

Omaha Performing Arts

IDEA Summary – April 2021 (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility)

Team, Trust, Integrity, and Inclusion are core values at Omaha Performing Arts. We appreciate and value ideas that come from a diverse work environment, and we believe in fostering an inclusive culture that can provide an atmosphere which allows all individuals to attain their greatest potential, achieve a welcoming environment for our patrons and artists, and provide deep, enriching engagement for the communities we serve.

This document serves to summarize more than five years of progressive work both internally and externally. Several addenda are also included at the end of the summary which provide greater detail.

1. Omaha Performing Arts Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Strategic Plan (2017 – 2021)

The IDEA Strategic Plan has informed our work over the past years. It is a dynamic document that is updated annually. These efforts have been advocated and supported by President Joan Squires and the initiatives and programs have been developed and led by VP for Human Capital and Inclusion Gennean Scott. Most recently, VP for Programming and Education Andy Cassano has joined the leadership of these efforts, and the work is guided by an internal committee of more than 10 staff members from across all departments. It is incorporated into the institutional Strategic Plan which is discussed, reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors annually.

2. Administrative Recruitment

Omaha Performing Arts is committed to a diverse and dynamic workforce and has implemented fair and equitable workplace practices across our entire organization, including hiring, strategic planning, volunteers and third-party contractors and daily operations. The work began several years ago and is ongoing.

Our recruitment, hiring, compensation and professional development practices are built with our organization's core practices of Team, Trust, Integrity and Inclusion. Formal relations have been developed with the National Black MBA Association (NBMBAA), Association of Latino Professionals For America (ALPFA), and the National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP), Urban League Young Professionals, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and UNO Inclusion Services and Empowerment Network as part of our efforts to increase the diversity of our candidate pools.

3. Staff Demographics

Omaha Performing Arts		
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statistics		
(BIPOC - self identified Black, Indigenous and People of Color)		
	<u>OPA - 2021</u>	<u>Local/State/National - 2019</u>
BIPOC Staff	28%	21.8% - Omaha metro area companies 19.3% - NE Companies
BIPOC Senior Management	22%	16% - Fortune 100 Companies
Women	55%	50% - Omaha metro and NE companies
	55% - senior staff	10.9% - Senior Exec. Fortune 500 Companies
	<u>OPA - 2021</u>	<u>OPA - 2016</u>
New Hires	35%	An increase of 15%

4. HRAM Award – 2020

The HRAM (Human Resource Association of the Midlands) Ideal Award for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Advocacy, Leadership (IDEAL) recognizes Omaha companies and organizations for their diversity and inclusion initiatives, research, implementation, and successes at all levels.

In 2020, Omaha Performing Arts was named as one of three local organizations that exemplified a dedication to diversity and inclusion efforts. The award specifically recognized O-pa’s ongoing commitment to implementing our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility policies.

Organizations recognized in 2020:

THRIVE Award Level 1 – Leading and Resources – Heartland Family Service

EMERGE Award Level 2 – Implementation – Omaha Performing Arts

CULTIVATE Award Level 3 – Recognize – Children’s Hospital and Medical Center

5. Vendors/Contractors

Two of O-pa’s largest contractors are minority-owned companies:

- Lions Gate Security – venue and performance security
- Total Cleaning Solutions – housekeeping services

6. IDEA Committee

In 2017, O-pa formed an employee committee, IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility), focused primarily internally to ensure these values are carried through organization-wide. While work continues, accomplishments include but are not limited to:

Strategic Plan

- IDEA strategic plan as mentioned in Part 1 on page 1 with annual review

Training:

