**IMP Taking a Moment: Reflecting on our DEAI Responsibilities**
**March 9, 2021**
**Resources & Links**

Emergent Strategy (Adrienne Maree Brown)
https://bookshop.org/books/emergent-strategy-shaping-change-changing-worlds/9781849352604

Videos/podcasts of Adrienne Maree Brown explaining:

Approximately 5 1/2 minutes - - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IyN76oTt67M

Approximately 50 minutes - - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IyJz4McUbD0

Approximately 60 minutes - - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yp6HK3qq8rQ

Calling In
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DpUe1UPooAOaL9V3di_zHnvDV3n4S2H9/view?usp=sharing

Challenging the Narrative
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HgwhNGiRei-DNY3pZ27b3PmnOAKIcoli/view?usp=sharing

Detour-Spotting
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A5YwbWLGjqjI2gKFjbJWVjygNpqBTHsx/view?usp=sharing

Interrogating Institutional Practices DEAI
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zpz0MRqG_xcWftw5s6sf0R9xxbKlfhU9/view?usp=sharing

Kendi - Racism as Policy
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aA0-wp6AjDD7uVzjni2CLnM4TzlsRxIO/view?usp=sharing

Anti-racism continuum
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TViLLvMtHssh-FSB4mr5FolaV7uB8mLe/view

AAM hiring resource
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vOY7362aHhRPve2B6iZC8T-w7EHLvBrd/view?usp=sharing

On-boarding
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pgw4hIninvnmSSi6ONYV512eYYn0Xh6s/view

**Other links from chat**
We're Not That Hard to Find
https://unitedarts.cc/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/were-not-that-hard-to-find.pdf

Barriers to Entry
https://medium.com/@elisecouture/barriers-to-entry-an-infrastructure-of-exclusion-in-the-museum-15623f83f28e

How to Make the Hiring Process Accessible
https://aoda.ca/how-to-make-the-hiring-process-accessible/

Check out our **racial justice webinars and trainings**



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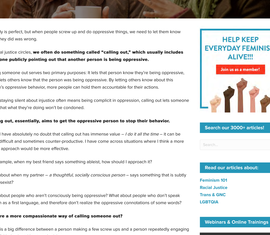

# Calling In: A Quick Guide on When and How

January 18, 2016 / Sian Ferguson

Nobody is perfect, but when people screw up and do oppressive things, we need to let them know what they did was wrong.

In social justice circles, **we often do something called "calling out," which usually includes someone publicly pointing out that someone's behavior is being oppressive.**

Calling someone out serves two primary purposes: It lets that person know they're being oppressive, and it lets others know that the person was being oppressive. By letting others know about this person's oppressive behavior, more people can hold them accountable for their actions.

While staying silent about injustice often means being complicit in oppression, calling out lets someone know that what they're doing won't be condoned.

**Calling out, essentially, aims to get the oppressive person to stop their behavior.**

While I have absolutely no doubt that calling out has immense value – I do it all the time – it can be really difficult and sometimes counter-productive. I have come across situations where I think a more gentle approach would be more effective.

For example, once my best friend says something ableist, how should I approach it?

What about when my partner – *a thoughtful, socially conscious person* – says something that is subtly heterosexist?

What about people who aren't consciously being oppressive? What about people who don't speak English as a first language, and therefore don't realize the oppressive connotations of some words?

**Is there a more compassionate way of calling someone out?**

There is a big difference between a person making a few screw ups and a person repeatedly engaging in hurtful behavior without apologizing.

If the person is going to let someone change their problematic behavior, then we need to be intentional and strategic about how we encourage people to do that.

I recently came across the idea of "calling in" through this brilliant article by Nygc Loan Tilin on Black Girl Dangerous. They write:

> *"I picture 'calling in' as a practice of pulling folks back in who have strayed from us. It means extending to ourselves the reality that we will and do fuck up, we stray, and there will always be a chance for us to return. Calling in as a practice of loving each other enough to allow each other to make mistakes, a practice of loving ourselves enough to know that what we're trying to do here is a radical unlearning of everything we have been configured to believe is normal."*

Much like calling out, calling in aims to get the person to change their problematic behavior. **The primary difference between calling in and calling out is that calling in is done with a little more compassion and patience.**

Sometimes people – *especially people who are my, new to social justice activism, or easily hurt* – receive messages better when they're sent gently.

As someone who is socially anxious and very sensitive, I often feel afraid to participate in certain spaces online because I'm too afraid I'll say something wrong and be ostracized by the group.

**Of course, my personal hurt is not an excuse for my oppressive behavior to go unchecked.** But those who are mindful in thought/feel afraid to participate in these online spaces – when possible and appropriate, we should extend compassion to people, even when they've messed up.

**I want to make one thing very clear: I am not advocating that people shouldn't get angry at their own oppression.**

Trans people have the right to get angry about transnegativism. Women and non-binary people have the right to get angry about sexism. Black people have the right to get angry about racism.

**Calling people out allows us to hold people – particularly those who have privilege over us – accountable for their oppressive behavior.** It's important that marginalized folks are allowed to do that, and it's important that people who do oppressive things are held accountable.

I'm also not saying that calling people in is always and inherently better than calling people out. I think both calling in and calling out can be constructive in different circumstances.

**Rather, I want to discuss another method of engaging with oppressive behavior.**

Our activism, like our general behavior in life, should be as compassionate as possible, but for many of us, energy and compassion are not renewable resources.

We can burn out really easily. We can run out of patience. And some people are simply not worth our energy.

For our movement, and for our own self-care, we need to budget our compassion and not waste it on those who won't return it.

But it's really difficult to figure out when we're wasting our energy on people and when we're not.

Here are a few questions you might want to ask yourself when deciding whether you should call someone in or out.

## 1. Do I Have the Emotional Capacity to Call Someone in Right Now?

Dealing with oppression can be draining. Taking on the task of trying to reach out and possibly educate someone requires emotional energy.

**Nobody should feel obligated to call someone in, especially when it's too emotionally painful to do so.** So before you call someone in, ask yourself if engaging with them will be more hurtful to you than beneficial. You could always just break and call them in later if necessary.

An alternative option is asking another person – *perhaps an ally* – to call them in and help educate them.

When it comes to activism, we need to take care of ourselves first. It's not selfish to indulge in self-care when you need it; it's important for your survival. We need to make sure we have the emotional and mental energy to keep going.

## 2. Do I Have Privilege Over Those Who Are Harmed by This Person's Actions?

A huge part of ableism is talking to other privileged people and getting them to be supportive of marginalized groups.

It is exhausting for marginalized people to constantly call in people who have privilege over them, so our supporters should be doing that for us whenever they can.

**Marginalized people should not have to educate their oppressors.**

As a queer person, I should not be expected to educate every person who perpetuates heterosexism – intentionally or not. But I would really appreciate it if straight people attempted to write in solidarity with the queer movement would encourage other straight people to avoid engaging in oppressive behaviors.

As a white person, I could do more to engage with other white people when their behavior or attitude perpetuates racism. Of course, I can't go around compassionately educating every willfully ignorant racist.

But I can attempt to compassionately engage with those who, like me, are willing to learn more about oppression in order to better support people of color.

Calling people in is one of the ways in which this could be done.

