

PDX Accountability Collective

Last Updated: 10/20/2020

PDX Accountability Collective: Proposed Code of Conduct

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Overview

1. Declaration of Purpose

The PDX Accountability Collective acts as a “Best Practices Committee”, exploring and adapting new standards to address the concerns of Portland-area theatre professionals. Loosely based off of the Chicago Theatre Standards, The PDX Accountability Collective seeks to create awareness and systems that protect and respect artists by outlining practices and tools to prevent and respond to not only everyday challenges within arts environments, but to actively combat the lack of equity and diversity within these spaces due to systemic and institutionalized oppression. The PDX Accountability Collective acknowledges that without annually updated company standards and communication pathways, artistic spaces can rapidly become unsafe and abusive environments for artists to create and achieve a higher quality of work, especially for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), Womxn, Disabled, and LGBTQ+ artists. The PDX Accountability Collective would like to offer services and resources, to serve as a protective foundation for artists to speak out or respond to abusive and/or unsafe environments without fear of an artist risking their career or livelihood. Additionally, the PDX Accountability Collective would like to work with Portland-area Theatres and foundations to evolve a new infrastructure with the intent of preventing discriminatory and unsafe environments for Portland-area theatre professionals. By creating and committing to a specific set of practices and anti-discriminatory infrastructure, Portland-area theatres are not only creating discriminatory-free artistic environments, but also investing in the integrity and prosperity of Portland’s theatre professionals and their work. PDX Accountability Collective will continue to work with and observe the Actor’s Equity Association (AEA) and The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) rules and guidelines, but will also petition on the behalf of Portland-area theatre professionals if these guidelines do not meet the below standards and procedures that have been set within the Portland community for theatre professionals.

2. Mission Statement

The PDX Accountability Collective (PDXAC) is a Best Practices Committee or DEI group. PDXAC is an “Artist First” group, working to create and cultivate safe spaces for artists at all levels of theatrical production. It’s mission is to create:

- Spaces free of harassment, whether it be based in race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic origin, skin color tone/complexion, or ability level.
- Nurturing environments that allow us to challenge ourselves, our audiences, and our communities; that support risk of mind and body; and that establish the freedom to create theatre that represents the full range of the human experience;

- An agreed upon set of practices and procedures for theatre environments, including written and reproducible documents.
 - These standards are to be annually reviewed, updated, and re-signed with all Portland-area theatres who choose to uphold this standard.
- A peer support network through mentorships, partnerships, and collaboration through online communication and community outreach.
- Providing resources for annual and ongoing diversity and equity training for all levels of a theatrical production, including administrative levels.
- Providing resources for administrative and production recruitment practices that reflect a more diverse community and narrative.

3. Who the PDX Accountability Collective Supports

Non-Union theatres, union theatres, large union theatres, theatre schools, and independent productions/artists who are producing work but not associated with the aforementioned establishments. Additionally, we advocate for all artists, including prospective students, children, and parents of prospective child/teenage theatre artists.

4. What We Demand:

It must be recognized that the following calls to action are not simply words, but a commitment that emboldens us to both recognize and embrace our drive for change within the theater ecosystem of the Portland area. We approach this work with the understanding that our communities are assets rather than inconveniences. We recognize that the entire demands list may not be within the current actionable power of the individual organization. Fundamentally, we are asking you to advocate for the voices of your artists.

Describing the history of abuse in our community will entail describing our own failures and shortcomings. Such descriptions will necessarily include the failures and shortcomings of people we love. We will have to grapple with the fact that a person who treats one of us well may not treat all of us well, and those who experience harm may cause harm in turn. We must cultivate an environment where people are readily and repeatedly taking responsibility. Let none of us shrink from this work.

This is not about sanctions on particular individuals or organizations. It is a demand for the kind of transparency and accountability that will allow us to better understand the complexities of complicity and how it settles and proliferates. Accountability means not just a single public statement but regular discussion and action pertaining to these matters.

We owe it to past artists, we owe it to ourselves, and we owe it to future artists to advocate for the changes needed. We demand nothing short of radical, truly transformative change for the protection of our communities.

We must consistently ask ourselves who we are leaving out.

a. Section 1: Holding Theatres Accountable

Issues have persisted due to a lack of internal and external accountability within the Portland theater community.

