

BOSTON COURT PASADENA ANTI-RACIST POLICIES 2023

Boston Court Pasadena recognizes the depth of change that is needed throughout our artistic industry and institutions, and within our own organization, to transform both the field and ourselves into a truly just, equitable, and inclusive community. In service of that, BCP is sharing some public commitments to anti-racism in our organization, created through detailed and ongoing interactions with staff, board, the We See You White American Theatre Document, outside stakeholders, and paid consultants. These commitments are a beginning for work that has no end, and represent a living document that we will both hold ourselves accountable to, reinvestigate, and continuously adjust.

We acknowledge that BCP specifically, and our institutions in general, have taken their rules and practices from a country founded, built, and nurtured on white supremacy and that these rules and practices have caused harm. Since systemic racism and oppression are a part of the fabric of our history and our culture, dismantling and reenvisioning our institution and our systemic practices through an anti-racist lens will be constant and ongoing work that must be woven through our organizational culture, artistic practices, and through all the spaces and places of our institution.

BCP is committed to uprooting and changing all systems of oppression, including those based on racism, ethnicity, gender, ability, age, class, appearance, and religion. This work is ongoing, and we will continue to address additional areas as we continue our review of practices that need to change.

The policies outlined below are the 2023 revisions and updates of the policies we originally released at the beginning of 2022. These policies were written through an intensive all-staff process that began in 2020 and our entire staff also participated in reviewing our policies in the Fall of 2022 to create this updated document. If you have any questions or would like more information on specifics of the policies summarized, please email us at socialimpact@bostoncourtpasadena.org.

Land Acknowledgment

Boston Court Pasadena is located on the unceded lands of the Tongva, Gabrielino, and Kizh peoples, specifically the lands of the Hahamog'na band of the Tongva tribe. We honor and uplift these still-enduring communities and we are grateful for their stewardship of these lands.

Kuuyam nahwá'a is a Tongva peoples concept that means guest exchange, a belief that when given a chance to affect history in a positive way that a human being would make the just move. One action people and institutions can take to is to make a voluntary recurring contribution to support Tongva-led Land Back efforts, acknowledging both relationship and reciprocity to the lands and Native Peoples of Tovaangar, this place many of us now call home.

You can learn more about kuuyam nahwá'a and make your contribution on the Tongva Taraxat Paaxavxa Conservancy website: <https://tongva.land/donate-personal/>

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Being in Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples, Land & History

- Land Acknowledgements
 - We will continue our practice of including land acknowledgements at all first rehearsals and before all live public performances and events.
- Building relationships with local indigenous populations
 - As of 2022, we have established communication with the Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Conservancy, which is local to Altadena, and we hope to continue to build our relationship with the Conservancy as a community partner.
 - If a piece we are developing or producing includes reference to, or draws on, indigenous culture or experience, we will ensure there are indigenous artists and indigenous cultural consultants leading the project.

Creating a Welcoming, Safe, Inclusive, and Anti-Racist Environment for Everyone:

- Staff and Board Ongoing Practices:
 - All Board and Staff members participated in facilitated anti-racist training in January and February of 2021.
 - All staff members participated in Bystander Intervention training in 2021.
 - Before the end of 2023 all staff will participate in bystander intervention, implicit bias, and conflict de-escalation training.
 - We will implement ongoing anti-racist and bystander intervention training for staff members, contracted artists, and seasonal staff that is required annually and/or