## 3. What Are (Or Were) Their Intentions? Do You Think They'll Change Their Behavior?

**When it comes to supporting marginalized groups, the impact of our actions is more important than our intentions.**

Let's use a really simple example to illustrate this idea. Imagine that I am standing in the kitchen next to my friend, who is too short to reach something on the top shelf. I move over and try to grab it for her. In doing so, I stand on her toes. She then shouts out, "Ouch! You're hurting me! Stop standing on my toes!"

In this situation, I didn't intend for her to get hurt. I intended to help her. But it won't be very helpful if I turn around and say, "But I didn't mean to hurt you! I'm trying to help you! I refuse to get off your toes because it's not meant to be hurtful!"

Instead, I should stop standing on her toes because it's hurting her and then apologize. In fact, I should do the work, in advance, to be intentional about asking if she would like my help and how I should best support her in the process.

I thought about how angel, who I asked I was to get involved in social justice when I was in high school. At that age, **I didn't need someone to shout at me for using a phrase I didn't know was hurtful to someone – I needed a bit of guidance.**

She was ignorant, but she was willing to learn. She immediately apologized and asked for more information. Since then, she's started a personal blog on feminism and has gotten really involved in social justice activism.

I can't help but feel that if I called her out with less compassion, she might have felt less confident and she wouldn't have responded as she did.

**In social justice activism, it is important that we invest what we can in one another's growth and happiness.** After all, humans drive the movement, and if we don't take care of the each other, the movement becomes less powerful.

If someone is intentionally being an asshole, let them go. If someone is intentionally ignoring marginalized groups, let them go.

But if someone is engaging in oppressive behavior because they don't know it was oppressive – *or because they had a momentary lapse in judgment* – calling them in could be the most constructive move.

## How Can We Call Someone In?

There is certainly no single, full-proof formula for calling in people effectively. That said, it can be helpful to have flexible guidelines on how to call someone in.

I have a general pattern which I use when I try to call people in and, and I adjust it when circumstances change.

Firstly, it's a good idea to figure out **which method of communication would be best.** Is it better to approach them in person? Would a message or phone call be more effective?

Sometimes it's better to have the conversation privately, as sometimes a public conversation isn't inappropriate. It depends on the nature of the oppressive thing they did and what kind of relationship you have.

For example, if someone uses the word "lame" – an ableist slur – when commenting on my Facebook posts, I usually just comment and explain nicely why I don't want them to use that word on my posts.

However, if I am familiar enough with that person to know they might be scared or embarrassed about their mistake, a private conversation would be better.

**After all, I'm more interested in helping them change their oppressive behavior than publicly shaming them for it.**

Secondly, **mention the specific action and explain why it was hurtful or oppressive.** Maybe the person doesn't understand exactly why their behavior is harmful.

Let them know how it impacts you directly, if it does. I'm personally really hurt by people perpetuating the stigma attached to mental illness, because I'm mentally ill.

So when someone does that, I explain how their actions hurt my feelings. I'll be sure to explain how the stigma attached to mental illness directly prevents people like me from getting adequate mental health care.

**The beauty of social media is that we can quickly link our friends to educational articles, thus saving us the effort of rehashing common arguments – use this advantage!**

Lastly, we should be willing to have a discussion with them about their actions.

They might want to apologize for their actions. They might ask for help on changing their behavior or language. If we can help them, and if they're willing to learn, we can attempt to guide them so that they become more conscious of their actions.

—

Social justice activism is essentially about people – it's about supporting people, educating people and creating the sort of society where people's autonomy, growth, and rights are nurtured.

In order to help people, we need to accept that people will screw up sometimes. **Imperfection is part of humanity, a part of learning, and a part of growing.**

Calling one another in is a way in which we can nurture the people within our movement – the people who, like us, are willing to learn but are bound to make mistakes from time to time.

It is essential that we think deeply about how we can hold each other accountable without hindering one another's growth.

**This way, we can create a sustainable, compassionate movement that nurtures the people who are part of it.**

*Sian Ferguson is a Contributing Writer at Everyday Feminism. She is a South African feminist currently studying towards a Bachelors of Social Science degree majoring in English Language and Literature and Gender Studies at the University of Cape Town. She has been featured as a guest writer on websites such as Women's E and Fiya Box, while also writing for her personal blog. In her spare time, she tweets excessively @sianferguson, reads about current affairs, and spends time with her gorgeous group of friends. Read her articles here.*

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Celebrating the Love between Queer Men of Color – In 25 Wonderful Photos! →

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JUL 1, 2021 · 10:30 EDTIME
Kate Rogers
Freelance Writer

Article

# Challenging the Narrative and Amplifying Voices: Resources for Education and Inclusivity in the Outdoor Industry

Share this article:

The outdoors community is racially white, which has allowed for the privilege of being able to travel land and open discussion of social and racial injustices. Racism and bias exposes that people go beyond the outdoors in America, but the desire remains that Black outsiders of the outdoor community from experiencing the great outdoors.

The latest outrage involving Central Park birdwatcher Christian Cooper, the outdoor industry's recent embrace of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives spanning across the US and Asia, and even millions of jobless, Nothing so exposes the fault lines in our society, and the need for meaningful change, as the pandemic and the protests against it. Years ago, I have gotten out of the city, hoping to escape the pandemic, but these events have seen to experience discrimination based on the color of their skin, background, sexual orientation or gender identity, and have seen the need for change in our society, and the outdoor industry. Many people have come to the realization that the outdoors is not for everyone, the outdoors is not inclusive, identifying the doesn't make us bad people, but it means we need to be more open to understanding that not everyone has this privilege. We need to utilize our voices and platforms to generate change.

*Allegra Dayton, Managing Editor*
*Life Force, Inside Outside, Mountain Life*

**Our Pledge To Do Better**

Inequality and the outdoors During a time when society and open to the outdoors, we need to be more open to understanding that not everyone has this privilege. Our DEI-DI-Inclusion survey which had 400 respondents...

Read More

**"We, as a community, need to do better. We can stop contributing to the noise and start amplifying the voices of those who have been silenced for too long.** Fighting racism and injustice can be simply uncomfortable, but haven't we been protecting for all of us.

*"Fighting racial injustice in America is a collective effort, and it's not enough. We must act on our values, but it requires dedicated action from all of us."* – Merrie Hall

Let these resources serve as the start for your journey. **Take a deep breath and prepare to be uncomfortable. We wrote this for you to have your ambitious you think should be added, please comment below or message us via our social media.**

Allegra Dayton, Managing Editor
Life Force, Inside Outside, Mountain Life

## CHALLENGE THE NARRATIVE

Ask yourself questions about how you can use your voice to make the outdoors and hiking community a safer, more inclusive space for all.

- What can I do to support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in my community? in the outdoor industry?
- Do the friends I hang out with represent the diversity of the world? Do they showcase BIPOC in their social media and marketing? Do they sponsor athletes of color?
- Do I need to search out trail organizations being diversely led by staff? How can I encourage these others?
- Does my social media feed represent an inclusive outdoor community?
- Do I know what it means to be a BIPOC in the outdoor industry? Do I know trails and parks?
- What are my local politicians' policies on the outdoor lifestyle and community? Do they represent me?
- How can I use knowledge to have conversations with friends, family, and power-above race and gender? Do I know how to have difficult conversations?
- What do I want to have more about? What are the best resources to do so?

## WATCH

Reconstruction. This four-part PBS series explores the transformation years following the American Civil War, when the nation struggled to redefine itself as a nation. The series explores the racial, economic, and sociohistorical and change.

