





# Syracuse Stage Anti-Racism Action Plan

As of October 19, 2020

Syracuse Stage stands firmly against racism and discrimination. We pledge to stand with under-represented and oppressed communities and to advance anti-racism in all aspects of our work, including the outward facing, public dimension of our creative endeavors and the less visible internal practices of the organization.

Guided by the initiative of the **We See You White American Theatre movement**, Syracuse Stage undertook a full staff study of the WSYWAT document in June. An anti-racism staff workgroup met throughout the summer and made immediate and far reaching recommendations to staff leadership. This summer, Syracuse Stage convened an anti-racism staff workgroup to identify opportunities to enhance inclusivity in all of its activities. Each department was then charged with identifying specific action steps that would move Syracuse Stage toward achieving many of the WSYWAT demands.

Syracuse Stage Board of Trustees leadership and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) task force of the board reviewed, discussed and participated in the examination and strategic discourse. Additional work at the board level and continued engagement of the full staff is critical in order to ensure organizational commitment to our expressed goals and to guarantee procurement and allocation of the financial and other resources necessary to realize their fulfillment.

We recognize that the need for change is urgent, immediate, and overdue and that the work must be correspondingly ongoing and long term. Therefore, this is a document of first steps. This outline reflects broad and specific areas of change, affirmation, and commitment as Syracuse Stage moves with purpose to become a more inclusive and richly diverse theatre company for the people of Central New York and the American Theatre community.

## ARTISTIC/PRODUCTION COMMITMENTS

- Effective immediately, increase transparency of play selection process for all staff
- Effective immediately, compensate artists for participating in donor and community facing activities
- Effective immediately, continue and increase engagement of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) artists in The Cold Read Festival of New Plays
- Continue, and by 2022 increase, hiring of BIPOC guest directors
- Continue, and by 2022 increase, hiring of BIPOC guest designers
- Establish at least one fully funded mainstage assistant director residency, creating an additional opportunity for emerging BIPOC directors by 2022
- Continue the current commitment to commission and produce plays that lift up and illuminate BIPOC stories for young audiences. Expand engagement in these stories beyond Central New York

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITMENTS

- Extend anti-racism training and engagement to all staff and board of trustees before the conclusion of the current season; build ongoing anti-racism training into all future organizational budgets
- Definitively set aside any “give or get” expectation for the Board of Trustees
- Continue the organization’s commitment to increasing diversity of the **Board of Trustees** and its leadership
- Aggressively seek greater diversity among full time and seasonal **staff**. Expand intentional outreach of employment opportunities to the local BIPOC community
- Refine and broadly share resources for staff to confidentially report incidences of discrimination and harassment and actively encourage discussion and education around anti-racism
- Continue to support, encourage, and provide space for the newly created staff anti-racism task force

## COMMITMENTS TO OUR COMMUNITY

- Continue and increase community partnerships, particularly by offering space and staff time to social justice, cultural, and BIPOC arts organizations.
- Deepen and expand our relationships with the **Community Folk Art Center** and **SaltSpace** into mutually beneficial long term affiliations.
- Commit to seeking vendor partnerships with local, BIPOC owned businesses.
- Continue to respectfully acknowledge the **Onondaga Nation**, firekeepers of the Haudenosaunee, the indigenous peoples on whose ancestral lands Syracuse Stage now stands. Continue to display this statement in our lobbies, printed programs, and website, and establish the reading of this statement at every first rehearsal.
- Create a lobby display detailing **Syracuse’s historic 15th Ward** and acknowledging the history of the land Stage is built on. Create opportunities for BIPOC artists to display artwork in our lobbies. If live performances resume in the 2020-2021 season, the exhibition on the 15th Ward will be in place to coincide with the opening of *salt/city/blues*.
- Expand the theatre’s purchasing from and contracting with local BIPOC owned businesses, including active work to identify and contact new BIPOC businesses.

As we move forward, keenly aware that every step made will not be perfect, we will endeavor to do so with great openness to input from stakeholders and peers. We publish these first steps to assure public accountability as Syracuse Stage works toward becoming a more equitable, a more inclusive, and a more just organization. We commit to further and regular review and reaffirmation of these goals, knowing that in the days, months, and years ahead, these commitments must be refined, expanded, and altered as time and practice educate us as to how, quite simply, we can do better.