- o on a contract by contract basis through an online course similar to our already existing sexual harassment training course.
 - o Continuing the practice that began in 2020, BIPOC staff members will hold Affinity Spaces on an as needed basis either in person or virtually. Contracted Artists, Interns, and short-term employees can be invited to the space per the desires of the Affinity Space members.
 - o We have hired a Social Impact Consultant who began working with us in 2021 and consults with us on casting, EDI, and outreach decisions. The Social Impact Consultant is an ongoing consulting position for Boston Court.
 - Our social impact consultant is a safe confidant who can be contacted by BIPOC employees if they are feeling unsafe or experiencing difficulties across racial/ethnic lines.
 - o We will support all employees seeking professional development while at Boston Court so that they can build skills for future jobs (since there aren't many opportunities for vertical growth within our small organization).
 - o On an ongoing basis the Boston Court EDI Committee, comprised of staff and board members, and the Boston Court staff will review these policies and make necessary adjustments.
- Audience Welcoming, Communications, and Accessibility
 - o We developed a Community Code of Conduct with the goal of encouraging and welcoming a wide range of audience reaction to our work, and discouraging audience members from policing each other's reactions. The Community Code of Conduct can be found on our website under the Social Impact section and is posted in our lobby.
 - o By the end of 2023 we will create a living Front of House best practices document that will incorporate what we learn in our bystander intervention and de-escalation trainings and will also clarify how to ensure compliance with Boston Court's house policies while still being the most inclusive and welcoming space we can be.
 - o We have added staff member pronouns to our website to all nametags.
 - o We have added image descriptions to our Staff section on the website.
 - o We commit to building, sustaining, and growing relationships with BIPOC audiences across all our programming. Boston Court has not and will not rely on the BIPOC community to fund BIPOC projects.
 - o We will continue our community matinee program that offers regular reduced ticket price performances and review the program regularly to ensure that we are reaching those who would most benefit from affordable ticket prices.
 - o We plan to add more bilingual signage to our lobby and backstage area, and to prioritize hiring Front of House staff who are bilingual and/or who know ASL.
 - o We provide captioning for all of our virtual events.
 - o We have expanded the accessibility section on our website and made it more visible.

- In 2023 we will work with a disability consultant who will guide us in what specific information is useful to have on our website.
 - We will also budget for a disability consultant to work with us on an ongoing basis.
- We budget for at least one ASL-interpreted performance per run with the goal of increasing the number of ASL-interpreted performances per run as possible. We will also work to make sure the audiences who could benefit from these performances are aware of them.
- We will continue to post all necessary content warnings including flashing light/seizure warnings, fire, depiction of rape/sexual assault, smoke/fog, gunshot on the doors to the theatre during events that require them.
- We will add content warnings to all event website pages.
- We will continue to communicate our anti-racist work to our community and make sure we are clearly sharing our values:
 - Boston Court's Anti-Racism policies are on our website under the Social Impact section along with our Anti-Racist Ethos, Community Code of Conduct, and Land Acknowledgement
 - We will create marketing material to explain the policies and any updates to the public.

Fundraising & Financial Practices

- Fundraising
 - We will continue our current policy of never exploiting or fetishizing images of, or performances by BIPOC artists or audiences for fundraising galas or marketing materials.
 - We will review all our fundraising and marketing materials before publication to ensure that they are reflective of the racial makeup of our staff and programming and that we are not tokenizing any BIPOC artists in our materials. By the end of 2023 we will establish a set of procedures for how to review and clear materials.
 - Beginning in 2020 and moving forward we ensure that all our funders are aware of the We See You WAT demands by talking about it in our grant applications, and having one on one conversations with funders when possible to encourage them to review it and incorporate it into their funding practices.
 - We continue our commitment to allocating funds raised for BIPOC artists' projects to that work and not to general operating funds or other unrelated initiatives.

- Financial & Budgetary Transparency
 - By the end of 2023 we will add our 990 and audit to our Social Impact website page. They are currently listed under the Donate page.

Marketing & Public Relations Practices

- Press
 - We recognize that the gaze of the media is disproportionately white and male, and that BIPOC and even non-BIPOC artists are being reduced by this limited lens on their work. Given this, we will institute policies to get more diverse press, bloggers, social media influencers, and online outlets to cover our programming:
 - Do outreach on a consistent basis to community-based and college news outlets and radio stations that reach new and more diverse communities even if they don't have a specific theatre critic.
 - Identify & invite BIPOC press, critics, and bloggers to all reviewable events, including providing invitations for BIPOC critics and journalists at all opening night performances. When necessary, limit critics to single tickets and not pairs, thereby opening up the opportunity for more BIPOC media presence at all shows.
- Marketing
 - We have instituted in-depth meetings between directors, playwrights, and the marketing director to allow creative teams more input on marketing decisions and to ensure that the plurality of lived experiences of artists involved are represented in the marketing story.

Production Practices

- Production Budget
 - We have added budget line items for all productions that can be put toward culturally competent intimacy direction, cultural consultation, and/or counseling depending on the needs of the production.
 - We will continue our practice of paying designers equal fees, and as of 2021 we pay props designers an equal fee to all other designers.
 - We have added a line item to all production budgets for culturally competent hair and makeup styling and products, when production demands warrant, we will cease lumping hair and makeup in with the costumes budget.
- Production Policies
 - In initial meetings with directors, playwrights and designers we communicate the following:
 - We are committed to casting and hiring diversely, and we will not tolerate an entirely white production team and cast.
 - We have budgeted line items to provide culturally competent intimacy direction, cultural consultation, or counseling depending on what is needed to make a successful and safe production.

