

## THEATRE HORIZON ANTIRACISM ACTION PLAN

This antiracist action plan is a **living, breathing document** that will be edited and expanded overtime as we continue to learn.

**Our goal in doing this work is to shift Theatre Horizon’s culture from one that has upheld the institutionalized centering of whiteness to one that actively works to dismantle it.**

Theatre Horizon was founded with a belief in producing art for a diverse population, with inclusion and empathy at the core of its mission. Compelled by a desire to support a renaissance of Norristown’s cultural and economic health, these values have guided us in forming relationships with community partners, ancillary programming that has brought attention to food scarcity and homelessness in Norristown, and using our performances to activate social change through voter registration and census outreach. We continue to offer \$2 tickets to Norristown Neighbors and ACCESS Card holders, and conduct “Relaxed Performances”: two initiatives designed to create a welcoming space for more people. However, **we now recognize that values of inclusion and empathy are not enough.**

**We need to work to be actively and explicitly antiracist.** We have fallen short in creating true racial parity among our staff (currently 20% BIPOC) and among our board (currently 12% BIPOC). While we have featured diverse artistic teams in our rehearsal rooms, this diversity has not extended to Executive-level positions. We recognize that we have (often unwittingly) upheld white supremacist culture<sup>1</sup> in the ways that we fundraise, our governance structures, and our hiring practices. **We need to do better.**

**The creation of this document is an active process that consists of several phases.** In early June 2020, the Theatre Horizon staff began brainstorming antiracist actions we could take to move the institution forward. We brought the Board of Directors into this conversation on June 8th and developed an Antiracist Action Committee of Board and Staff that began meeting weekly. In August, this committee produced a draft of the plan and hired anti-oppression facilitators,

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<sup>1</sup> **white supremacy culture**—or the systemic, institutionalized centering of whiteness

BIPOC artists, BIPOC board members and BIPOC audience members to review and give feedback. Edits were made by the committee in response to this feedback and discussed by the full board in early September, 2020.

**We acknowledge that we need help.** In order to hold ourselves accountable to change, key action items include making new systems for anonymous feedback, regular antiracist action committee meetings to incorporate what we've learned into this document, and hiring a third party to assess and revise this plan, as well as creating more long-term actions beyond 2023.

**We recognize that antiracist work is never done.** There is no checklist. We follow the belief of Ibram X. Kendi that the terms “racist” and “antiracist” are “like peelable nametags that are placed and replaced based on what someone is doing or not doing, supporting or expressing in each moment” (Kendi, Ibram X, How to be an Antiracist, p.23). The goal of this plan is to make more of what we do, support, and express, explicitly antiracist and to build in opportunities for persistent self-examination.

**This document was inspired by the work of:** Nicole Brewer for her Conscientious Theatre Training, ArtEquity facilitators Faith Jones-Jackson and Amy Smith, the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) collective of artists who created “We See You, White American Theatre” (referred to as “We See you, W.A.T.” in this document), Michael Bobbit and his antiracist action plan for New Rep Theatre, Ibram X. Kendi, adrienne maree brown, and the creators of the Black Theatre Alliance of Philadelphia

**Many people contributed to the making of this document including:** Nell Bang-Jensen, Ang Bey, Kareem Brantley, Bryan Buttler, Rachel Camp, Zaina Dana, Matt Decker, Rebecca May Flowers, Cara Frisina, Tamanya M. M. Garza, Noelle Diane Johnson, Emily Jolley, Zandra Maffett, Hallie Martenson, Zuhairah McGill, LaNeshe Miller-White, Amanda Morton, Dawn Navarro, Rebecca Noon, Erlina Ortiz, Gina Pisasale, Diane Reilly, Erin Reilly, Mydera Taliah Robinson, Gabriela Sanchez, Jim Schneider, Deanna Shelton, Tabitha Stewart, Robert Vogel, and Andrea Wikerd.

Our actions have been broken up into six different categories and fall into four different timeframes. They are:

	<b>Actions Taken</b>	<b>Within 6 Months</b> (By March 2021)	<b>Within 1 Year</b> (By September 2021)	<b>Within 3 Years</b> (By September 2023)
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	<p>-Formation of antiracist action committee in June 2020; a group of board and staff members who began weekly meetings devoted to the formation of an antiracist action plan</p> <p>-Made antiracist action plan public and available on our website</p> <p>-Organized paid consultancies with BIPOC artists, audience members and anti-oppression facilitators to help create antiracist action plan</p>	<p>-Create anonymous safe reporting system for when harm is committed in our space. These reports will have the option of being sent to a third party (not staff and board)</p> <p>-Revise sexual harassment and abuse reporting policies to protect anonymity (and include option of going to a third party)</p> <p>-Create racial harassment and abuse reporting policy (will also have the option of going to a third party)</p> <p>-In addition to an anonymous reporting system, Artistic Director will hold monthly virtual “office hours” in which anyone who wants to</p>	<p>-Theatre Horizon’s next strategic planning process will use this antiracist action plan as its core value. All future strategic plans will prioritize moving the organization in an explicitly antiracist direction.</p> <p>-Hire external consultants to conduct “anti-oppression assessment” of Theatre Horizon</p> <p>-Work with external consultants to create processes and policies for when harm is committed in our space. Disseminate these to artists and contractors at their hiring</p> <p>-Integrate recommendations of</p>	<p>-Hire external anti-oppression consultants to assess our execution of this three-year plan and develop a new plan that will take us through another three-year period</p> <p>-Will make next three-year antiracist plan publicly available on our website</p>

