



Racial Equity Action Plan

Marin Shakespeare Company is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

- Diversity means that we actively seek to include people with a wide variety of experiences and backgrounds.
- Equity means that we seek to work in ways that are just, including allocation of resources and decision-making power, as well as restorative conflict resolution, and the recognition that equity is not the same as equality.
- Inclusion means that we seek to create a working environment and programs that are welcoming to all, and that celebrate each person as an individual.

We recognize that achieving these goals is a multi-faceted, never-ending process. This Action Plan reflects our long-term goals, and the first steps we will take. These goals and action items will change and grow over time as we continue to deepen our understanding of inclusion and justice.

Our Racial Equity Action Plan is intended to ensure that Marin Shakespeare Company operates in a manner that is fair, just, and equitable. We recognize that to achieve equity in our nation, our industry, and our company, special consideration must be given to Indigenous people who are the original stewards of this land, and who have been and continue to be systematically oppressed. Special consideration must also be given to American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS), a group that has endured and continues to endure harsh discrimination and oppression for generations. Our work must also be intersectional, as equity and inclusion must welcome and respect all people regardless of background, gender-identity, ability, and age including but not limited to people who identify as American, immigrant, culture-specific, or mixed; queer, trans, two-spirited, non-binary, or gender non-conforming; people who are disabled or have a learning disability; and people of every age. We also recognize that discrimination and oppression are intersectional, multi-layered, complex, and nuanced. So must be our Anti-racist work.

Accountability

Long Term Goals:

We will hold ourselves accountable for harm caused by our work past and present, and seek to rectify these by creating policies and procedures to prevent and/or reduce future harm. We will share information about our company in a way that is transparent. Through our accountability practices, our goal is to build trust among our company, our patrons, and our communities.

Short Term Action Steps:

1. In order to achieve Truth and Reckoning, staff and board will continue to reflect on, learn, and respond to We See You White American Theatre, the Bay Area Living Document, and other learning resources.
2. We will create and carry out new Governance policies, Artistic policies, Marketing policies, Communications policies, Front of House policies, Education policies, and Social Justice policies.
3. We will share our Employee Handbook with all full and part-time staff.
4. We will continue to publish 990's on our website annually.
5. We will publish quarterly Accountability Reports on our website.

Equitable Presence

Long Term Goals:

Diversity is a first step towards creating an inclusive organization, and achieving equity. Marin Shakespeare Company was founded by two White leaders who were the only full-time staff members for more than two decades, in a county that is 82% White. Marin Shakespeare Company benefits from the participation of people with diverse voices and perspectives, helps achieve equity by sharing financial resources with people who have been traditionally marginalized, and models the inclusivity we want to see in our world through achieving equitable presence. We will work to increase BIPOC participation in our board, leadership, full-time staff, and part-time staff which includes actors, designers, technicians, and teaching artists. We will continually evaluate recruiting and hiring practices to ensure we are not relying solely on systems and networks that exclude or harm people in the BIPOC community. Diversity is intersectional and our goal is to create an inclusive, equitable organization where everyone feels welcome and respected.

Short Term Action Steps:

1. Our full-time staff is currently more than 50% BIPOC. We will work to maintain and/or increase staff diversity in upcoming staff hires.
2. We will be color-conscious in hiring of part-time staff including Teaching Artists and theatre artists.
3. In our Artistic Director search, the select pool of candidates considered will be at least 50% BIPOC.
4. The board will continue to seek diverse members.
5. The board will ensure participation by at least one BIPOC member to the Executive Committee and Nominating Committee.
6. Recognizing that the Marin community itself is not always welcoming to BIPOC artists and audiences, we will work to make Marin a safer space for everyone, particularly our artists and other staff.

Comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Training

Long Term Goals:

Our goal is to create a working environment that is welcoming and safe for everyone. There are over 100 staff and key volunteers such as Board Members at Marin Shakespeare Company, many of whom work part-time and/or seasonally. We will create a comprehensive DEI training plan so that people in each job category receive a baseline understanding of the company's expectations and so that full-time staff, board members, acting companies, and others receive more in-depth training, on an ongoing basis.