- **September 2018** – 2-hour all-staff and volunteer training on cultural sensitivity, unconscious bias, stereotypes, microaggressions and relationship building by Moniki Gunn-Cannon, Gunn & Cannon Empowerment Group
- **February 2019** – 2-day professional training for managers and other select staff and volunteers by Kaisha Johnson of Women of Color in the Arts to discuss community building, equity, inclusion and diversity terminology
- **May 2019** – Sexual harassment training for all staff facilitated by HR on sexual harassment, timeline of laws and the “Me Too” movement, how to recognize harassment, organizational costs of harassment, bystander training, intervention, organizational policies regarding reporting, investigation and prevention
- **June 2019** – Implicit bias training for Ambassadors (volunteers)
- **October 2019** – Ally training for all staff facilitated by Inclusive Communities trainers to discuss staff identities and how they influence communication and interpersonal relationships, microaggressions, allyship and creating inclusive spaces
- **January 2020** – Sensory-friendly performance training for all staff and volunteers by Autism Action Partnership on learning autism characteristics understanding how autism affects patrons’ experiences and what staff and volunteers can do to help improve experiences of patrons with autism and their families
- **August 2020** – Mandatory Implicit Bias Test, Discussion and Roundtable
- **March 2021** – Mandatory mental health in the workplace training for all staff (2 parts)
- **April 2021** – Mandatory ADA Training for all staff (2 parts)
- **Summer 2021** (being scheduled) – Mandatory Unconscious Bias Training – Video course by Vernā Myers at The Vernā Myers Company. (Joan Squires previously participated in this training provided by the Broadway League)

Staff Activities:

- **February 2018** - Lunch-and-learn for staff called “The Break” to educate staff on different cultures represented by staff

- **November 2018** - Lunch-and-learn for staff called “The Break” to educate staff on different cultures represented by staff
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- **March 2019** – Staff-led book club for staff on *So You Want To Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo
- **April 2019** – Staff outing to include Joslyn Museum Exhibit: *30 Americans* followed by a luncheon and self-guided tour at Big Mama’s Kitchen
- **July 2019** – Staff-led book club for staff on *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin Diangelo
- **October 2019** – Optional documentary viewing for staff of *Out of Omaha*
- **March 2020** – Optional viewing for staff of *American Son*
- **Feb 2021** – Staff-led presentation on the Harlem Renaissance Experience
- **May 2021** – Staff-led book club for staff with author Lacey Lamar on *You’ll Never Believe What Happened to Lacey: Crazy Stories about Race* by Amber Ruffin and Lacey Lamar

Other internal staff activities include:

- Collaboration with the Autism Action Partnership to develop sensory-friendly performance toolkits and social narratives
- Annual participation in community events that celebrate diversity and inclusion such as Chinese New Year (2018 and 2019), Cinco de Mayo (2018 and 2019) and Pride (2018 and 2019)
- Annual professional and volunteer development resources to further personal education, including HR quarterly newsletter and emails
- Establishment of the **Accessibility Sub-Committee** (see section 6 below)
- Monthly IDEA features in employee newsletter (starting in March 2020)
- Monthly IDEA blogs on O-pa website, shared on O-pa’s social media and emailed to patrons

7. Accessibility

O-pa has established an Accessibility Sub-Committee that is finalizing a comprehensive plan for auditing our venues, services, technology and communication. Current accommodations for patrons include:

- **Venues:** wheelchair and companion seating, accessible parking, accessible restrooms, public access to our stages, baby-changing stations, lactation rooms and more.
- **Services:** American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, assisted listening devices, a hearing loop, braille and large print programs, sensory-friendly toolkits and more.
- **Technology:** Full Wi-Fi access in the performance halls in order to utilize the GalaPro app which provides audio description and live captioning.

- **Communication:** O-pa recently conducted a website audit and made several changes including descriptive alt text on all images, updated website copy for increased readability, increasing color contrast and font size, and simplifying navigation.

A list of our Accessibility offerings can be found on the O-pa website at www.o-pa.org/our-venues/accessibility

8. Volunteers and Governance

The O-pa Board of Directors Governance Committee is actively cultivating and recruiting board candidates that reflect more diversity of ethnicity and gender. A committee of board members has identified several candidates and discussions are underway.

