RE-Tool:
Racial Equity in the Panel Process

Why Racial Equity in the Panel Process?

Valuing racial equity requires examining how our organizational practices can support equitable outcomes by assessing/addressing racial disparities and inequity. The panel process involves a system of often unquestioned activities—assumed to be inherently impartial—that directly impact funding outcomes.

To address racial equity in the panel process, we must actively investigate who has access to opportunities and who doesn't. Put another way, anti-racist grantmakers must design and implement systems and protocols that increase access and decrease barriers for historically under-resourced groups. We must ask ourselves: Who submits applications? Who do we award? How do we train panel moderators, panelists, and facilitators? In what ways can we interrupt racial bias and contribute to systemic change?

By interrogating every step of the process from applicant pool, to the selection and training of panelists, to the panel experience and outcomes, as well as our communication with grant-seeking artists and organizations every step of the way, we can apply a racial equity lens to grantmaking and move from being part of the problem to being part of the solution.

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OUR STORY

In 2015, a small group of peers were in conversation about issues of equity in the grant panel selection process. We were operating out of the premise that, as panel moderators and administrators, we have a responsibility and an opportunity to understand our own practices and habits through the lens of racial equity. In establishing equity, we wanted to look beyond the language of mission statements and examine the nuts and bolts of how we actually operate our programs: panelist selection, moderator training/lack thereof, the tone of the panel room, etc.

In the fall of 2017, with funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, we were able to expand the group of five to a racially diverse group of twelve and to hire a Project Manager/Facilitator to support us in reaching our goals. After a period of recruitment, we began meeting as a steering committee, remotely and in person, for conversations, racial justice trainings, and—at the heart of it—for support in operationalizing equity practices in the organizations where we work. As a "leave-behind" from our work together we created this RE-Tool for racial equity in the panel process.

Building Art Space Equitably (BASE) cohort meeting, photo by Kathy Hsieh

HOW TO USE RE-TOOL:

RE-Tool focuses on race, recognizing that the creation and perpetuation of racial inequities is pervasive and systemic in all aspects of our organizations and all sectors of our institutions, without exception. Other groups of people are also subject to systemic oppression— based on gender, sexual orientation, ability and age, to name but a few. Focusing on racial equity provides the opportunity to introduce a framework, tools and resources that can, when appropriate, be applied to other areas of oppression. **Source**: Why Lead With Race? from The Alliance

When we confirm that racial bias is operating in these processes, we have to take action to interrupt it. RE-Tool provides effective strategies to intervene in ways that expand and empower our collective work for racial equity.

Here's a summary of what's in each section:

- The **Glossary** provides language and terminology necessary for getting the most of out of the tool. We encourage you to start there!
- **Framing the Problem** provides a context for the necessity of racial equity work in grantmaking.
- **Laying the Groundwork** includes examples of diversity, equity, and inclusion statements as well as some tips on starting this work in your organization.
- You will find a series of questions categorized under headings that represent the typical **Panel Process**: *Applicant Pool, Selection & Training of Panelists, The Panel Experience,* and *Transparency in the Grantmaking Process.* Under each question are emerging practices, examples, and tips gathered from RE-Tool authors. You may notice some redundancy in our tips as the suggestions are applicable to different phases of the panel process and worth repeating.
- We've highlighted one **Intervention Story** as a concrete example of how arts funders can "flip the paradigm" in pursuit of racial equity.
- And finally, we offer **Suggested Resources**.

Once you have the lay of the land, feel free to skip around or go straight to the sections you're most excited about.

Though our recommendations come from a range of funding organizations, it's not a "one-size-fits-all" resource. That said, we hope you find actionable ideas and practical advice applicable to the work you do. To this end, we encourage you to share this tool: convene an "equity club" of colleagues to discuss RE-Tool, talk through ideas and questions, share emerging practices and research, and make space for feedback and critique.

GLOSSARY

ALAANA: This is an acronym for Asian, Latinx, African, Arab, and Native American intended to be inclusive of any individual, culture, community or arts organization from these racial/ethnic identity groups. The term intentionally names these broad racial and ethnic identities rather than grouping them under the more generic term "people of color." **Source**: Grantmakers in the Arts

> ALAANA is not a term embraced unanimously because not all people of color feel included. For example, there are people of Middle Eastern descent who do not identify as Arab.
>
> Many of these terms refer to social constructs that are, themselves, contested. The authors believe the term "minority" diminishes the voices of people of color and ignores the reality that people of color are the global majority. So, for the purposes of this document, the authors have decided to use ALAANA and people of color.

Diversity is the wide range of national, ethnic, racial and other backgrounds of U.S. residents and immigrants as social groupings, co-existing in U.S. culture. The term is often used to include aspects of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class and much more. **Source**: Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative

> The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. Yet, it is quite possible within a setting of people of different backgrounds and perspectives not to have acceptance and respect. This is why inclusion is important. Further, diversity may or may not be linked to the issue of equity. A diverse workplace is not necessarily an equitable workplace. Nor does the presence of people from diverse backgrounds necessarily produce decision-making that optimizes results for the groups their diversity reflects. A foundation that focuses only on diversity cannot presume that it has equity as a goal.
> **Source**: D5 Coalition

Inclusion is a sense of belonging, which allows people to engage and contribute within an environment (the key to reaping the benefits of diversity). **Source**: Kira Banks, Forward Through Ferguson

