



Salt Lake City Arts Council Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB) Report

February 2024 • Prepared by Kilo Zamora

Purpose

The objective is to create a comprehensive overview of the Foundation's EDIB practices, policies, and procedures. Additionally, the aim is to identify new opportunities for advancing this work and formulating new SMARTIE Goals. This overview will serve as an informative resource for both the board and staff, offering insights into the current trajectory of EDIB within the Foundation and facilitating the development of an EDIB strategic plan.

Methodology

Kilo Zamora conducted meetings with all staff members and two board representatives to investigate the operationalization of EDIB and its potential opportunities. The ensuing conversations were systematically coded based on emerging trends and subsequently organized into distinct categories.

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Key Findings & Themes

EDIB is a core value at the Arts Council.

EDIB is recognized as a core value across the organization and staff. EDIB is implemented as a standard practice across the Salt Lake City Arts Council organization, including the Board, leadership, and staff. All staff have annual work plan goals following a S.M.A.R.T.I.E. framework, integrating “Inclusive” and “Equitable” to the traditional S.M.A.R.T. framework (Strategic, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-bound). Successes are reported out in team meetings and to the Board. And EDIB initiatives have funding set aside in the annual budget to support the staff’s outcomes.

Executive Director Felicia Baca’s experience and interest in EDIB topics continues to be a driving force for the Arts Council’s progress. Her cultural humility framework (growth mindset) and inclination to engage experts and resources to enhance the organization’s EDIB approaches have been key success drivers throughout her entire five-year tenure. The Arts Council Board’s membership has seen increased diversity over the last several years, which has led to more robust decision-making for the organization.

Improvements have been made to the diverse artist pipeline, for example embedding EDIB questions in the application process. The Arts Council is continuously reviewing vendors, performers, artists, board, and staff to assess diverse representation in all its forms, including age, race, gender, socio-economic class, religion, sexual orientation, disability status, and forms of creative expression. Adjustments have been made to the grants program to increase accessibility for artists of all experiences and abilities, making it more realistic for all artists to apply and receive grants. Examples include eliminating matching fund requirements for individual artists, increasing awareness of the grants program, and reviewing the geographic distribution of grant applicants. The Arts Council is also assessing venues for accessibility concerns and implementing plans to improve accessibility for all visitors.

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Trending assets to support EDIB.

The Salt Lake City Arts Council enjoys support from City leadership and amongst the arts community for its EDIB efforts. Mayor Mendenhall and her cabinet support EDIB across all City departments. In her 2024 State of the City address, Mayor Mendenhall said, *“I support and defend efforts aimed at diversity, equity, and inclusion, no matter the political whiplash these efforts may be forced to endure. We will not stop this critical work. It’s the right thing to do.”* Specific examples of this commitment include making access to language services readily available and encounters with the City Equity team a regular practice. Beyond the City organization, the Arts Council also enjoys the support of the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs and the Utah Division of Arts & Museums.

Within the Arts Council, DEIB is supported across the staff and Board. Arts Council leadership has fostered an open culture for discussing, learning, and exploring difficult topics. The team is conscious of tokenism when selecting artists, assembling review committees, and recruiting board members. Increasing diverse representation on the Board is a goal, but Board members are allowed to participate on committees based on their skills and interests, not assigned because of their identity markers.

A portion of the Special Projects Coordinator’s time is allotted to EDIB work, such as seeking out best practices and new solutions for disability and language accessibility, participating in the Citywide and national GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) work. Funds have been specifically budgeted for EDIB line items, and program staff are given flexibility within their budgets to make expenditures to address EDIB needs as they are identified. The Arts Council makes professional development a priority, providing opportunities for staff and Board trainings, workshops, and conference attendance, and engaging with EDIB consultants on a regular basis. The organization as a whole is oriented with a growth mindset and encourages peer learning both internally and externally.

