

SAMMONS CENTER FOR THE ARTS

ANTI-RACISM, ACCESS AND EQUITY POLICY

This policy was approved by the Sammons Center Board of Directors at their meeting on January 30, 2019

A: STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The City of Dallas is made up of people from diverse communities and equity-seeking groups defined as ALAANA and LGBTQIA+. The Sammons Center for the Arts recognizes that the changing nature of the population has implications in terms of delivering and/or providing access to its services (e.g. programming, activities, etc.).

We recognize that barriers to services exist for members of diverse communities, particularly for equity-seeking groups, and we are committed to acting as a positive force in eliminating these barriers.

To achieve this, the Sammons Center for the Arts will:

- ensure that diverse communities have equitable access to its services, resources and decision-making.
- be non-discriminatory and promote the goals of anti-racism, access and equity; and
- take reasonable steps to ensure its services, programs and decision-making reflect the community it serves.

The Sammons Center for the Arts prohibits discrimination or harassment and protects the right to be free from hate activity based on age, ancestry, citizenship, creed (religion), color, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender identity, level of literacy, marital status, place of origin, membership in a union or staff association, political affiliation, race, receipt of public assistance, sex, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristic by or within the organization.

¹ For the purposes of this policy, equity-seeking groups include ALAANA, Aboriginal/First Nations people, women, people with disabilities, racial minorities, the socio-economically disadvantaged, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons (LGBTQIA+).

Definitions

Anti-racism: a set of practices and systems designed to eliminate racism. Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviors, structural arrangements and institutionalized practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable.

Access: the ability of or extents to which communities or residents can attain needed services and achieve full participation in the planning, development, administration and delivery of those services. Access includes client access and organizational access.

Equity: practices designed to remove systemic barriers to equality of outcome by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices.

Discrimination: the act of treating a person unequally by imposing unequal burdens or denying benefits, rather than treating a person fairly on the basis of individual merit. Discrimination is usually based upon personal prejudices and stereotypical assumptions related to at least one of the grounds set out in this Policy. It is not necessary to have an intent to discriminate under the Code. Workplace rules, policies, procedures, requirements, qualifications or factors may not be directly or intentionally discriminatory but may nonetheless have an adverse effect. This may create barriers to achievement and opportunity.

Harassment: a course of conduct of comments or actions that are unwelcome or should be known to be unwelcome. A person has the right to be free of humiliating or annoying behavior that is based on one or more grounds in the Code.

ALAANA means African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native American. This also includes Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (category as defined by the US Census Bureau).

LGBTQIA+ means Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other associated communities.

B: POLICY AND ACTIONS ON ANTI-RACISM, ACCESS & EQUITY

Governance

The Sammons Center for the Arts is committed to achieving representation of the diversity of the Dallas community on its Board of Directors by ensuring that it has an equitable and transparent nominations process, that this process is communicated to all members, and that members are committed to outreach beyond the current membership if necessary to achieve this goal.

- *The Nominating Committee utilizes an open and inclusive process for evaluating, recruiting and selecting nominees to the board of directors.*
- *The Sammons Center actively seeks candidates from across the community and encourages people from all equity-seeking groups to consider a position on our board of directors.*

Employment

The Sammons Center for the Arts is committed to achieving representation of equity seeking groups on its staff by ensuring that members of equity seeking communities have equitable access to employment. This includes recruitment, selection, staff development, performance evaluation, retention, promotion, termination.

- *The Sammons Center utilizes blind resume review when considering applicants for employment.*
- *The Sammons Center avoids stereotypically gendered wording in job descriptions.*
- *The Sammons Center uses standardized employment interviews to ensure all applicants are treated the same.*
- *The Sammons Center sets diversity goals when recruiting candidates for employment.*

Sammons Center for the Arts is committed to maintaining an environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect and are free from all forms of discriminatory treatment, behavior or practice. Discrimination, harassment, violence, and any other form of discriminatory practices will not be tolerated by the Sammons Center for the Arts. Discrimination does not have to be intentional. It can result from practices or policies that appear to be neutral but have a negative effect on groups or individuals based on race, religion, gender, etc.

- *The Sammons Center promotes open, effective communication, as well as clear channels for feedback to all employees*
- *The Sammons Center has established clear written employment policies and guidelines that address penalties for discriminatory treatment or behavior, harassment, and retaliation.*
- *The Sammons Center has established a clear process for reporting behaviors that violate these policies.*

Services

The Sammons Center for the Arts is committed to ensuring that its services and programs are accessible to diverse communities. This involves review of current outreach, communications, program planning and evaluation, to ensure goal is being met.

