

Los Angeles
County
**Arts &
Culture**

From Words to Action

Implementation of the Organizational Grant Program's
new diversity, equity, and inclusion requirement

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Executive Summary

As part of LA County’s Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative, the Department of Arts and Culture implemented a new eligibility requirement in Fall 2018: applicants to the Organizational Grant Program must submit a statement, policy, or plan outlining their commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and access. Applicants were offered professional development workshops to help them understand and meet the requirement. These workshops offered sample definitions of terms and concepts, and were designed as a starting point to help arts nonprofits consider how their organization could improve access to the arts for everyone in LA County.

While nearly all applicants used the term “diversity” in their statements, policies, and plans, they defined it and used it in different ways. Far fewer organizations used the terms equity, inclusion, and access. Some applicants described their commitment to DEI by indicating how many of various race and ethnicity or gender categories they had on their board, in their staff, or among their artists. Among those, some set specific goals to make those groups more diverse. Other applicants addressed questions of diversity as they related to the organization’s historical work around equity and inclusion. In some cases, applicant organizations demonstrated a long-standing commitment to addressing these issues in specific communities. All of these different approaches were accepted as meeting the requirement.

This report concludes with a series of recommendations to arts nonprofits in LA County who are seeking to deepen their work in this area. It also makes recommendations for how the Department of Arts and Culture can continue to improve implementation of this requirement.

Background

Beginning in Fall 2018, applicants to the Organizational Grant Program (OGP) administered by the LA County Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture, formerly the Arts Commission) were required to submit a statement, policy, or plan passed by their board of directors that outlines their commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and access as part of their application in order to be eligible for OGP funding.

This requirement was one of five recommendations approved by the LA County Board of Supervisors as part of their [Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative](#) (CEII). CEII launched in 2015 when Supervisor Hilda L. Solis authored a motion, co-authored by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, to conduct a constructive County-wide conversation about ways to improve diversity in cultural organizations, with a focus on the five lenses: boards of directors, staff, artists, programming, and audiences. Over the course of 18 months Arts and Culture engaged community members and arts stakeholders in town hall meetings with hundreds of constituents who shared their experiences and suggestions. In the spring of 2017, Arts and Culture released a report with 13 recommendations for how LA County government can improve and increase equitable access to arts and culture for all residents.

Five of those 13 recommendations were approved, including this new OGP requirement, which was designed to “ensure that all the benefits of, and opportunities provided by, the arts are available and accessible to all residents, no matter who they are or where they live.”¹ The Board of Supervisors specifically required that “all cultural organizations receiving LA County funds have written, board-adopted statements, policies or plans that outline their commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and access.”²

This report analyzes the DEI statements, policies, and plans (SPPs) submitted by OGP applicants for the 2019-21 cycle.³ Analysis of those statements also provided a lens into better understanding the Arts and Culture’s

administration of this requirement, which is discussed in the Recommendations section of this report.

Grant requirements

The new grant requirement was scaled to budget size, with smaller-budget organizations asked to submit a statement while larger-budget organizations were asked to submit a more detailed plan. The SPPs submitted were required to have been formally adopted by the applicant organization’s board of directors. Table 1 summarizes the requirement by OGP budget size.

Table 1: DEI requirements by OGP category

Budget Category	Budget Size	Minimum Requirement
OGP 1	Up to \$200,000	Statement
OGP 2	\$200,000-\$1 million	Statement required; policy encouraged
OGP 3	\$1 million - \$15 million	Policy and plan
OGP 4	Over \$15 million	Policy and plan

In laying out this new requirement, Arts and Culture gave the following instructions (emphasis in the original):

“Statements, policies and plans should reflect organizational thinking about board, management, staff, volunteer and artist composition, as well as programming and audiences/participants.

- **Statement:** Brief explanation of **why** the organization is committed to DEI and access, and the alignment of that commitment to the overall mission of the organization.
- **Policy:** Outlines the organization’s broad vision for and commitment to DEI and access, and the alignment of that commitment to the overall mission of the organization as defined in their statement, and further details **what** the organization does to realize that statement.
- **Plan:** Outlines **how** the organization will work toward complying fully with policy and evaluating progress on an annual basis.”⁴

Applicants were offered the opportunity to participate in free workshops funded by Arts and Culture and led by the Aspire Group consulting firm on how to craft a statement, policy, or plan. Trainings involved taking time to detail each organization's timeline regarding DEI, and an in-house sharing of that timeline with other participants with a specific focus on the organization's process and outcomes.

Participants were not required to use any particular definitions of DEI. The following definitions taken from the D5 Coalition⁵ and adopted by the CEII advisory committee in 2017⁶ were offered as a starting point:

- **Diversity:** The demographic mix of a specific collection of people, taking into account elements of human difference, but focusing particularly on race and ethnicity, LGBTQ populations, people with disabilities, and women.
- **Equity:** The promotion of justice, impartiality, and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the underlying or root causes of outcome disparities within our society.
- **Inclusion:** The degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes within an organization or group.⁷

The CEII report provided these definitions as well as a "visions and values" statement with different variations of DEI definitions adapted for the general arts landscape of LA County. When asked by applicants to clarify which of these definitions they should use, Department staff advised that all definitions were guideposts and that grantees should use ones that spoke to their work and approach, including the option to create their own.

OGP applicants are arts nonprofits that represent a wide variety of organizations in terms of artistic discipline, budget size, mission, and communities served. Each organization has a very different historical arc in relation to DEI. This new requirement applied equally to all OGP applicants, including those established specifically to address lack of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access to arts and culture, some of whom have been in practice for many years and have deep roots in the communities they serve. Recognizing this wide variation among grantees, Arts and Culture, in implementing this new policy, sought to allow for flexibility so that each

organization could create a statement, policy, and/or plan that would address DEI within the context of their specific organization.

