

ACTOR'S EXPRESS ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-BIAS ACTION PLAN

Actor's Express is committed to fighting systemic racism and white supremacy. Further, AE is committed to reflecting, promoting and defending diversity in all its forms at every layer of the organization. These include the following:

- Programming
- Artists
- Intern Company
- Staff/AE Workplace
- Board of Directors
- Audiences

Actor's Express will take all steps necessary to ensure a workplace that is committed to anti-racist principles and in which all persons of color and persons from non-majority groups are welcome, present and safe.

For this purpose, our definition of diversity includes but is not limited to:

- Race;
- color;
- religion (including religious dress and grooming);
- sex or gender;
- national origin;
- ancestry;
- age;
- mental or physical disability;
- medical condition;
- pregnancy;
- military or veteran status;
- genetic information;
- citizenship status;
- marital status;
- sexual orientation; and
- gender identity and/or gender expression.

PROGRAMMING

Actor's Express recognizes and affirms that diverse voices are essential to a creatively robust theatre company. Further, we affirm that inclusion and ethical representation in programming are at the center of our mission.

- The Artistic Director will choose work to represent a broad range of voices. Currently, no seasons are comprised of work written exclusively by white male playwrights. Beginning with the 2020-21 Season, AE will work toward the goal of parity in representation, ensuring that playwrights of color and women shall always be included in any season lineup at a rate of no less than 50% of all mainstage productions.
- In addition to the voice of the writer, care shall be taken to ensure that the stories reflected in each play will reflect diverse experiences and points of view.

- The Threshold New Play Series will shift its focus primarily to playwrights of color, with priority consideration given to Atlanta and Georgia-based writers.

ARTISTS

Actor's Express recognizes and affirms that diverse representation onstage and in creative team roles is essential in our mission of serving the city of Atlanta, a majority Black city and one of the most diverse cities in America. Consequently, AE commits to ethical representation onstage in its productions, as well as behind the scenes.

- Practices will be set up to ensure that underrepresented groups have access to the casting process. Directors will be expected and required to cast diverse actors for each production, except for situations in which characters are defined by race, gender, ethnicity or other definitions of diversity and in such cases in which it would be a breach of ethical cultural representation to deviate from said designation (e.g. casting a Black actor in an Asian role).
- Care will be taken to ensure that color conscious casting will not lead to further injury. Actors of color will not be exclusively or primarily relegated to roles of servitude, villainy, sexual objectification or any stereotypical representation that would be injurious to any person of color. Any stereotypical casting practices are strictly prohibited.
- Creative Teams will be chosen that reflect the diversity of our community and country. Care will be taken to ensure that persons of color are placed in key positions of artistic decision-making.
- Not only will artists of color be chosen to participate in work that speaks to their specific lived experiences; all work will be open to the participation of artists of color in creative and decision-making capacities. Artists of color will not simply be segregated to work that aligns with their respective lived experiences but will also be sought to participate in work from other points of view.
- AE will also expand its casting team to ensure that no audition process is ever run exclusively by white decision makers and gatekeepers. A diverse casting team will determine audition invitations, actor vetting, audition processes and casting deliberations with directors. This policy will be in effect for every AE mainstage production.
- AE recognizes that some longstanding work models in our industry can make it difficult to balance personal and family responsibilities and that these models may disproportionately impact BIPOC artists and technicians. Beginning in 2021-22, AE will begin moving to a five-day rehearsal week.
- In addition to the work week adjustments, AE will begin eliminating 10-out-of-12 tech rehearsals from its production calendar, moving toward the model of 8-out-of-10s.

INTERN COMPANY

The Actor's Express Intern Company is a cornerstone program that creates opportunities for early career artists to bridge the transition into a professional theatre career. AE affirms that all

practices related to the Intern Company will serve the goal of equity, access and ethical representation in all layers of the program.

- AE will dismantle its model of unpaid internships beginning in the 2021-22 season. Moving forward, all interns will be offered stipends for each production in which they are involved.
- Additionally, AE recognizes that the number of hours required in the previous longstanding internship model may be prohibitive to maintaining fulltime employment outside the internship and that this may disproportionately impact BIPOC interns. Beginning in the 2021-22 season AE will remove several longstanding duties from the internship workload and will work to eliminate late nights completely from the internship schedule. Eliminated duties will include scene shop work, post-show wardrobe maintenance and other duties as determined.
- AE recognizes that despite some benefits of reporting directly to the Artistic Director, this structure may sometimes result in a power dynamic that may inhibit some interns from reporting challenges that may arise. AE will designate one member of the staff to become an Intern Liaison, to whom interns may address such challenges with the expectation of anonymity.
- When recruiting members for the Intern Company, AE will work toward a goal of racial parity. In addition to existing university partnerships, AE will seek partnerships with and recruitment opportunities at HBCUs in the region.
- AE recognizes that opportunity gaps and inequities exist for BIPOC students and students from other underrepresented groups at historically white colleges and universities. AE will address these gaps by actively inviting access to our program to these students and not relying on resume credits as a deciding factor in considering applicants.
- AE will hire more BIPOC instructors for intern classes.

STAFF/AE WORKPLACE

Actor's Express will create a workplace in which the diversity of the staff represents the diversity of the community. Further, AE management will take care to create a workplace that is fully inclusive and free of racist behaviors, which may include but are not limited to, discrimination, harassment, microaggressions or any other behavior that would result in the marginalization of any person of color or any person from any underrepresented group.

- Job openings and volunteer opportunities shall be advertised on platforms that will allow the widest possible pool of qualified, skilled applicants to gain access to the hiring process. AE executive leadership will work toward the goal that no staff position is filled until there is racial parity among all finalists or interviewees.
- AE values diversity of religious practice and will honor religious holidays not already designated as days off. Any full-time employee, part-time employee, intern, contractor, volunteer and anyone else conducting business inside AE will be allowed time off to observe their respective holidays and holy days. At no time may these days off be counted toward vacation or be considered "conflicts."

- The Actor's Express Conduct Policy accompanies this document and will be distributed to every full-time employee, part-time employee, artist, intern, contractor, volunteer and anyone else conducting business inside AE. Anti-bias, anti-racism and anti-discrimination are central to the Conduct Policy and any individual violating its terms will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Actor's Express recognizes that a diverse Board of Directors is critical to the success of the organization and its ability to serve the community.

- In the recruiting and nominating process, the Board shall prioritize diversity in the matrix of skills and attributes used to evaluate each prospective Board recruit.
- The Board will strive for gender and racial parity in its makeup and will actively consider other areas of diversity in recruitment. The Board will seek a goal of at least 50% representation of women and 50% persons of color in its overall makeup. Until this benchmark is achieved and maintained, no incoming slate of new Board members will be less than 50% BIPOC candidates.

AUDIENCES

A diverse audience is a critical measure of the success with which Actor's Express serves its community.

- AE will actively seek audiences from diverse communities through its marketing, outreach, public relations and social media activities.
- AE will partner with community organizations to reach new audiences and create a welcoming space for diverse people.
- Further, AE will engage directly with audiences on the principles of anti-racism and diversity. In addition to contextual engagement connected with specific productions, AE will communicate these values consistently and frequently through its website, social media channels, email communications with ticket buyers, playbill notices and lobby displays.
- AE will institute intervention protocols to protect artists, staff, interns and volunteers who experience racist and/or discriminatory behavior from any patrons.