> Inclusion means the ability of people from diverse backgrounds to raise their perspectives authentically and for those voices to matter and affect decisions within majority-group settings where the organizational culture has been enabled for that to happen; and the initiative of majority-group members to access non-majority voices in the latter's own settings and through their own informational vehicles, so that majority-group members enlarge their understanding of issues and relationships. Neither of these approaches ensures the absence of disagreement, but inclusion promises a broader view

of the world and a more democratic process of decision-making. Others have called this "transformational inclusion." Inclusion can be a problematic term in that it implies that some people are "in" and others are "out" and that the in-group needs to invite others in, thereby privileging them. It also implies a "pseudo-community" where harmony is seen as the goal of the out-groups being invited in. **Source**: D5 Coalition

Privilege is unearned (conscious or unconscious) access and power based on systemic bias. White privilege refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally, white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it. **Source**: Peggy McIntosh, Racial Equity Tools

Racial bias is a harmful aversion to, stereotyping of, or discrimination against a race. Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. **Source**: Cheryl Staats, Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them. **Source**: Center for Assessment and Policy Development

> Racial equity results when you cannot predict advantage or disadvantage by race. But the route to achieving equity will not be accomplished through treating everyone equally. It will be achieved by treating everyone equitably, or justly according to their circumstances. **Source**: Race Matters Institute

> Strategies that advance equity require an analysis of the historical and, in many cases persistent (systemic) factors that create unequal conditions and thus unequal opportunity for certain groups of people. The pursuit of equity recognizes and accounts for the complex interaction between the dynamics of identity, socio-economic forces, and policy and practice that operate in the environments and contexts in which philanthropic investments occur. **Source**: D5 Coalition

Racism is a complex system of beliefs and behaviors, grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race. These beliefs and behaviors are conscious and unconscious; personal and institutional; and result in the oppression of people of color and benefit the dominant group, whites. A simpler definition is racial prejudice + power = racism. **Source**: People's Institute for Survival and Beyond

A note on culturally-specific organizations: The RE-Tool was crafted by grantmakers, the majority of whom work in predominantly white or multi-racial spaces. We want to acknowledge that racial equity work within people of color-led organizations is different than racial equity in the context of predominantly white organizations. For a discussion that illuminates some of these differences, see American Theatre's interview with Randy Reyes from Theater Mu.

We recognize that all areas of the country are not as racially diverse as the U.S. as a whole. Even if you're in a community that is majority white, the practices included in RE-Tool may be meaningfully applied and are helpful to all applicants regardless of race.

FRAMING THE PROBLEM

The following excerpts are from the engaging, must-read research study *Not Just Money: Equity Issues in Cultural Philanthropy* funded by Surdna Foundation and researched by Helicon Collaborative. Please read the full report for compelling statistics, data, and infographics.

"Recent studies confirm inequitable patterns in funding distribution at national and local levels. There is an ongoing lack of racial diversity among decision-makers: arts foundation staff and boards, individual donors, cultural institution leadership and panelists. People of color-led organizations and artists of color, as well as low-income communities in urban and rural settings, face distinct challenges in accessing resources due to explicit and implicit racial bias and racism."

> **Despite important efforts by many leading foundations, funding overall has gotten less equitable**, not more, over the past five years.

> Just **2 percent of all cultural institutions receive nearly 60 percent of all contributed revenue** – up 5 percent over a decade. Funding inequities are systemic and local patterns mirror national ones.

"We are in a pivotal moment as a society, when greater recognition and meaningful support for a wider spectrum of creative voices and cultural traditions can stimulate a new burst of artistic energy, strengthen the role of the arts in diverse communities, and help our country address and heal some of its pronounced divisions. However, this report shows that funding in the cultural sector is getting less equitable – a larger percentage is going to large, urban fine arts institutions, and smaller portion to smaller, community based, culturally specific and rural arts organizations.

To change this trend, we must first acknowledge the origins of the nonprofit arts sector, which sprung from Western European cultural values and fine arts traditions, and was structured to preserve them. We must also understand larger social and economic systems within which the nonprofit cultural system operates and which inform its behaviors – structural racism, class and geographic bias, and the increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of a very few."

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

If racial equity is new within your organization, not all staff are likely to embrace trainings and new practices, especially staff that are entrenched in a routine way of working. If you don't feel supported within your organization, find other like-minded people committed to this work to provide both support and strategies to move things forward.

Many organizations enter conversations around equity, diversity and inclusion by exploring and evaluating the organizational vision, values and practices with staff and board. Creating and adopting values and equity statements is an important means to laying the groundwork for the implementation of equitable practices.

Of course, having an equity statement does not achieve equity. It is critical to develop practices that operationalize and systematize equity. Below are examples of diversity, equity, and inclusion value and vision statements.

- **New England Foundation for the Arts** (NEFA) values an equitable, diverse, and inclusive world, which we interpret as all people having fair access to the tools and resources they need to realize creative and community endeavors. We acknowledge structural inequities that have excluded individuals and

communities from opportunity based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, class, age, and geography, and strive to counter those inequities in our work.