While DEI definitions were offered as general guidelines, Arts and Culture did not prescribe specific tasks, goals, or other parameters. The Department further determined that the DEI statements, policies, and plans would not be included as part of the grant panel review process, and that panelists would not score them. Instead, three new questions were added to the application so that applicants could describe their DEI related efforts. Responses to these questions were included in the panel review:

- Describe how the applicant addresses and is taking steps to integrate and reflect the values of cultural equity and inclusion at the board, leadership and staff level. Provide specific details highlighting progress or efforts made in the last two or more years.
- Describe the applicant's community/core audience including any relevant demographic, geographic, cultural, economic or other characteristics, as applicable or that are important to your organization. Describe how the applicant identifies community/ core audience needs (including any advisory councils) and how the applicant develops programs to meet these needs.
- Describe how the applicant addresses and is taking steps to integrate and reflect the values of cultural equity and inclusion externally via marketing, program partnerships, outreach, audience engagement or other strategies. Provide specific details highlighting progress or efforts made in the last two or more years.

DEI professional development

In 2018 the Grants and Professional Development division contracted with the Aspire Group to conduct 22 CEII-specific workshops to assist applicant organizations in starting the SPP process. The workshops provided guidance on how an organization could tell the story of its journey and evolution, how it intends to convey why the organization engages in DEI efforts, and the value the organization believes comes from DEI as it relates to organizational staffing and board members, the arts they produce, artists employed, audiences engaged, and communities served. Applicants were provided an online toolkit on Arts and Culture's website that answered frequently asked questions and offered the DEI definitions stated above.

The Department also created a cohort program with the Aspire Group, where five OGP grantee organizations met over the course of three months to take a more intensive dive into DEI issues. Participating organizations were each given a small implementation grant to deepen their DEI work.

Additionally, Arts and Culture sponsored scholarships for OGP organizations to attend Undoing Racism trainings provided by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. Staff from a total of ten OGP grantees attended alongside 12 Arts Department staff at two different trainings. This intensive three-day training explores the history of structural racism in the US and asks organizations and individuals to explore ways they can work to address systemic injustice. In 2019 Arts and Culture plans to hold 12 additional CEII workshops for OGP applicants in the second year of the two-year cycle. The Department also continues to provide scholarships to OGP grantees for Undoing Racism and other DEI-related trainings.

Methods

Arts and Culture sought to gain insights into applicant perspectives on DEI from the documents that were submitted to meet this requirement. Therefore, staff of the Research and Evaluation division were asked to conduct this analysis.

A total of 235 nonprofit arts organizations applied for OGP grants in the fall of 2018, for a two-year grant that runs from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021. With support from staff of the Grants and Professional Development division, all applicants ultimately met the SPP requirement.⁸

Methods used to analyze the DEI statements, policies, and plans involved close readings of all 235 SPPs focusing on each organization's approach to DEI in relation to the goals laid out in the CEII report. A series of themes emerged from our textual analysis. The four categories discussed below are quantifiable. Another series of themes also emerged that are not quantifiable but represent notable grantee approaches to DEI.

To begin, the analysis counted organizations that, in their SPPs, addressed

- why they engage in DEI work
- whether they had a history of DEI work
- whether they used a definition provided by another organization
- whether they amended their mission statement to reflect DEI priorities

These are the quantifiable categories that emerged from a close reading the SPPs. SPPs were grouped according to OGP budget size and analyzed in comparison to others within their grouping. They were also analyzed together as a whole.

This analysis uncovered trends, themes, and areas for improvement, while also identifying specific SPPs that might serve as models to help other arts

nonprofits that want to begin, deepen, or continue to articulate their DEI work.

This analysis further revealed another layer of information related to Arts and Culture's approach to this requirement. Therefore, this is not only an analysis of the SPPs and applicant perspectives but also of the context of implementing the new requirement. To analyze the statements in a vacuum would miss the important relationship Arts and Culture has with applicants and grantees as authorizers and facilitators of funding. Investigating both aspects gives insight into Arts and Culture's approach to this requirement, trainings offered, and other resources provided. By extension, this gives insight into Arts and Culture's broader approach to improving DEI in the arts and culture sector in LA County.

Limitations

The approach used in this study was to analyze the text of the SPPs in light of the goals articulated in the CEII report and the motion by the Board of Supervisors that approved this change to the OGP grant requirements. The strength of this approach is that it allowed for an analysis of all applicants to the program in a timely manner that allows program staff to discuss and act on what was learned.

What remains unknown is what conversations took place within applicant organizations, or what actions were taken beyond what was written in the SPPs. When the second year of the initial rollout of this new requirement comes to an end, a fuller understanding of the impact of the requirement on applicants could be explored through interviews or focus groups, though this could only be done with a subset of applicants. After the full two-year cycle of OGP grants is complete, and over the course of time, the text of final reports could be analyzed to understand what changes occurred in grantee practices – if any – as a result of implementing of their new DEI statements, policies, and plans.

Analysis and Findings

Of the 235 applicants, five (two percent) were asked to rewrite and submit their SPPs, as they were deemed to not adequately meet the requirement. All successfully did this and ultimately met the new requirement. Table 2 shows how many applicants in each category submitted statements, policies, and/or plans.