Efforts are also moving forward to further diversify in our volunteer groups to reflect our community, including both the Ambassadors and the Presenters Circle.

9. O-pa as a Community Resource

Omaha Performing Arts serves as a resource and an example to other local, regional and national arts organizations for hiring policies, retention practices, and trainings provided for employees.

- O-pa's Human Resources department has been conducting diversity training for the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands since 2018.
- O-pa is also a participant in their newly developed BIPOC Leadership group and serves as a committee member for the HRAM Diversity & Inclusion Committee since 2017.

10. Programming and Education/Community Engagement – an Overview

Omaha Performing Arts (O-pa) is dedicated to presenting a variety of performances that actively engage our diverse populations in Omaha and the greater metropolitan area. As the largest arts nonprofit in the state, we present the best of Broadway, jazz, blues, dance, comedy, family and popular entertainment. Since the founding of O-pa, we have and will continue to create engaging experiences that promote inclusion, with open dialogue and to cultivate community relationships through a diversity of artists, performances and events that are reflective of our community. **(For Statistics - See Addendum A – page 8)**

To activate engagement and community partnerships, many artists and shows enable us to explore important and relevant topics of today through workshops, pre- and post-concert activities, lectures and talkbacks. Audiences participate in lively conversations with national and local artists and experts before many concerts through our Curtain Warmer

programs which most recently have included presentations by the Great Plains Black History Museum, Ranky Tanky, and the African Culture Connection. Past workshops have included the MEMPHIS Diversity Forum, the WICKED Anti-Bullying Summit, the Cultural Inclusion Summit with COME FROM AWAY and a mentorship summit with A BRONX TALE. We also provide sensory-friendly events, with accompanying activities every year.

Our Education and Community Engagement programs reach more than 100,000 students and adults per year across Nebraska and in parts of Iowa through a variety of opportunities including student matinees, master classes, professional development workshops and more. **(For Listing - See Addendum B – page 9)**

To further connect our community to the arts as well as develop O-pa’s relationships and events outside of our venues, we partner with several Omaha organizations such as 75 North, Salem Baptist Church, Miller Park, Partnership 4 Kids, Inclusive Communities, Autism Action Partnership, Omaha Girls Rock, and more. O-pa also offers Arts Access which provides underrepresented populations with free tickets to select performances. **(See Addendum C – page 11)**

11. Voices AMPLIFIED

The long, rich history of education and engagement activities, along with a desire to expand those activities and make a stronger impact, have informed our program, **Voices AMPLIFIED!**, a multidisciplinary arts and social justice initiative to amplify artists in diverse cultures. More than just a one-time experience, Voices AMPLIFIED! is a season-long series of interconnected performances, events, panel discussions, workshops and talkbacks that intersect local and national artists with community partners in food, health, education and other social services around a central theme.

Voices AMPLIFIED! is led by a committee of ten community members comprised of educators, artists, local leaders, and O-pa employees who meet every other week to collectively design each program, establish the best locations, collaborators and featured guests, help with grassroots marketing, and identify barriers, challenges, and solutions in reaching marginalized communities.

This year’s committee includes Deborah Bunting, Raydell Cordell III, Aaron Gregory, Jade Rogers, Matt Mason, Gennean Scott, Andy Cassano, Bill Grennan and Dara Hogan and have included community partnerships with No More Empty Pots, The Simple Foundation, Film Streams, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the UNO College of Community, Fine Arts and Media. **(See attachment).**

12. Community Resource Group

O-pa is in the process of developing a Community Resource Group to provide resources and support to our employees and patrons. The CRG will serve as a conduit for leadership regarding community issues and needs, and work to connect O-pa and the community by sharing their expertise and experiences to improve inclusion and equity across all departments and activities. Invitations have been extended to key stakeholders in the BIPOC community.

Addendum A – Programming

O-pa Programming Statistics – Focusing on Diversity of Artists and Productions

The following represents the number of performances on the annual presenting season that featured BIPOC artists since the 2009/2010 season. The numbers below do not include Broadway, commercial touring or rental shows.