Black Ice. Black Ice explores the rapidly changing demographics of Norway's population, from a homogeneous country to a diverse country. The film also highlights Norway's lack of engagement for racial communities of color due to safety, access, relevancy, and representation.

Introducing Our Times: Black Voices, Written Spaces & the Possibility of Co-with Dr. Carolyn Finney. Look at how the natural environment has been underestimated, commodified, and represented by both white and black Americans.

The Creation of Gondwanaland. Series A Hiking Black Women. In this PSA Talk, J. Morgan Moore and Gondwanaland Co-Founder Ashley Hunter-Williams discuss the ways in which the outdoor industry can reduce the leading causes of preventable death among Black women by building communities of women walking together outdoors.

The Unlikely Trail Hiking. In 2011, Derrick Lugo set on from NYC to Rio Grande the Appalachian Trail.

Barbara Hillary Commencement Address. The epitome of resilience, Barbara grew up in Harlem and in her 80s she was working a nurse. Became the first African American woman to reach both the North and South Poles.

The Triple Crown of Hiking. NPR "Morning Edition" reviews this film's story of the NYC and talks about completing the Triple Crown as a PCT.

The Blackcatchers's YouTube Channel. Colleen Daniel Wilson, an African American Hiker and her cyclist wife who recently documented the PCT.

Black Trail Days. Documentary on Hoffler, Virginia, Black Trail Days, recently accessed and shared in Trend Magazine.

Outdoor Diversity. We Don't Want Your Hashtags. We Want Action! Series outdoor brands can take to make their long-term commitment to fight racism.

Something About Black Tree

Hiking Black and Brown Series on the Outdoors




Click to Speak on Gilded Racism on the Outdoors

## Books: Further reading for when you want a deeper dive

The Adventure Gap Changing the Face of the Outdoors

Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors

Rooted in the Earth: Reclaiming the African American Environmental Heritage

The Unlikely Thru Hiker: An Appalachian Trail Journey

Hiking Equity Why it's Hard for White People to Talk About Racism

Tonto Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility

The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection

Dispossessing the Wilderness:Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks

Stamped from the Beginning The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America

Between the World and Me

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

Trans Women's History, Race, and the American Landscape

For more reads, Thru has compiled this list of books to read about anti-racism.

## SPEAK

Part an on one of these podcasts to hear from the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ community.

**Unlikely Hikers.** Covering diversity, community, and Daily Diversity by featuring underrepresented voices on the outdoors.

"Who Backcountry's Pitched Adjacentness" an Revisionist History. In Season 3 Episode 5, we hear about Ashley Hunter-Williams and Brittany Brown's Board of Education, perhaps the most well-known Supreme Court case in history.

"Black Girls Do Hike" an Better with Allen Podcast. Black Girls Do Hike started as an online community, but quickly developed into a proud space of some of the most underrepresented and underserved groups in the cycling community.

Black Hikers Discussion on Backpacker Radio. The has known African-American male to complete the Appalachian Trail, which has the experience in managing diversity. Gary Jones interbreed with the PTSD, what it's like hiking through racial America as a black man.

"Hiking Black in the Outdoors" on Outdoor Magazine. In and whether, latest, and outdoor leader, Brittany Lynch talks how the outdoors play a role in helping her heal through grief and assuring her safety.

"The Power of Storytelling" on the Explorers Website Stacy Grace Outdoor Sensible Brilliant discusses how storytelling helps underserved people in the near people of color and LGBTQ+ persons experience the outdoors.

Code Switch: Being Outdoorsy While You're Black or Brown

## SPEND

Can't get out there and power? Don't worry, the outdoor industry has your back! There is not list of organizations and social justice efforts to start about, follow, and donate to. Don't have the means to donate? You can share these organizations and their efforts, volunteer, and share on social media.

Outdoor Alliance. Advocating the outdoor community, the outdoor industry, and the outdoors.

Big City Mountaineers. Combating underprivileged and economically challenged youth into the outdoors.

Urban Outdoor. Helping Women of Color get outside as an inclusive, empowering community.

Growing Youth Foundation. Connecting underserved youth and young adults in Atlanta, GA to the outdoors through mentorship.

Cultivate. Strengthening Organizations creating economic equity in outdoor recreation through providing gear, outdoor orientation and outdoor education for free at a subsidized cost. Connecting participants with volunteer and job opportunities in outdoor industry careers.

Run with Hazel. Hazel Jeanvoy was jogging in her neighborhood in Georgia when he was gunned down by two men. Run with Hazel Grace is the death. Support efforts for justice by signing the petition or donating funds.

Equal Justice Initiative. This nonprofit works to challenge racial and economic injustice, and provide a voice for underserved members of the community.

Support BIPOC-owned Outdoors and Fitness Brands

Bedouin. Owned and operated by people of color selling cold weather and sun protection gear, like gloves and face masks.

Coral Gilt. Glut of an broken clothing's best kept secret. In Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Owned by Spanish and Venezuelan Jewelry.

Hazelbrook Knitwear. Graphic designer and artist whose work is inspired by the natural landscape for the outdoors.

Vagabondit A Black-owned health food brand that sells plant-based protein powders.

Copper Cow Coffee. Traditional hand-sustainably-roasted Vietnamese pour over coffee and tea company based out of Ho Chi Minh City and the Vietnamese American owned.

Backcountry Noir. Makes dehydrated Asian and vegan camping meals in zero waste 100% compostable bags.

Bear Flagger Clothing. Colorado-based clothing company that specializes in innovative hangwards.

Sherpa Adventure Gear

Alex Pickett Outdoors

Pro Apparel

Yoma

Chimerafine

Cathaoriki

Vera Moonshine

Jent Life

Sugar On Clark

Super Crush

Get Dirt, Stay Out

Gang Grounder Girls

Coffeehouse

Native Women Wilderness

## FOLLOW

Become more in-tune with the experiences of BIPOC and marginalized people in the outdoors. Aside from organizational outdoor groups, they'll promote calls to action and ways to help straight from the source.

@outdoorlatinos

@blackgirlsrunthem

@brownsugarfitness

@blackmenhiking

@outdoorcurlz

@outdoorinsiderdiver

@ultrapopsicle

@blacktrail

@blackpeoplehike

@blackcurlz

@blackpeoplehikeclubatlanta

@ebonyhikers

@blackhikersofcolorado

@blackmenhikeclub

@blackhikersofcolorado

@outdoorafrica

@outdoorfriendsofcolor

@ebonyhikers

@ebonyrunners

@blackgirlsrunthem

@outdoorfriendsofcolor

@ultrapopsicle

@ultrapopsicle

@blackpeoplehikeclub

@blackcurlz

@blackhikersofcolorado

@blackmenhikeclub

@blackhikersofcolorado

@outdoorafrica

@outdoorfriendsofcolor

@ebonyhikers

@ebonyrunners

@blackgirlsrunthem

# DETOUR-SPOTTING
## for white anti-racists

**joan olsson**

For white people living in North America learning to be anti-racist is a re-education process. We must unlearn our thorough racist conditioning to re-educate and re-condition ourselves as anti-racists. There is scant social or political encouragement for this journey of re-education. We are constantly tempted to detour off course by the racist propaganda of society and our own guilt and denial. In the face of society's and our own resistance, sustaining the will to continue this journey takes bold and stubborn effort.

This journey sends us into unfamiliar territory. No white person has ever lived in a non-racist North America. We were never taught the skills of anti-racist living. Indeed, we were carefully taught the opposite: how to maintain our white privilege. Racism, the system of oppression (of people of color) and advantage (for white people) depends on the collusion and cooperation of white people for its perpetuation.