Table 2: Submissions by OGP category, percent (n)

	Statements	Policies and/or Plans
OGP 1	100% (126)	0
OGP 2	60% (45)	40% (30)
OGP 3	0	100% (29)
OGP 4	0	100% (5)
TOTAL	171	64

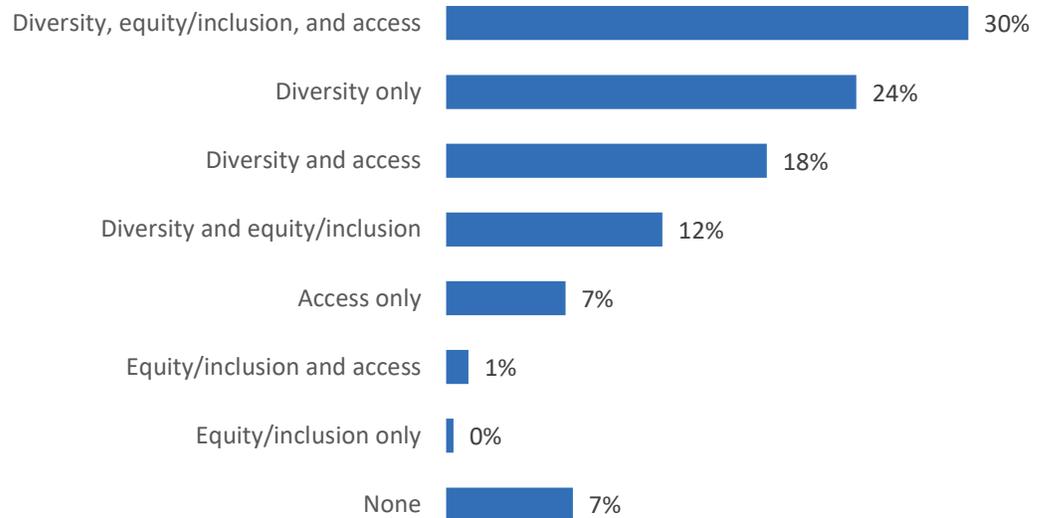
SPPs by the numbers

The analysis of the final SPPs submitted began with a simple count of keywords used in the SPPs. Of all 235 SPPs,

- 85 percent (n=199) used the word “diversity” at least once
- 57 percent (n=132) used the words “access” or “accessibility” at least once
- 44 percent (n=103) used the words “equity” or “inclusion” at least once

Different applicants used a mixture of keywords in many different ways, as Figure 1 shows. The largest share – nearly one-third – used all three terms. The next largest share – nearly a quarter of all applicants – used the term “diversity” only and did not mention equity, inclusion, or access in their applications. Seven percent (n=17) used none of these keywords in their SPPs:

Figure 1: How applicants used keywords in their SPPs



Of those grantees that chose to focus primarily on diversity, many used their own definition of the term. The analysis went deeper to understand exactly how the term “diversity” was used and what it meant to each organization, discovering that it varied significantly. For example, this could include a statement that used the word diversity and spoke about it in relation to human diversity. Likewise, an SPP that used the word diversity in terms of bringing more people of color into their board was also included.

Examples of how the word “diversity” was used include

- Human diversity
- Diversity of European musicians
- Diversity of opinions
- Racial and ethnic diversity
- Diverse perspectives on world and national issues

Applicants that explained the context of their DEI work or approach in their SPP, such as why they serve a specific identifiable community, were counted as having a history of DEI work. Examples include the following:

- Believe human diversity is important
- Art is a tool for low income, immigrant, and communities of color to tell their story
- Media is a tool for expression

Table 3 shows the distribution of how SPPs were categorized. Applicants were coded as to whether they explained why they *Serve a specific identifiable community*, had a *History of addressing DEI*, used *Someone else’s definitions*, and whether they *Revised their mission statement* rather than create a separate SPP.

Table 3: Emergent SPP themes that could be quantified

	Serve a specific identifiable community	History of addressing DEI	Someone else’s definitions	Revised their mission statement
OGP 1	76% (96)	50% (62)	9% (11)	12% (15)
OGP 2	77% (58)	53% (40)	4% (3)	12% (9)
OGP 3	100% (29)	93% (27)	7% (2)	31% (9)
OGP 4	80% (4)	0	0	0
TOTAL	80% (187)	55% (129)	7% (16)	14% (33)

Eighty percent of all SPPs offered an explanation of why they serve a specific identifiable community and more than half demonstrated that they had a history of addressing DEI. Most wrote their own definitions of the terms they used with only a small number relying on others’ published definitions of DEI. The definitions used either came from the Department of Arts and Culture or Americans for the Arts (AFTA). A small sample within each budget category revised their mission statement to incorporate DEI elements.

Most of these percentages remained constant within OGP budget size categories, holding true whether an applicant submitted a statement, policy, and/or plan. The largest budget size organizations, OGP 3 and 4, were more likely to offer an explanation for why they serve a specific, identifiable community. Nearly all OGP 3 applicants showed they had a history of engaging in DEI, while a smaller share of OGP 1 and 2 applicants and no OGP 4 applicants did so. OGP 1 applicants were slightly more likely to write their own DEI definitions and to rewrite their mission statement. No OGP 4 applicants revised their mission statements.

Digging deeper into the text

Beyond sorting SPPs into those four categories, their text was analyzed in detail in order to deepen understanding.

While the training provided by Arts and Culture was intended as a jumping off point applicants could use to address DEI within the context of their own organizations, not all of them did this in their SPPs. The statements highlighted in this section show how different applicants' work around DEI expanded beyond the training and definitions offered. These are sorted into themes that are responsive to the goals of CEII:

- how the applicant's DEI work relates with larger systems change
- whether DEI work was part of the organization's framework since its inception
- whether an organization worked toward resource re-distribution and shifting historical narratives
- outlined their own framework to implement their DEI related work
- the purpose of DEI in terms of the applicant's larger artistic and social goals

Applicants highlighted in the following analysis discussed how their DEI work was linked to a larger analysis of the connection between arts and society, economics, social change, justice, community development, or engagement. The SPPs presented here were not selected because they are better than the others, but because they demonstrate specific elements that emerged in the analysis. The full text of all statements cited in this section are available in the appendices.

