



Racial Equity Guiding Principles and Policies

"The beauty of anti-racism is that you don't have to pretend to be free of racism to be an anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself. And it's the only way forward." Ijeoma Oluo

RACIAL EQUITY COMMITTEE'S DEFINITION OF EQUITY

Racial equity refers to what a genuinely non-racist society would look like; a society where an individual's racial identity does not inform the distribution of resources and benefits, marginalization or discrimination, and all people experience psychological and physical safety. Racial equity holds society to a higher standard, it demands that we pay attention not just to individual-level discrimination, but to overall institutional, structural and systemic racism.

RACIAL EQUITY COMMITTEE CHARGE

- To provide guidance and expertise to the entire organization in order to actualize the Guild's core value of equity through advising the development of goals, metrics, accountability and implementation.
- To investigate, understand, and acknowledge the roots and realities of racial equity and inequity within American society and within the National Guild organization specifically.
- Based on this understanding, the committee will create a vision and strategy to interrupt and disrupt racially inequitable practices within the organization by recommending and implementing racially equitable structures, systems, policies and practices.
- Because equity is a core value, the committee is charged with the creation of recommended guiding principles that empower equitable practices that are foundational, representing:(1) the highest priorities; (2) deeply-held beliefs; (3) core driving forces of racial equity.

PREAMBLE TO NATIONAL GUILD RACIAL EQUITY PRINCIPLES

Racial Inequities are power and policy problems.

Racial Equity requires power and policy solutions.

We must examine Guild policy and power structures at all levels of the organization and implement equitable power and policy structures that will support the emergence of equity.

The goal of these racial equity principles is to influence the emergence of an anti-racist organization. To succeed in creating equity in a society where it does not exist as a norm, we have to create a context for it; to create the conditions to allow equity to emerge.

If we want to realize equity, we cannot create it within the known world, the old ways.

There are established roles of advantage and disadvantage institutionalized within all of our systems,

We must create something new.

PRINCIPLE: the foundation for a system of belief that informs one's behavior and chain of reasoning or actions.

GUIDING QUESTIONS: to be vocalized in planning and development to ensure principles are not forgotten.

POLICY STATEMENTS FOR BOARD CHARTER: To be integrated and institutionalized into the working structure of the Guild.

PRINCIPLE #1: PRIORITIZATION OF THOSE MOST IMPACTED BY RACIAL INJUSTICE

- In order to create true equity, we must center the experiences and interests of those who have been marginalized. If not, we will continue to perpetuate inequity and systems that exclude those who have been left out.
- We acknowledge that the foundations of the United States were built from acts of terror: the genocide of the indigenous peoples on whose land we occupy, and the enslavement of African people whose bodies created the vast wealth of American capitalism.
- We acknowledge that not everyone has equal access to opportunity because of the way our society is structured, therefore in order to provide individuals with the differentiated support needed to flourish, we will center and prioritize the voices, experiences, interest, and needs of those who have been historically, and are currently, systematically marginalized.
- We will continuously ensure that all policies, programs, and practices center the self-identified needs of those members, constituents, stakeholders and collaborators who continue to be impacted by injustice. All operationalizing policies, practices and programming will reflect full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups.
- No policy, program, or organizational practice is impenetrable; we will adapt and make changes at any point “midway” as we learn more.

GUIDING QUESTIONS: Do our practices prioritize the interests and needs of systematically marginalized people? What impact does this policy/practice/program have on systematically marginalized individuals and communities? How does this policy/practice/program prioritize their interests and needs?

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. We, the National Guild, stand and advocate for equity and social justice for [Black, Indigenous, People of Color \(BIPOC\)](#) communities and organizations across the nation. Our values explicitly include an active commitment to anti-oppression, equity and justice for BIPOC individuals and organizations.
2. We intentionally build relationships and partnerships with people of color, and arts organizations that focus on, are led by, created for and are accountable to BIPOC communities to affect positive social change. We advocate for and support the building of healthy communities through centering cultural and racial equity.
3. We stand and advocate for equity in the Arts and Arts Education for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color’s families, communities, leaders, and teachers of all ages. We are committed to redressing the unequal power relations and stereotypes that structure mainstream cultural institutions. We model anti-racist policies in the National Guild for Community Arts Education.
4. We advocate to correct the deep underinvestment in the organizations created by and for BIPOC communities and individuals. We are dedicated to and advocate for fair and equal consideration for all artists and cultural communities, a respect for each person’s individual and cultural community, and the assurance that everyone is at the decision-making table and given equal opportunity and access to resources.

PRINCIPLE #2: REDISTRIBUTION OF POWER

- There are established, institutionalized roles of advantage and disadvantage within our collective American society and within our organization. Equity requires the redistribution of material, power, cultural, and social access within the operations of the National Guild and beyond, to those with whom we work and serve. Redistributing power depends upon providing equitable opportunities.
- We will continuously cultivate internal anti-racist practices, and eliminate oppressive aspects of institutional culture. We will continually examine how practices and programs might advantage some over others, and offer external education aimed at changing inequitable policies across the field.
- If we cannot explain how our equity initiatives redistribute access and opportunity, we restructure our initiatives to align with these equity principles.
- As we co-learn with our communities, we will adapt and commit to remaining flexible and to critically examining others' perspectives on the impacts of our work.

GUIDING QUESTION: How does this initiative/policy/practice actively redistribute power and opportunities for those who are systematically marginalized?

