[EQUITY SCORECARD AND INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT]

Cultural**Alliance**

BRINGING ARTS AND CULTURE
TO LIFE IN YORK COUNTY

MISSION

We are a Catalyst, fueling the creative energy and vibrancy of our community through Leadership, Collaboration, and Sustainability in order to enrich the quality of life of all of our citizens.

VISION

We envision a thriving York County where the arts are an integral component of economic growth and development, tourism, education and everyday life.

A Conversation on Equity-Why Now?

Over the past three years, the Cultural Alliance has made a pivot from being strictly a fundraiser/investor to also including a leading role as convener, collaborator, catalyst, and partner to the arts and culture sector. In 2016, the Cultural Alliance created our strategic plan to continue that pivot and broaden our role as catalyst to connect the arts to key community priorities. This included strategies to engage more diverse leadership in the cultural sector, and enable our partners to reflect our diverse community in cultural experiences. An excerpt from the Cultural Alliance strategic plan is below.

OBJECTIVE TWO

Connect the arts to key community priorities.

Goal 1: Enhance the community's awareness, appreciation, participation, and support of the arts as an essential part of a vibrant, thriving York County

STRATEGIES	TIMELINE
Engage more diverse leadership, staff, and volunteers in our cultural sector.	**2018**
Ensure that our diverse community is reflected in our local arts offerings and in the audience.	**2018**
Strengthen the alliance with the York County Convention and Visitors Bureau to raise the visibility of our cultural offerings and visitation.	**2017**
Cultivate innovative ideas and investigate ways to establish a greater presence for the cultural sector that will more deeply integrate the arts into the fabric of our community.	**2017-2019**

The New Model of the Cultural Alliance: A Model of Inclusion

Directed by our strategic plan, the Cultural Alliance in partnership with Design Quake launched a design-thinking study in 2017 to identify how we can reposition the organization for relevance and sustainability that will ensure arts and culture in York will thrive for years to come. Through this year-long process of in-depth empathy interviews with community members, qualitative/quantitative research of other United Arts Fund models, and ideation sessions with

partners/donors, we heard resoundingly that the new Cultural Alliance model needs to support more organizations, and that diversity in both programs and the audiences that funded organizations serve is a critical focus area.

**Community Issues Force the Conversation**

In 2018, national news coverage of racially-motivated discrimination events led to the formation of a confronting racism task force made up of community leaders, non-profit organizations, and concerned citizens. The Cultural Alliance has joined this task force and is committed to working to eliminate racism in our community. Working on this task force has caused the Cultural Alliance to look inward at our own leadership and organizational practices to identify how we incorporate equity and inclusion.

A Definition of Equity

Often, equity-focused conversations derail because people are using the same terms in different ways. One of the challenges of communicating effectively about equity is to "name it, frame it and explain it." The following definition will provide a shared language and understanding of equity, and the difference between equity and equality.

Equity is defined as "the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair." The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or a lofty value. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept.

Equality Vs. Equity
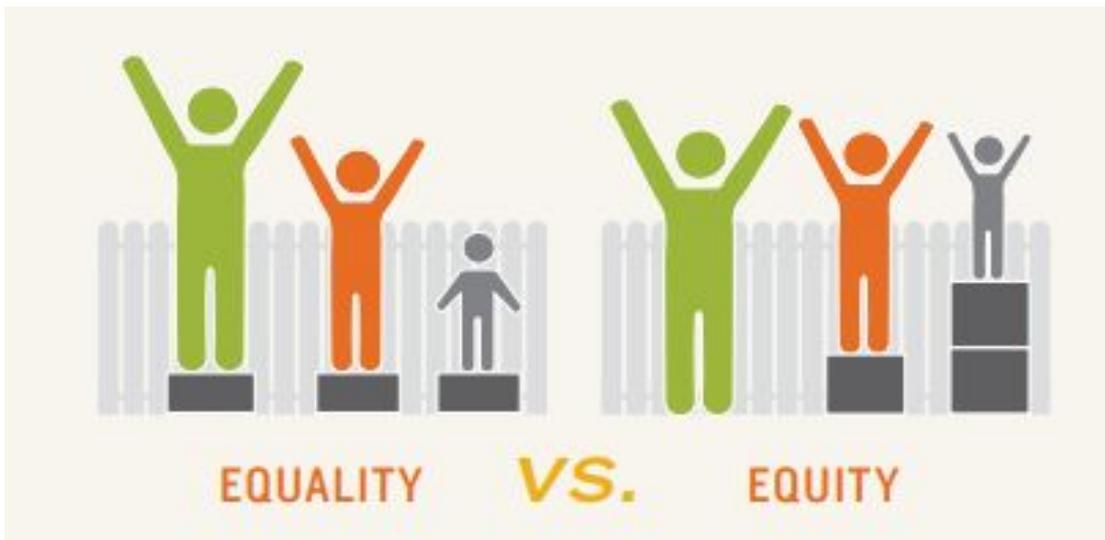
Equity involves trying to understand and give people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Equality, in contrast, aims to ensure that everyone gets the same things in order to enjoy full, healthy lives. Like equity, equality aims to promote fairness and justice, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same things.