Short Term Action Steps:

1. We will comply with state requirements for Sexual Harassment training.
2. We will create baseline DEI training for all employees, that teaches cultural awareness, competency, and humility.
3. We will create job specific DEI training for key job titles, that establishes Codes of Conduct.
4. We will provide in-depth DEI training for key employees and board members.
5. We will continue to deepen our understanding of appropriate DEI training.

Conflict Resolution

Long Term Goals:

We will create and carry out policies for How To File a Complaint that give all MSC personnel multiple ways to report micro-aggressions, harassment, and other complaints, and to achieve conflict resolution. Our policies will include processes for learning from mistakes, and finding the most effective ways to eliminate harm. Our policies will seek to create an environment in which staff, volunteers, and others feel safe in reporting complaints. Our policies will seek to employ restorative justice processes.

Short Term Action Steps:

1. We will train all full and part-time staff in how to report complaints, and how complaints are handled.
2. We will train all full-time staff in how to handle complaints received.
3. We will create a thorough and transparent process for handling and resolving complaints in a timely manner.
4. We will seek outside professional expertise in handling complaints on an as-needed basis.

Anti-Racist Theatre-Making

Long Term Goals:

Our goal is to create anti-racist theatre. Our working definition of anti-racist theatre is theatre that heals...artists, audiences, ourselves, and our communities. We will work to create theatre that helps heal our world. As a company inspired by Shakespeare, we will continue to interrogate Shakespeare to eliminate harm. We recognize that Shakespeare's hegemony excludes other voices. We recognize that Shakespeare's texts include racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic biases. We recognize that the training and casting of actors for plays by Shakespeare has often perpetuated exclusion and discrimination. We will work to dismantle these harms that Shakespeare has caused, while continuing to provide opportunities for actors, students, and audiences to benefit from the many positive contributions Shakespeare offers.

Short Term Action Steps:

1. We will consider all artistic choices of plays, playwrights, production choices, and events through an anti-racist lens.
2. We will hire Artistic leaders dedicated to creating anti-racist theatre.

3. We will continue to learn and teach how to recognize racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic language in Shakespeare, so that we can eliminate language that causes harm, and learn from language that shines a light on issues of importance today.
4. We will work to make our audition process welcoming to all.
5. We will practice color-conscious casting.



RACIAL EQUITY POLICIES

These policies are supplemental to Marin Shakespeare Company's Racial Equity Action Plan. While these policies focus on anti-racism, we recognize that intersectionality is inextricable from racism and must be considered in order to achieve equity and inclusion. These policies will change and grow over time as we continue to deepen our understanding of how we can achieve inclusion and justice.

\$\$\$ indicates the need for corresponding budget line item

GOVERNANCE POLICIES

1. In order to remove barriers to inclusion, the board will eliminate expected minimum annual financial contributions from members and instead ask each Board member to make an annual financial contribution that is significant for them,
2. The Board will require all Board Members and Executive Staff to commit to Racial Equity Expectations, which are now part of the Board Member Job Description.
3. Recognizing that BIPOC representation is important in governance, the board will continue working to recruit BIPOC board members.
4. The Board Chair will appoint at least one BIPOC member to both the Executive and Nominating Committees.
5. The board's Anti-Racism Committee will continue to provide ongoing DEI training for board members, as well as onboarding for new board members, led by DEI professionals as appropriate.
6. The board will make decisions based on both fiduciary responsibility and equity.
7. New board members and organizational leaders including Artistic and Managing Directors will be vetted for their commitment to the company's values, policies, and practices of Anti-Racism.

ARTISTIC POLICIES

1. We will work to increase hiring of BIPOC and other traditionally under-represented Directors, Designers, Stage Managers, Technicians,

and Actors in order to benefit from diverse voices and perspectives, financially support those who have been traditionally marginalized, provide artistic growth opportunities for those who have been traditionally marginalized, and model the inclusivity we want to see in our world.