We aim to hold participating Portland theaters accountable through, but not limited to, the following:

- The creation, maintenance, and continual evolution of a set of guidelines that make the work space safe and accessible to everyone. These guidelines will want to explicitly encompass strategies for combating conditions that resulted in previous grievances. Examples of previous grievances include:
 - Tokenization
 - Siloing BIPOC artists into only “cultural” or “historical trauma” projects
 - Lack of BIPOC and actively anti-racist folks in leadership
 - Obtaining and utilizing EDI specific grants without the presence or input from effected groups
 - Internalized prejudice and Casting bias
 - Lack of advocacy on behalf of BIPOC artists
- Providing support and resources to empower artists’ to safely use their voices without jeopardy to livelihood, outlined further in further specifics in **section X**
- Maintaining a reporting and mediation system as an avenue to report racism and all types of prejudice without retaliation

b. Section 2: Transparency

In order for artists to make well-informed decisions about their safety, time, and energy they must be afforded the respect of transparency and access to information. The ability of each

organization to provide this information will vary based on financial and legal restrictions; however, every effort should be made within the ability level of the organization.

We are wary of the use of privacy as a justification for never discussing difficult topics. We all must labour to protect the privacy of victims/survivors/those who are harmed while simultaneously protecting vulnerable people unaware of individuals against which serious allegations have been made. Against convenient dichotomies, we must affirm the possibility of doing both.

Each organization should have or actively be striving for ways to be transparent, including but not limited to:

- Internal reporting policies that include timelines and possible steps for addressing issues, with the acknowledgement that though some projects have shorter timelines the issues brought up may be the result of longer-term issues. These internal policies will want to be created with safety, transparency, and the goal of community accountability in mind, including the potential need to publicly acknowledge issues and the steps being taken. Examples of previous grievances include:
 - Lack of transparency around repeat offenders of racism and prejudice actions
 - Repeatedly hiring and giving voice to repeat offenders
 - Individual artists, with the risk of job loss, being forced to reach out to bring light to issues
 - The presence of environments where individuals are afraid to have these difficult conversations, therefore stripping people of agency
 - Artists discovering they must work with a repeat offender or lose a source of income
 - Lack of representation in the rehearsal room
 - Lack of advocates (cultural advisors or liaisons), or the assumption that an artist is able to be a cultural consultant without;
 - I. The Consent of the artist
 - II. Compensation
 - III. Training
 - IV. Internal organizational structure knowledge
- Active conversations and input from those affected by EDI shifts within the organization. Acknowledging the need to approach artists as resources without judgement or retaliation for the feedback provided. Additionally, these structures should not be created and implemented behind closed doors. Staff should be contacted and involved in the process in order to properly represent the population of the organization. However, this is with the acknowledgement that organizations must recognize the difference between seeking input and disproportionately placing the required work on the shoulders' of BIPOC staff and artists.

- Harassment and misconduct guidelines clearly posted in multiple accessible places (i.e. theaters, any workspaces, rehearsal spaces, online, etc.) in order to create a common vocabulary that allows us to safely and consistently communicate boundaries.

c. Section 3: Accountability

Each organization is responsible for holding themselves accountable. Each organization should have or actively be striving toward committing the change they seek, including but not limited to:

- Reviewing their set of guidelines on a quarterly basis, including the act of creating anti-bias agreements. As the work evolves so does your set of guidelines. Make spaces safe for everyone of every background.
- Creating or utilizing an existing EDI group, committed to following up with the created policies with the support of the Executive and Artistic Director(s), or equivalent.
- Providing and requiring anti-racist training for all employees and volunteers.
- Providing and requiring anti-racist training for all board members.

Examples of previous grievances include:

- “If we (the BIPOC community) do not feel safe in your space. Reimagine safety. Big problems require big changes. “
- “One thing is we are seeing a lot of white led companies and how their commitment to what’s going on is changed and how their eyes are changed. How do we keep them accountable?”
- “you can’t just put out a statement and then go on as business as usual!”

d. Section 4: Make a Commitment to BIPOC Artists

In order for BIPOC artists to make a living and make advancements in their career we need theatre companies to invest in BIPOC artists. We need every theatre company to make a commitment to BIPOC artists and let BIPOC artists be creative without the pressures of a white gaze.

