

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Plan & Progress Overview

2019-22

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Building a More Equitable and Anti-Oppressive Museum

At the Brooklyn Museum, we are committed to growing diversity, inclusion, and accessibility at every level of our organization in order to cultivate equitable experiences for our community and contribute to the work of systemic change.

Over recent years, we have intensified our efforts to counter the forces of structural inequities and the legacies of oppression that so greatly affect our society. We are building an anti-oppressive culture that weaves equity and inclusion into every aspect of our work—from our [collecting practices](#) to exhibitions, public programs, visitor engagement, and community partnerships to employee opportunities, Board governance, and how we budget and spend our resources.

Our journey toward realizing our DEIA goals, as outlined in our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Plan, will take time, and it is an ongoing effort that must include a variety of perspectives. We recognize the harm—whether intentional or unintentional—that exclusionary practices and misinformation throughout the museum sector have caused, and we are committed to learning from the past and present. Despite our best intentions, we may make mistakes along the way; however, we aim to build accountability, leading to more empathetic and just decision-making. We are committed to examining our own role in upholding systemic inequities and to building a new path forward.

The work of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access is never complete; it is an ongoing, evolving process at the Brooklyn Museum. As we continue to interrogate and reflect on the ways that systemic oppression has affected our community and collections—in the field of museum work and beyond—we are exploring ways to create an anti-oppressive environment. Our DEIA plan challenges us to do so by looking inward, focusing on our internal operations and workplace culture.

About Our DEIA Plan and Progress

In 2019, the Brooklyn Museum developed a five-year plan to advance its institutional commitment to DEIA. With this plan, we sought to address structural issues that undermine our DEIA values, while refining our operations through an equity lens. We believe that the six goals outlined in this plan will help us grow an accessible and inclusive environment that allows all staff and visitors to flourish.

In the last few years, members of our staff and Trustee groups have, through highly organized efforts, challenged us to engage in difficult conversations about our past and present practices while asking the questions: *In what ways does our work across the Museum reflect our institutional values? How are these values felt by staff, interns, Trustees, artists, and visitors?* As a result of the work of these dynamic groups, the current plan focuses on internal efforts to ensure that commitments to equity are not only reflected in our public engagement offerings but also have lasting impact by being rooted in the Museum's governance, workplace policies, and culture.

We took several measures to ensure the process for developing the plan was inclusive and considerate of diverse internal stakeholders, including the following:

- Working with the Diversity Committee of the Board of Trustees (formerly the Diversity Task Force of the Board of Trustees) and executive leadership to identify institutional goals and set milestones for making the Museum a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible museum;
- Collaborating with the staff-led DEIA Staff Committee (formerly known as the Racial Equity Task Force) to research, identify, and incorporate into this plan anti-racist values that propel the Museum toward culturally equitable standards based on initiatives taken by peer organizations nationwide; and
- Inviting staff and interns to contribute ideas, resources, and feedback, participating in focus groups and surveys that informed this plan.

As a result, staff, interns, and Trustees have identified two primary areas in which the Museum continues to demonstrate great strength in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility: (1) Community, Programming, and Exhibitions and (2) Recruitment and Professional Growth. Our best practices in these two areas will be a foundation on which to build the initiatives outlined in this plan. The plan builds upon our strengths while challenging us to address much-needed improvements that prioritize the processes and culture that guide our work. Over time, our goals have only expanded. This document provides an overview of the progress made on the original six goals and supporting initiatives outlined in the Museum's DEIA Plan.

Our Guiding Principles

We are committed to giving attention to *our goals* as well as *why* and *how* we aim to reach them. Giving equal attention to our processes, motivations, and outcomes is essential to building accountability and integrity in our work. We have developed a set of **guiding principles** to align our DEIA Plan with our core values. Based on findings from discussions with internal and external stakeholders, we implement our plan with the following principles in mind:

- **COMMUNITY-BUILDING** by deepening communication among all stakeholders in the plan; building trust, respect, and kindness among individuals and groups of people working across the institution; and strengthening our sense of belonging and appreciation for one another.
- **COLLECTIVE PURPOSE** builds commitment and creates motivation to drive our DEIA work.
- **COMMUNICATION** should be clear, consistent, and respectful across the institution.
- **CARE** requires each person to be aware of, and responsive to, the needs and feelings of our colleagues, visitors, local community, stakeholders, and selves. Care requires self-awareness and an ability to receive what others are trying to express despite how much we agree or disagree. In doing so, we uphold a spirit of generosity rooted in the¹ understanding that each individual is called to educate, listen, and share for the collective good, and that we are each deserving of care and actively extending care to one another.
- **COURAGE** is an essential tool for each of our community members as they step outside of their comfort zone and confront their biases and blind spots within conversations on identity, diversity, equity inclusion, and access. Similarly, courage helps us use productive methods when confronting the prejudices presented by others. By leaning on courage, we will build trust in ourselves and one another to do the hard, and necessary, work of shaping a museum of the future.
- **CONSISTENCY** in our approaches to discussing, visioning, and practicing inclusion and equity, at every level of decision-making within the institution, is essential for a workplace culture that thinks beyond diversity and embeds inclusiveness and equity in all aspects of the work.
- **JOY** must be centered in our efforts if we are to sustain these initiatives over time in the face of societal challenges. By finding joy in this work, we offer opportunities to reinvigorate ourselves with the laughter, patience, solidarity, and positivity necessary for a healthy community and organizational culture.

¹ Nel Noddings, “Caring in Education,” *The Encyclopedia of Pedagogy and Informal Education*, 2005. <https://infed.org/caring-in-education/>.

Critical Factors for Success

Accountability

We are committed to reviewing our progress on the initiatives in this plan annually. Quarterly updates will be provided to staff and other key stakeholders. We aim to provide periodic updates on our annual priorities and progress. We invite staff and visitors to provide us with insight on how we are doing so that we can continue to learn and grow together. Successful implementation of this plan will require the full support and ongoing commitment of the executive leadership, staff, and Trustees. We established a DEIA department, led by a Director of DEIA who reports to our Executive Director and President & COO, to ensure that the plan is executed at all levels. Hiring an internal expert on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to lead our efforts has been critical to ensuring that staff perspectives are appropriately gathered and reflected in the plan.

Measures of Success

Assessment will be essential to determining the impact of our DEIA initiatives in realizing our institutional vision, and whether or not we are making the best use of institutional resources. Our efforts to create infrastructure for capturing baseline data was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, as we roll out a new strategic plan, we are making investments in technology that will allow us to refine our approach to data collection.

Shared Language

We recognize that in order to move from discussion to action, it is essential that we develop and integrate a shared understanding of key concepts to guide our work. Here are a few examples of how we define some terms necessary to this work:

- **Diversity** is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, class, ability, religion, and cultural practices.
- **Equity** is an approach that ensures everyone has the support necessary to access the same opportunities.

- **Inclusion** means making a variety of identities part of the Museum through active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity.
- **Access** is the opportunity for people of all bodies, abilities, cultural identities, socioeconomic statuses, and backgrounds to enter and interact with the Museum with dignity.
- **Oppression** is the intentional or unintentional use of power to subjugate, disempower, or marginalize a group, resulting in the benefit, privilege, or dominance of another group. While there are many examples of oppression, oppressive practices are often described in four categories:
 - **Internalized** oppression describes thoughts, feelings, and values that individuals hold.
 - **Interpersonal** oppression describes behaviors, language, and actions between people.
 - **Institutional** oppression describes the policies, practices, codes, and procedures that shape an organization.
 - **Structural** oppression describes the way that systems (social, legal, political, etc.) are organized and maintained.
- **Anti-oppression** is the active interrogation, mitigation, or dismantlement of oppressive systems and practices.

Brooklyn Museum DEIA Goals and Highlights

1. Advance cultural competence among staff, interns, fellows, and Board of Trustees.
2. Empower employees by centralizing information and resources relevant to organizational structure, policies, and strategic planning.
3. Advance inclusion by strengthening ties among staff, interns, volunteers, and Trustees.
4. Increase the diversity of the staff and Trustees—particularly by welcoming people with disabilities, people who are gender nonconforming and/or transgender, and people of color—to better align with New York City population demographics.
5. Continue to diversify the Board of Trustees and Board of Advisors in consideration of race, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status and with a shared commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in our work.
6. Evaluate pay equity through compensation and benefits benchmarking with the goals of promoting internal equity and remaining competitive within the industry, and in consideration of cost of living in New York City.