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. We advocate for and support the reversal of long-term inequities in funding, hiring and resources in the National Guild and in the arts and culture sector
2. We support and implement structures, policies and practices that include decision-making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the National Guild. The Guild is committed to reflecting full participation and shared power with BIPOC cultural groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices
3. We are committed to ensuring leadership opportunities for BIPOC individuals; We support, recognize, and prioritize the leadership of Black people, Indigenous people and people of color
4. We are committed to policies and processes rooted in sharing and equalizing power so that we can create new equitable solutions, innovations and insights that benefit us all.

PRINCIPLE #3: DIRECT CONFRONTATION

- Equitable practice requires us to directly confront all instances of inequity. This includes manifestations in our interpersonal relations and institutional practices, to better and more transparently address cultural and structural racism within the broader context of our work. Confrontation does not mean acts of hostility or aggression towards another; it requires a strong resolve to stand in solidarity and address racist words and actions.
- We will stay continuously committed to intentionally restructuring our organization to create equitable conditions for all those with whom we work and whom we serve. We will do this from a place of empowered compassion.
- We are committed to maintaining honest and authentic relationships with those who are aligned with our values and principles. We are willing to let go of any relationships that do not align with our values.

GUIDING QUESTIONS: Are we allowing ourselves to have the courage to confront racial inequity head-on and unapologetically? Are we receiving information without defensiveness and with grace?

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. We hold space for difficult conversations and solution-seeking about systems of oppression and racism, in the Guild organization, in the arts and arts education sector, and in the world in which we live.
2. We listen to those who raise concerns, even if it makes waves.
3. We are transparent, self reflective and evolving: we routinely review and assess the Guild including stakeholders from every area of our organization. We are transparent with our community regarding internal challenges, and work diligently to refine and improve our policies and actions to best reflect our mission, vision and values with a focus on racial equity.
4. We advocate for and support a policy based on, “No meeting about us without us.” People of color should not be a minority at the table.

PRINCIPLE #4: REPARATION AND ADVOCACY

- We acknowledge that the foundations of the United States were built from acts of terror such as the enslavement of African people whose bodies created the vast wealth of American capitalism. We follow the collective work of Movement for Black Lives and other Black-led organizations in their demands for **reparations**.*
- As a national membership organization, we will externally use our platform as a conduit for shifting resources to black communities. We will show up and advocate across sectors, taking the lead from directly impacted communities. Internally, the Guild will commit to embedding **restitution** practices into our policies and programs.**

GUIDING QUESTIONS: *Does this policy or program shift financial, informational, human, or similar resources to black communities? Does this advocacy action voice the language and demands from black peoples leading the work of reparations?****

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. We, the National Guild stand and advocate for the sanctity and humanity of black lives. Black Lives Matter. We stand with and advocate for the individuals, organizations and communities who are suffering and acting for justice and the creation of an anti-racist world. We stand against systemic racism, inequity, and injustice in African American life.
2. We stand with and advocate for federal and state reparations as a means to provide economic amends for egregious injustices due to the lingering legacy of the enslavement of African Americans in America.
3. As an arts organization we advocate for and take action toward equity in the provision of arts education for Black students including equity in leadership, and teacher and teaching artist participation.
4. We advocate for equitable funding for arts organizations operated by and for African Americans. The National Guild takes action to seek and provide equitable financial resources for arts organizations led by, created for and accountable to African American communities. We make membership fully accessible to those who wish to join the National Guild for Community Arts Education.

***Reparations** *“include(s) five key components: Cessation/Assurance of Non-Repetition, Restitution and Repatriation, Compensation, Satisfaction, and Rehabilitation. Reparations are a concept rooted in international law that involves specific forms of repair to specific individuals, groups of people, or nations for specific harms they have experienced in violation of their human rights. Therefore, reparations cannot be achieved simply through “acknowledgment or an apology” or “investment in underprivileged communities.” ([M4BL Reparations ToolKit](#)).*

****Restitution** - *measures intended to restore the survivor to the original situation before the violations occurred, including, as appropriate: restoration of liberty, enjoyment of human rights, identity, family life, and citizenship, return to one’s place of residence (repatriation), restoration of employment, and return of property.” ([M4BL Reparations ToolKit](#)).*

*****Additional Questions for the Movement for Black Lives Reparations Collective**

- What does cessation and non-repetition look like to you?
- What does restitution look like to you?
- What does compensation look like to you?
- What does satisfaction look like to you?
- What does rehabilitation look like to you?

PRINCIPLE #5: TRANSFORMATION OF SELF

- In ultimate service to the community arts education field, we believe in and commit to our personal transformation as individuals and as a collective. This includes: (1) the Guild Board; (2) staff; and, (3) all other Guild stakeholders.
- We recognize that unlearning white supremacy is deeply personal work and that when we actively engage with this life-long work progress will ensue. We will expect and take personal responsibility for continuous learning/unlearning as it relates to systems of oppression.
- We prioritize investing in professional development and leadership development, creating spaces for co-learning and reflection, building accountability in our internal practices and in our programming, and upholding organizational policies that are inclusive.
- We believe that collaborative decision-making and power-sharing leads to positive transformation and true service. This, coupled with transparency, ensures that humility prevails in all deliberations.

GUIDING QUESTIONS: *In what ways have I actively worked to dismantle white-supremacy culture in my own practice? How have those I am accountable to been centered in my work? What have I learned from those whom I am accountable to?*

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. As a historically white led and white serving organization, we recognize that in order to transform we should be learners and creators of cultural and racial equity
2. We are committed to routinely provide continued anti-racist learning opportunities for all Board members, staff and membership to deepen the consciousness of oppression and expand the personal commitment to acting as an agent of social change.