OGP 1: DEI statement required

Two applicants took approaches to DEI that articulate **how their work relates to larger systems change**, one through the lens of equity and power, and the other through how their identity connects to community. *Arts Bridging the Gap* stated that, "equity moves past inclusion and representation accepting that power has created uneven starting points for some communities and individuals. We therefore commit to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that empower a just, inclusive, equitable nation." Their statement suggests that *Arts Bridging the Gap* has an analysis that goes beyond diversifying their board or changing how groups have historically been left out of representation. Rather, their statement points out that systems of power create uneven distributions of wealth and suggests they see

equity as an avenue toward diversity, access, and inclusion. Also, in this category, *Elysian Valley Arts Collective* sees their DEI work as “understanding neighborhood identity” in order to “nurture traditions and pass on a sense of place to the next generation.” This place-based approach to DEI suggests that the organization aims to support a local constituency through its arts-based work.

In a similar vein, *Human Resources LA* “aims to expand access to contemporary and conceptual art. The organization is committed to incorporating equity and diversity in programming in all aspects of organizational structures.” They state that one of their goals is to foster anti-racist work, develop programs that highlight the work of Indigenous artists, and support community workshops that respond to the challenges of the political moment. While their work is not place-based or rooted in a particular community, the programming described in their SPP shows an approach to DEI that articulates a connection between anti-racist practice and Indigenous artistic representations.

Two other organizations each had a statement that suggests ***DEI was part of their frameworks since inception***. *Macha Theatre Company* stated they are dedicated to providing LGBTQ performance opportunities and aim to create bridges between communities as well as pipelines to the mainstream by featuring lesbians of color in title roles. They state they are the only professional lesbian theater led by a Latina lesbian in the US. Their statement, grounded in their identity, shows how their theater work is tied to their personal and social experience. Likewise, *Razorcake/Gorsky Press Inc.* is committed to DIY punk by “amplifying unheard voices.” As stated in their mission statement, the organization “does not tolerate racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or ableist bullshit.” They state they have been doing anti-racist and anti-sexist work since 2001 and they believe diversity makes better punk.

OGP 2: DEI statement required, policy encouraged

Within the OGP 2 cohort, a number of statements and/or policies focused on how to operationalize their DEI visions. Several statements offered an analysis of DEI work beyond the minimum requirement. For example, *Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC)* believes their legacy has been the diversity of the staff and board, as well as their promotion of cultural equity in LA County through their arts programming. They state,

SPARC's intent is to examine what we memorialize through public art by producing work that includes stories of people not included in the standard dialogues of American History through participatory processes with local residents [that] have resulted in excellent artworks which are empowering and rise from within the community.

Later they state that they believe the arts have significant transformative impact on the most significant social problems of our time. *SPARC's* approach is grounded in public processes to shift historical narratives which involve creating visual stories that come from communities historically left out of mainstream narratives.

Community-centered in a similar way, *Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural* serves populations in the Northeast San Fernando Valley area. Their statement reads, "residents had no bookstores, art galleries, or full-fledged cultural spaces until Tia Chucha's opened its doors in 2001." Their mission is to transform the community through ancestral knowledge, the arts, literacy, and creative engagement by providing year round free and low-cost arts and literacy programming that is bilingual and intergenerational. Additionally, the organization believes arts and literacy are for healing, and their programming embraces community histories, cultures, and languages to help foster the imagination of new options.

Both *Tia Chucha's* and *SPARC* approached DEI by discussing how their work came from their connection with people of color and low-income communities in LA County. In their statements they both talked about ***working toward resource re-distribution and shifting historical narratives*** to center the communities they serve as protagonists of their own stories. As in the case of the other cases discussed above, *Tia Chucha's* and *SPARC* have been doing DEI work since they were founded.

OGP 3 and 4: DEI policy and plan required

In their SPP, *18th Street Arts Center* discussed how their vision revolves around using art to dismantle various forms of oppression, and to connect diverse, immigrant, and historically oppressed audiences of color in LA to artists with similar values. Their programs "advance new frameworks and include a diversity of experiences beyond the male, white, cis-gendered, and heterosexual contextual experience." They began their policy and plan with a discussion which contextualizes the organization's development and then

proceeded to share their goals with regard to artists, leadership, and audiences.

In addition, they **outlined frameworks to implement their DEI related work**. For example, when talking about artist engagement, they stated that their residencies will provide access for support to international early and emerging artists who are currently marginalized or historically oppressed. In their implementation section they stated that they would provide anti-oppression training for staff, board, artists, and the public to inform the yearly themes of their artist think tanks. They believe this will lay the groundwork for organizing each cohort around global issues that address societal oppression. Their policy and plan explains their understanding of the systematic roots of oppression, that they have been doing this work for a long time, and as in the case of the other statements discussed above, their work uses a DEI focus in pursuit of larger systems change.

Center Theatre Group of Los Angeles's SPP explained how the organization thinks about the **purpose of DEI in terms larger artistic and social goals**. Their policy and plan also explained why they do DEI work. *Center Theatre Group of Los Angeles* believes theater is a cultural force with the capacity to transform lives, and they embrace their commonalities and celebrate differences. They plan to have diverse community representation in the boardroom and aim to create a space where larger social issues can be discussed. Additionally, they stated that they are positioned to play a role in “democratizing participation in arts and culture experiences and increasing the civic value and public perception of the central role of the arts in the lives of everyone.” Their policy and plan discussed the importance of democratizing arts access and how they see themselves as a facilitator of conversations around important social issues.