		<p>discuss anything related to Theatre Horizon (or seek support in terms of fundraising, marketing and producing their own projects) is welcome to show up. Dates and times will be publicly available on our website.</p> <p>-Devote time at each Board Meeting to update full Board on whether we are fulfilling our commitments in this document</p> <p>-Antiracist action plan is read and discussed by full Board and Staff. Through individual meetings, Board and Staff commit to mandatory EDI training and prioritizing these policies in decision-making moving forward.</p> <p>-Post public updates on our website and social media as we continue</p>	<p>“anti-oppression assessment” into antiracist action plan and make revised plan public on our website</p>	
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		to execute these policies and plans at the intervals specified in this plan (6 months, 1 year, 3 years).		
<b>STAFF CULTURE &amp; HIRING</b>	<p>-Brainstorming sessions with current staff about antiracist actions we can take to move the company forward. Conversations with each department about how their work can be more antiracist.</p> <p>-Made Juneteenth an official Theatre Horizon holiday and publicized ways for staff and stakeholders to use this day taking action towards the cause of black liberation</p> <p>-Theatre Horizon's HR Committee did a "360 Review" of Executive</p>	<p>-Quarterly at staff meetings devote time to checking in where we are on antiracist action steps</p> <p>-Establish department-specific antiracist metrics for staff to meet in their work. Achieving these goals will become part of every staff member's job description and assessed at annual reviews</p> <p>-When hiring positions, explicitly name an antiracist environment.</p> <p>-Because systems of</p>	<p>-Re-evaluate our hiring, feedback and performance evaluation process to foster a staff that is more representative of the Norristown community<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>-We will create a Preferred Vendor list for each department that prioritizes Norristown businesses that are owned and operated by Black, Indigenous, People of Color, as well as fellow organizations with antiracist policies in place.</p> <p>-Provide clear metrics for all employees at</p>	<p>-Commit to making our staff racial and ethnic demographics more closely match those of Norristown; 60% of all new hires over the next three years will identify as BIPOC<sup>3</sup>.</p> <p>-Work with Zuhairah McGill's First World Theater and other local theaters to evolve our apprenticeship program into a collective fellowship program for Black artists and designers</p>

<sup>2</sup> Based on data gathered in the 2019 Census, the municipality's population is 37.6% black or African American, 29.3 white (non-Hispanic), 14.5% Hispanic and two or more races 3.35%.

<sup>3</sup> At the time of writing this (9/15/2020), Theatre Horizon employed seven full and part-time staff members. Of this group, 2 (28.5%) identified as Black, and 5 (71.4%) identified as white.

	Leadership; taking staff and artist feedback into account when evaluating Managing and Artistic Directors	higher education substantiate racial inequities, we will remove barriers such as education requirements or a certain number of years of experience in postings. -When hiring for a staff position, conduct intentional, individual outreach to BIPOC arts administrators	Theatre Horizon to advance within the institution with clearly defined goals and processes.	
<b>TRAINING &amp; EDUCATION</b>	-Board and staff began an “antiracism audit” to build awareness of current practices and policies that are complicit in racist systems  -Began research for external consultants for ongoing antiracist training who can speak to the specific needs of our organization and our community.	-Create a plan for Executive Leadership training with an EDI specialist to be completed before the start of the 2021-2022 season.  -Create a plan for how antiracist training (including bystander intervention and de-escalation techniques) will be disseminated to all patron-facing volunteers	-Implement Antiracist training program for all Board and Staff (including bystander intervention and de-escalation techniques). Frequency and content of these trainings will be determined by external consultants.  -Antiracist training and protocol implemented for all creative teams	-All Theatre Horizon teaching artists will undergo trauma-informed and/or antiracist teacher training and will be paid for their time in this professional development.