Most of us first became aware of racial prejudice and injustice as children. As white infants we were fed a pabulum of racist propaganda. That early "training" was comprehensive and left little room for question, challenge or doubt. Our childhood games, rhymes and media conspired: "Eenie, meenie, minie, mo; Catch a n…r by his toe …" We played cowboys and Indians. All of us knew the Indians were bad and had to die. My WWII generation watched "Bugs Bunny" outwit evil Japanese villains. As Lillian Smith acknowledged:

> "These ceremonials in honor of white supremacy, performed from babyhood, slip from the conscious mind down deep into muscles and glands…and become difficult to tear out." (1)

Our generous child wisdom told us racism was wrong, but there was no escaping the daily racist catechism. We resisted the lies, the deceit and the injustice of racism, but we did not have the skills to counter the poisonous messages. Our conditioning filled us with fear, suspicion and stereotypes that substituted for true knowing of people of color. We internalized our beliefs about people of color, ourselves, other white people and about being white. Those internalized attitudes became actualized into racist behavior.

As I continue my journey toward becoming a re-conditioned and effective anti-racist, I have become aware of "habits," attitudes and their attached behaviors, which divert me from my intended goal. To change the detouring behavior, I must first be fully conscious of what I'm doing, the behavior and its consequences. Next, I need to reflect on the behavior's attitudinal roots. Finally, I determine the prescribed, desired change I want to make and the best strategy for achieving it. Sometimes I need to remove the behavior from my personal repertoire. More often though, re-tooling is necessary, replacing the discarded pattern with new behaviors. It will likely take repeated attempts before I have fully internalized and externalized the desired change.

Most of the obstacles and detours encountered on our journey of re-education are those same habitual behaviors birthed in our internalized beliefs. The behaviors will vary with each white person. I recognize that no two white people share exactly the same experiences and societal moldings. We learned racism in our unique and personal ways from different teachers and at different times. But we all learned the lessons well. I have observed in myself and other white people some common patterns of guilt, denial and defensiveness which appear regularly in our interactions with people of color and other white people.

Eighteen common detours from our anti-racist journey are examined in this way:

#) ***The Detour's Title***

Attitudes or behaviors that signal a detour or wrong turn into white guilt, denial or defensiveness.

***Reality Check and Consequence***

A clarification of the underlying meaning and consequence of this behavior pattern.

1) ***I'm Colorblind***

"People are just people; I don't see color." Or "I don't think of you as Chinese."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

Statements like these assume that people of color are just like us, white, and have the same dreams, standards, problems, peeves that we do. "Colorblindness" negates the cultural values, norms, expectations and life experiences of people of color. Even if an individual white person could ignore a person's color, the society does not. By saying we don't see their color, we are also saying we don't see our whiteness. This denies their experience of racism and our experience of privilege.

"I'm colorblind" can also be a defense when afraid to discuss racism, especially if one assumes all conversation about race or color is racist. As my friend Rudy says, "I don't mind that you notice that I'm Black." Color consciousness does not equal racism.

***2) The Rugged Individual and The Bootstrap Theory***

"America is the land of opportunity, built by rugged individuals, where anyone with grit can succeed if they just pull up hard enough on their bootstraps."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

The "rugged individual" and the "bootstrap theory" are two of the crown jewels of U.S. social propaganda. They have allowed generation after generation to say, "If you succeed, you did that, but if you fail, or if you're poor, that's your fault." Belief in this propaganda is founded in a total denial of the impact of either oppression or privilege on any person's chance for success.

***3) Reverse Racism***

(a) "People of color are just as racist as white people."

*(b)* "Affirmative Action had a role years ago, but today it's just reverse racism; now it's discriminating against white men."

*(c)* The civil rights movement, when it began was appropriate, valuable, needed. But it's gone to the extreme. The playing field is now level. Now the civil rights movement is no longer worker for equality but for revenge."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

(a) Let's first define racism:

Racism= Racial Prejudice (white people and people of color have this)

Plus

Systemic, Institutional Power (white people have this)

To say People of Color can be racist, denies the power imbalance inherent in racism. Certainly, people of color can be and are prejudiced against white people. That was part of their societal conditioning. A person of color can act on their prejudices to insult, even hurt a white person. But there is a difference between being hurt and being oppressed. People of color, as a social group, do not have the societal, institutional power to oppress white people as a group. An individual person of color abusing a white person – while clearly wrong, (no person should be insulted, hurt, etc.) is acting out of a personal racial prejudice, not racism.

(b) This form of denial is based in the false notion that the playing field is now level. When the people with privilege and historical access and advantage are expected to suddenly (in societal evolution time) share some of that power, it is often perceived as discrimination.

(c) This was said by Rush Limbaugh, who is obviously no anti-racist, but this comment is loaded with white people's fears of people of color, especially if "they" gained control. Embedded here is also the assumption that to be "pro-Black" (or any color) is to be anti-white. A similar illogical accusation is directed at women who work for and end to violence against women and girls. Women who work to better the lives of women are regularly accused of being "anti-male."

***4) Blame the Victim***

(a) "We have advertised everywhere, there just aren't any qualified people of color for this job." Or "If he only had a stronger work ethic." Or (b) "If she just felt better about herself…" Or "Internalized racism is the real problem here." Or (c) "She uses racism as an excuse to divert us from her incompetence." And "He goes looking for racism everywhere." (As if racism is so hidden or hard to uncover that people of color would have to search for it.)

***Reality Check and Consequence***

All "blame the victim" behaviors have two things in common. First, they evade the real problem: racism. Second, they delete from the picture the agents of racism, white people and institutions, which either intentionally perpetuate or unintentionally collude with racism. As long as the focus remains on people of color we can minimize or dismiss their reactions, and never have to look directly at racism and our own responsibility or collusion.

***5) Innocent By Association***

"I'm not racist, because …I have Vietnamese friends, or my lover is Black, I donate to Casa Latina, or I marched with Dr. King."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

This detour into denial wrongly equates personal interactions with people of color, no matter how intimate they may be, with anti-racism. It assumes our personal associations free us magically from our racist conditioning.

***6) The white knight or white missionary***

"We (white people) know just where to build your new community center." Or "Your young people (read youth of color) would be better served by traveling to our suburban training center."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

It is a racist, paternalistic assumption that well meaning white people know what's best for people of color. Decisions, by white people, are made on behalf of people of color, as though they were incapable of making their own. This is another version of "blame the victim" and "white is right." It places the problems at the feet of people of color, and the only "appropriate" solutions with white people. Once more the power of self-determination is taken from people of color. Regardless of motive, it is still about white control.

***7) The White Wash***

"He's really a very nice guy, he's just had some bad experiences with Koreans." Or "That's just the way Uncle Adolf jokes. He's very polite to the Black janitor in his building."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

We're trapped here by another version of our guilt response. We attempt to excuse, defend or cover up racist actions of other white people. We are particularly prone to this if the other person is close to us, family or friend, and if we feel their actions reflect on us.

8) ***I Was An Indian in A Former Life*** (2)

"After that sweat lodge I really know what it feels like to be an Indian. I have found my true spiritual path."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

This is spiritual or cultural appropriation and poses a serious threat to the integrity and survival of Native cultures. To fill a void in their own spiritual core, some white people are drawn into the New Age garden to pick from a variety of Native spiritual packages usually offered for sale. Since Native spiritual practice is inseparable from their history and current community, it cannot be disconnected from that context to service white people searching for life's meaning. Appropriating selected parts of Native cultures romanticizes the lives of Native peoples while denying their struggles. Their lands and livelihoods stolen, indigenous peoples now witness white people trying to steal their spirituality. Rather than escape our white racism by finding a spiritual path, we instead collude in one more way with the genocidal attacks on Native cultures.