Each organization can show this by committing to but is not limited to :

- Hire, develop, commission BIPOC artists. Center their stories and let BIPOC artist create without limitations or pressures of the white gaze.
- Hire, develop, and commission a diversity of BIPOC artists’. Include different styles, periods, and context. Productions of BIPOC shows should not only be centered around trauma and pain.
- Hire and cast BIPOC artists for every show in your season. BIPOC artist should not only work on BIPOC centered shows
- Principle design teams (costumes, lighting, sound, scenic, projections) must be 50% or majority BIPOC

Each organization should make a commitment to protecting their BIPOC artists by exercising practices like those that follow which include, but are not limited to:

- Hire credible cultural consultants for culturally specific shows and, if applicable, season planning.
- Hire intimacy directors¹ with cultural competency and Anti-Racist training.
- Understand that the *notes* of a white artistic director/dramaturg will never be more important than the BIPOC creatives' values, opinions, performance, and, as these are based on lived experience. You will never understand our stories better than we do. Decenter yourself.

Examples of previous grievances include:

- "Don't tell us we aren't Black enough or what kind of Latinx we should be."
- "Don't tell us how to be"
- "Stop using us a tokens"
- "Don't make us educate you on how to be Anti-racist, Hire someone to do the work."
- Create a season that reflects all aspects of BIPOC life
- "Let's make sure we aren't only doing trauma porn. Actually seeing us in joy, happy and creative. Let's not advocate for just any of our stories but joyful stories too."

5. Partnering With PDX Accountability Collective: What does this look like?

PDX Accountability Collective understands that rewriting a company's infrastructure to include equity and diversity is an arduous task. Due to the current COVID situation, we also realize that quite a few theatre professionals are currently out of work. As most Portland-area theatre professionals are multi-talented and skilled, quite a few offer helpful insight into equity and diversity training and efforts. At this time, we're proposing to offer a liaison between participating theatre establishments and Portland-area theatre professionals with the goal of working together to re-create what a safe working environment looks like. This may look like:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Workshops and Training Courses for administrative theatre professionals and production teams.
- Workshops evaluating hiring and audition practices and procedures.

¹ "Intimacy Coordination for TV and Film, or Intimacy Direction for Theatre and Live Performance, is the codified system for choreographing and performing scenes of intimacy on stage and screen. This unique method allows for the creation of specific and repeatable choreography that effectively realizes the director's vision while prioritizing the safety and confidence of all those involved in the production.

Intimacy professionals are performer advocates, communication specialists, and movement designers that improve the artistry in intimate scenes and the experience for everyone working on them. Implementation of intimacy direction/coordination supports the whole creative team, and builds trust and communication within the ensemble. This eases unnecessary discomfort and awkwardness, and assists in preventing sexual harassment in the workplace." <https://www.idcprofessionals.com/about-intimacy>

- Self-Advocacy Workshops
- Political Policy Advocacy
- Creating and crowdsourcing Resilience Funds (Incentives for self-advocacy)
- Networking events, including networks and potential partnerships with community civil rights organizations such as Urban League Network and PAALF.
- Quarterly town-hall meetings for Portland-area theatre professionals.

Keeping in mind that this will be organizational and community needs dependent.

To date, we are offering the following resources and accountability measures:

- Legal consulting in regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion procedures.
 - [Insert Lawfirm/Lawyer information here for transparency]
- Cultural consulting in regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion procedures.
 - [Insert Consultants here for transparency]
- Online incident reporting and an accountability record system
- Safe and accessible mediation spaces and resources.
- Online Database of a BIPOC artists network.

6. Proposed Timeline in respect to Season 2020-2021

Phase 1:

- Finalize Draft 1 of PDXAC's Code of Conduct, Demands, and Mission Statement/Overview.
- Present the aforementioned documents to the BIPOC community for approval.
- Finalize Draft of PDXAC's Code of Conduct, Demands, and Mission Statement/Overview.
- Present to PATA in lieu of fiscal partnership and to serve as PATA's EDI Oversight board.
- Set a meeting to present to Artistic Directors of Portland-area theatre companies for approval and partnership.
- Set a meeting to present to donors and funders of Portland-area theatre companies for approval and partnership.