- FY10 – 9 out of 32 shows had BIPOC artists (28%)
 - FY11 – 13 out of 36 (36%)
 - FY12 – 4 out of 20 (20%)
 - FY13 – 15 out of 47 (32%)
 - FY14 – 13 out of 42 (31%)
 - FY15 – 11 out of 45 (24%)
 - FY16 – 16 out of 73 (22%)
 - FY17 – 13 out of 40 (33%)
 - FY18 – 18 out of 42 (43%)
 - FY19 – 16 out of 59 (27%)
 - FY20 – 18 out of 45 (40%)
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- Between March 14, 2020 – June 27, 2020 (COVID shutdown) – 23 out of 36 events (64%)
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- FY 21 (July 2020 – June 25, 2021)
 - 25 of 27 events featured BIPOC artists
 - 89 of 138 artists were BIPOC (ex: Ranky Tanky, Alicia Olatuja, Etienne Charles)
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- Upcoming 2021/2022 Season:
 - BIPOC Artists represent 50% of our Presents programming & 50% of our artist budget
 - 3 of 4 Jazz on the Green
 - 9 of 17 O-pa Presents programs
 - 3 of 7 Holland Music Club
 - 2 of 3 National Geographic Live
 - Voices AMPLIFIED! will include 20 performances, discussions, workshops and conversations with BIPOC artists.

Addendum B – Education and Engagement

O-pa Education and Community Engagement Programs – Focusing on IDEA

O-pa's education and community partnerships in the Orpheum Theater, Holland Performing Arts Center and the community connect our artists with students and community members across the area and region.

In 2020/2021:

- 6 out of 11 artists hired for Theater Essentials Online are BIPOC
- 55% of Disney Musicals in Schools students are BIPOC
- 4 of 11 Disney teaching artists are BIPOC

Over past 7 years 50% of Nebraska High School Theatre Academy (NHSTA) students nominated to compete at the national Jimmy Awards in New York City are BIPOC, and the NHSTA Showcase has consistently been hosted by BIPOC artists from Omaha, NE.

In the fall of 2020, education staff hired local accessibility specialist Fran Sillau to provide training for the Disney teaching artists and participating elementary school teachers on inclusive theater practices.

In July 2021 education staff will hire K&R Strategies to facilitate a story circle dialogue series for BIPOC student alumni of NHSTA program.

Below is a listing of many activities designed to connect IDEA values and goals with the community:

- 2009/2010 - “Journey Through Journaling” residency with THE COLOR PURPLE
- 2009/2010 - Bela Fleck: The Africa Project in partnership with African Culture Connection
- 2010/2011 - Trey McIntyre Project
- 2010/2011 - Step Afrika! Residency
- 2011/2012 - community drumming residency with Mark Powers
- 2011/2012 - social dance workshops with Luna Negra
- 2012/2013 - The Rite of Spring community celebration week with The Joffrey Ballet, Greg Proops and The Bad Plus
- 2012/2013 - diversity forum with MEMPHIS THE MUSICAL
- 2012/2013 - residency with Kevin Spencer’s “Healing Magic”
- 2012/2013 - League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with THE LION KING
- 2013/2014 - residency with Ron K. Brown Evidence Dance Company
- 2013/2014 - League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with WAR HORSE
- 2013/2014 - anti-bullying summit with WICKED in partnership with the ADL