Equity Scorecard: What Is the Cultural Alliance Already Doing?

During the first confronting racism task force meeting, the group was asked to name organizations already working to eliminate racism in our community-the Cultural Alliance of York County was added to the list. Clearly, some of our efforts in building equity into our practices is resonating. Below is a scorecard listing of what the Cultural Alliance is actively doing.

Cultural Alliance Equity Scorecard

Grant Making
- The Cultural Alliance staff has proactively reached out to diverse affinity groups to increase grant applications from organizations and individuals serving diverse populations in our community.
- Grant review panelists are chosen from diverse backgrounds to reflect the community when possible.
- Though applications have increased from underserved populations, most do not receive funding after panel review.

Education and Advocacy
- Staff has provided grant writing training and one-on-one coaching to first-time applicants from underserved populations to strengthen submitted applications.
- Staff has used community liaisons to offer leadership and professional development training to artists/arts organization staff from diverse backgrounds.
- There is no education/advocacy programs strictly for diverse audiences.

Internal processes
- Board of Directors are chosen based on their expertise and fundraising experience; their diversity is not a consideration.
- Cultural Alliance staff has organically added diverse staff over the past three years, but equity is not a structured part of organizational climate.

Community Relationships
- Cultural Alliance staff has overtly worked to build relationships and connections with non-arts organizations and reached out to community liaisons to build trust and act as a connector to the arts and culture sector.
- Though identification of the Cultural Alliance has grown, many underserved populations still don't know where to go to connect with arts and culture.

Equity Organizational Assessment Tool-Where Are We Now?

In order to understand how we might embed equity into our practice, the staff of the Cultural Alliance utilized the Equity Assessment tool created by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to gain an awareness of where our organization falls on a spectrum now (a copy of this assessment tool is in the appendices of this document.) It is used to raise organizational awareness, start focused conversations, contribute to the development of equity action plans, and track organizational change.

How Did We Use It?

•   The staff answered each question by circling the response that most closely applied to the Cultural Alliance.

•   We added up the numbers associated with each answer to get our Organizational Equity Score.

•   We used the chart below to find out what your Organizational Equity Score means.

Equity Organizational Assessment Tool-What Is Our Score and What Does It Mean

The staff organizational assessment came up with a score of 3 for the Cultural Alliance. Scores are defined below.

<7: Organizations at this score level tend to think what's good for 'everyone' will necessarily be good for people of diverse groups. Thus, it does not lift up issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in any regular or routine way. Further, it may even take the position that paying attention to racial/ethnic diversity or disparities diverts attention away from shared concerns.

8-15: Organizations at this score level find the data showing disparities in their community troubling, know something needs to be done, and yet are not sure how to act systematically on that concern. They may take a step or two in the way of funding or outreach, often without a shared theory of change to guide these decisions. They may also recognize that their own staff and Board are not diverse but presume that slow turnover of staff/board members dictates slow change generally. "We just don't know what to do, but we don't want to get it wrong."

16-22: Organizations at this score level recognize that virtually all programmatic and operational functions must be equity informed in order to advance the overall organizational mission. They are 'hard-wired' to incorporate a race equity and inclusion lens in every facet of their work.

Inclusion Model-Embedding Equity into Our Practice
Advancing equity can sometimes seem daunting and often leaves many wondering how and where to start. The possible next steps below can help to provide a clear frame for undertaking this important work.

Step 1: Engage an Expert in this Work & Devote Resources
If we want to strengthen our skills in the practice of equity and intercultural competency, we will need an expert to provide deep learning at both the individual and organizational levels. Many organizations won't want or be able to dedicate as much time or money to shepherding this work forward. Having an expert on our Board of Directors and dedicated internal resources will help to spread and embed what we learn more quickly.

Step 2: Build Equity into Our Board of Directors
Exceptional nonprofit boards recognize that equity is essential to an organization's success. They see the correlation between mission, strategy, and board composition and understand that establishing an inclusive organization starts with establishing a diverse and inclusive board.