Reflection

The patterns that emerged from this analysis have something to say about the applicant organizations, but they also tell us something about Arts and Culture’s administration of the requirement. The Department’s approach to DEI is being shaped at the same time as it is rolling out new recommendations. While applicant workshops have offered concrete definitions of DEI, larger frameworks about the significance of those terms and ultimate purpose of CEII, both to the Department of Arts and Culture and to the larger goal of this

new requirement, are still developing. As a result, this process is both limited and at the same time, open and flexible.

The relationship between Arts and Culture and applicants is a critical point of investigation for this project. As is inherent in any funder-grantee relationship, funder expectations and instructions partly drive grantee responses. Arts and Culture's current approach gives those who have been doing DEI work for a long time the opportunity to credit, detail, and perhaps expand it. At the same time, this approach invites organizations that have never thought about DEI before a space and mechanism to do so. The training provided some ideas for how to successfully meet the requirement but did not prescribe exactly how it should be done. A result of this intentional flexibility is that the SPPs vary widely in both content and style, and all of the applicants' very different approaches were accepted as meeting the requirement. Arts and Culture remained flexible to all grantee approaches and did not take a position on what constituted a right or wrong SPP.

Some applicants described their commitment to DEI by indicating how many of various race and ethnicity or gender categories they had on their board, in their staff, or among their artists, and some of them set goals to make those groups more diverse. Other applicants addressed questions of diversity as they related to the organization's work around equity and inclusion. Some SPPs did both, highlighting how a diverse body would lead to greater equity. To focus solely on diversity can be one indicator of how an organization is approaching its goal and for many nonprofit organizations, this approach may be the easiest entry point to DEI. These different approaches show the variety of theoretical and pragmatic directions across the entire pool of applicant organizations. This range likely reflects the wide range of directions being taken to address equity and inclusion in the arts and culture ecology across LA County.

The CEII initiative, however, is not limited to diversity, explicitly including equity, inclusion, and access.⁹ The literature review¹⁰ published at the launch of CEII discussed how efforts to improve diversity from the 1990s onward have been eclipsed by today's deeper and more challenging efforts toward true equity and inclusion for all, especially for communities that have historically underserved by the arts. This evolution reflects a broader change in how identity is seen in the US. The concept of "social constructionism" that emerged in the 1970s moved from older conceptions of naturalized or "essentialized" identity – the idea that gender, race, class, ability, and

sexuality are natural and fixed – to a new understanding of those identities as products of interpretation shaped by cultural, historical, and economic contexts.¹¹ The essentialist approach neglects the idea that race, class, and gender are social constructs produced in society, which in turn limits the ability to see that all identities are produced through particular relationships of power that shift over time.

Looking at diversity without taking into account other social factors such as equity, inclusion, and accessibility, can potentially limit a view into the relationship between identities and social and economic contexts, which is what ultimately connects diversity, equity, and inclusion. To fully address diversity, equity, and inclusion, it is critical to contend with the ways in which identity and race have been historically and systemically tied to inequities in all domains of life, from health to housing to class.

All these different approaches to DEI were accepted as meeting the requirement, ranging across the continuum from essentialism to social constructionism. Arts and Culture did not take a position as to whether any approach was “right” or “wrong.” This leads to larger theoretical and practical questions. Specifically, what is the ultimate goal of the requirement? Given such a wide range of responses, how can Arts and Culture measure success for the program overall? If the overarching goal of CEII is to ensure all residents of LA County have access to the benefits and opportunities created by the arts, how can we know whether and how implementation of this SPP policy contributes to it? Recommendations in the next section address how arts nonprofits can begin or strengthen their DEI work, and how Arts and Culture can improve implementation of this requirement.

Recommendations

The Department of Arts and Culture's Research and Evaluation (R&E) team is separate from the program staff who manage the grants programs. As evaluators, the R&E team plays a critical role of providing recommendations to improve programs that are informed not only by data and DEI theory, but by an almost daily observation of practice. R&E staff are knowledgeable about the OGP grant program and history of the CEII initiative, viewing program practices from the perspective of an outsider on the inside. While the initial task for this study was to use the SPPs to learn about OGP applicants, lessons also emerged for the administration of this new requirement.

Therefore, two sets of recommendations are offered. First are recommendations to future OGP applicants on how to create or strengthen their SPPs. Second are recommendations to Arts and Culture's program staff for how implementation of the SPP policy could be improved.

Recommendations to OGP Applicants

Revisit SPPs and dig deeper

Many applicants used an essentialist approach, focusing on counts of types of people in different aspects of their work, such as artists, staff, or board members. Applicants that used this approach in the past as well as those who are just beginning to write their SPPs can deepen their DEI work by looking at how other social forces interact with race and ethnicity, gender, and other demographic factors to understand how they affect equity and inclusion internally and how they interact in the wider LA County arts ecology. They can also explore questions of intersectionality to understand how each individual's experience of the world is made up of all aspects of their identity, and how this affects how they encounter arts, culture, and creativity.

Engage in self-assessment and reflection

For those organizations that established a DEI statement, policy, or plan, the year two mark is an opportunity to reflect on how the new policy has affected

their work and/or their relationship with the wider arts ecology. Have any internal practices changed? Have attitudes changed? Have relationships between different parts of the organization changed? Have relationships with outside organizations changed? Are there opportunities to make changes that were not possible before? This could be reviewed in a holistic way encompassing the entire organization, or through the five lenses offered by Arts and Culture's CEII initiative: board, staff, artists, programming, and audiences.

Seek out DEI professional development opportunities

Arts and Culture provides support to allow OGP grantees to attend professional development. Workshops are offered directly by Arts and Culture, and scholarships are available to attend other trainings. Some trainings may be specific to DEI. Others may help nonprofits engage in processes needed to improve DEI, such as training on how to facilitate difficult conversations within an organization.