Goal 1. Advance cultural competence among staff, interns, fellows, and Board of Trustees.

Initiative	Key Progress
<p>Define Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Produce internal definitions of <i>diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility</i>, and related terminology to serve as common institutional language.</p>	<p>2020: Definitions created by DEIA leadership team.</p> <p>2021–22: Shared language integrated in updated DEIA values and presented in new hire onboarding and DEIA Staff Forums.</p>
<p>Cultural Competency Training Conduct annual training for the entire staff on cultural competency in the workplace, as well as intensive specialized training for staff who directly interact with visitors. Training will be provided by specialists to ensure that all staff members can participate as learners.</p>	<p>2021: Hosted virtual DEIA workshops for all staff led by Mosaic Education Network, in partnership with Brooklyn Cultural Institutions Group members.</p> <p>2021–22: Started DEIA new hire orientation workshops to address best practices in the workplace. Initiated monthly DEIA Staff Forums to raise awareness of, and prompt dialogue about, equity issues and resolutions in the Museum and the cultural sector.</p>
<p>Update Values Statement Articulate our shared purpose in supporting the DEIA Plan, offering internal and external stakeholders a clear framework for being an inclusive and equity-minded cultural institution.</p>	<p>2021: Updated the Museum’s values statement and placed it on the website and in the Employee Handbook.</p> <p>2022: Continually integrate the values statement into governing documents and leadership strategy.</p>
<p>Departmental DEIA Goals Department leaders will create departmental DEIA goals with their teams and review progress on those goals.</p>	<p>2021–22: All departments identified at least one goal to advance the Museum’s DEIA values in fiscal year. Continually collaborate with the DEIA department to reach goals and track progress.</p>
<p>Professional Development Workshops Develop a regular series of professional development workshops.</p>	<p>2022: Various mandatory and voluntary trainings have been offered to empower staff with skills, knowledge, and resources.</p>

Goal 2. Empower employees by centralizing information and resources relevant to organizational structure, policies, and strategic planning.

Initiative	Key Progress
<p>Centralize Resources and Onboarding Information for Staff To encourage equitable relationships and empower staff, we will centralize resources and institutional policies for all staff, including onboarding resources and policies for new hires.</p>	<p>2021: Researched and updated Employee Handbook to reflect DEIA values. Rolled out phase one of new employee onboarding resources for new hires.</p> <p>2022: Initiated plans for new internal communications strategy.</p>

Goal 3. Advance inclusion by strengthening ties among staff, interns, volunteers, and Trustees.

Initiative	Key Progress
<p>Build Relationships Across the Museum Establish opportunities for staff, Trustees, interns, and volunteers to learn about each other’s work and discuss issues relevant to inclusion and community-building.</p>	<p>2019-22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased staff visibility through DEIA engagement and learning programs. ● Completed phase one of internal communications program development. ● Improved communication and collaboration between the Diversity Committee of the Board of Trustees and the DEIA Staff Committee. ● Established Employee Resource Groups as volunteer opportunities for staff, fostering belonging. ● Developed a series of social events for staff to promote engagement.

Goal 4. Increase the diversity of the staff and Trustees—particularly welcoming people with disabilities, people who are gender nonconforming and/or transgender, and people of color—to align with New York City population demographics.