Many board members already understand that a homogeneous board can result in near-sightedness and group-think. By contrast, a heterogeneous board — one composed of individuals with a variety of skills, perspectives, backgrounds, and resources — promotes creativity and innovation and yields differing voices that can play an important role in accomplishing the organization's mission and increasing understanding of constituents and community needs.
If the nonprofit sector is to remain relevant, effective, and grounded in the needs of our increasingly diverse communities, nonprofit boards must become and remain inclusive. Unfortunately, it's more easily said than done, as

many boards have found. It requires asking what is holding you back from achieving the level of equity you desire and then working to overcome those restraints and create an environment that encourages dialogue and interaction on diverse views. It requires confronting difficult issues and answering tough questions.

- Are people of color/diverse backgrounds comfortable serving on the board?
- Does the board consider issues relating to equity when it sets policies and makes decisions for the organization?
- What could the board do differently to become more inclusive and welcoming?

To put commitment of an equitable board into action, develop a plan that includes strategies, concrete goals, objectives, pipeline of candidates, tasks, and a timeline. Boards are more likely to focus on an issue if an official goal or policy exists to remind them of what they want to achieve.

Organizations are more successful integrating new voices when the new group makes up 30 percent of the total — or, at a minimum, three people. This helps change the culture, and the new participants will not feel isolated. To better integrate new members, create opportunities to help them share their personal experiences and integrate training on inclusiveness into board meetings.

To stay focused on our objectives and goals, monitor progress on a quarterly or semiannual basis through the following steps:
- Track retention rates of diverse board members.
- Conduct exit interviews to further assess progress and identify areas of improvement.
- Administer board self-assessments that include questions related to equity strategies and goals.
- Survey staff, constituents, and stakeholders about their perceptions of the Cultural Alliance's culture of inclusiveness.

Step 3: Create an Equity Management Accountability Group

Management plays an essential role in advancing the organizational mission. The same is true as it relates to equity, diversity, and inclusion as features of the mission. This tool suggests one approach to institutionalizing management accountability in these areas specifically through a Management Accountability Group (MAG). The credibility of a management accountability group is linked to who is on it, the organizational information it can access, how its recommendations are received, and how it relates to the rest of the organization.

Involving Stakeholders and Management in MAG

In addition to members of management, engage stakeholders who have active and authentic connections to their respective communities as part of the Management Accountability Group. It is important to ensure meaningful participation, voice and ownership. The sooner you can engage a diverse mix of stakeholders, the sooner you will be able to move from talk to action in creating equitable opportunities for the communities you seek to serve.

A newly constituted function, a MAG should have an explicit charge: a stated purpose and a vision within the organization's context, a set of outcomes to achieve, a process for doing so, and ways to measure change. Here is some text to consider when developing a charge for a MAG.

Setting the Purpose for the Management Accountability Group

This should spell out the need to advance the organization's mission by improving its performance around equity. The expectation would include setting goals and tracking performance in both operations and programs. Specific areas could include hiring and retention, leadership, consultants, contracting, grant making, policy priorities, and financial investments.

Vision Statement

This section would put the focus on equality within the context of the organizational vision. It would include statements such as:

Equity in the organization - in its staff, its grantees, and in the people and neighborhoods being served - enrich the ideas, perspectives, and points of view that we use in formulating our work. Equity ensures that multiple viewpoints are considered in decisions about priorities, investments, and all other key organizational matters. Equity as an organizational goal indicates that our aspiration is for ALL constituents of our work to benefit from what we do and that this can be done in ways that close existing gaps among groups. Equity ensures that ALL means ALL in what we say and do.

The vision could also contain key questions the Management Accountability Group should seek to address, providing clear and consistent answers to give staff a shared understanding. Such questions might be:
- What do we mean by equity?
- What are our organizational goals with respect to equity?
- Where are we currently in relation to these goals?
- What action strategies will get us to our goals?

Outcomes
This section would offer an initial set of outcomes, or results, that are expected from the group's work. These might include:
- Greater diversity in staff/board at all levels of the organization, and especially at the senior management levels
- Greater diversity in the people and organizations who receive institutional resources, including grants, contracts, and fees for service
- Regular collection of data by race/ethnicity in operations and programs
- Routine use of data by management to improve performance
- Operational guidance for recruitment, hiring, and succession planning

Step 4: Apply the Equity Impact Analysis to All Policies
Every decision that an organization makes impacts people in one way or another - people inside the organization and externally. Typically, those impacts vary for different racial/ethnic groups. Even, perhaps especially, decisions and policies that are believed to be 'universal' are likely to have differential impact because racial/ethnic groups are 'differently situated' with regard to opportunities and challenges. Without explicit attention to equity, policies with good core ideas can play out in ways that inadvertently disadvantage or harm people of diverse groups.

