

THEATRE HORIZON ANTIRACISM ACTION PLAN 1-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

On September 30, 2020, we published an [Antiracism Action Plan](#): a living, breathing document that will be edited and expanded over time as we continue to learn how the implementation of antiracist initiatives resonates within our organization and community. Our goal is to ensure ongoing commitments to the evolving conversation surrounding equity, diversity, inclusion, and access.

Inspired by “We See You, White American Theatre,” our goal in doing this work is to establish a culture at Theatre Horizon that dismantles the institutionalized centering of whiteness and white supremacy culture. Over 30 people contributed to the creation of the Antiracism Action Plan. Their names can be found [here](#).

In March, 2021, we updated the public about our actions 6-months after the plan’s initial publication. We are making another public update today, one full year since our plan was released. The purpose of these progress reports is to provide external accountability for where we are in achieving these goals.

This Antiracism Action Plan allows us to further our “Third Space Initiative.” As a “Third Space” - a place separate from work and home that is essential for creating a sense of connection across perceived boundaries - we will continue to build long-term, sustainable relationships with our Norristown community, and increase accessibility to our virtual and physical spaces. We will do this through: the formation of a Community Advisory Board led by antiracist facilitator Nicole Brewer of Conscientious Theatre Training; the development of a strategy for virtual events with Virtual Access Consultant Jared Mezzocchi; and redesigning a more visible, welcoming, and accessible exterior to our building.

If you would like to talk more about this work with us, you are welcome to email Artistic Director Nell Bang-Jensen at Nell@TheatreHorizon.org. We will continue to publish updates on this work at the increments of time identified in the plan.

In the name of transparency, the list below details what we said we would accomplish in the first year, and where we are now. The original action items are listed with information in italics about what has been accomplished:

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Theatre Horizon’s next strategic planning process will use this Antiracism Action Plan as its core value. All future strategic plans will prioritize moving the

organization in an explicitly antiracist direction.

- *The strategic planning committee was formed in the Spring of 2021 and will begin their work in October 2021. The Antiracism Action Plan will be the core foundation to build upon in the strategic planning process.*
- Hire external consultants to conduct “anti-oppression assessment” of Theatre Horizon
 - *We have hired the group ‘oneTILT’ to conduct this assessment as part of their consulting and EDI training for our Board and Staff, beginning in October 2021. Nicole Brewer of Conscientious Theatre Training will also be working with our Board in the Fall of 2021.*
- 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
 - *Our EDI Representative and Artistic Director will take these harm reporting systems (created March 2021) to our external consultants in October 2021 with a particular focus on developing relationship repair processes and policies. In the meantime, all contractors have received updated harm reporting information.*
- Integrate recommendations of “anti-oppression assessment” into Antiracism Action Plan and make revised plan public on our website
 - *Any changes made to our Antiracism Action Plan as a result of the anti-oppression assessment will be updated on our website between the 1 year and 3 year progress reports*

STAFF CULTURE & HIRING

- Re-evaluate our hiring, feedback and performance evaluation process to foster a staff that is more representative of the Norristown community
 - *We are breaking down this goal into several steps. In terms of re-evaluating our hiring practices through an antiracist lens, both our Managing Director and the Chair of the HR Committee on our Board have recently attended an antiracist recruitment training in July of 2022.*
 - *One hiring practice we will begin implementing in September 2021 is ensuring every draft of a job posting is reviewed by 3 people who are not in the theater industry to conduct an edit for theater jargon and exclusionary language. We seek to reach a pool of applicants who may not have theater experience specifically.*
 - *We will begin implementing exit interviews to pinpoint opportunities for management improvements and to gain valuable insight and feedback on employee experiences. The Managing Director will work with the chair of the HR Committee to design standardized exit interviews.*
 - *Our performance evaluation process is currently based on a system of collaborative goal setting between employees and their managers. We are committed to also ensuring that each of these conversations involve a 360 degree evaluation of the employee’s Manager as a first step in evolving*

away from a hierarchical staff structure.