Recommendations to the Department of Arts and Culture

Define success for the DEI statements, policies, and plans requirement

In order to meaningfully evaluate this new SPP requirement and the broader CEII initiative, Arts and Culture needs to define success for both. Is submission of an SPP that includes certain words an adequate measure of success? Should Arts and Culture expect the content of those statements to reflect deeper reflection or additional work within the applicant organization? Over the long term, does Arts and Culture expect the adoption of these SPPs to lead to something observable or measurable across the body of arts nonprofits in LA County? One first step toward answering these questions may be for Arts and Culture to develop a formal statement, policy, or plan laying out its commitment to DEI.

Any setting of definitions or revisions to the requirement should not take place independently but within the context of the larger CEII initiative, including the process to establish a new Cultural Policy for LA County. Input from Arts and Culture staff and leadership as well as Arts Commissioners (the advisory body for Arts and Culture), the CEII Advisory Committee, and OGP grantees themselves should be sought. Examples of how other grantmakers have administered similar requirements should be reviewed to identify promising practices.

Continue and improve applicant workshops that utilize peer learning

In implementing this new policy, the workshops and other professional development provided by Arts and Culture have focused primarily on helping OGP applicants meet the requirement, with some limited opportunities provided for nonprofits that wish to go deeper. As the policy moves into its second year of implementation, nearly all OGP applicants will have successfully met the minimal requirement. While professional development should continue, the focus should move from an emphasis on meeting a minimal requirement to going deeper into equity and inclusion. Additional training would be critical if any changes are made to the SPP policy itself that could require some grantees to rewrite the SPPs that were approved in the first round.

This analysis uncovered several arts nonprofits whose SPPs demonstrate a deep understanding and history of addressing DEI, including but not limited to those highlighted in this analysis. These organizations should be tapped to present or even co-lead workshops with staff or consultants on how they do their DEI work, being reimbursed for their time as trainers. This peer learning approach would elevate the work of organizations who have been doing DEI work for a long time in LA County. It would also support networking between groups and both within and across supervisorial districts.

Professional development on various aspects of DEI are increasingly available through different organizations throughout LA County. Arts and Culture should compile a list of DEI-related trainings, not only for OGP grantees but for arts educators, artists, and other arts administrators. These could be highlighted on the Arts and Culture website and promoted through email lists and social media. Scholarships for OGP grantees to participate in these trainings should be promoted as well.

Center DEI as a core value for professional development across the Department of Arts and Culture

This process has already begun at Arts and Culture, as described earlier, especially within the Grants and Professional Development team. This work can be deepened by offering an array of DEI related workshops with different focuses, thereby creating different entry points to DEI available not only for OGP applicants but for artists, arts administrators, and teaching artists across the County.

Site visits are another opportunity where staff could provide informal, one-on-one support as arts nonprofits continue on their journey to address DEI for themselves and the communities they serve. Currently, site visits are primarily used as a compliance tool. A more formalized system for using site visits to achieve other programmatic goals is being developed, and DEI should be included as one component.

Finally, as it moves forward to deepen its own DEI work, Arts and Culture should continue to share what it learns with grantees, other grantmakers, and other departments of County government. Being transparent about challenges faced and lessons learned can play a critical role in increasing equity and inclusion in the wider arts ecology across the County and beyond.

Appendix

Below is the text of the DEI statements quoted in this report. Full policies and plans are not included due to length. These particular statements are highlighted not because they are the “best” but because they are good examples of key findings in the analysis.

OGP 1

Arts Bridging the Gap

Arts Bridging the Gap supports a full creative life for all humans, and believes that all members of a community should experience arts which reflect and nourish their identity, self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Arts Bridging the Gap is committed to ensuring racial and cultural equity in its outreach, funding, leadership, resource allocation, partnerships, and programs.

Arts Bridging the Gap believes that equity moves past inclusion and representation; accepting that power has created uneven starting points for some communities and individuals. We therefore commit to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that empower a just, inclusive, equitable nation.

Definitions:

Inclusion and access:

- Every member of a community¹ having opportunities and access to encounter, appreciate, participate in, learn and be informed about the arts and culture.

¹ Arts Bringing the Gap define communities as municipalities, neighborhoods, social and cultural enclaves, diverse groups, and groups with distinct demographic characteristics as well as more formal institutions and organizations. We believe every human deserves to be a valued member of a community.

- Everyone experiencing equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society.
- Fair and just pathways to appreciate and be exposed to the arts as well as attain information, financial resources and opportunities to fulfill cultural and artistic expression and development.

Cultural equity:

- The inclusion and fair representation of multiple diverse populations in outreach and in the allocation of funding, resources (e.g., facilities and fiscal), and programs, providing equitable and fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some communities.
- 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.
- All people have the right to inherit, develop and engage in intellectual, emotional, material, and spiritual traditions and heritage.
- Arts and cultural organizations and artists from all disciplines and cultural traditions are valued equally and supported equitably.

Arts Bridging the Gap Acknowledges that in 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.

Diversity

- An Arts and cultural organization that reflects and embraces the diversity of its communities in staffing, leadership, programming, including artists, and audiences/participants.
- This definition includes all the ways in which people differ, including but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, geography, citizenship status, religion, language, physical appearance, and those affiliating with multiple identities.
- Our definition also includes diversity of thought: ideas, perspectives, and values.

