

TAPA SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE FRAMEWORK

At A Glance: The TAPA Social Justice Committee (SJC) is committed to bring about sectoral and systemic change.

Step 1: Identifying, exploring, unpacking, understanding the implications of the performing arts sector on equity-owed arts organizations and artists within the TAPA membership

Step 2: Raising awareness of anti-racism, anti-oppression, mental health and physical well-being in professional theatre, dance and opera

Step 3: Supporting implementation of social justice resources and workshops to all TAPA members, with a focus on creating systemic change

TAPA Stance on Unanimity:

TAPA is a non-partisan arts service organization that represents a broad membership of diverse companies and individuals. We therefore agree to a declaration of unanimity, rather than a simple majority (51%). TAPA restricts ourselves to establishing positions on social issues that require absolute unanimity from our broad-based membership.

It is beyond our capacity to achieve absolute unanimity on these issues.

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As such, the work of the SJC is to empower TAPA members to continue their own anti-oppression based work by providing pathways, resources, and education.

SJC Priorities:

We understand that there are many priorities as it relates to Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity in the Arts. We feel that equitable succession and leadership development and a move towards work/life balance, gender parity and support for the holistic needs of artists are part of the change required. There is an urgent need to equitably build, restructure and educate organizations to be proactive and always equitable, diverse and inclusive and supportive of

arts-workers and artists they engage. There is a dire need to unpack the complexities of diversity in the performing arts and eradicate historical inequities.

Some aspects of historical inequities include:

- The ways in which creation occurs (The ways “works” are made that do not support the diverse people who do the work, disproportionately puts the artists in precarious and risky situations that continue to exacerbate their marginalization, especially towards Indigenous and artists of colour.)
- Fear of racism, anti-racism while working in white institutional structures where change is resisted. A lack of Organizational accountability framework in operation, management and the sector (How do you hold yourself, other arts organizations and the sector accountable?)
- There are significant mental health challenges for artists in the sector (How do we consider the implications of declaration of mental health needs?)
- Need for Mental health resources and mental health peer support
- A focus on inclusion for artists with caregiving responsibilities. (We recognize there is a lack of support for artists with caregiving responsibilities often also intersecting with artists who have little agency or are otherwise marginalized.)
- Few equity-owed people in positions of leadership with power to implement change
- Lack of equity-owed arts managers and leaders to diversify the staff of the organizations that are called to do so.
- Respectful Workplaces information and the education of members on its framework
- Bridging the administrative and leadership roles with the creative work through social justice

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SJC Collective Agreement:

- Bringing knowledge and experience from the Arts Sector to continually engage, benefit committee members, TAPA and the Sector on issues relating to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- We are committed to also think and work through the lens of mental health in the Arts
- We agree to explore, and where possible support the implementation of equity resources in all sectors of the industry, beyond the stage and with the desire to create systemic change supporting intergenerational conversations from young people to older adults.
- We want to start at a place of unpacking and understanding the implications of diverse lived experiences; engaging in deeper conversations about anti-racism, anti-oppression in the Performing Arts
- We want to identify where racism and oppression are occurring and work towards undoing the harm caused; creating systemic change.
- Raising awareness when it comes to sector and systemic change that can support growth in the arts sector

SJC Objectives:

What do we hope to do together as a committee in support of the Performing Arts Sector?

We believe that the work in social justice improves the lives and mental, financial health for the Arts Sector. The TAPA Social Justice Committee seeks to address, support and facilitate through education the inequities within its membership and the arts sector. While responding to queries of members, we intend to offer suggestions in implementing change that serves both the membership as well as artists. We aspire to do so through knowledge sharing, partnerships, collaborations, dialogues, learning tools and educational resources.

This SJC is committed to:

- Be an intermediary for support, education, and advocacy between our membership and its artists.

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- Intersect with the TAPA INDIE Caucus, while being a conduit for information between membership, Arts organizations and the performing Arts sector.
- Remain vigilant in addressing our accountability as a committee and how this accountability may impact the sector.
- Support the continuation of social justice processes for future sectoral growth and development.
- Offering social justice strategies for incremental change in our organizational and creative models will be a primary focus, with an intent to support organizations that are keen in organizational change with social justice as a core feature.
- Audit existing practices within our current artistic practices to ensure transparent action, clear discourse, and foundational work toward balancing historical inequities within our sector.

What are some of the possible needs for a Social Justice Committee?

- We envision providing support to the TAPA membership through activities that will support the creation of more equitable, diverse, inclusive and supportive organizations.
- We through the Social Justice Committee will be a resource for TAPA internally and for its membership.
- Through said involvement, we will be a catalyst to support any needs for resources.
- A catalyst for access to social justice educational support to TAPA's membership and in turn better serve the larger theatre artist community in Toronto.
- Support and champion other initiatives that promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the sector.

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TAPA Strategic Partnership with The Black Pledge

Steps for Implementation

- Co-create and facilitate a curriculum of learning and education around equity, diversity, inclusivity and accessibility (EDIA), anti-oppression, and social justice with a focus on anti-Black racism for TAPA members, staff and Board to feel better supported in professional praxis and promoting cultural competency.
- Develop a comprehensive tool kit associated with The Black Out Night that provides resources to reflect membership feedback rooted in the Social Justice Committee Agreement and Pillars (Appendix 1).
- Partner with TAPA and cross-sectoral organizations and leaders to create EDIA and Social Justice resources, affinity groups and approaches for collective advocacy and inclusion.
- Convening TAPA member meetings on a range of topics leading towards the development of new audiences and expanded intentional outreach.

SJC History:

TAPA strives to be responsive to the changing cultural environment of our times and to the evolving needs of the TAPA membership.

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Part of this is a review of the Dora Mavor Moore Awards every five years. The manner and spirit with which the Dora Awards review process was conducted in 2017-2018 involved layers of assessment and discussion with the TAPA membership and members of the community in a positive collaborative process. The gender-based performance categorization was revealed as an area of great concern as it prevented access to recognition for performers identifying as non-binary or gender non-conforming individuals. In 2018 TAPA announced a major change to performance categories for the Dora Mavor Moore Awards; All gender qualifications for performance awards were removed and a gender-neutral policy was established. Training for the

Dora jurors was added to this initiative to help create real systemic change for gender inclusion within the performing arts industry in Toronto.

Building on this precedent-setting step forward, TAPA is committed to continuing to work with the membership in this essential work; and compelled to being the vanguard of embracing and promoting change and social justice.

What do we desire to do as the work of the committee?

The TAPA Social Justice Committee meets monthly to discuss and explore solutions related to the performing arts on issues relating to, but not exclusive to:

- **ORGANIZATIONAL/SECTORAL CHANGE**
systemic changes, financial access/inequity
- **EDUCATION/ADVOCACY**
forum for discussion, education and addressing concerns of unfair treatment
 - Advocacy within the sector in partnership with other organizations entrenched in social justice work
 - Support and assistance in social justice resource mapping and sharing

We believe that as a committee we too should be accountable and are considering ways to understand this responsibility. We aim to:

- Hold, a repository of contacts / consultants to support the work of the committee by considering what work already exists in the sector
- Encourage consideration of independent artists in the Arts Sector

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