- We will not expect or require directors, playwrights, actors, or any production personnel to take on the role of cultural consultant unless they choose to, and if they do fill this role we will compensate them accordingly.
 - We are committed to accommodating all accessibility needs of the cast, crew, and production team, and will be clear about who to communicate with regarding access needs.
 - We will do our best to accommodate a flexible rehearsal schedule based on the needs of each team and within the boundaries of our union contracts (for example evening or daytime rehearsals, five days vs six days, etc.).
- We will also have conversations very early in the process with actors to assess what they need from the rehearsal/performance process in terms of counseling, intimacy direction, and accessibility, especially if the content is potentially traumatizing/triggering.
- Beginning in 2023 in our hiring conversations with designers we will include questions about their experience working with a wide diversity of actors and production personnel. If designers do not have specific prior experience with a diverse array of performers and production personnel we will either consider a different designer, or will offer them resources to learn before they begin working with us.
- We will share our common practices around artist participation in talkbacks, fundraising events, and marketing during initial conversations with artists and make it clear that participation is always at their discretion.
- We will create a written rider for director and playwright contracts that includes our diverse casting and hiring policies, our anti-racist and respectful practices, and our code of conduct.
- We will create a written rider for designer contracts that includes their right to walk-throughs of Boston Court's inventory and spatial configurations to ensure transparency around equipment, working conditions, and expectations.
- In 2021 we created an anti-racist statement and set of policies that are shared with all contracted artists at the beginning of their employment, and we read a respectful practices statement at each first rehearsal that directs everyone to the full policies on our website. We are clear that Boston Court prohibits racism, racist language, stereotyping, and racist jokes, and what the consequences for this behavior will be.
- We will continue our practice of offering an opportunity prior to, during rehearsals, and meetings for collaborators to share their pronouns if they feel comfortable.
- We will hire culturally competent facilitators who are trained in anti-racism best practices for post-show conversations and audience Q&A's.
- We will research and implement anti-racist training for all production personnel.
- We are interrogating and redesigning the schedules we ask our stage managers and technicians to work, the demands that our standards of production put on our production teams, and the culture of "the show must go on" with the goal of

creating an environment that is healthier, safer, and more remunerative for everyone we employ.

- Everyone employed by Boston Court will have a clearly defined scope of work outlined in a contract and/or job description. Changes to the scope of work by employer or employee to be discussed in good faith and agreed upon by both.
- While we do not have a dedicated hair or makeup team, we will continue our practices of hiring culturally competent stylists or providing performers funds to visit culturally competent stylists.
- We will continue our practice of providing actors all products and supplies necessary to maintain hair continuity for the show. The actor must approve all products, tools, & materials.
- We will credit everyone who has worked on a production in any capacity, and will ensure people have an opportunity to approve their crediting before the playbill is published.
- We completed a vendor audit in 2020 to assess what vendors we were using, and are striving to support local, BIPOC small-businesses wherever possible.

Artistic Goals & Practices

- We commit to the most intersectionally diverse representation of the world we live in on our stages and behind the scenes for all our events, including our theatre, music, and engagement events.
- We commit to at least 50% of all artists that we hire being BIPOC each season while honoring other intersections of identities as well. We commit to no production team being entirely white.
- We commit to programming BIPOC plays that center lived experience and not exclusively trauma and pain.
- We commit to continuing to hire BIPOC artists for non-BIPOC-specific plays.
- We commit to contextualizing all of our plays with Q&As, talkbacks, and supplemental materials that provide our primarily white audiences with an anti-racist framework for understanding the material.
- We commit to never programming any work that employs racist, stereotypical, harmful and non-Native created imagery/characters/metaphors of and about American Indian, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian or Indigenous peoples.
- We will always question and attempt to undo the centralization of and the white/Western aesthetic as the default. In the artistic team's meetings and notes sessions with artists we always stress that artists should take or leave our notes and that we are there to support their vision.
- The Literary Manager will create an annual literary year in review that summarizes the work we have done and the work we were reading. This document will contain playwright demographic information where possible so that we can assess whether we are reading a diversity of playwrights and plays.
- We commit to fully equitable, co-created, reciprocal and collaborative co-productions. We will always work to ensure our co-production partners are receiving equal value from the partnership.

Casting & Hiring Practices

(Many of the casting and hiring policies outlined here are built on the incredible work of Sharifa Johka at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.)