● One of the **Theatre Communications Group** (TCG) long-standing core values is diversity. The diversity of the theatre community—combined with its interdependence—makes it strong, healthy and robust. TCG is committed to supporting the plurality of aesthetic, perspective, race, class, gender, age, mission, as well as organizational size and structure. TCG's strategic plan includes a multi-year, six-point Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Initiative (EDII) to transform the national theatre field into a more equitable, inclusive and diverse community. While these efforts have been focused on racial and cultural diversity, TCG takes an intersectional approach to identity and equity that infuses all of our programming.

● The **Chamber Music America** (CMA) Board of Directors has made diversity, inclusion, and equity a primary focus of CMA's work. We are committed to examining all aspects of the organization's systems, programs, services, and communication mechanisms to fully understand and represent all chamber music traditions and the people who create, perform, and present those traditions. While we have a commitment to improve in the areas of diversity, inclusion, and equity, we realize that Chamber Music America was born from the Western European classical tradition, which evolved within a society that practiced many forms of racism and exclusion, some of which continue today to impact our members and our communities.

We further recognize that the people and music of ALAANA communities must represent a greater portion of the organization in order for CMA to be a relevant part of a broad cross-section of contemporary society. It is our view that, at this particular time and because of this history, race continues to be a uniquely privileging or penalizing category for many communities. We will, therefore, conduct our diversity, inclusion, and equity work focusing on ALAANA people, and approach other issues of diversity—including LGBTQ, gender, or abilities—through a racial lens. This means that we will prioritize the involvement of these communities that are also part of the ALAANA community in order to focus directly on race, which we believe to be the clearest and most urgent issue affecting our field.

CMA believes that there is a fundamental difference between inviting ALAANA communities into a Western European-based structure and revising the structure itself to include ALAANA musicians, presenters, composers, and others in the field to fully benefit as active participants in the organization. We are committed to the latter, and know that we have a great deal of work to do in order to become a fully inclusive and equitable organization. CMA will undertake this work by seeing diversity, inclusion, and equity as a related set of approaches that build on one another and lead to the fair sharing of the benefits and services that our organization offers.

Our hope is that this work will allow Chamber Music America to fulfill its vision for the future, where people of all races, religions, genders, and abilities are able to fully participate in the performance, presentation, and enjoyment of the many styles of small ensemble music. Our Statement of Commitment will guide the work of CMA as the national organization for the field, serving as a model for chamber music practitioners throughout the country and allowing us to participate in the increasingly national conversation on diversity, inclusion, and equity issues.
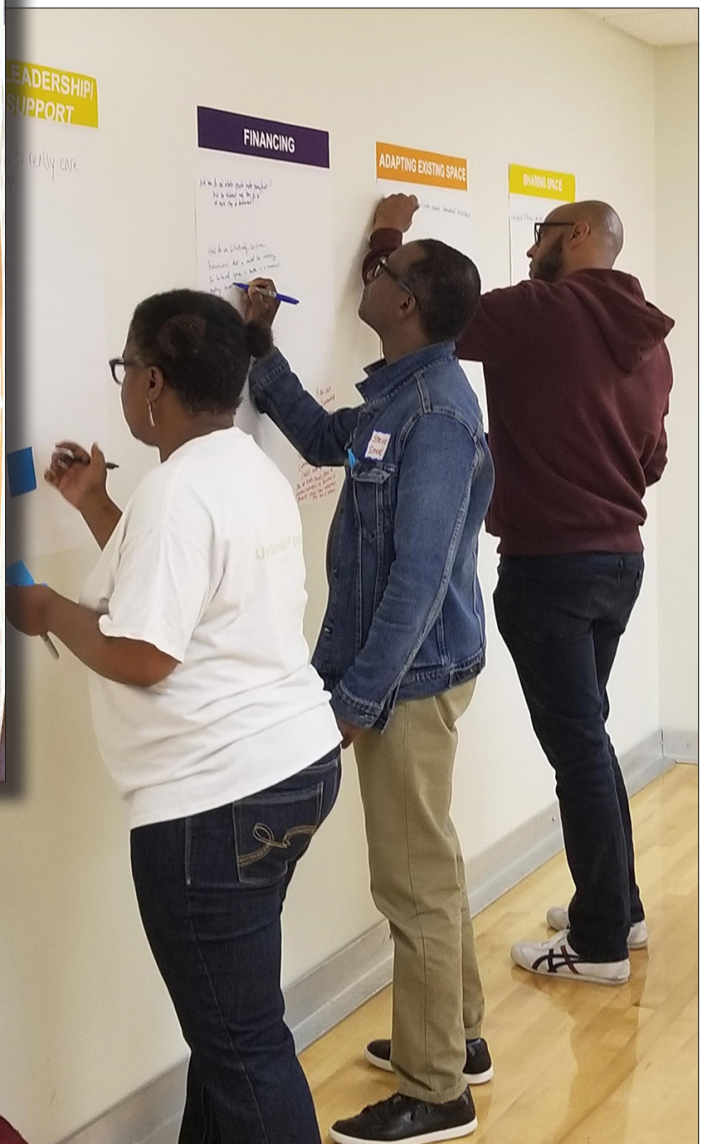
BASE cohort meetings funded through Seattle Office for Arts & Culture (left photo by Kathy Hsieh, right photo by Carol Rashawnna Williams)

THE PANEL PROCESS

This section includes questions and corresponding practices for each stage of the panel process:

- o Applicant Pool
- o Selection & Training of Panelists
- o The Panel Experience
- o Transparency in the Grantmaking Process

Rebecca Mwase & Ron Ragin, *Vessels*, National Theater Project funded
through New England Foundation for the Arts, photo by Melissa Cardona

● APPLICANT POOL

Who is applying? What are the barriers? Does your organization collect demographic data from applicants? If so how?