Phase 2:

- Meet with Artistic Directors to come up with an agreed upon schedule and worklist. Worklist should include:
 - A public statement and commitment to engaging in ongoing conversations regarding discrimination, harrasment, and uncomfortable non-equitable artisitic enviornments.

- A public statement and commitment to actively change and update standards/procedures preventing discrimination, harassment, and uncomfortable non-equitable artistic environments.
- A public statement supporting the need to invest locally before outsourcing; To exhaust all avenues found within the local community in regards to administration and productions.
- Addressing any previous or open grievances that BIPOC Artists have. (This may come in the form of multiple town-hall meetings.)
- Equity and Diversity Workshops/Trainings to address lack of equity amongst staff.
- Consulting with trained professionals to draft updated and equitable hiring and audition practices.
- Creating a season in which local theatre professionals can begin working. This may look like
 - Paying Theatre Professionals to hold space and have conversations regarding their experience in local theatre establishments.
 - Paying Theatre Professionals to approve and provide feedback regarding the creation/updating equitable hiring and audition practices.
 - Workshopping original content and scaling productions down to accommodate for COVID procedures, while actively investing in local artists and the integrity of Portland artwork.
 - Endorsing and supporting small-non union theatre companies and carving out long term creative space for them to prosper.
 - Endorsing and supporting small-non union or independent artists' shows, artwork, or public installations.
 - Endorsing and supporting small-non union or independent artist's political activist based installations that may reside outside the four walls of a theatre.
 - Youth Outreach.

Phase 3:

- Establishing internal structures and systems, independent of the PDX Accountability Collective. An internal checks and balance system.
- Workshopping and publicly sharing and vetting intended future works with the local community and artists.
- Presenting a season or series of work that fits within the agreed upon standards and practices set within Phase 1 and 2.

Phase 4: Ongoing

- Committing to regularly scheduled town-halls with local theatre professionals to address any public incidents or issues.
- Committing to any requested facilitated discussions between local theatre professionals and local theatre establishments.
- Annually reviewing and signing updated standards and structures regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion presented by the PDX Accountability Collective.

- Annually reviewing and updating the company's internal practices and structures regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion.

7. Partnered Theatre Professional Organizations:

AGE

8. Potential Partnerships and Resources:

PATA

RACC

Portlandincolor.com

Equity in Action

Urban League of Portland

PAALF

Oregon Children's Theatre

Ronnie Lacroute

Advance Gender Equity in the Arts

9. Budget:

Expenses

Salaries-56%

This is an estimate based on 8 core members of the collective at \$20 per hour for 30 hours per month.

Professional Services-34.3%

Approximately half of this will be through in-kind donations. This includes legal services, cultural consultation, transcription services, space rental, and insurance.

Software- .67%

Annual subscriptions included are Doodle, Zoom, TCG, Office 365, Tech Soup.

Office Supplies- 2.5%

This number is more open ended to include any printing or office-pertaining equipment that may not be offered by the space or as in-kind donations.

Marketing- 1.7%

This includes graphic design, website design and upkeep, and other marketing subscription services.

Collateral- 4.9%

Revenue

2020

Memberships- 6%

Based on .05% of 25% of the member's budget for 2020-21.

FY 2021-22 and onward is .05%

Crowdfunding- 7%

Individual Donors- 40%

In-Kind- 13%

Grants- 34%

Grantmakers are considering special terms

2021

Memberships- 12.5%

Crowdfunding- 0%

Individual Donors- 10%

In-Kind- 14%

Grants- 64%

10. Index and References -

- [Chicago Theatre Standards](#)
- [BIPOC demands of WAT](#)
- Actors Equity Association's Rules and Guidelines
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Rules and Guidelines
- OSHA's Rules and Guidelines
- PDX Accountability Website
 - Incident Form

Various Community Resources

Partnership:

[Insert legal language regarding the signing of this Code of Conduct and Partnership with PDX Accountability Collective]

Theatre Company/Donor: _____

Artistic Director: _____

Date: _____

PDX Accountability Representative: _____

Date: _____