***9) The Isolationist***

"I thought we resolved this issue (racism) when it came up on the board last year." Or "We need to deal with this specific incident. Don't complicate it by bringing up irrelevant incidences of the past." Or "This only happened today because the TV news last night showed police beating a Black kid."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

Attempts are made to isolate a particular incident of racism from of the larger context. We blame a publicized incident of racism outside our organization to rationalize an internal incident and to avoid facing the reality of racism within. When trying to resolve an accusation of racism within an institution, we often see the incident in a vacuum, or as an aberration, in isolation from an historic pattern of racism. Racism has been so institutionalized that every "incident" is another symptom of the pattern. If we continue to react incident to incident, crisis to crisis, as though they are unconnected, we will find genuine resolution only further from our reach.

10) ***"Bending Over Blackwards"*** (3)

"Of course, I agree with you." )Said to a person of color even when I disagree) or "I have to side with Betty on this." (Betty being a woman of color.)

***Reality Check and Consequence***

Our white guilt shows up as we defer to people of color. We don't criticize, disagree, challenge or question them the way we would white people. And if we do disagree, we don't do it with the same conviction or passion that we would display with a white person. Our racism plays out as a different standard for people of color than for white people. If this is our pattern, we can never have a genuine relationship with a person of color. People of color when we are doing this. Our sincerity, commitment and courage will be rightly questioned. W cannot grow to a deeper level of trust and intimacy with people of color we treat in this way.

***11) BWAME***

"**B**ut **W**hat **A**bout **Me**. Look how I've been hurt, oppressed, exploited…?"

***Reality Check and Consequence***

This diminishes the experience of people of color by telling my own story of hardship. I lose an opportunity to learn more about the experience of racism from a person of color, while I minimize their experience by trying to make it comparable or less painful than mine.

***12) Teach Me, Please***

"I want to stop acting like a racist, so please tell me when I do something you think is racist."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

White people often assume we can learn about racism only from people of color. We further assume that people of color have the energy and/or desire to do this teaching. My understanding is that most people of color are weary of educating white people about racism. We will get stuck. We'll get frustrated and impatient with ourselves and other white people in this struggle. And we'll stay stuck if we don't seek help from other white anti-racists. Our inclination has been to ask people of color to help us. We should seek out other white people BEFORE we go to people of color. Perhaps, as we become more trustworthy as allies, we will build genuine relationships with a few people of color who offer their reflections for us when we get stuck. This is at their discretion, not ours. We can't assume people of color should be so grateful for our attempts at anti-racism, that they will be willing to guide us whenever we are ready to be guided.

***13) White On White, and Righteously So***

"What is wrong with those white people? Can't they see how racist they're being?" Or "I just can't stand to be around white people who act so racist." And

***You're Preaching To The Choir***

"You're wasting your time with us, we're not the people who need this training."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

We distance ourselves from "other" white people. We see only confirmed bigots, card-carrying white supremacists and white people outside our circle as "real racists." We put other white people down, trash their work or behavior, or otherwise dismiss them. We righteously consider ourselves white people who have evolved beyond our racist conditioning. This is another level of denial. There are no "exceptional white people." (4) We may have attended many anti-racism workshops; we may not be shouting racist epithets or actively discriminating against people of color, but we still experience privilege based on our white skin color. We benefit from this system of oppression and advantage, no matter what our intentions are. This distancing serves only to divide us from potential allies and limit our own learning.

***14) The "Certificate of Innocence"***

Sometimes we seek or expect from people of color some public or private recognition and appreciation for our anti-racism. Other times we look for a "certificate of innocence" to tell us we are one of the good white people.

***Reality Check and Consequence***

If our ally commitment depends on positive reinforcement from people of color, we set ourselves up for sure failure. The first time a person of color is displeased with our actions, we could respond, "Well, if the people I'm doing all this for don't want my help, then why bother? I quit." Clearly, we're challenging racism for "them" not for us. We have not identified our self-interest, as white people, for fighting racism. Until we do, we cannot stay on this lifelong journey.

***15) Smoke And Mirrors***

We use the current PC language; we listen to the right music; we state the liberal line; we're seen at the right meetings with the right people. We even interrupt racist remarks when the right people are watching and when there is no risk to us. We look like an anti-racist.

***Reality Check and Consequence***

This is the "Avon Ally," the cosmetic approach. People of color and other white anti-racists see through this pretense quickly. This pseudo-anti-racist posturing only serves to collude with racism and weakens the credibility of sincere white anti-racists.

***16) The Accountant***

We keep a tally sheet. If we perform some "feat of anti-racism," we expect reciprocity from an individual or group of color, usually with some prestige or power that can serve our interests.

***Reality Check and Consequence***

"I scratch your back, you scratch mine is NOT justice seeking nor ally behavior. It serves only to reduce justice work to some kind of power brokering currency.

***17) Silence***

We stay silent.

***Reality Check and Consequence***

Our silence may be a product our guilt or fear of making people of color or white people angry with us or disappointed in us. We may be silent because our guilt stops us from disagreeing with people of color. We may be afraid that speaking out could result in losing some of our privilege. We may be silenced by fear of violence. The reasons for our silence are many, but each time we miss an opportunity to interrupt racism, or to act as allies or to interact genuinely with people of color or other white people. And no anti-racist action is taken as long as we are silent.

[A note about silence: Silence is a complicated issue/matter. There are times when faced with a potential intervention situation that I may choose not to interrupt – for reasons of good sense or strategy. Anti-racists need courage, but foolish risks makes little sense. When the choice is between intervening in this moment, alone, or gathering allies to speak out later in a more strategic way, the latter may prove more effective.]

***18) Exhaustion And Despair – Sound The Retreat***

"I'm exhausted. I'm only one person. I can stop and rest for awhile." Or "Racism is so pervasive and entrenched, there just isn't any hope."

***Reality Check and Consequence***

Despair is a real enemy of anti-racists. For our commitment to be a lifelong one, we must find ways to mitigate the effects. Burn-out or desertion are of no use to the struggle. We can remember men who jumped on a "Take Back the Night" bandwagon, challenging violence against women – for a while. Until the attention on them as good men waned. Until the "glamour" of the issue faded. One of the historical, repeated failures of "liberals" in social justice movements has been short-term and inconsistent commitment to the "issue du jour."

If we quit, for any reason, we engage our "default option." (5) As white people, we can take a break from the frustration and despair of anti-racism work. Such retreat will result in no significant consequences for us. Racism doesn't allow such a respite for people of color. One of the elemental privileges of being white is our freedom to retreat from the issue of racism. If things get too tough we can always take a break. And <u>our</u> work against racism doesn't get done.

**THE JOURNEY CONTINUES**

Once identified, behaviors like those above are possible to change. The patterns are repeated less often. We re-educate and re-tool ourselves to avoid racist behaviors and to take more potent anti-racist action.

People of color will continue to demand their rights, opportunities and full personhood. But racism in North America won't end because people of color demand it. Racism will only end when a significant number of white people of conscience, the people who can wield systemic privilege and power with integrity, find the will and take the action to dismantle it.