Anti-racist grantmakers actively collect demographic data with the intention of using the information to address racial inequity. For the purposes of evaluating racial diversity, the data collected is focused on race and ethnicity, but there are many other types of demographic data that deepen the understanding of who is applying and may be important for specific programs or initiatives. Examples include: gender, geography, sexual orientation, age, parental, marital, or education status, religion, and artistic discipline or genre. Regarding the legality of collecting demographic data, please refer to the legal research provided by GuideStar in conjunction with D5.

Tip #1: Share a statement to let applicants know why you are collecting demographic information. For example, "Our organization values diversity, seeking to be inclusive and accessible to all applicants. For this reason, we request information on race/ethnicity and gender of all applicants. This helps us assess whether the program is achieving its diversity objectives."

Tip #2: Allow people to self-identify beyond the census categories and include a "decline to state" option.

Tip #3: For organizations, ask for the quantitative demographics of the executive leadership, staff, board, artists served and audience.

Tip #4: Place the request for demographic data at the end of the application process instead of the beginning, focusing instead on the artist or organization's creative work.

Tip #5: Track demographic information through all of the stages of your application and review process to assess for bias. For example, if your process involves five phases—application, pre-screening, panelist review, finalist review, and awards—then accordingly assess the demographics at each phase to look for significant changes.

If you discover a drop in the numbers of a particular demographic group between the application and the pre-screening stage, ask yourself what about the pre-screening process is affecting this group of artists? If you find a significant change between the pre-screening and the awards phase, what is happening in the panel review that allows a bias against a specific sector of applicants to enter the process?

Tip #6: Discuss the legality of collecting demographic data to assure staff and prepare them to answer questions from applicants. Please refer to this legal research provided by GuideStar in conjunction with D5.

What do you do to ensure racial diversity of applicants?
It's challenging to begin to address a lack of diversity within the constraints of a deadline. This work requires what most organizations are short on: time. But continuing with the application process without addressing the lack of diversity perpetuates inequity. Increasing racial diversity in the applicant pool requires advance work and an ongoing commitment.

Tip #1: **Ask what support is needed and examine ways to provide for this through your grantmaking**. Investigate how you can move beyond the limits of your existing networks and connect directly with ALAANA artists and organizations not represented. Ask what support is needed and if your guidelines provide for this. Connect with alumni ALAANA artists and organizations to help expand networks.

Tip #2: **Fund opportunities directed to ALAANA artists and organizations**. Send invitations to apply to artists from under-represented communities.

Tip #3: **Examine your application**. If there is racial diversity in some programs, but not others, it's important to assess the program differences that might contribute to this. Are there variations in the guidelines? Are there diverging geographic demographics? Are there language barriers? Try to zero in on the source of the barrier. Extend the deadline to apply if necessary.

Tip #4: **Convene culturally-specific groups of arts leaders and artists of color to provide honest feedback on your application process and review criteria**. Pay people for their time to participate. Designate staff and develop a process for building relationships with artists and organizations from communities not represented.

Tip #5: **Solicit nominations from organizations and artists**. Or instead of having organizations apply for funding, do the research to find the awardees that best fit the criteria. This conserves valuable human resources for the recipients, forces funders to get to know the community, and eliminates a sense of competition between potential recipients.

Tip #6: **Provide comprehensive support to apply**. Designate staff to help applicants navigate the application. Provide financial support to applicants to compensate for their time to apply. If your application is in English, provide translation support for non-English speaking applicants. Provide multiple ways for applicants to understand the application: webinars to review guidelines and "how to" instructions to complete the application, designated office hours for call-in support, in-person meetings, and downloadable PDF instructions.

Do you have requirements or institutional goals around racial equity and diversity in the applicant pool?
Set goals and indicators related to your mission statement and organizational values using cultivated, specific language for advancing racial equity. See the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture Equitable Development Strategy on page 24 for a detailed plan.

State arts agencies do not have established percentages for diversity, but general population percentages can help with evaluation. Take a look at the new National Assembly of State Arts Agencies' Visualizing Grant Diversity report. And remember, racial diversity is not racial equity. Just because you have racial diversity, doesn't mean you've addressed the systems determining access and opportunity for all.

What criteria do you require for the application?
> **Tip #1**: **Streamline the grant process as much as possible**. Convene focus groups of artists or organization leaders of color that you are trying to reach to understand which questions are necessary and which create barriers. If you do not have the resources to support convenings, do an online survey, including past grant recipients, applicants, and those who have never applied, or do personal interview calls.

> **Tip #2**: **Allow different options for responding to applications**. For example, instead of writing the answers, allow applicants to respond using short videos. Use video interviews or site visits with interested applicants instead of paper applications—this is especially helpful for navigating language barriers or artistic work that is not easily represented through work samples.

● SELECTION & TRAINING OF PANELISTS

Who selects the panelists? What criteria do you use for selecting panelists?
The selection of panelists strongly influences outcomes and is often done by a single person within an organization with no formal process or criteria, especially in regard to incorporating racial equity values and practices. Consider these tips:

> **Tip #1**: **Explicitly state the criteria for panelists**, such as a demonstrated experience with the artists or types of work represented in the applicant pool, a background as a practitioner in an artistic field, availability, etc.

