interactions and through everyday practices.
- Develop a system for being more intentional and conscious of bias during the hiring, promoting, or evaluating process. Train our hiring team in equitable practices.
- Advocate for public and private-sector policy that promotes diversity, inclusion, and equity. Challenge systems and policies that create inequity, oppression, and disparity.

Additionally, the Arts Council is committed to supporting the BIPOC population, in any way we can, to address the systemic racism that is keeping us from being our best, most compassionate selves. The Arts Council pledges to develop platforms in our organization for compassionate discourse and creative expression concerning racial disparities and shared social concerns.

Action Steps

1. Intentionally promote artists of color: make a conscious effort to recruit, develop, support, and promote artists of color.
2. Provide platforms in the community for compassionate discourse and creative expressions: work collaboratively with RAM, Eliminate Racism, and others to develop projects and programs that focus on these critical conversations and modes of expression.
3. Equitably fill our decision-making tables: continue to enrich our board, committees, and programming circles to include more POC
4. Demonstrate—directly and indirectly—through the language used in our promotional materials and program descriptions, that the Arts Council is inclusive and welcoming.