Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Values

The Dallas Opera believes that we have an obligation to be more reflective of our communities and that the art form, the industry, and the city gain from diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Equity:** The Dallas Opera is committed to creating an equitable culture among its staff and board, and across all its programs. The organization will work with its members to implement fair policies and practices that create working environments free of prejudice, discrimination, and misogyny, and that respect and inspire all people equally. Equity means fairness for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religion, age, or disability status.

**Diversity:** Different perspectives, cultural histories, life experiences, and personal stories enrich the style, scale, and subject of new works and the interpretations of the inherited repertoire, as well as stimulate innovation at the organizational level. Diversity and gender parity recognize the richness of our varied identities and experiences and affirm their contribution to our art form and the communities we serve.

**Inclusion:** Leadership at The Dallas Opera has begun to examine the attitudes, behaviors, and barriers that underlie the art form’s exclusive traditions, while exploring ways to weave new connections into the mosaic of contemporary American life. As we strive to establish mutually beneficial relationships with other arts and non-arts organizations in our surrounding communities, newcomers to opera will be introduced to the art form in a variety of settings and will be welcomed and valued as contributors to programming and organizational decision-making. Inclusion goes beyond numerical diversity to ensure authentic representation, empowered participation, and a true sense of belonging.

Commitment in Action

Through current programs and initiatives in development, The Dallas Opera is committed to:

- **Adoption of Equity Values and Practices:** expand the commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and gender parity as stated values and adopted practices.
- **Diverse and Inclusive Boards and Staffs:** increase diversity of its staff, Board of Directors, and audiences.
- **Diverse and Inclusive Administrators:** increase the recruitment, leadership development, and mentorship of administrators who are women and people of color.
- **Diverse and Inclusive Casting and Hiring:** work with members to understand and overcome biases and barriers to commissioning and casting of people of color.
- **Diverse and Inclusive Training:** increase the recruitment, nurturing, and retention of singers, conductors, directors, and other artists, artisans and technicians of color, and encourage the progress of administrators of color; and increase opportunities for women who are, or are aspiring to be, world-class conductors and company leaders.
- **Equity Training and Learning:** with a focus on eliminating racism and other biases, provide training and other learning resources on equity, diversity, and inclusivity through consultations, workshops, online resources, and other means.
Common EDI Terms and Definitions

The Dallas Opera understands that language has power and the meanings of words can change and evolve over time. We are providing these definitions to underscore our own meaning in the Values Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in order to provide greater context and understanding.

- **Diversity** is the breadth of representation within the opera field. It can mean diverse cultures and ethnicities, gender identities, ages, geographies, budget sizes, or works presented. When we speak about wanting to diversify our staffs or boards, it is important that we be explicit about whether we’re talking about people of color, women, artists, or other groups.

- **Inclusion** is the invitation and the welcome. Inclusion doesn't just mean representation at the board table, but also whose voices are heard. It moves beyond numbers and urges us to think about how we create a space where everyone feels comfortable and safe. When a staff or board has increased diversity with additional people of color, does this new group feel empowered to speak up? Are long-time staff or board members open to new ideas and new ways of thinking?

- **Equity** means recognizing that not everyone is starting from the same point, but ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to succeed. Universal policies and practices, while equal and accepting, may not be equitable. Equity requires additional, purposeful effort to ensure that those who are oppressed can reach the same levels of success as those with power. Equity is not the same as diversity, nor is it the even the same as equality. Our organizations may have hiring policies that offer equal access. Yet, job postings, support for staff, and the “culture” of an organization may not be equitable in that they don’t take into account the root causes of lack of representation.

When The Dallas Opera refers to “people of color,” we mean people from ALAANA backgrounds. ALAANA stands for African, Latinx, Asian, Arab and Native American individuals and communities. We acknowledge that both identities and languages are fluid, and we strive to increase our own understanding and update our language as cultures and needs change.