> **Tip #2**: **Communicate to applicants the requirements** you have for panelist selection and training.

> **Tip #3**: **Invite nominations of and suggestions for panelists** by applicants or past grantees.

Tip #4: Invite past grantees or potential applicants of color to serve on panels.

Tip #5: Work with re-grant or intermediary organizations. If you are funding intermediary organizations or re-grant programs, ask that your value around racial equity and diversity be represented in the program requirements and in their panel process.

Does the staff person selecting panelists and moderating the panel receive any training?

Providing staff with anti-racism, racial microaggressions training, and/or implicit bias training offers grounding for how to recognize, interrupt and re-direct racial bias and racism when it surfaces in the panel room. These are skills that most people don't have—skills that require training and practice to develop.

Tip #1: Create a brave, creative, and productive environment for others by acknowledging power dynamics and the ways that social identities influence interactions.

Tip #2: Learn how to recognize impacts of white supremacy culture on the group process.

Do you track the demographics of your panelists? Do you have a racial diversity requirement for panels?

Having ALAANA panelists is essential if racial equity is your goal. The authors believe they should be a majority of the panel. Stating a goal and requirement of majority ALAANA panel representation will facilitate your selection panel recruitment. It should go without saying that people of color also encompass a broad diversity including: disability, gender, class, artistry, generation, etc.

What is your training process with panelists?

Training is a direct way of communicating and guiding the panel in understanding racial equity values, review criteria and awareness around bias. All documentation should clearly state that racial equity is a core value of your organization, including program guidelines, panel guidelines, etc.

Tip #1: Include an implicit bias training as part of the panel orientation, including online video resources. Videoconference trainings as well as in-person trainings are effective ways of convening panelists for this important work.

Tip #2: Develop a circle of support. Racial equity and implicit bias trainings challenge us to examine our behavior and values in ways that are unfamiliar and uncomfortable. It's a good idea to have people in your circle to call on when questions arise that are outside your realm of experience.

How is racial equity embedded in the process and scoring system? How do you incorporate racial equity into the panel charge?

> **Tip #1: Charge the panel with the responsibility to recommend a grant roster that captures the diversity of the field** and ask: "Is there diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, and generation? Are there different cultural perspectives? Does my roster include works in more than one genre or style of work? Is there a range of points of view, tone, or style?"
>
> The charge to the panel should detail all of the expectations, for example: "Review and score all applications prior to the panel meeting; recommend a cohort of grantees that captures the diversity of the relevant larger field; serve as lead responders in the panel meeting; identify and discuss challenges and opportunities with program staff to inform program development and policy."
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> **Tip #2: Ask panelists to sign a commitment pledge** to support racial equity and diversity.
>
> **Tip #3: Communicate the scoring process** to applicants.

If supporting an intermediary organization, do you have specific requirements/protocols around the panel process and do you specifically require racial diversity on the panel?
Requiring intermediary organizations to mirror your values around racial equity and diversity is another way of furthering this work. Convene intermediaries to discuss the panel process and include them in panel training opportunities.

Do you compensate panelists?
Paying panelists for their time is highly recommended. Many artists are systemically underpaid for their work and this is especially amplified for ALAANA artists. Civic duty or prestige does not equal compensation. If you wish to have a broad representation from ALAANA panelists, place resources behind this value. Compensating panelists underscores your commitment to equity.

● THE PANEL EXPERIENCE

How are panelists empowered to engage in equitable practices?
Many panel deliberations happen without discussion of what information or understandings are guiding the decision-making and what personal preferences or biases are operating for each panelist. By intentionally having these conversations with panelists, we open the opportunity for panelists to rigorously review applications, challenge assumptions, and hold themselves and each other accountable for disrupting bias.

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Do you provide a definition of artistic merit for the panel to use? If not, do you ask panelists to define how they are determining artistic merit or quality?

The criteria of artistic merit asks panelists to assess the "quality" of an artist or organization as if this is an empirical fact—a thing outside of our individual heads and hearts that is locatable, measurable, quantifiable and justifiable. What these factors are often remains mysterious and unnamed.

In truth, artistic merit is predicated on access, opportunities, and the ability to navigate educational and funding systems that privilege white dominant culture. In a system of racism, one can see how unexamined notions of "excellence" are entrenched in white supremacy. With a racial justice lens, we might begin to question inequities in grant writing skills and capacity, access to partnerships, and other resources.

Tip #1: Name and define criteria for artistic merit. How can it be recognized or evidenced?

Tip #2: Ask panelists to honor and acknowledge the aesthetic choices the artist has made and to offer scores within those artist's choices. The essential question is whether this artist is a strong exemplar or unconvincing within their particular field. You might call this "the cup of tea." Instruct panelists not to discount an artist's work that isn't their cup of tea and not to give an artist more credit than is due simply because their aesthetic is one the panelist admires.

Tip #3: In the training with the panel, put together a list of the ways in which each of them recognizes merit. Below is a list of different suggestions that have surfaced in panel meetings.