- *The Sammons Center cross-promotes our programs with organizations serving diverse communities, special populations such as seniors and people with disabilities.*
- *The Sammons Center is in the process of developing cross-sector cultural programs aimed at people with disabilities or illnesses that can be helped or ameliorated through discipline-specific therapeutic arts programs.*

In addition, the Sammons Center for the Arts will take into consideration provision of services to disadvantaged individuals, low-income persons, families in poverty, and equity-seeking communities.

- *The Sammons Center has developed specific programs for disadvantaged persons including disadvantaged youth presenting free events and events planned with specific partner organizations that focus on disadvantaged persons*
- *The Sammons Center has developed specific guidelines around access for seniors and people with disabilities such as priority seating, clear and open pathways for wheelchairs and mobility-assist devices, staff assistance with navigating through the building, and large print promotional materials upon request.*

Training and Education

The Sammons Center for the Arts is committed to ensuring that those involved in the delivery of services and programs have the knowledge, understanding and skills to work with and provide services to members of diverse communities, particularly equity-seeking communities.

- *The Sammons Center has provided training opportunities for all personnel to ensure their commitment to recognizing and avoiding conscious and unconscious bias towards any and all persons with whom they have contact whether patron, co-worker, subordinate, superior, board member, visitor, contract personnel, volunteer, intern or others.*
- *The Sammons Center has enacted clear antiharassment, antiretaliation, and antidiscrimination policies with specific remedies and consequences for all staff members or volunteers should the policies be violated.*

Information and Communications

The Sammons Center for the Arts is committed to ensuring that all of its communications, including information on its services and programs, are accessible to diverse communities.

C: HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Definitions

Complainant: the individual alleging the discriminatory treatment or behavior

Respondent: the individual against whom the allegation of discrimination is made.

Employee: for the purpose of this policy, the term employee includes employees, volunteers, contractors and consultants working with the Sammons Center for the Arts.

Avenues of Complaint

Complaints will be dealt with by the Executive Director. Where appropriate, the Executive Director will consult with the President of the Board of Directors.

All situations in which the Executive Director has been named in a complaint will be dealt with directly by the President of the Board of Directors.

Right to Complain

Individuals have the right to complain about situations they believe to be discriminatory or harassing in nature.

This policy prohibits reprisals against employees because they have complained or have provided information regarding a complaint. Alleged reprisals are subject to the same complaints procedures and penalties as complaints of discrimination.

Reporting a Complaint

Although individuals may first choose to make a verbal complaint, a written summary of the incident will be required. Complaints should be reported as soon as possible. If the complaint is delayed beyond three months, the complainant should outline the reason for the delay in reporting the incident(s).

A letter of complaint should contain a brief account of the offensive incident(s), when it occurred, the person(s) involved and the names of witnesses, if any. The letter should be signed and dated by the complainant.

Investigation

Within three working days of receiving a complaint, the Executive Director and/or President of the Board of Directors must initiate the investigation process.

As soon as possible after receiving the complaint, the Executive Director will notify the individual(s) being named in the complaint. All individuals named in the complaint have a right to reply to the allegations against them.

Individuals named in the complaint as witnesses will be interviewed.

Settlement and Mediation

With the consent of the complainant and the respondent, the investigator may attempt to mediate a settlement of a complaint at any point prior to or during an investigation.

Every effort will be made to reach a settlement satisfactory to the complainant and the respondent.

Confidentiality

All individuals involved with a complaint must ensure the matter remains confidential.

The investigator will release information only on a need-to-know basis. Whenever possible, investigation reports are presented in a summary format without the names of witnesses.

Findings and Recommendations

Once the investigation is complete, the investigator will prepare a written report summarizing investigation findings.

Final Decision

The individual(s) who filed the complaint and those named in the complaint have the right to review and comment on the investigation findings with the *Executive Director* or the *President of the Board of Directors*.

Remedy

A response to a founded complaint could include remedial action ranging from:

1. requiring the respondent to provide a verbal or written apology;
2. giving a verbal or written reprimand with a copy to the respondent's personnel file;
3. dismissal of the respondent.

If the findings do not support the complaint, the Sammons Center for the Arts might:

- make a recommendation for training or better communications; or
- recommend that no further action is necessary.

It may be that no action is taken against the respondent, but there might be a need for some management or systemic activity.

A person who is found to have made a frivolous or vexatious complaint may be subject to disciplinary action.

Timeframe

Complaints should be reported within three months of the incident. If the report is made after three months, an explanation of the delay should accompany the complaint.

Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner.

Records

When remedial action requires discipline of an employee, a record of the disciplinary action will be placed in an individual's personnel file. All other records of the investigation will be kept separate and apart from the personnel file.