That won't happen until white people find racism in our daily consciousness as often as people of color do. For now we have to drag racism into our consciousness intentionally, for unlike our sisters and brothers of color, the most present daily manifestation of our white privilege is the possibility of forgetting about racism. We cannot. Racism continues in the name of all white people. While there is nothing about racism to celebrate, there is much to celebrate in a life lived in the pursuit of justice.

**ENDNOTES**

1. Lillian Smith, Killers Of The Dream. W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 1949. Page 91.
2. Paraphrase of title by Andrea Smith. "For All Those Who Were Indian In A Former Life." First printed in Sojourner: The Women's Forum, November 1990.
3. I first heard this phrase from Rev. Joe Barndt of Crossroads Ministry and the author of Dismantling Racism. Augsburg Fortress: Minneapolis. 1991.
4. Credit to Kathleen Carlin for her "Principle of Intentions versus Effect" from her anti-sexism work. Translated here to a racism corollary. Before her death in 1996 she was the Executive Director of Men Stopping Violence in Atlanta, GA.
5. Term from Dr. Molesi Kete Asante, Chair of African American Studies, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA.

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Research Report
September 2021

# Interrogating Institutional Practices in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

## Lessons and Recommendations from Case Studies in Eight Art Museums

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### Foreword

In 2013, a demographic survey of the staff of North American art museums conducted by the Museum Leadership Initiative (MLI) at the Center for Leadership in Arts and Culture at Harvard Business School, and drawn from the Census and other data, found that composition of museums in the United States is not remotely representative of the country's population [1]. The leadership and the workforce of museums, with few exceptions, are predominately white, female, and middle class. Museum staffs are also characterized by relatively little demographic change from year to year, and change, when it occurs, predictably reflects a museum's ability to understand the interests, contributions, and needs of the communities it serves. Museums that have been able to make significant changes in their staffing have significant assets to draw upon in undertaking such programs. One condition is both a challenge of social justice and of long-term institutional survival and relevance.

Museum leaders have been aware of the need to diversify their staffs and professional organizations, but attempts to transform institutional culture and the challenge and thought provoking work that accompanies such transformations. To shine a light on fruitful approaches to the work, the Mellon Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) commissioned the Center for Leadership in Arts and Culture to gather lessons from museums that have succeeded in achieving meaningful demographic diversity along staff [2]. The research team at Walker & Kraft (Walker) leads the work, conducting research, developing and implementing surveys, and facilitating cohort learning programs, culminating in presenting a framework for change.

The following capacities report summarizes findings from each of the case studies to indicate possible ways of interrogating staff demographic diversity, cultivating an inclusive and equitable workplace culture, and building trust with communities that museums have historically not reached or served. The report also includes a framework for change that can be used by museum staff and governing bodies and a rubric to measure progress.

While the mission of any one institution in the group of studies does not signify an endorsement of the institution's practices, the institutions in the group of studies, by the fact of their participation, offer staff available to their peers and the museum field at large, a rigorous learning opportunity to develop stronger cultures of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access within and beyond their walls.

The case studies suggest that it should be possible in the long run for art museums to align themselves with the ideals of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The research shows that it can indeed be a process driven by the relentless, slow, and hard work of people who are committed and commissioned by institutional leadership. The hard work also treasured is more likely to yield fruit when it is undertaken with a sense of joy, hope, and a deep sense of purpose. The work is also more likely to succeed when it is undertaken with a sense of urgency, because it is the work required to contribute to partner with the art museum community in the vital practice stewardship of our democracy.

Lori Digaetano, Executive Vice President, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

### Introduction

Following the lead of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's (AWM) Museum Staff Demographics Survey, Sheila Smith, the Mellon Foundation, and the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) in 2018 and 2019 convened a cohort of museum professionals to learn how to make their staffs more representative of the communities they serve and to understand how equity and diversity have a statistically substantial presence in patterns of intellectual leadership, behind-the-scenes operations, and front-of-house staffing. The cohort was also asked to learn how to make museums a welcoming, equitable, and inclusive place that history and diversity, or staying the course, that is, the status quo, would not provide some amount of breadth in terms of tradition, location, and demographics.

In continuing the case studies, we set out to understand how these museums have sustained or lost momentum in their commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We also set out to learn what was interested or compelling to each museum's leadership before about diversity, inclusion, and equity, and what, if anything, was different, substantive, and singular, the sought to explore and learn from the museum community. The research team also wanted to understand the relative importance of organizational succession as well as challenges and opportunities.

These eight case studies have been published and are freely available for reading and distribution:

- The Viking Ship Museum (Norway)
- Brooklyn Museum
- Contemporary Arts Museum Houston
- Detroit Institute of Arts
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago
- Oakland Museum of California
- Seattle Art Museum

The case studies yielded substantive lessons on how to increase staff and board diversity, work toward more inclusive exhibition and public programs, cultivate an inclusive and equitable workplace in the museum, and build trust with audiences museums have historically not reached or served well. We also observed several barriers to meeting these goals.

The report synthesizes findings from these eight case studies and provides recommendations for museum practice. The research team also offers a framework for change that can be used by museum staff or other organizations to assess their institutional practices and to plan their next steps. Accordingly, the findings in each section of the report are illustrated with examples from the case studies. The report also includes a rubric that can be used to measure progress, based on the research from organizations and communities.

### Museum Leadership and Organizational Structure

Building equity, inclusion, diversity and access into the operations of the museum requires internal work to create a welcoming climate for staff, to empower engagement and action horizontally across the museum, and to ensure that the museum's leadership and governance structure accommodates with new organizational structures, and a capacity to sustain change.

#### Recommendation: Broaden Job Qualifications with a Spirit of Inclusion

Museums should review job descriptions and qualifications to ensure that they are inclusive and open to contemporary practice and development. Instead of passing over applicants, the job slots that sought candidates have found that with outside the field, however, this approach has required more time and resources than hiring from within the field. Museums that staff with non-traditional skills or educational backgrounds find that they can also have a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

#### Recommendation: Emphasize Internal Promotion and Development

Promote compensation for interns and internships to expand beyond familiar ranks.

Establishing the museum's brand by many museum directors as one of the most challenging tasks they face. Boards often are compelled to provide resources to expand the institution's reach and to develop a more diverse audience. Many museum directors have traditionally been cultivated through wealthy networks. Our research shows that it is also true that by the board, of their children attend the same primary school, theatre or sports teams, or are part of the same social or professional circles. Museum directors seem to enjoy the people who share their brand of museum leadership.

Most participating museum directors have set goals for board diversity and have a number of strategies for achieving these goals. But for such strategies as "recruit more diversity," museums currently have fast internship programs, but internships are not a pipeline for diversity specifically, and museum directors have not been successful in hiring interns from the internship program into full-time positions. Museums have found it challenging to recruit diverse board members through a "pipeline" approach. Museums have found success in hiring interns and fellows who are from the museum's communities.

Our best models of work have succeeded in recruiting diverse board members through a high level of personal engagement on the part of museum directors. Southern Ballet Theatre, a company known for ethnically specific philharmonic concertos, has been able to develop recruitment strategy around connections to Detroit and the broader metro area that are meaningful.

#### Recommendation: Cultivate Alignment across the Organization

Museums should develop a shared vocabulary around equity, diversity, and inclusion, and a focus of access, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Create a means for staff to express their experiences and levels of sensitivity.

