



## Measuring Equity

A list of strategies to assist organizations striving to reach operational equity.

- View culture as an expansive, complex, multi-dimensional system in which full access to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) artmaking is critical to complete human realization.
- Make race-led equity an explicit priority in the organization's mission, vision, and values to build generational trust and broaden access and participation.
- Maintain BIPOC Board of Directors, staff, contracted vendors, and hired artists throughout the organizational composition and share the decision-making power in the organization.
- Empower BIPOC voices to shape the organization's equity-led mission statement and guide strategic planning, goals, and operationalized policies and practices.
- Intentionally invest in BIPOC-led businesses, vendors, contractors, and partners.
- Provide ongoing training and critical conversations in racial justice, equity, anti-racism, and cultural competency for all members of the organization.
- Normalize and embed critical conversations into the routine operations of the organization.
- Actively examine work toward eliminating systemic inequities and personal/professional biases.
- Ensure BIPOC community members, audiences, and other partners/stakeholders have agency to inform ways to broaden access, programming, or jobs in the organization.
- Review compensation structures and promotion policies to elevate BIPOC staff.
- Center programming on diverse histories, narratives, experiences, and voices that broaden the public's awareness of and deepen the relationship with storytelling from a BIPOC lens.
- Actively promote and cultivate emerging or lesser known BIPOC artists and arts collectives.
- Reduce barriers to entry for BIPOC community members to access and participate in programming.
- Embrace physical, language-based, identity, and cultural differences as meaningful intersections with racial justice and empowerment through the arts.
- Seek out and create opportunities to "meet communities where they are" to build long-lasting trust among BIPOC community members.
- Constantly and consistently seek feedback from the BIPOC community, especially those who do not have a relationship with the organization or the arts/culture sector.
- Seek to build the next generation of culture bearers in communities where long-held art forms or stories are threatened by extinction, where there are no institutions to carry on the work, or where resources are being diverted away from culture.
- Promote Austin's diverse cultural richness in ways that drive audiences and donors to BIPOC cultural organizations and artists who do not have stable or diversified revenue streams.
- Use power and privilege to open the door to supportive peer networks/connections, mentors, investments, funding, and other resources that lift up the work of BIPOC cultural workers.
- Share physical space and capital resources with BIPOC cultural producers.
- Seek input from BIPOC innovators, practitioners, experts, and elders through respectful relationships of trust and respect, with compensation for their experience and knowledge.

- Set goals and measure outcomes of the BIPOC community where organizational programming intentionally intersects with quality of life indicators.
- Enact a “right to return” approach that brings stature and stability to disenfranchised BIPOC cultural organizations or practitioners who have felt unwelcome by their city or their cultural community.
- Host regular convenings of BIPOC makers and community members to stimulate and grow burgeoning careers/businesses, establish economic impact, and nurture a culture of learning, trust, and connection among residents and visitors alike.
- Seek out the BIPOC cultural community as a practice of checking privilege, eliminating assumptions, and forging a tighter knit local ecosystem where there are more commonalities than divisions.
- Maintain a stance of inclusion and assuming best intent when advocating for more resources for the whole of the arts community.
- Create an “equity rider” for contractors/subcontractors that requires fiduciary relationships built for and with BIPOC members of the community.
- Understand collective and individual sites’ complex histories and internalize the experience that forged the land and place where culture is now produced, practiced, and performed to eliminate further cultural displacement, gentrification, appropriation, and tokenization.
- Contribute to a shared culture and environment where BIPOC self-determination, agency, belonging, and growth are part of the evolution of the cultural ecosystem.
- Study the unintended consequences of past policies, programs, actions, and inactions where BIPOC harm was inflicted, and publicly acknowledge lessons learned and efforts to improve.
- Realize the role of trauma passed down through generations of BIPOC communities, and respect the healing still needed while avoiding the infliction of further trauma through marginalization, silencing/forcing of voices, labor or pay disparities, gatekeeping/power dynamics, tokenization, and unwelcome reminders/recollections of past pain.
- Actively promote an inclusive identity and narrative of the whole of Austin’s creative/cultural community by seeking information first-hand, resisting splintering into camps, othering historically marginalized individuals and groups, and refusing to participate in white supremacy.
- Discard assumptions of “quality,” “value” or “professionalism” that rely on Eurocentric norms long embraced by the arts field, and redefine what artistic process and product can mean in a larger, more global, culturally expansive context of history and heritage.
- Assume personal and professional accountability for advancing race-led equity and continue to question “how we’ve always done things” in the cultural system through a critical equity lens.