2. At least one BIPOC person will be involved in production choice and planning; they will participate in all production concept and design decisions, and in hiring decisions for designers and technicians. This may be the Artistic Director, Play Director, Production Manager, or other staff member. We will work to ensure we are not culturally appropriating in all areas of production design. \$\$\$
3. At least one BIPOC person will be involved in casting; they will be in the room at all general auditions, helping to make auditions feel safe for BIPOC actors, and will actively invite BIPOC artists to auditions, productions, and workshops. They will participate in all casting decision sessions. This may be the Artistic Director, Casting Director, Casting Associate, or other staff member. \$\$\$
4. For both virtual and in-person general auditions, we will allow 5 minutes per actor and request both performance and additional information about the artist.
5. We will pay actors an hourly rate for press events, special events, and photo shoots. \$\$\$
6. At First Rehearsals, we will include:
 - a. Land acknowledgement
 - b. Pronouns
 - c. DEI/Company Culture Training
 - d. Ensure that the Personnel Director's safety talk at first rehearsals conveys clearly the various avenues for reporting concerns, and how concerns will be handled.
7. We will hire an Intimacy Director for all productions that involve intimacy. \$\$\$
8. When producing BIPOC stories, we will hire decision-makers of appropriate representation to ensure authenticity of story-telling. \$\$\$
9. We will ensure Costume Designers are trained so that actors are comfortable with their costumes, hair, and wigs. We will create written guidelines that all Costume Designers will sign.
10. To diversity the official voice of Marin Shakespeare Company, all full-time staff will participate in giving pre-show talks at performances.
11. We will visibly identify all FOH staff.
12. We will hire a FOH Director, a floating position, who oversees all FOH staff and is a dedicated DEI presence at all shows. \$\$\$

13. We will provide training and written guidelines for moderating post-performance discussions.
14. We will create a post-mortem survey for company members for each production.
15. All MSC Staff will be encouraged to see theatre made by BIPOC artists, and to get to know BIPOC actors, directors, designers, and Stage Managers.
16. We will make space available at the Center for Performing Arts, Education, and Social Justice, when built, for historically marginalized groups to support their self-directed art-making.

ARTISTIC POLICIES WE WILL CONSIDER:

17. We will consider eliminating 6 day work weeks and 10 out of 12's. Considerations will include the terms of our AEA contract, and the fact that we do not work a full LORT work week.
18. We will consider how to provide therapist/counselor services for actors in rehearsals and performances of plays that include racialized trauma. \$\$\$
19. We will consider providing additional compensation for artists participating in post-performance discussions. Considerations will include budget, and how this will limit the number of artists who are invited to participate. \$\$\$
20. We will consider how to include more plays written by BIPOC and traditionally underrepresented playwrights in our season programming.

MARKETING

1. We will continue to develop affordable ticket pricing and reduced ticket pricing.
2. We will offer free tickets to Indigenous people on whose traditional homelands our theatres sit.
3. No pressure shall be put on BIPOC artist or staff to assist with marketing, fundraising, or special events without proper compensation and credit. BIPOC artists who participate in events that fall outside of their position as detailed in their contract (i.e. actors) will be compensated. \$\$\$
4. We will buy ads in BIPOC publications. \$\$\$
5. We will provide invitations for BIPOC critics at all opening nights.
6. We will invest marketing resources to build BIPOC audiences. \$\$\$

7. We will share information with audiences and other community members on how to support BIPOC businesses, the Coast Miwok people, and how to engage as responsible community members.
8. We will work to identify and establish local partnerships with nearby BIPOC-owned businesses.
9. We will continue to offer underserved BIPOC youth free or reduced-rate tickets to see shows and engage with Artists.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. We will create a “Language Guide” for staff and board to talk about social justice work, education work, and onstage work, eliminating hierarchical and paternalistic language.
2. We will create a process for vetting printed marketing materials and eblasts with at least three eyes on each piece, letting our “Language Guide” inform print, social media, and other communications.
3. We will vet each marketing piece to ensure there is no tokenization, commodification, or exploitation of BIPOC.
4. We will train our staff to “check” ourselves when any of us hears or sees MSC rhetoric that may be hurtful. We will employ the Ouch-Educate-Appreciate process.
5. We will redesign our website to include our values more prominently.
6. We will acknowledge the Coast Miwok people past and present and other Indigenous people, and share information and resources with the public about how to support these traditional stewards of the land on which our theatres sit.

FRONT OF HOUSE / VENUES

1. We will post a land acknowledgement at each venue, with a description of how the theatres’ land was acquired and the history of the land, with acknowledgements of the land’s Indigenous stewards, the Coast Miwok.
2. FOH staff will be trained in cultural competency, Bystander Intervention, and how and when (always!) to report incidents.
3. We will put in our playbills and consider signage that welcomes everyone to theatres, with information about how to report harmful behavior including harassment, micro-aggressions, and other inappropriate behavior. “The safety and comfort of all our patrons is

important to us. If you experience any unwelcoming behavior from our staff or other audience members, please report it to...”