Creating alignment among staff is important to the operations of promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in museums. Staff need to be aligned on details of the museum's mission, vision, and strategic plan. Instead special care be debated and organized. Some museum directors found success in creating alignment around equity, diversity, and inclusion by hiring a consultant who was able to staff to utilize an intake process to identify the organizational strengths and weaknesses of the museum, some directors have managed to generate buy-in. This approach has been an effective way to begin the process for the alternation of strategic change or transformation, which can lead to balance.

LACMA has worked toward cultivating alignment among staff for equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts through a institutional management tool. The museum's leadership team developed an internal operational to the team, including discussion and seeking ideas with staff across levels and departments. The team has also used the management tool to develop a shared vocabulary around diversity, inclusion, and equity.

The Brooklyn Museum instituted its weekly "monopoly meetings" to create a forum for horizontal communication across the museum. The meetings are attended by representatives from different units together to share ideas and listen to each other regarding the institution's priorities and challenges.

The Brooklyn Museum's weekly "monopoly meetings" to create a forum for horizontal communication across the museum. The meetings are attended by representatives from different units together to share ideas and listen to each other regarding the institution's priorities and challenges.

#### Recommendation: Recognize for Values

Identify instances where important institutional knowledge is shared and create opportunities for distributing this knowledge through intra-institutional collaborations and communications.

While cultivating alignment around the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion can seem from a horizontal engagement among staff, formal recognitions can have a meaningful impact in reinforcing the work. Museums have found success in recognition through employee awards, hiring bonus payments, or creating intra-departmental committees to address the organizational aspects of the organization that had previously been siloed. Directors see this as a way of "rewarding the work." Museum directors have also found success in recognition through different departments or units of operation, for example, the Oakland Museum of California and Seattle Art Museum created programs bundling them with the public.

At the Brooklyn Museum, public programming was part of the museum's strategic plan until 2018, when director Anne Pasternak made it part of curatorial. The public programming staff now helps curators and exhibition teams develop programs, and curatorial staff participate in the museum's internship, in planning for an exhibition including Kehinde Wiley's venue. The director, Anne Pasternak, has made it clear that the museum's curatorial work should be in the exhibition, which, 5 percent of the museum's collection and 95 percent of the museum's work.

Job has established a committee, Reflecting Our Changing Society, which meets every month and has several departments to address the museum's progress in building a stronger relationship with the Brooklyn community. The committee has also been tasked with "reviewing the museum's position and how established it is from the museum to listen to community members and ask about how the museum can be a greater impact in their lives and neighborhoods.

At Chicago Moderna Art, museum leaders recently committed that staff should reflect the neighborhood's audiences, which operates to the director of the marketing department. At Atlanta, the museum's marketing department has been tasked with "reaching out to the community." Marketing departments have also been tasked with "reaching out to the community." Marketing departments have also been tasked with "reaching out to the community." Marketing departments have also

# Kendi: Racism is about power and policy, not people

By Brita Belli | DECEMBER 7, 2020

On Dec. 2, author and historian Ibram X. Kendi made the case that much of the conventional thinking around racism misses the point. First and foremost, he argued, it is power and policy, and not people, that keep racism firmly entrenched in society.

During an online conversation sponsored by the Yale Alumni Association and the university's Belonging at Yale initiative, Kendi began by confronting the notion of what makes a person "racist."

Racism has long been understood as part of a person's identity, said Kendi, author of the New York Times bestselling book "How to Be An Antiracist," professor, and founding director of the Antiracist Research and Policy Center at American University. So, he noted, if someone supports a policy disenfranchising Black voters, and is called out, their typical response is "I'm not racist."

"They understand 'racist' and 'not racist' as fixed categories," he said. ""This is who I am.""

Rather, argued Kendi, the term "racist" should instead be understood as a descriptor. "It literally describes what a person is being in any given moment, based on what they are saying or not saying, doing or not doing."

Ibram X. Kendi (Photo credit: Stephen Voss, courtesy of Boston University)

Similarly, he said, "in order to be anti-racist, we have to express ideas of racial equality. We have to support policies that are leading to racial equity. We have to challenge ideas that there's something wrong with Latinx people, we have to challenge policies that are dispossessing Native land."

The event, which drew more than 1,000 respondents, was moderated by Matthew Frye Jacobson, the William Robertson Coe Professor of American Studies & History and professor of African American Studies.

For too long, Kendi told the audience, society's understanding of racism has focused on the perpetrators rather than the victims. "We should be outcome-centered and victim-centered," he said. "If a policy is leading to racial injustice, it doesn't really matter if the policymaker intended for that policy to lead to racial injustice. If an idea is suggesting that white people are superior, it doesn't really matter if the expressor of that idea intended for that idea to connote white superiority."

If we train our focus on outcomes and victims, Kendi said, "intention will become irrelevant."

> "['Racist'] literally describes what a person is being in any given moment, based on what they are saying or not saying, doing or not doing.

During the conversation, Kendi shared how even he had internalized conventional assumptions about race. As a high school senior, he delivered a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day speech in which he blamed Black people for racial problems.

"I had consumed many of the mainstream bipartisan, interracial ideas that there was something wrong with Black youth," he said. "That Black youth were not valuing education… that Black youths' hip-hop was ruining their minds and making them sexual and dangerous. That Black youth were having too many babies. That Black youth were 'super predators.' That we needed to mass incarcerate these folks who were a menace to society."

A year later, as a first-year student at Florida A&M University, he began to hear first-hand stories of Black voter disenfranchisement during the 2000 U.S. election. "Those stories for the first time allowed me to see that maybe Black people were not the problem," Kendi said.

To eliminate racism, Kendi told the audience, people have to understand where it comes from. Many people have taken for granted that "the cradle of racism" is ignorance and hate. If that's the case, he said, it would stand to reason that once people are better educated, racist policies would end. But what if, he argued, the perpetrators of racist policies already know what you are trying to teach them? What if they are instituting those voter suppression policies out of self-interest?

Education, he said, is essential. But, he added, "How do we make education transformative? How do we create an education that would allow people to see that indeed the problem is not 'those people,' [that] the problem is power and policy? Then, how do we educate those people to challenge and disrupt power and policy? All of that is critical."

Kendi's next book, "Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019," co-edited with Keisha N. Blain, will be published in February 2021.

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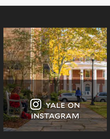


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24441, doi:10.3386/w24441.

[10] Significantly, it is not the lack of representation of their own identity that they find off-putting, but rather the lack of a variety of backgrounds.