- 2014/2015 - workshops with Black Violin
- 2014/2015 - League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with MOTOWN THE MUSICAL
- 2015/2016 - “Get Up & Go” with NEWSIES in partnership with Girls Inc.
- 2015/2016 - League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with NEWSIES
- 2015/2016 - Holland Stages Festival
- 2015/2016 - Heroes Night with WIZARD OF OZ
- 2015/2016 - Dance Theatre of Harlem residency
- 2016/2017 - residency with Basetrack Live
- 2016/2017 - residency with Carolyn Dorfman Dance in partnership with Institute for Holocaust Education
- 2016/2017 - residency with LA Gay Men’s Chorus “it gets better” project
- 2016/2017 - Heroes Night with WHITE CHRISTMAS
- 2016/2017 - League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with SOMETHING ROTTEN
- 2017/2018 - Heroes Night with AN AMERICAN IN PARIS
- 2017/2018 - cultural inclusion summit with THE KING AND I
- 2017/2018 - League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with THE KING AND I
- 2017/2018 - residency with Spectrum Dance Theater: A Rap on Race
- 2018/2019 - residency with Artist in Residence for Dance, Ray Mercer
- 2018/2019 - cultural inclusion summit with COME FROM AWAY
- 2018/2019 - League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with ALADDIN
- 2018/2019 - Heroes Night with ALADDIN
- 2019/2020 - Heroes Night with A BRONX TALE
- 2019/2020 - mentorship summit with A BRONX TALE
- 2019/2020 - residency with Ailey II
- 2019/2020 - residency with Artist in Residence for Dance, Ray Mercer
- 2019/2020 - residency with Camille A. Brown & Dancers

Addendum C – Arts Access

Omaha Performing Arts partners with numerous community organizations in a variety of ways. Through Arts Access, O-pa distributes thousands of free tickets to organizations each year that do not have regular access to the performing arts. Below are current O-pa Arts Access community partners.

75 North	JCC
Abide	Kids Can
AIM Upward Bound (Bryan)	Kroc Center - Senior Recreation Group
AIM Upward Bound (PLV Public Schools)	Learning Community Center of North Omaha
All Communities Outreach Services (formerly Christ Cathedral)	Learning Community Center of South Omaha
Angel Guardians, Inc. (VSP Club)	Lutheran Family Services
Autism Society of Nebraska	MCC - TRIO Single Parent Program
Autism Society Omaha	Mexican Dance Academy of Nebraska
Banister's Leadership Academy	Minority Outreach Resource Education (M.O.R.E.)
Bethlehem House	Morton Boys & Girls Club
Big Brothers Big Sisters Midlands	Mosaic
Boys and Girls Club of Omaha	NE Methodist College Upward Bound Math & Science
Boys Town	NE Methodist College Upward Bound Program
Carole's House of Hope	Nebraska Chinese Association
CASA	NorthStar
Catholic Charities Christ Child North	Omaha Girls Rock
Center for Holistic Development Inc.	Orchard Gardens Assisted Living
Centro Latino of Iowa	Partnership 4 Kids
Child Saving Institute	Pear Tree Performing Arts
Collective for Youth	Project Everlast
Completely Kids	Refugee Empowerment Center
Creighton Intercultural Center	Rejuvenating Women
"Creighton Student Support Services (ICC and Native American Advancement Program)"	Royale Oaks Assisted Living
Creighton TRIO Talent Search	Salem Baptist Church
Creighton TRIO Program	Seven Oaks at Notre Dame
Upward Bound Classic: Creighton	St Luke's Teen Center (United Methodist Church)
Upward Bound Math & Science: Creighton	Start Center for Entrepreneurship
Crossroads of Western Iowa	The Council Bluffs Schools Foundation (STARS)*
Douglas County Youth Center	TRAC Re-entry Services
EITC Coalition - Americorps	TRAClife (Teen Reach Adventure Camp)
ENCOR	Upward Bound Math & Science: MCC/Northwest High
Girls Inc. Omaha	Upward Bound: Methodist
Girl Scouts	Upward Bound Math & Science: Methodist
Heartland Family Youth Shelter	Urban League of Nebraska
Hope Center for Kids	VA Medical Center Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program
I Am Dance	VODEC
Immanuel Pathways	YMCA of the Okobojis
Immigrant Legal Center	
Inclusive Communities	
Intercultural Senior Center	
Iowa Western Community College	
IWCC - TRIO Student Support Services	