4. We will create a mechanism for patrons to share comments and suggestions.
5. We will create a protocol for responding to patron concerns, so that people reporting concerns feel appropriately acknowledged, and apologized to when necessary.
6. We will ensure moderators for Talkbacks are properly trained and culturally competent.
7. We will work to hire BIPOC for FOH staff by reaching out to schools and community organizations that serve young people who may be looking for summer jobs. We will research which schools and organizations to contact, and invest in these young people now, as the future theatre leaders of tomorrow.

EDUCATION

1. We will audit our Play Power materials to find ways to make them even more inclusive, anti-racist, and teaching true U.S. and local history.
2. We will improve cultural competency training for Teaching Artists; train TA's about different learning styles; and train TA's in implicit bias and anti-bias, so that all children feel understood, respected, and celebrated for their unique, diverse creativity.
3. Will Power instruction will include instruction about the “unconscious” racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism in Shakespeare, and will interrogate Shakespeare’s relevance today in a diverse world.
4. We will work to recruit and hire more BIPOC TA's.
5. We will work to develop deeper relationships with groups serving BIPOC and low-income students in Marin.
6. We will reconsider our Actor Training and Intern Programs, with an eye towards equity and inclusion, and the requirements of AB5. \$\$\$
7. When budget allows, we will hire a Community Relationships Director to build relationships with community organizations, so that we can determine their needs and how our resources can support their needs. \$\$\$
8. We will continue to learn about racism in Marin, and educate our community about racism in Marin. We will seek to partner with organizations already doing the work.

9. We will try to create programs for Marin theatre-goers (adults and students) to see BIPOC theatre in other counties, coupled with a restaurant and/or bar visit of a BIPOC-owned business.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. We will use our “Language Guide” to speak about prison programs with people-first language, and without language that implies a savior mentality.
2. We will ensure that when we talk about the goals of our prison programs we include both the goal of personal benefits to participants, their families, and the institutions, and equally our goal to shine a light on the national shame of mass incarceration.
3. We will work to hire more BIPOC TA's for the prison programs.
4. We will train our TA's to avoid paternalism in our teaching methods, creating space that is collaborative and appreciative of teaching that flows both from TA to actor and actor to TA.
5. We will train our TA's in trauma-informed teaching, including being able to identify and respond appropriately to systemic anti-Blackness, systemic racism, range of sexual identities, range of educational backgrounds, range of socio-economic backgrounds, and language barriers.
6. We will train our TA's to identify, remediate, and discuss biased language in Shakespeare when editing scripts and teaching classes, and will train TA's how to talk about the plays, creating ongoing dialogue about “unconscious” racism, sexism, anti-Semitism in Shakespeare, as well as systems of patriarchy and hierarchy. We will ask the actors for their solutions to textual challenges.
7. In our trainings, we will include Returned Artists as paid trainers. \$\$\$
8. We will train our TA's about racism in the carceral system including facts and figures, utilizing resources such as Michelle Alexander's book “The New Jim Crow” and Ava DuVernay's documentary “13th.”
9. We will add culturally conscious contemporary monologues to the curriculum. We will hire Returned Artists to help identify appropriate contemporary material. \$\$\$
10. We will continue to educate the community about racism in the carceral system, and encourage action against mass incarceration through social media, public speaking, and other methods. We will consider creating a video educating the public about Mass Incarceration made by people who have survived incarceration, to

share with community organizations and schools. We will consider other ways to continue to educate about mass incarceration and abolition.

11. We will continue to add to the “Learning Resources” section of our website, particularly with information about Reparations for ADOS, supporting Coast Miwok, and abolishing mass incarceration.
12. We will promote organizations working to end mass incarceration.
13. We will consider how we can create opportunities for people who want to become more engaged with this work.
14. Long term, we will try to create programs to stop the school to prison pipeline. We will work with children of incarcerated parents. Third grade reading levels are a determinant of future incarceration; we will consider how can we help break this cycle. \$\$\$
15. We will continue to provide virtual check-ins for Returned Artists, and determine other ways to help support Returned Artists.
16. We will continue to hold Social Justice as the value that inspires all we do.