

San Benito County Arts Council Statement on Cultural and Racial Equity

BACKGROUND

The San Benito County Arts Council's mission is to activate and connect people, spaces, and communities in San Benito County through arts, culture, and creativity. Our vision is that San Benito County is a thriving community where arts, culture, and creativity are essential, diverse in their expression, accessible to all residents, and integrated into everyday life. Underpinning our vision and mission is a core set of values, which inspire and guide all of our work. These include:

- Diversity: we seek to represent and include all members of our community.
- Collaboration: we strive to develop sustainable and authentic relationships that become the foundation on which all of our successful collaborative efforts are built.
- Leadership: we seek to lead transformational change through the arts by catalyzing people, communities and spaces.
- Commitment to Excellence and Effectiveness: we aim for the highest quality and excellence in everything that we do.

STATEMENT ON CULTURAL AND RACIAL EQUITY

To support a full creative life for all, the San Benito County Arts Council commits to championing policies and practices of racial and cultural equity that empower a just, inclusive, equitable community.

DEFINITIONS

Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—are represented in the development of arts policy; the support of artists; the nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression; and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources. *Source: Americans for the Arts*

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.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & AFFIRMATIONS

- In the United States, there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally such that inequity and injustice result, and that must be continuously addressed and changed.
- Cultural and racial equity are critical to the long-term viability of the arts sector.
- We must all hold ourselves accountable, because acknowledging and challenging our inequities and working in partnership is how we will make change happen.
- Everyone deserves equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society.
- The prominent presence of artists challenges inequities and encourages alternatives.

COMMITMENTS

- We will strive to identify and dismantle racial, cultural, geographic, economic and physical barriers that obstruct the full participation in the arts for residents in San Benito County.
- We will collect and analyze data to evaluate our racial and equity goals and will use this information to remove racial, cultural, economic, language, and physical barriers to Arts Council programs and services.
- We will commit resources to cultural and racial equity goals, including budgeting for racial equity training, employing equitable and unbiased practices in grantmaking, investing in culturally and linguistically diverse outreach practices and tools to reach diverse communities of color, and allocating adequate funding to scholarships that predominantly support students of color.
- We will maintain existing partnerships and develop new partnerships that further our racial and cultural equity work. We will encourage artists, art organizations, and residents of diverse backgrounds to participate in the planning of Arts Council programs and services. We will maintain membership on our Council and our planning committees to reflect the racial and cultural diversity of San Benito County.
- We will strive to model racial and cultural equity throughout our organizational leadership. We will commit time, energy and resources to develop more diversity in our staff, board and committees. We will apply a racial equity lens to our decision-making and organizational policies, plans and practices.

SIGNED/ DATED



11/30/2020

Pamela Brown, Board President



11/30/2020

Jennifer Laine, Executive Director