Initiative	Key Progress
<p>Establish Benchmark Measures for Staff Demographics Develop a new staff demographics survey to determine to what extent staff diversity aligns with New York City population demographics, benchmark measures for staff demographics, and chart annually.</p>	<p>2021: Piloted demographic data collection and analysis processes.</p>
<p>Assess Human Resources Assess our Human Resources practices through the lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to better attract, train, retain, and promote people of color, individuals with disabilities, and gender-nonconforming individuals.</p>	<p>2020: Reviewed critical staffing needs in Human Resources department to advance excellence.</p>
<p>Improve Hiring Practices Broaden locations and networks where job opportunities are posted to diversify applicant pool, including leadership positions, as well as standardize job descriptions, and train those conducting interviews to ensure applicants are treated consistently and fairly by the hiring team.</p>	<p>2020: Human Resources broadened locations for posting job announcements.</p> <p>2021: Hired a Talent Specialist to oversee efforts to improve hiring practices. Contracted hiring firms with demonstrated success in diversifying candidate pools to oversee hiring process for key leadership positions. Committed to implementing the Rooney Rule in review process for key leadership positions; revised EEO statement and job descriptions to align with updated Museum values.</p> <p>2022: Human Resources collaborated with various departments to refresh the new hire onboarding process. 100% of staff hired since September 2021 have participated in the program.</p>
<p>Training for Hiring Managers Develop a mandatory annual training for hiring managers focused on inclusive hiring and recruitment, addressing discrimination in the workplace, and tempering implicit bias to counteract potential barriers to hiring applicants from historically underrepresented communities.</p>	<p>2021–present: Researching and drafting proposal for piloting a manager training program.</p>

<p>Pipelines for Professional Growth Continue to actively increase pipelines for professional growth through paid fellowships, internships, mentorships, and leadership training.</p>	<p>2020–22: Eliminated unpaid internships and fellowships. Refined recruitment process for internships and fellowships, further diversifying cohorts. Increased opportunities for interns and fellows to build relationships and be mentored by staff.</p>
<p>Accommodations for Staff Create and assess protocol for accommodation requests related to physical and cognitive-emotional disabilities.</p>	<p>2021: Piloted hybrid work policy to promote a forward-thinking, accessible workplace. Updated accommodations request protocol.</p>

Goal 5. Continue to diversify the Board of Trustees and Board of Advisors in consideration of race, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status and with a shared commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in our work.

Initiative	Key Progress
<p>Board Demographic Assessment Annually assess Trustee demographics to identify and pursue areas for growth.</p>	<p>2021: Benchmarked Board demographics by race and gender.</p> <p>2022: Identified areas of Board growth in consideration of skill, knowledge, professional affiliation, race/ethnicity, gender, and arts engagement.</p>
<p>Trustee and Advisor DEIA Training Host a learning series—including art-centered conversations, workshops, lectures, and readings—exploring DEIA topics so that Trustees and advisors stay abreast of conversations around identity, culture, and systemic</p>	<p>2022: Board of Trustees and executive leadership team completed a rigorous four-session training series with Perception Institute to advance diversity and inclusion among the Board.</p>

Goal 6. Evaluate pay equity through compensation and benefits benchmarking with the goals of promoting internal equity and remaining competitive within the industry, and in consideration of cost of living in New York City.

Initiative	Key Progress
<p>Assess Competitiveness and Affordability of Salaries Measure salaries at the Museum and compare to industry standards and cost of living in New York City. The DEIA Staff Committee and Human Resources department will collaborate to define pay equity and identify industry models of wage transparency.</p>	<p>2020: Tasked Wage Transparency & Pay Equity Subcommittee of the DEIA Staff Committee with collecting information on wage equity case studies, frameworks, and terminology.</p>
<p>Assess Climate of Pay Equity and/or Wage Transparency Hire a contractual compensation specialist to examine the current climate of pay equity and wage transparency at the Museum, and to identify possible pathways for advancing pay equity and/or wage transparency.</p>	<p>2020-21: Conducted wage equity analysis with consultants specializing in the cultural sector.</p> <p>2021: Developed principles to guide the institution’s wage transparency and pay equity work in support of creating a concrete action plan.</p>
<p>Increase Pay Equity and/or Wage Transparency Develop a multiyear strategy that increases pay equity and/or wage transparency and fuels the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the Brooklyn Museum.</p>	<p>2021-22: Established a compensation structure to promote equity and transparency for non-union staff. Completed negotiations with DC-37 to increase wages and create greater parity with non-union salaries. Improved communication with staff about pay equity discussions and union negotiations.</p>