As an organization Arts Bridging the Gap is founded and run on the beliefs that:

- Our community's diversity is an asset to our arts and cultural environment and our economy
- Every individual has the right to engage in arts and culture that celebrate their highest potential.
- Every individual has the right to participate in creative thinking and expression.
- Including communities through the arts and culture achieves our highest potential, by promoting mutual respect and understanding.
- The prominent presence of artists challenges inequities and encourages alternatives and that therefore we must lead in our actions.
- Inequity is pervasive and historic. Simple diverse representation does not dismantle the unequal nature of voice, resource allocation, and visibility that exist in the arts and cultural ecosystems. Disparities and discrimination are daily occurrences that are entrenched in long standing majority privilege and power inside and outside of the arts; tackling issues surrounding these occurrences requires an understanding of the root causes of disparities within our society.

Furthermore, Arts Bridging the Gap believes that cultural equity is 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

As an organization Arts Bridging the Gap takes these actions every day to ensure that our work and practices are driven by the above beliefs:

- Provide informed, authentic leadership for cultural equity.
- Pursue cultural consciousness throughout our organization through substantive learning and formal, transparent policies.
- Acknowledge and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services.
- Commit time and resources to expand more diverse leadership within our board, staff, and advisory bodies.
- Encourage substantive learning to build cultural consciousness and to proliferate pro-equity policies and practices by all of our constituencies and audiences.

- Practice proactive outreach to multiple diverse communities to support involvement and engagement in opportunities, programs, resources, and partnerships and provide accessibility and inclusivity in all aspects of leadership, partnerships, and programs.
- Champion equitable resources to support and serve multiple diverse populations specifically.
- Commit to systemic change that will remove barriers, thus improving access, empowerment and representation in the development and distribution of arts policy and resources to diverse communities and individuals.
- Acknowledge that there are different methods of communication, and embraces a variety of communication styles that will allow for equitable access

Elysian Valley Arts Collective

The Elysian Valley Arts Collective (EVAC) was founded to preserve and promote an inclusive community of artists, designers and artisans in Elysian Valley; we welcome all and respect diverse life experiences, skills and heritages. Our organization was informally started by resident artists in 2006 with an artwalk as a way to introduce new creative residents to the established neighborhood, The EVAC was formally organized in 2008, with a clear commitment to nondiscriminatory and inclusive governance, membership, and programming.

In the changing landscape of urban Los Angeles, the EVAC recognized the value of art in exploring and understanding neighborhood identity. We developed programming to promote conversation, articulate cultural identity, nurture important traditions and pass on a sense of place to the next generation.

The EVAC values and respects all of our members and neighbors. The goal of the EVAC is that ALL voices are valued and heard.

Human Resources LA

Access, equity, and inclusivity are critical to HRLA's mission. We aim to expand community access to contemporary and conceptual art, while also amplifying underexposed voices and modes of expression. Our sustained effort to support equal participation across gender, ethnicity, class, age and sexuality ensures that HRLA continues to serve as a point of convergence for diverse and disparate art communities. We are committed to actively incorporating

equity and diversity in our programming, and in all aspects of our organizational structure. Members of our audience engage in conversation and idea sharing. Our volunteer program and collective curatorial practice is designed to draw from, learn from and to engage with our audience. Diverse programming streams manifest these aims, including a series of conversations designed to foster anti-racist work in the arts, programs highlighting the work of indigenous artists working in experimental modes, and community workshops responding to the challenges of the current political moment.

Macha Theater Company

MACHA Theatre is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing the LGBTQI performance opportunities as well as building bridges to the mainstream in order to foster understanding between both communities. This theater company was founded in 2000 by Odalys Nanin, producing artistic director, because of the lack of leading roles for lesbians of color in the mainstream theaters of Los Angeles, California, as well as hardly any type of real cultural inclusion or representation of the Latina lesbian experience in the theater mainstream.

For the past eighteen years, MACHA has produced award winning high quality and exciting theater featuring lesbians of color in title roles. The company has had a loyal following ever since its inception, as well as critical acclaim for the interesting stories and great production values of its productions.

This is the only professional lesbian theater company led by a Latina lesbian in practically all of the United States. MACHA Theatre has been a welcome addition to the regional cultural landscape of Los Angeles County, providing a much-needed voice missing from other theaters in this area. There are not very many venues providing performance opportunities to this particular population and thus, MACHA fills this need by offering cultural, equity and inclusion to the LGBTI and women of color community who are an integral part of the city of Los Angeles.

Razorcake/Gorsky Press Inc.

Razorcake/Gorsky Press is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to DIY punk, independent culture, and amplifying unheard voices. We feel that when we work together, life is a little more bearable. On one side is a terrifying culture of manipulation, and other the other side are all of us.

Anyone has the potential to be a Razorcake contributor. DIY punk can't be fully captured, understood, or expressed by men. If you're a woman, womyn, girl, grrrl, transgender/agender/non-binary/genderqueer writer, drop us a line. We're encouraging people who are marginalized – by gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and personal experience – to submit material to Razorcake. If you don't see or hear what you'd like covered, lend us a helping hand. If you're knowledgeable about DIY punk, are open to contribution. We have openings for interviews, articles, podcasts, photos, comics, web columns, videos, reviews, and editorial illustrations. All creative content is done on a volunteer basis.

Razorcake/Gorsky Press does not tolerate racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or ableist bullshit – and we've held these ethics since our start in 2001. Diversity makes us a better punk organization. Let's work with each other and help each other out.

OGP 2

SPARC

The Executive Committee of SPARC is committed to integrating and promoting the values of diversity in our organization. SPARC's legacy has been its diversity. We continue to cultivate a diverse staff and board, and to promote cultural equity in Los Angeles County through relevant and accessible multi-cultural arts programming for 42 years.