For individual artists:
- Artist demonstrates strong technical skills and craft in the execution of their work
- Self-awareness of the artist is communicated in their response to application questions
- Work reveals something about the world, communicating unique perspective/s, inviting the viewer to question, discover, explore new ideas—the storytelling is compelling
- Opportunity represents an artistic challenge or stretch, there is risk involved
- Exploration feels relevant and deeply considered
- Artist has an authentic relationship/connection to the content/ community involved in the work
- Artist shows a commitment to working in this form
- Combination of aesthetics, technical skill, and delivery is engaging emotionally, intellectually, spiritually.

For organizations:
- Extent to which the project serves the organization's community or constituency
- Potential impact on artists (including evidence of direct payment) and the artistic field
- Alignment of the project to the organization's mission, audience, community, and/or constituency
- Vitality of any proposed performance measurements
- Plans for documentation and distribution of project results, as appropriate
- Ability to carry out the project based on such factors as the feasibility of the budget, the quality and clarity of the project goals and design, the resources involved, and the qualifications of the project's personnel
- Where appropriate, potential to reach underserved populations such as those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited
- Demonstrated racial diversity on the board, leadership, staff, artists served, and participants in programs and audiences.

Tip #4: Ask panelists, either in the training or at the start of the panel meeting, to talk about their artistic preferences. For example, "We all have likes and loves. What are yours? Are there particular aesthetic styles that you love more than anything else on Earth? Or ways in which an artist's perspective is revealed in the application that makes you say 'Yes!'" Encourage panelists to declare their preferences to the whole panel. This helps surface ideas that are guiding a panelist's scoring. Ask the panelists to hold one another accountable for being consistent in how merit is discussed and scored.

Do you discuss what biases panelists might have (that are different from conflict of interest)?

In the same way that a deep understanding and delineation of merit needs to be integrated into the panel process, identifying bias and ways of holding one another accountable for the ways in which bias influences decisions is important to the equity in panel work.

Tip #1: Move beyond the naming of biases as shaming or conflating bias with conflict of interest. Openly articulating filters and biases helps illuminate potential influences on decision-making. Bias is natural and is only a problem in the decision-making process when it is acted on without question.

Tip #2: Encourage discussions of bias as a way of surfacing ideas that are guiding a panelist's scoring. Just because a bias is articulated, doesn't mean that it is automatically a bad or wrong impulse. Sometimes a conversation that arises out of a feeling of bias can provide important information for the review.

For example, a panelist might say, "This particular application is hitting on my bias against cultural appropriation." The panel facilitator might then ask how this relates (or doesn't) to the review criteria and guidelines? If the guidelines

state that an artist should have an authentic relationship or connection to the content or community involved in the work, then the panelist's question has raised an important point for the full panel to consider.

If there is a power imbalance among panelists, do you have effective strategies for leveling the imbalance?

At the beginning of the panel process and during training, encourage panelists to be mindful of their own privilege when considering how much time they take up and whether they are actively making space for all perspectives. Develop shared agreements at the beginning of the panel process that address power in order to raise awareness of the role of privilege in how the space is shared.

> **Tip #1: Introduce a collective agreement** during the panelist training/orientation that might include:
>
> - Openness to others' points of view
> - Awareness of power dynamics
> - Positive spirit, generosity, laughter, constructive critique
> - Full attention to discussion, limiting distractions
> - Letting others speak, finish thoughts, deep listening
> - Staying grounded in the guidelines and criteria
>
> **Tip #2: Distribute the lead comments evenly among panelists**. Assign a panelist to begin the feedback, usually someone who has scored that particular applicant positively, and another panelist, who scored that applicant lower, to start the conversation. Let the panelists know they don't have to defend the applicant. They are just being asked to start the conversation.

How do we identify and disrupt racism when it surfaces in deliberations? How do we empower all panelists to do the same?

> **Tip #1: Discuss and agree on ways to raise concerns during the deliberations**, either in the panel training or at the beginning of the panel review. Practice this with staff, role playing different scenarios to build confidence.
>
> **Tip #2: Decide when and how to intervene**. When we experience injustice, we often feel provoked and disrespected—even angry. Before you speak up, think first about what you really want to have happen. In the panel context, which is short in duration, is it enough for the bad behavior to stop? The clearer your goals, the more likely you'll achieve them.
>
> **Tip #3: Practice how to intervene**. Find ways to describe your concerns absent judgments and accusation. For example, replace, "What you said about that artist's work is racist" with "What did you mean when you categorized this artist's work as too 'urban?'" Begin with the detailed facts, tentatively suggest what the facts mean to you, then invite others to a conversation.

Tip #4: Assess the type of conversation that will help the type of bias or racism that is happening. Is it overt and egregious—someone makes an intolerant comment? If so, a conversation about the content might be the best course. If it is more pervasive—someone engages in a repetitive pattern of behavior that is disrespectful—you must gather more data until you can describe the pattern. For example, if a panelist repeatedly interrupts or talks over other panelists. Be sure you can cite a few instances and draw attention to the pattern. **Source**: How to react to biased comments at work? HBR.org by Judith Honesty, David Maxfield & Joseph Grenny

What process is in place for assessing the level of fairness and equity in the panel room?

Tip #1: Organization-wide assessments often include a review of all operational and programmatic practices. If your organization is undergoing this type of evaluation, make sure to include the panel process.

Tip #2: Experiment with different ways of organizing and leading panels. Track the results in terms of racial equity and diversity goals. Try modifications with different panels. Have regular staff discussions about what is working and what isn't. Practice. Try the assessment tools included in the resource list.