- We commit to posting job listings at least two months in advance of the position start date and one month in advance of interviews starting with the goal of giving a wider range of applicants time to apply whenever possible.
- We commit to post job listings on job boards that are not specifically theatre-related with the goal of reaching people with applicable skills who may not have a background in theatre.
- We will not exclusively draw applicants from college programs because we acknowledge that their students are often predominantly white and wealthy.
- We commit to sharing our job listings with community partner organizations which will allow us to reach a wider pool of applicants than only people with previous theatre experience. We will investigate what other professions have skill sets embedded in them that are transferable to our job posting and share job listings with those fields.
- We commit to hiring outside our network of previous relationships and endeavoring to build new relationships with a wider and more diverse network of individuals and organizations.
- We do not require a college degree or a degree in theatre, specific years of experience, specific prior positions held, but we will reserve the right to request references.
- We do not require knowledge of specific software or hardware when it is possible for us to provide training/professional development as part of onboarding.
- We do not require people to have specific formatting of resume or cover letter.
- We allow people to submit alternative application materials such as a presentation, portfolio, etc. in place of or in addition to a traditional resume and cover letter.
- We will always hire based on capability as demonstrated in other jobs with translatable skills, as displayed in interviews, and described by references, rather than solely on industry experience in a resume.
- We refuse to have a finalist candidate pool for any position that is entirely white. We commit to a majority of finalists being BIPOC, and if we do not have a majority finalists of color we will return to the drawing board until we do.
- We will include questions about anti-racist values in our interviews, such as “what experience do you have in dismantling a racist system?” “Can you share an experience when you observed a racist practice in a work environment?” “What experience do you have using gender inclusivity and body positivity in your daily practice?”
- We commit to having an open casting call for all productions.
- We will not hire casting directors who are not clearly committed to casting diversely.

- When we initially meet with directors and designers we are considering or planning to hire we will clearly state BC's financial resources, supportive services, and BC's expectations before we hire them. In this meeting we will give designers and artists the opportunity to tell us their expectations of hours, timeline, ways of working, and support they need.

Board Practices

- Board Membership
 - Our goal is to have an intersectionally inclusive and diverse board membership, with at least 50% BIPOC board membership.
 - In line with our goal to have the board be at least 50% BIPOC, it is our goal for the officers and committee chairs to also be at least 50% BIPOC.
 - We currently are revamping our governance policies and have adjusted our give/get levels to give greater access to a wider group of people to join the board, including artists.
 - We will better convey that the financial commitment is not mandatory, it represents a “good faith effort” both in conversations with board members and in our stated policies.

- Board & Leadership Accountability
 - The Board has formed a standing EDI Committee as of 2021.
 - The Board EDI Committee will continue to share updated language/terminology and provide anti-racist education materials and training opportunities to the rest of the board in conjunction with paid consultants.
 - The entire board will participate in ongoing anti-racism check-ins and further training yearly.
 - The Board supports the LA Arts Anti-Racist Theatre Standards and Boston Court's commitment to them, and supports the work of the BLKLST Collective to ensure our adherence to those standards.
 - The Board supports implementing as soon as possible a 360 annual review process for executive leadership, that will include artists, staff, and community stakeholders, the majority of whom should identify as BIPOC.
 - Current Boston Court Artistic Leadership has been in place since 2020, by end of 2023 we commit to have succession plans for the Artistic Director that maintain the organization's commitment to being an anti-racist organization and will ensure these expectations (succession plan & limits of service) are a part of future job descriptions.
 - We are working with the board and current leadership to develop equitable succession plans for leadership and protocols for future leadership hiring.

- Board & Staff Communication
 - We will continue to clarify and expand communication pathways around board access and make sure they're communicated to both staff and contracted artists.

- Board Budgeting & Financial Transparency
 - The Boston Court budget is audited by an independent reviewer, both by LA County and Pasadena City, and public funding continues to be dependent in part on that independent reviewer's audit.
 - Boston Court does not have any endowment or investment funds.
 - We do not prioritize monetary/financial commitments over mission-aligned work nor does a board member's financial contribution give them more weight in discussion. Each board member is valued equally regardless of their financial contributions.

A reminder that this is a summary of a much longer, more granular BCP working document. We consider this a living document that will change and evolve as the needs of our world continue to evolve.

BCP has also signed on to the [LA Arts Anti-Racist Theatre Standards](#) and is in communication with the [BLKLST Collective](#), which is the accountability partner organization for the Standards.