



MINNESOTA OPERA DIVERSITY CHARTER September 2018

Created by the Minnesota Opera Diversity Council:

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Board Approach & Benchmarks Created by the Minnesota Opera Board Governance & Nominating Committee

Intent & Guiding Principles, Approach and FY19 Board Benchmarks were approved by the Minnesota Opera Board of Directors on September 13, 2018.

INTENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

MN Opera's vision and mission is to sing every story and to change lives by bringing together artists, audiences and community, advancing the art of opera for today and future generations. In this work, MN Opera aims to be an organization that inspires hope, empowers all voices, and strengthens bonds between people of all backgrounds and identities. We recognize that this eventual outcome requires increased inter-cultural competency and will take time to achieve. It is through deliberate action and ongoing commitment that we believe that the values of equity, diversity and inclusion will become as integral and inherent to our work as the art form itself.

MN Opera recognizes it has not always fully addressed barriers inherent to the art form and built into the structure of the company. We believe that embracing and encouraging a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion will help to fully realize organizational vision while providing for a strong and vibrant future. In alignment with strategic goals, MN Opera aims to build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture to:

- Build connection to Opera for diverse populations to advance the art form.
- Build upon the variety of opinions, viewpoints and ideas to create a culture of creativity that builds a positive reputation.
- Nurture and train artists from a diverse range of identities and backgrounds as the next generation of opera professionals
- Facilitate our ability to identify, engage and retain top talent on our staff and board.
- Help ensure organizational relevance with the philanthropic community for a vibrant future

APPROACH

We recognize the areas of focus outlined in this document do not form a complete catalogue of the types of diversity we value at MN Opera. However, we feel that efforts in racial, socio-economic, gender and age diversity requires immediate attention. Again, this is a focus, not a limitation.

To achieve these goals, MN Opera has established a standing Diversity Council to define, implement, review, measure, and improve Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives at the Company. The Council is comprised of both leadership team and staff members. In addition, within the Diversity Council, we have designated a Diversity Steering Committee to drive and guide activity.

The Council will meet five times annually. The Steering Committee will meet monthly. The Council will develop annual benchmarks, to be reviewed by the Board, to move the work of the organization forward. The Council will provide regular progress reports to the Company and the Board.

MN Opera's Board of Directors has made a similar commitment and is pursuing a parallel track of EDI work, led by the Governance and Nominating Committee. The board will adopt recruitment policies, process and annual benchmarks that enhance the diversity of the board. It will incorporate diversity measures in its annual self-survey and generally monitor the effectiveness of the Diversity Council and its work.

FY19 MN OPERA STAFF BENCHMARKS

The Diversity Council has identified the following goals to drive and measure organizational activity around building equity, diversity and inclusion.

Staff

- Continue to track the diversity profile of the staff annually and report progress to the Company and Board. The goal is to facilitate continued improvement year over year with respect to the diversity profile of the staff.
- Re-evaluate and refine recruiting and hiring practices in order to increase racial diversity across all levels of staffing, especially management and leadership positions and identify, evaluate, and institute supportive retention practices.
- Develop a plan to onboard newly hired staff on MN Opera's EDI policies. Extend Intercultural Development Inventory Assessment and training to all seasonal, part-time, and new staff.
- Examine and adjust staffing and organizational structure to ensure that diversity objectives are appropriately sourced, staffed, and managed.
- Engage staff in EDI learning activities and efforts so that all staff feel empowered to incorporate EDI principles into their daily work and be able to articulate company EDI goals.
- Undertake consensus organizing community engagement work to build authentic long-term connection to new, diverse audiences. Work will be led in collaboration with community organizers.

Artists

- For all categories of artists (RAPs, mainstage artists, Conductors/Directors, Designers), intentionally look to expand the racial and gender diversity of artists involved with MN Opera.
- Track the diversity profile (race, gender, etc.) of artists in all categories to ensure progress increasing racial and gender diversity year over year.
- To support these goals, communicate our diversity expectations publicly, and with frequency.
- Develop a plan supporting the successful launch of an expanded Resident Artist Program to include administrative and production positions for emerging leaders of color.
- Begin to develop strategy to bring into orchestra negotiations (as of this writing, FY22) to work with the orchestra to determine how to enhance the racial diversity of our players' group considering the Union requirements.

Programming

"Programming" refers to all productions and other activities and programs produced and sponsored by the Company, including, but not limited to: mainstage productions, new works, commissions, co-productions, audience engagement, donor engagement, educational offerings and training programs.

- Use new community-based modeling as a tool to influence and inform programming for future seasons to better balance the Company's curatorial responsibilities to the art form with the profile, needs, and demands of the community.
- Monitor audience and volunteer diversity to determine the impact of programming decisions with the goal of seeing increased racial, socio-economic, and age diversity year over year.

- Monitor activities to determine how well education, audience, and community programs align with MN Opera EDI intention and priorities informing future decision making.
- Use communication outlets to share information and publicly engage and support dialogues around EDI work, both in Opera industry and in Minnesota.
- Create annual activity that engages a broad constituency, potentially including but not limited to Opera leaders, other arts professionals, community members on matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

FY19 MN OPERA BOARD BENCHMARKS

MN Opera's Governance & Nominating Committee has identified the following goals to drive and measure board activity around building equity, diversity and inclusion.

- Continue to track and report the diversity profile of the board annually. The goal is to facilitate continued improvement over time with respect to the diversity profile of the board.
- Re-evaluate and refine recruiting practices to increase racial diversity within the board.
- Engage board in EDI learning activities and efforts so that all board members will feel empowered to incorporate EDI principles into their board leadership.
- Develop a plan, for implementation in FY20 and beyond, to onboard newly elected board members on MN Opera's EDI policies.