Martha Redbone, Aaron Whitby/Blackfeet Productions, *Bone Hill*, National Theater Project funded through New England Foundation for the Arts, photo by Kevin Yaratola

● TRANSPARENCY IN THE GRANTMAKING PROCESS

How do you communicate the program guidelines?

> *Tip #1:* **Conduct in-person meetings and community information sessions** in order to build relationships and attract a diverse applicant pool.

> **Tip #2: Offer application mentorship** to help artists and organizations learn how to apply.

> **Tip #3: Offer translation support** for applicants for whom English is not a first language.

Are your guidelines, review criteria, and panel process transparent to applicants?

Being open and transparent about how decisions are made is an important way of being accountable to applicants.

> **Tip #1: Recognize the cultural nuances of and impact of the language** that is used in describing programs and when interacting with panelists, art-makers and community members.

> **Tip #2: Share the application guidelines in multiple ways**. Directly state how the review criteria are assessed through specific parts of the application.

> **Tip #3: Allow different options for responding to applications**. For example, instead of writing the answers, allow applicants to respond using short videos.

> **Tip #4: Let applicants know by whom and how they will be reviewed**. You don't have to name specific panelists if that is not your process, but sharing general information about past panelists or the qualifications of panelists, and how panelists are selected is helpful.

> **Tip #5: Make sure there is a direct connection between the selection criteria and the application**. For example, if artistic merit is a review criterion, let the applicants and panelists know that merit will be determined by an evaluation of work samples and the CV/resume. If impact is a criterion, which questions or what information in the application will be used to assess this?

Do you share the panelists names with applicants?

There are many practices around sharing names of panelists. Here are few:
- Publicly share the names of panelists (after the panel meeting to prevent lobbying)
- Share the names of panelists in advance to publicize their diversity and signal a welcoming process
- Share the panelists' names every few years
- Share an organizational list of all panelists, but don't specify which panelist was on which review process.

Do you include the applicants in the design of the program guidelines?
Including those who are most impacted at the beginning of the process is the best way to ensure the process for applying and the program you are offering serves the intended artists or arts communities.

> **Tip: Nothing about us, without us, is for us**. No policy should be decided without the full and direct participation of members of the group(s) affected by that policy. This powerful slogan came out of the struggle of people with disabilities in South Africa.
>
> There are many ways to involve constituents in the planning process—ranging from surveys to convenings. Consider paying those involved for their time in helping you design your process or program.

Are applicants allowed to witness the panel process or be involved in the selection process?
The option to attend the panel review or to receive a recording of the deliberations provides a powerful learning opportunity for applicants. The downside is that panelists may feel self-conscious or inhibited in the discussion of the applicants. Comments are more filtered. Another alternative is to convene the applicants and charge them with the responsibility of selecting the awardees.

Do you provide feedback to applicants who are not funded?
Direct feedback about how panelists respond is critically important for applicants. Here are a few different approaches to sharing feedback:

> **Tip #1: Share the recorded panel discussions with applicants**—audio clips for each applicant can be made available online.
>
> **Tip #2: Provide email feedback for the finalists that are reviewed by the full panel**. Share the notes from the discussion via email. Specific comments do not need to be attributed to particular panelists. Staff can create a summary of the constructive comments.
>
> **Tip #3: Share general notes about the overall review process** with applicants that did not make it into the finalist review and for whom you do not have specific notes. General comments that were discussed in the panel process can be shared via email as well.
>
> **Tip #4: Convene unawarded applicants and share general feedback**, answering questions and providing applicants with a direct opportunity to understand the process. If possible, having a panelist present for this convening can provide applicants with access to the decision-making process and expand the panelists understanding of the applicants.

INTERVENTION STORY

We'd like to close RE-Tool with an example of an "intervention" for racial equity in grantmaking. When we move beyond mitigating symptoms of the problem and get closer to the root, we are able to make radical interventions for change.

Seattle Office of Arts & Culture Equitable Development Strategy

OFFICE OF ARTS & CULTURE

SEATTLE

"Equity is about ensuring the communities most affected by injustice get the most money to lead in the fight to address that injustice, and if that means we break the rules to make that happen, then that's what we do."

Kathy Hsieh, *Cultural Partnerships & Grant Manager*

Goal
To flip the paradigm of traditional City government funding models and test a new, alternative way to invest resources that center the value and expertise of communities of color in the arts and cultural sector.

Core values of grantmaking team
- We aim to center intersectional racial equity in all we do so that we might inspire the arts & cultural sector to do the same, and when they do, the stories and art they share with the broader community will reflect this same value.
- Through the process of applying, applicants gain a better understanding of what intersectional racial equity means.
- We aim to support the full spectrum of the arts and cultural ecosystem – inclusive, diverse, multicultural, small, large, emerging, established, participation, presentation, traditional, contemporary, grassroots, professional.
- We strive to role model access, equity and inclusion best practices and are funding opportunities for the community to do the same.

Create solidarity not competition

Structural racism is designed to pit those without institutionally-backed power against each other. How do we offset this in our grantmaking practice? Instead of having organizations apply for funding, do the research to find the awardees that best fit the criteria you are seeking.

Include those who are most impacted at the beginning of the process

Since the source of the funding was about addressing community inclusion on the critical issue of arts space-making and cultural preservation, who better to lead the strategic work than those very same communities that are experiencing the highest risk of displacement?

