



Disrupting Systemic Racism in the Arts & Culture Sector: From Thought to Action

The Arts Consulting Group (ACG) team is distressed and saddened by the widespread hatred and injustice taking place in our society today. We mourn the Black lives that have been taken in senseless acts of racially motivated violence, imprisonment, and injustice that have occurred for more than 400 years. We send our deepest condolences to the many families and communities that have been directly impacted by these recent and ongoing tragic events.

ACG stands with the Black Lives Matter movement and the Black community. Their voices and stories have regularly been excluded yet are integral to the vibrancy and intersectionality of our communities. We believe that arts and culture organizations are meant to serve and should be held to a higher standard in condemning injustice, seeking ways to actively disrupt conscious bias, tackling unconscious bias, battling stereotypes, and eliminating racism and discrimination.

As leaders in arts and culture management consulting, we recognize that we have a privileged seat at the tables of power. We also acknowledge that our team and the field have historically been predominantly white. Therefore, it is our responsibility to educate ourselves and speak out by participating in an open and honest dialogue to help organizations achieve a diverse, inclusive, equitable field. As changemakers, ACG will fight for those whose voices have been marginalized and silenced. We will initiate and support efforts to end systemic racism, bigotry, and oppression.

ACG is dedicated to continuing its efforts in advancing arts and culture institutions so that they can better enhance the communities they serve. Without community, there is no art. Without art, there is no creative expression. Without creative expression, we lose touch with our humanity. ACG understands that thought and action can have both intended and unintended consequences. Actions come with risk. Artists take personal and creative risks every day. Now it is our turn to engage with those who have similar and different perspectives on how to actively disrupt racism and end discriminatory practices. ACG will continue to:

- Promote governance and board recruitment models that move clients away from activities that reinforce white supremacy and towards practices that amplify diversity of both people and perspectives.
- Proactively identify, cultivate, recruit, and place people of color for our executive search clients and the ACG team.
- Ensure job opportunities are publicly available and position announcements are widely distributed.
- Advance pay equity by performing executive search and other compensation benchmarking studies to identify and highlight comparables by industry and geography.
- Engage in conversations with and mentor diverse individuals seeking careers in the arts and culture sector.
- Partner with organizations that support emerging leaders of color in the field.

- Embrace color-conscious hiring processes with intentionality at every stage of client and ACG team executive searches.
- Provide bias training, anti-racism educational resources, and project-specific inclusion strategies for every committee and client with whom we work.
- Collect demographic information and deliver diversity metrics so that clients can more deeply understand themselves and their communities.
- Utilize research-based, validated assessment tools that objectively determine position soft skill needs, minimize unconscious hiring biases, and develop a deeper understanding of biases among team members.
- Compose position announcements, client reports, and public communication with ongoing sensitivity towards race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and inherent power language.
- Actively participate in ongoing diversity and anti-racism education for the ACG team.

Pledging to take these actions is only the first step. We also strongly encourage our clients to be proactive participants in their efforts to disrupt and end systemic racism by embracing the following S.A.F.E. actions. With this framing in mind, ACG will continue to collaborate with clients and organizations that seek to:

Set institutional policies that strengthen equity, diversity, and inclusion in programming, staffing, governing, and serving communities.

Assert their commitment to anti-racism, inclusion, diversity, equity, and access values in ACG agreements and position announcements.

Form inclusive committees with an equity lens, including those who are not currently members of the existing board power structures.

Evaluate qualitative and quantitative data to minimize unconscious biases in assessments, employment, and decision making.

ACG will be resolute in our efforts as an agent of constructive change, especially when we have a seat at a table of power. Are there people in power who will not engage our firm's services because of these values? Perhaps. Is setting a higher industry standard worth the risk in order to disrupt systemic racism? Definitely. Will we work tirelessly with all organizations regardless of where they are on the broad continuum in addressing these issues? Happily. Do we need to redouble our efforts and add more action steps to these lists of commitments? Absolutely.

As an ongoing dialog in the arts and culture sector, we encourage you to please send your thoughts and suggestions to OurCommitments@ArtsConsulting.com. We welcome your ideas and voices as we continue our path to learning and growing with you and to serving both individuals and institutions that add vibrancy to the field.

We are energized by the response from our colleagues in arts service organizations, the funding community, and especially artists themselves. Our unity and collective values that define us are stronger than ever. We pledge our solidarity to support and encourage our partners in the arts and culture sector to eradicate injustice, hatred, and discrimination. Love will prevail.



Dr. Bruce D. Thibodeau, President
on behalf of the ACG Team

**Arts Consulting Group is committed to the principles of
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, and Success (I.D.E.A.S.).**

**We recognize that every person, organization, and community is unique.
We listen carefully, discuss options, seek to understand, and endeavor to
build consensus around diversity and inclusion so that every interaction with
clients, consultants, artists, and candidates is a learning opportunity.**