SPARC since its founding in 1976 has had an exemplary commitment to diversity through its dedication to producing, presenting and preserving public artworks in Los Angeles' diverse neighborhoods. The organization is best known for its work in hundreds of Los Angeles neighborhoods at a grassroots level to produce a rich legacy of Los Angeles murals and other public artworks which contributed to creating an ethnic face to our city. SPARC's intent is to examine what we memorialize through public art by producing work that includes the stories of people not included in the standard dialogues of American History through participatory processes with local residents have resulted in excellent artworks which are empowering and rise from within the community.

SPARC has remained committed to its values as socially responsible art makers. SPARC's core values to Cultural Equity and Inclusion are:

- Art is for everyone, regardless of their status in our society
- Distinctions between high and low art, fine and folk art are false

- Innovations are important only while nurturing the significant traditions in which various ethnic groups preserve their cultures
- All Americans can be participants in the making art and collaboration
- The arts can have significant transformative impact on the most significant social problems of our time

The diversity of the communities we serve through our work is also reflective in our organizational leadership; fostering future generations of artist leaders and mentoring them into stronger positions of influence is a pillar of SPARC's work.

We remain committed to helping individual communities find their voice, giving it public expression, and having others hear it, to breaking down barriers, real and perceived between communities and remembering that what we do is as much about public good as it is about public art.

Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural

Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural is fully committed to cultural equity and inclusion. The Northeast San Fernando Valley area we serve and its population of about 500,000 residents had no bookstores, art galleries, or full-fledged cultural spaces until Tía Chucha's opened its doors in 2001. Seeing this neglect, the cultural arts center and bookstore was founded as a dream of community empowerment by author and 2014-2016 Los Angeles Poet Laureate, Luis J. Rodriguez, along with two other active community members, his wife Trini Rodriguez and their brother-in-law Enrique Sanchez. Believing it's everyone's human right to explore and develop their innate creative gifts and improve their personal and collective quality of life, Tia Chucha's mission is to transform community through ancestral knowledge, the arts, literacy and creative engagement. Tia Chucha's provides year-round, on-site and off-site, free/low cost arts and literacy programming that is both bilingual and intergenerational. Understanding the value of the arts and literacy for healing, programming embraces our community's histories, cultures, and languages to restore and celebrate their identities, validate their voices, and foster the imagination of new options.

OGP 3 and 4

18th Street Arts Center

18th Street Arts Center (18SAC) was founded in 1988 on the belief that diversity is our greatest strength as a nation. We began with a diverse group

of artists seeking to create an active, multicultural, brave--- space for artistic exploration. Many of our founding artists were engaged in dismantling various manifestations of oppression. Thirty years later, these values remain central to our core.

As an international residency center, 18SAC believes that racial, cultural, ethnic, gender, ability, sexual and language diversity in its program offerings, leadership, staff, and artists leads to greater community wellbeing and a more just, peaceful world. 18SAC's global thought community of artists and cultural leaders are cognizant of the ongoing, messy work to uproot all forms of oppression. 18SAC's environment of creative time and space fosters real, incremental transformation with person---to---person cultural exchanges between local and international artists and 18SAC's audiences.

18SAC also **expands public perceptions of artistic excellence in contemporary art**. Excellent artistic voices develop out of their unique, cultural contexts and play an important role in shifting global attitudes, and our residency programs support, amplify, and connect those voices. Our programs advance new frameworks of artistic excellence to include a diversity of experiences beyond the male, white, cis---gender, and heterosexual contextual experience.

18SAC also strives to connect diverse, immigrant and historically oppressed audiences of color in LA County to artists who may hold similar political or cultural values in common with them. The diversification and cross---pollination of artists and audiences in 18SAC's brave space of experimentation (through residencies, exhibitions, and public programs) promulgates new cultural understanding that can undermine the forces of oppression.

Center Theater Group of Los Angeles

Center Theatre Group ("CTG") commits to transforming its Board of Directors and leadership to embody a culture of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. We pledge to create an environment where the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access permeate all levels and all aspects of our work. As part of this environment, we aim to attract, nurture, and retain a staff in a supportive home where we can be our best selves, and to help seed our field with future leaders that reflect the broadest array of voices and experiences. Because we know that theatre is a cultural force with the capacity to transform the lives of individuals and society at large, we embrace our

obligation to develop and produce programming that celebrates our commonalities and gives voice to our differences in order to ensure that everyone has access to our work onstage, behind the scenes, and in the community.

References

- ¹ “Revised Motion by Supervisors Hilda L. Solis and Sheila Kuehl, April 4, 2017: Los Angeles County Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative,” LA County Board of Supervisors, <http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/112832.pdf>.
- ² LA County Board of Supervisors, “Revised Motion.”
- ³ OGP grants are two-year grants, and half of the grant pool applies each year.
- ⁴ “Building Your Plan: A Cultural Equity & Inclusion Toolkit,” LA County Department of Arts and Culture, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://www.lacountyarts.org/building-your-plan-cultural-equity-inclusion-toolkit>.
- ⁵ D5 was a five-year coalition to advance philanthropy’s diversity, equity, and inclusion. More can be found at <http://www.d5coalition.org/about>.
- ⁶ “Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative Report,” LA County Arts Commission, April 2017, https://www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/lacac17_ceiireport_final.pdf.
- ⁷ LA County Arts Commission, “Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative Report.”
- ⁸ Five organizations were required to rewrite their statements, policies and plans, which also meant that they had to resubmit an amended board approval. An additional 22 applicants were required to resubmit their board approval. The statements, policies, and plans that were read for this analysis were the final submitted versions.
- ⁹ LA County Arts Commission, “Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative Report.”
- ¹⁰ “Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative: Literature Review,” LA County Department of Arts and Culture, March 30, 2016, https://www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/ceii_litrev_final.pdf.
- ¹¹ Stuart Hall and Sut Jhally, “Race: the floating signifier,” Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 1997.