As the Cultural Alliance works to change its model and implement new policies, we can use the following five questions routinely to produce policies/practices/decisions that have a good chance of generating more equitable outcomes.

1. Who are the racial/ethnic groups affected by the policy/ practice/decision, and are they at the table? This range of voices will produce the richest discussion possible for achieving desired results.

2. How will the policy/practice/decision affect each group?   Since different groups are likely to be differently situated, what is its probable impact on each?
3. How will the policy/practice/decision be perceived by each group? For policies/practices/decisions to be effective, they should reflect knowledge of group circumstances and be culturally aligned.

4. Does the policy/practice/decision ignore or worsen existing disparities, or produce other unintended consequences? Closing gaps on racial disparities requires attention to this question.

5. Based on the above responses, what revisions are needed in the policy/practice/decision under discussion? How might the intervention be modified to close racial gaps?

Conclusion

The Cultural Alliance, and the York community, are at a precipice of monumental change.   Quite literally, the fate of our community and our organization depends on doing this well, and getting it right. The hope is that this information and possible steps forward offer both encouragement and a starting point, as well as illustrates our serious commitment to hard-wiring equity into the Cultural Alliance. In the 21st century, the strength of an organization will be measured by how well these issues are embedded in their everyday way of doing business.

Endnotes

This document was created using the following resource tools developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation:

1. **Race, Equity, and Inclusion Action Guide: 7 Steps to Embracing Equity.**
2. **Advancing the Mission: Tools for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**
3. **Organizational Self-Assessment Toolkit**
4. **Equity Impact Analysis**

Appendix: Equity Organizational Assessment Tool-Where Are We Now?

What Does the Tool Accomplish?

It raises organizational awareness, starts focused conversations, contributes to the development of equity action plans, and tracks organizational change. Organizations that care about these issues can produce early results by using this tool.

How Did We Use It?

•   Answer each question by circling the response that most closely applies.

•   Add up the numbers associated with each answer to get your Organizational Equity Score.

•   Use the chart at the end of the tool to find out what your Organizational Equity Score means.

1. Removing barriers to opportunity and disparity/disproportionality reduction are explicit goals of the organization in its work and are articulated in a mission/vision statement.

0 = No   1 = Moving in that Direction   2 = Yes

2. The organization has an affinity group/committee that guides the ongoing work of removing barriers to opportunity and reducing racial disparity/disproportionality.

0 = No   1 = Moving in that Direction   2 = Yes

3. The organization's goals of reducing barriers to opportunity and racial disparities disproportionality are reflected in resource allocations.

0 = No   1 = Moving in that Direction   2 = Yes

4. a racial equity analysis is applied to policy issues and grant-making.

0 = Rarely   1 = Sometimes 2 = Almost Always   3 = Always

5. Results of investments show opportunity for all and a reduction in racial disparities/disproportionality.

0 = Rarely   1 = Sometimes 2 = Almost Always   3 = Always

6. Written materials reflect a knowledge and understanding of barriers to opportunity and embedded racial/social inequities.

0 = No   1 = Moving in that Direction   2 = Yes

7. The organization has regular trainings and discussions at the staff and board levels about removing barriers to opportunity and reducing racial disparities and disproportionality, both internally and externally.

0 = No   1 = Moving in that Direction   2 = Yes

8. The organization regularly assesses staff/volunteer composition by race/ethnicity and develops/implements strategies for increasing diversity at all levels.

0 = No   1 = Moving in that Direction   2 = Yes

9. The environment of the organization (food, art, holiday activities, events, etc.) is multicultural.

0 = No   1 = Moving in that Direction   2 = Yes

10. The organization has a mechanism in place to address complaints about barriers to opportunity and racial inequities in the workplace.

0 = No   1 = Moving in that Direction   2 = Yes

Equity Organizational Assessment Tool-What The Scores Mean

<7: Organizations at this score level tend to think what's good for 'everyone' will necessarily be good for people of diverse groups. Thus, it does not lift up issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in any regular or routine way. Further, it may even take the position that paying attention to racial/ethnic diversity or disparities diverts attention away from shared concerns.

8-15: Organizations at this score level find the data showing disparities in their community troubling, know something needs to be done, and yet are not sure how to act systematically on that concern. They may take a step or two in the

way of funding or outreach, often without a shared theory of change to guide these decisions. They may also recognize that their own staff and Board are not diverse but presume that slow turnover of staff/board members dictates slow change generally. "We just don't know what to do, but we don't want to get it wrong."

16-22: Organizations at this score level recognize that virtually all programmatic and operational functions must be equity informed in order to advance the overall organizational mission. They are 'hard-wired' to incorporate a race equity and inclusion lens in every facet of their work.