- 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.
 - *We have developed and disseminated a preferred vendor list that prioritizes Norristown- & BIPOC-owned and operated businesses by reaching out to contacts at the Norristown Chamber of Commerce, Valley Forge Tourism Board, and the Norristown Chapter of the NAACP. This list is a living, breathing document and we will continue to add contacts and businesses as we learn of them.*
- Provide clear metrics for all employees at Theatre Horizon to advance within the institution with clearly defined goals and processes.
 - *We conduct annual reviews with each staff member in February/March. The performance evaluation tool we have been using for the past year asks employees to collaboratively create goals with their supervisors with specific numbers, deadlines, and accountability structures. Moving forward, each of these conversations will explicitly include conversations about employees' career goals and advancement opportunities (inside and outside of the organization).*
 - *In the past, professional development at Theatre Horizon has been determined on a case-by-case basis. To make this more equitable, the HR Committee is creating a new strategy for professional development that divides that budget line equally among employees to ensure everyone has access to training opportunities. This new system will go into effect in the 22/23 season.*

TRAINING & EDUCATION

- 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.
 - *In October 2021, Theatre Horizon staff will begin antiracist training with one TILT and participate in workshops focused on dismantling white supremacy culture. During our consultancy with them, we will also determine what this training will look like on an ongoing basis in the future. The Theatre Horizon board will begin their training with Nicole Brewer of Conscientious Theatre Training this Fall as well.*
- Antiracist training and protocol implemented for all creative teams and casts on the first day of rehearsal. (BIPOC artists can choose to opt in or opt out.)
 - *We are still developing what these trainings look like, as well as who leads them. We are giving ourselves the opportunity to talk to external consultants about the various potentials this Fall before committing to one*

particular model. We will have this training in place by the time we welcome artists back to our physical space in December 2021.

PROGRAMMING PRACTICES & CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- 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 imagine our auditions in the future will be a combination of hybrid and virtual. When we begin auditions again (most likely November 2021), we will ensure a culturally-competent casting director will be hired based on the needs of the project. A job description for the position has been created.*
- 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).
 - *Given the state of the COVID-19 pandemic, our 2021/2022 season is remaining flexible and hiring is currently in process. For "Our Norristown", currently in development, the creative team is 78% BIPOC.*
- 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
 - *We are in the process of identifying culturally-competent Dramaturgs and/or Cultural Consultants. As theaters begin to re-open and we have greater access to experiential knowledge related to this role, we are committed to figuring out how the nuanced creative and cultural intersections act in collaboration with the needs of our productions.*
- 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 reexamining the 6-day rehearsal week
 - *In the 2021/2022 season, we have reenvisioned our production processes to hold rehearsal 5 of 7 days/week and eliminate 10 out of 12s.*
- 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
 - *We will begin collaborating with external consultants on building out the residency program beginning in October 2021. It is of the utmost importance for us to move deliberately in order to have the most equitable and ethical process possible, particularly when it comes to selecting*

residents and developing mutual expectations.

FUNDING & FINANCIALS

- Create a restricted Antiracist Action Fund, which will pay for annual antiracist training for staff and board, working 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.
 - *In FY21, our board members contributed \$6,750 to our Antiracist Action Fund which helped fund the creation of a video for volunteer ushers with information on bystander intervention and identifying microaggressions.*
 - *We will have an update on how much has been raised and how it was spent at the end of our fiscal year in June 2022.*
- Along with a copy of our Annual Report, publish an organizational budget on our website, in the name of greater transparency
 - *We published pie charts on our [website](#) that break down both our financials (Antiracist Action Fund Spending, Expenses, & Income) as well as the racial parity of our staff, board, and contractors. These pie charts will be updated yearly so we can track our progress over time. We would like to hold ourselves accountable as we work to cultivate a more diverse workforce and to gain trust in our community.*
- Review our fundraising policies and create new strategies that are developed with an antiracist lens
 - *To ensure people of all races and backgrounds who make a contribution have equal access to Theater Horizon, our new policy will be that all donors, regardless of gift size, are welcome and invited to donor events offered by the theater (not just those on the top of the “donor pyramid”).*
 - *In addition to welcoming all supporters, we are reimagining our donor benefits packages so that they are more equitable. Previously, benefits were tiered, and larger gifts from supporters translated into a more robust and exclusive package with increased benefits and more points of access to the company. We are developing this new benefits system and will begin implementing it during our 2021/22 Season.*

GOVERNANCE

- Conduct values assessment with staff and board as we begin a writing process to create a new mission that holds antiracism as a central value
 - *We decided to incorporate this work into our strategic planning process and focus our attention on those concrete actions to fulfill our mission rather than creating a brand new one.*

Note: At the time of the plan's publication (September 30, 2020), 12% of Theatre Horizon's Board Members identified as BIPOC and 29% of Theatre Horizon's staff identified as BIPOC. As of the 1-year update (September 30, 2021), 19% of Theatre Horizon's Board Members identify as BIPOC and 38% of Theatre Horizon's staff identify as BIPOC.