EDIB is continuously being incorporated into the Arts Council’s policies and procedures. Opportunities are regularly open to everyone. In artist applications, accessibility resources (such as free Internet locations) are specified in the document, and questions or requests for accommodations receive quick responses. Information sessions are a regular practice of RFQ and application processes and are offered virtually and in-person to help address accessibility concerns. All applications and submissions are free of charge to prevent fees from being a deterrent for participation.

The Public Art team and Art Design Board demonstrate their commitment to EDIB work in several ways. In terms of diverse representation, three of seven Art Design

Board members are BIPOC, and five of seven are women. Each year, the Public Art team takes on one major project to help emerging artists gain experience in public art, most recently the bike rack project. The Art Design Board acknowledges that preparing presentations during the selection process requires a fair amount of labor and compensates finalists for their time to present in the final round of artist selection.

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Wish list.

The following wish list compiles the Arts Council staff and Board members' recommendations for enhancements and improvements to their EDIB efforts. Some listed items may already be in planning or execution, and others reflect an individual's opinion during the interview. When considering operationalizing these wish list items, careful attention should be made to ensure efforts are strategic, meaningful, and in alignment with the Arts Council's mission, core values, and Strategic Plan.

Artist Development Pipeline

- Translate City Arts Grants application materials and public art plaques into multiple languages.
- Increase the funding available through City Arts grants.
- Provide varied ways for artists to apply for grants, not just written submissions.
- Develop more local BIPOC artists to increase their eligibility for large-scale public art projects.

Arts Council Board

- Increase BIPOC representation on the Board.
- Integrate EDIB into the Board onboarding process.
 - How to integrate EDIB into committee work, new EDI improvements the Arts Council is working on, recent successes, how to participate in EDI conversations, having a growth mindset.
- Provide all Board members a EDIB baseline training.
- Develop best practices for board members to engage with each other and advise the Salt Lake Arts Foundation on how to advance EDIB.
- Ensure full engagement from all Board members by being mindful of how each Board member is taking up space.
- Build a DEI lens (priorities, questions, and perspectives) into every Board committee.

Websites

- Conduct an accessibility audit of our websites.
- Increase accessibility (translation widgets, high-resolution options, etc.)
- A bilingual website (English and Spanish), at a minimum.

Programming

- Develop an EDIB standard practices checklist for exhibitions, events, and performances.
- Develop process to allow undocumented artists to receive commissions.
- Develop an annual public art internship program.
- Produce a public awareness campaign about how the public art process works.

General

- Increase BIPOC representation in the staff.
- Collect more EDIB data and use it to our advantage.
- Create a method to audit programs for EDIB efforts such as accessibility.
- Increase the speed of EDIB work.
- Execute structural improvements at the Art Barn to increase accessibility.
- Create land acknowledgement plaques.

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New Opportunities on the Horizon.

When looking to the future, the Arts Council staff and Board see many opportunities to increase our equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging impact.

Internal Opportunities

- Finch Lane Gallery's Sensory Inclusive Certification from KultureCity completed in early 2024, with learning spread across programs. Finch Lane Gallery has applied for a grant to increase accessibility for the space.
- Salt Lake City was given a \$1 million grant as part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge; our execution of the project, Wake the Great Salt Lake, gives us the opportunity to develop opportunities with an EDIB lens.
- The digital catalog of the Public Art Collection will be a searchable public database.
- Annual employee reviews provide an opportunity to regularly ask if staff members are completing specific EDIB tasks, such as translating materials into multiple languages.
- Exploring how to make art sustainable for West Side communities.

- The scale of Twilight Concert Series gives us the opportunity to encourage venues to make positive structural changes to improve accessibility.

City Opportunities

Mayor Mendenhall has made art a central feature of several priority projects, including Fleet Block Development, The Green Loop, Station Center development, and placing an iconic piece of public art on the West Side of Salt Lake City.

Additional Opportunities

National- and international-scale events coming to Salt Lake City, such as the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts and potential Winter Olympics, provide opportunities to increase our efforts and visibility for a large audience.

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