		-Executive leadership begins an open group of staff, board and audience members to meet weekly as they engage with Lalya F. Saad’s “Me and White Supremacy” workbook	and casts on first day of rehearsal. (BIPOC artists can choose to opt in or opt out.)	
<b>PROGRAMMING PRACTICES &amp; CULTURAL COMPETENCY</b>	-Under the leadership of Mydera Taliah Robinson, developed NSTEP (“Norristown Supplemental Theatre Education Programs”) which provide arts education opportunities to partner organizations in Norristown who largely serve communities of color and share a commitment to antiracism	-Redefine our partnerships with BIPOC-led arts organizations to ensure these partnerships are mutually beneficial and sustainable. Work with our partners on creating partnership agreements and budgets collaboratively that equalize power and eliminate institutional hierarchy. Offer opportunities to listen and reflect on past partnerships.  -Research and begin relationship-building with culturally competent dramaturgs with lived experience	-In response to We See You W.A.T, when resuming in-person auditions, ensure that when BIPOC artists are being cast, a BIPOC director (and/or casting director is present)  -We achieved racial parity on our stages each season as part of Theatre Horizon’s 2017 strategic plan. We are upping this commitment to include 50% BIPOC artists hired total (on and off-stage, which includes design teams, directors, and Dramaturgs).	-To remove barriers that disproportionately affect BIPOC artists from participating in rehearsal processes: allocate a portion of our antiracist action fund to provide stipends to offset living costs such as health insurance, childcare and transportation.  -We will create a land acknowledgement in collaboration with Lenape leadership, to be read at the beginning of every performance and on a plaque in our lobby.

		<p>that coincide with the shows originally in our 2020-2021 production season.</p> <p>-In our originally scheduled 2020-2021 season, the majority of shows programmed were by BIPOC artists. We will continue this commitment, pledging that at least 50% of the work on our stage will be written by BIPOC playwrights/creators.</p>	<p>-Before resuming in-person programming: hire culturally competent Dramaturgs and/or Cultural Consultants for every production. This person will be integrated in the pre-production and production process and helps remove the responsibility of BIPOC directors, designers and actors to bear the expectations and labor of serving as a cultural representative</p> <p>-In response to the demands of We See You W.A.T: work with Actors' Equity to shift our rehearsal and production models to prioritize the care of the creative team, cast and crew, including eliminating the practice of 10 out of 12s and</p>	<p>-Continue to work with our partners at ACLAMO Community Center to meaningfully collaborate with the Latinx community in Norristown and increase our cultural competency and Spanish-language programming (Education and Artistic).</p>
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			<p>reexamining the 6-day rehearsal week</p> <p>-In collaboration with BIPOC artists, design an artist-in-residence program for Black artists who create original work. Included in this program is space, funds, and other institutional resources such as marketing and fundraising</p>	
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<p><b>FUNDING &amp; FINANCIALS</b></p>	<p>-Included a pop-up on Theatre Horizon's homepage that encourages visitors to donate to Black-led organizations</p>	<p>-Refine our grant writing procedure (which includes a voice edit, a vision edit, and a proofread) to include an antiracist edit that removes any language that upholds racial hierarchy by tokenizing marginalized groups</p> <p>-Institute a practice in which Board Members pledge a percentage of their annual gift to Theatre Horizon to be put in a restricted Antiracist Action Fund</p>	<p>-Create a restricted antiracist action fund, which will pay for annual antiracist training for staff and board, work with external consultants, and the annual grant for Black artists. The remaining dividend will be donated to a Black-led organization, decided on by staff .</p> <p>-Along with a copy of our Annual report, publish an organizational budget on our website, in the name of greater transparency</p> <p>-Most of our high-end donors are white and have received more access to Theatre Horizon because of their financial contributions. To ensure people of all races have equal access, our new</p>	<p>-When partnering with or presenting the work of BIPOC-led organizations, create systems so that grant requests, fundraising, and ticket sales can funnel through their organization (not Theatre Horizon) if it is helpful to them in increasing their operational budget and bottom line</p> <p>-Cultivation Committee will work to re-examine current fundraising practices and diversify our donor pool</p>
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			policy will be that donors, of any level, are welcome at all events (not just those on the top of the “donor pyramid”).	
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	<p>-Theatre Horizon’s Board does not have a specific financial threshold to meet. Each Board Member is encouraged to make a “personally significant” gift to Theatre Horizon and to include Theatre Horizon as one of their top 3 charitable commitments (without a specific number specified).</p> <p>-Ongoing cultivation of potential BIPOC Board Members through attending Diverse Force networking events 2-4 times/year</p>	<p>-Continue bimonthly meetings with antiracist action committee to assess if we are fulfilling our commitments outlined in this plan</p> <p>-Appoint EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) Officer on our Board who sits on the Executive Committee and who all Committee Chairs are accountable to to ensure their work is being done in compliance with this document</p>	<p>-Conduct values assessment with staff and board as we begin writing process to create a new mission that holds antiracism as a central value</p>	<p>-In response to We See You W.A.T.’s demand for term limits for Executive Leadership, we will create a 12-year maximum term for Artistic and Managing Directors.</p> <p>-At least 75% of new Board Members over this three-year time period will identify as BIPOC, with the goal of achieving 30% BIPOC Board Members at Theatre Horizon.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>-In conjunction with our new strategic plan, change our mission to be explicitly antiracist.</p>

<sup>4</sup> At the time of writing this (9/15/2020), 12% of Theatre Horizon’s Board Members identified as BIPOC.

				Make this mission visible in Theatre Horizon's physical space to be held accountable to it
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