Fund significantly more than what you're asking for in return

Often arts funding only covers the direct expenses of a project with a small percentage for overhead. But if we're trying to make up for historic inequities, especially when funding artist of color organizations, how can equity ever be achieved if they're always playing catch-up?

Funding should not be restrictive

The recipients could use the funds for anything they wanted – to cover overhead, to carry out a project, to regrant, anything. If you trust that all of the organizations you're investing in do good, valuable, meaningful work then you should trust that they are using the funds in ways that advance their mission.

The funding should help the organization achieve its own mission

The organizations were selected primarily because the work and mission of each of them aligned completely with what we were seeking their expertise for, and they had demonstrated themselves as key connectors in their communities. Their time with us was designed to leverage their experience and knowledge of their communities to help us identify the strategy that they felt would serve their communities best in ensuring their ability to not be gentrified out of Seattle.

Create transformational value

Most funding in this country is transactional. How can we make our funding investments transformational? Our equitable development model not only provided direct funding, it also resulted in the creation of:

- Leadership Development
- Collective Organizing
- Asset-Centered Framework
- Community Connections

Drummers, African Village Experience funded through
Seattle Office of Arts & Culture's Arts in Parks, photo by Jenny Crooks

● SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Understanding Racial Equity, Undoing Racism, Racial Bias

Not Just Money: Equity Issues in Cultural Philanthropy – Helicon
Understanding Unconscious Bias – The Royal Society
Visualizing Grant Diversity – National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
How to react to biased comments at work? – Judith Honesty, David Maxfield, Joseph
    Grenny in Harvard Business Review
Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture – ProInspire
*Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and
    Practice Primer* – PolicyLink
Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity – Racial Equity Alliance
*What Are the Paradigm Shifts Necessary for the Arts Sector to Nurture More
    Sustainable THRIVING Institutions of Color?* – Yancey Consulting
Why Lead With Race – Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity
White Supremacy Culture From Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups
    – Kenneth Jones & Tema Okun
Grantmaking with a Racial Equity Lens – GrantCraft
Funders Your Grant Application Process May Be Perpetuating Inequity, *Nonprofit with
    Balls* – Vu Le
Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life – Derald W. Sue, et al.
*Tools for Creating Healthy, Productive Interracial/Multicultural Communities: A
    Community Builder's Toolkit* – *The Institute for Democratic Renewal and
    Project Change Anti-racism Initiative*
Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change Work – Americans
    for the Arts/Animating Democracy
How Do You Quantify Inclusion, Respect, Or Belonging? – Nova Collective
Breaking Free from Bias – Girard Chiva
*Analysis of Policies, Practices, and Programs for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and
    Inclusion* – D5 Coalition and JustPartners, Inc.

Assessment Tools

Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit – Race Forward
Racial Justice Organization Assessment – Western States Center
Moving A Racial Justice Agenda: Organizational Assessment – Western States Center
The Roadmap to Intercultural Competence Using the IDI – Intercultural
    Development Inventory
Right-sizing the Grantmaking Process Project Streamline – Grants Managers Network
Race Equity Crosswalk Tool – The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Community Engagement Ladder – Indiana Arts Council
D5's Self-Assessment for Foundation Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) – D5 Coalition
The California Endowment Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report Card – Social Policy
    Research Associates

Case Studies from Grantmakers and Culturally-Specific Arts Organizations

Investing in the Indigenous Arts Ecology – First Peoples Fund
MAP Fund: Collaborative, Iterative, and Responsive: Agile Techniques Transform MAP's Grantmaking – Lauren Ree Slone and Kevin Clark
Acknowledging Race in Granting to Individuals – Tony & Caroline Grant
City of Seattle – Turning Commitment Into Action Local and Regional Government – Alliance on Race and Equity
Mapping Small Arts and Culture Organizations of Color in Oakland – Akonadi Foundation & Kenneth Rainin Foundation
Minnesota's Culturally Specific Organizations: Equity in the Sector Local and Regional – Government Alliance on Race and Equity
How Advocates of African-American Art Are Advancing Racial Equity in the Art World – Meredith Mendelsohn and Tess Thackara
Latino/a Art: Race and the Illusion of Equality – Arlene Davila
Dismantling Stereotypes About Asian-American Identity Through the Arts – Priscilla Frank
State of the Work: Stories from the Movement to Advance Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion – D5 Coalition
Legal Opinion on Nonprofit Organizational Demographic Information – D5 Coalition & Gawthrop Greewood, PC Attorneys at Law
The Road to Achieving Equity: Findings and Lessons from a Field Scan of Foundations That Are Embracing Equity as a Primary Focus – Kris Putnam-Walkerly & Elizabeth Russell with support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Who Gets Most Arts Money? Still Large, White Organizations – *American Theatre* by Diep Tran

SPECIAL THANKS

● ● CONNECT

We trust there are many "intervention stories" to share, applaud, and use as inspiration—and we want to hear yours too. We hope, as was true for the authors, that the information, resources, and practical advice offered in RE-Tool deepens our collective commitment and pursuit of racial equity and makes space for community-building and sharing. To that end, feel free to contact us via email below. Thank you for joining us on the journey.

Photo - Back row (left to right): Eleanor Savage, Jane Preston, Francene J. Blythe, Ken May, Tariana Navas-Nieves, Jordan Baylon
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