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# Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization

**MONOCULTURAL ==> MULTICULTURAL ==> ANTI-RACIST ==> ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL**

*Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Deficits ==> Tolerant of Racial and Cultural Differences ==> Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets*

| Exclusive<br><br>An Exclusionary Institution | 2. Passive<br><br>A "Club" Institution | 3. Symbolic Change<br><br>A Compliance Organization | 4. Identity Change<br><br>An Affirming Institution | 5. Structural Change<br><br>A Transforming Institution | 6. Fully Inclusive Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization in a Transformed Society |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans<br>• Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution<br>• Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels<br>• Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups such as women, gays and lesbians, Third World citizens, etc.<br>• Openly maintains the dominant group's power and privilege | • Tolerant of a limited number of "token" People of Color and members from other social identify groups allowed in with "proper" perspective and credentials.<br>• May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies<br>• Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels of institutional life<br>• Often declares, "We don't have a problem."<br>• Monocultural norms, policies and procedures of dominant culture viewed as the "righ" way" business as usual"<br>• Engages issues of diversity and social justice only on club member's terms and within their comfort zone. | • Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity<br>• Sees itself as "non-racist" institution with open doors to People of Color<br>• Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting "someone of color" on committees or office staff<br>• Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups<br><br>*But…*<br><br>• "Not those who make waves"<br>• Little or no contextual change in culture, policies, and decision making<br>• Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control<br>• Token placements in staff positions: must assimilate into organizational culture | • Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity<br>• Develops analysis of systemic racism<br>• Sponsors programs of anti-racism training<br>• New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege<br>• Develops intentional identity as an "anti-racist" institution<br>• Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities<br>• Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage<br>• Actively recruits and promotes members of groups have been historically denied access and opportunity<br><br>*But…*<br><br>• Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched | • Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based upon anti-racist analysis and identity<br>• Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their world-view, culture and lifestyles<br>• Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institutions life and work<br>• Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities<br>• Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset<br>• Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments | • Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism and all other forms of oppression.<br>• Institution's life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices<br>• Members across all identity groups are full participants in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles, and interest<br>• A sense of restored community and mutual caring<br>• Allies with others in combating all forms of social oppression<br>• Actively works in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate all forms of oppression and to create multicultural organizations. |

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HUMAN RESOURCES

# Hiring Tips to Create Value and Inclusion for all Disciplines in Museums

*Posted on Mar 29, 2019*

*A museum human resources leader wants the field to value all staff positions equally and see the opportunities they represent for diversity. Photo credit: Kevin Harber on Flickr. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.*

Ayanna Reed, Director of Human Resources, Oakland Museum of California

There are qualified and diverse candidates out there who may not be aware that museums are a sustainable career option for them—it's our job as a field to recruit and retain this virtually untapped market. One important way to achieve this is to highlight that museums offer careers in a range of disciplines, all equally valuable as career opportunities. These vast disciplines include and extend beyond the curatorial roles most people associate with

museums, and reinforcing this can attract diverse talent whose skills are in other areas. We in the field thank the Mellon Foundation for highlighting through its surveys the need to diversify the curatorial field and other more traditional museum roles, and would like to showcase all the other positions that support museums and present an opportunity for this diversity. Here are some tips for hiring with this mindset:

**1. Invest in the fundamentals. Do you recognize and validate the diversity of career paths and skills across your institution (i.e. Facilities, Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology, Marketing & Communications, Administration, Security, etc.)?**

It takes all functions to keep a museum running and to provide a safe and welcoming space for staff and visitors. There are many roles and skill sets in the museum world that are sometimes undervalued because they fall outside of the "curatorial sphere," but these same roles and skill sets are highly valued by other fields that we compete with for talent, and with a current unemployment rate of less than four percent in the U.S. we are in a competitive talent market. If we're going to attract strong, diverse candidates to fill all of the roles in our institutions, we need to shift our language and recruitment practices to ensure that non-curatorial roles are not positioned or understood, either implicitly or explicitly, as secondary to content-related roles. A few ways to do this include: ensuring these roles are hired into your organizations; placing these positions in leadership roles; and paying equitable wages based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the position combined with market rate pay, in alignment with your organizational budget.

**2. Evaluate your education requirements. Do you require a master's degree as a point of entry for your "professional" roles?**

While specific degrees are important in some functions, consider a vast array of degrees and majors for positions where this is not true; determine if college degrees or beyond are a true requirement for the position in lieu of experience. Consider depth of experience in a similar role, or transferrable skills and competencies that can open the doors for diversity of thought within the organization. To help eliminate barriers, remove the educational requirements for positions where it is not required.

**3. Focus job requirements on transferable skills, not just demonstrated museum experience.**

To expand museum opportunities to a more diverse population, the field can look at the

knowledge, skills, abilities and previous experience highlighted on a candidate's resume. Requiring previous museum-specific experience limits the ability for a wider array of individuals to apply for positions. Consider recruiting from the hospital or hotel industries for roles in customer service, sales, and facilities, for instance. These populations work in environments that expect high standards of customer service, have diverse clientele, and have high-volume visitation.

**4. Evaluate the titles of your positions. Museum and non-profit titles can be very specific or highlight characteristics of the person and not the position. Consider using more universal position titles when you post for positions externally.**

By using more universal position titles for postings, you will expand the reach to individuals who may have never considered working for a museum. Using more universal titles in conjunction with internal titles will attract individuals not familiar with museum-specific language, such as philanthropy instead of development, exhibit builder instead of preparator, or customer service & sales associate instead of visitor experience associate. Remove titles like "diversity intern" and limit naming positions after their funders if you want the role integrated into your organization. Titling an employee's position with the name of a funder (with limited exceptions) or by pointing out the need for a diversity-specific position does not typically provide a welcoming environment where the employee feels like a complete member of the team based on their experience or ability to contribute to the organization. It often emphasizes that the person is there short-term, or for a particular project or program, and people may not invest the time and resources to truly engage them and help them grow. Invest in grant-funded positions, fellowships, and internships like you would invest in any staff member, as they are ambassadors and can create transformational leadership at all levels.

These few tips can enhance opportunities related to recruitment, inclusion, and retention in museums.

**About the author:**

As Oakland Museum of California's Director of Human Resources, **Ayanna Reed** brings more than 20 years of experience in human resource management. Prior to joining OMCA, she served as the Human Resource and Facilities Manager and Interim Director of Human Resources for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. She is currently the President of the Board of the Northern California Chapter of the National Association of African Americans in Human

Resources, a national organization for African American human resource leaders.

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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND INCLUSION

**Taking the Bias Out of Hiring: Identifying and eliminating unconscious bias in recruitment processes.**

Ayanna Reed, Director of Human Resources, Oakland Museum of California

## Upcoming Events

zenefits

# The essential new hire checklist for managers

Congratulations! If you are reviewing this manager checklist, it's likely because a new teammate has joined your organization. Providing new employees with the right tools, communication and a smooth onboarding experience is essential in laying the foundation for a successful experience on your team.

In fact, a positive orientation can make all the difference in your company's retention rates, as more than half of voluntary turnover happens within 6 months of new hire's start date. Use this checklist as a handy guide to ensure you've covered the bases of everything a new hire will need to know in their first week through their first 90 days. While we are using best practices gleaned from hundreds of businesses, you should tailor this template based on your organization's needs. You can also access an Excel version of this template here.

### Check Lists


**PG 2** – Two weeks prior to start date
**PG 3** – One week prior to start date
**PG 4** – First day checklist
**PG 6** – First week checklist
**PG 7** – First 30 days check-in
**PG 8** – First 90 days check-in

# Two weeks prior to start date

Depending on the size of your organization, the following tasks may fall into your court or HR's. Regardless, be sure to have this information collected *prior* to your new hire's first day to ensure you have the required documentation and can streamline applicable benefits and payroll.

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### Offer letter and employment agreement

- ☐ Offer letter sent and signed (confirm start date and salary)
- ☐ Background check completed (Learn more on background checks here)
- ☐ Employment agreement signed
- ☐ Drug screening passed (if applicable) (Learn more about drug screening tests here)

### Employment details

- ☐ Employee contact information (address, cell, in case of emergency contact info)
- ☐ Obtain an employer identification number (EIN)
- ☐ W-4 **Federal** Tax Withholding Form
- ☐ W-4 **State** Tax Withholding Forms
- ☐ Employee I-9 form complete (confirms worker's eligibility to work in the U.S.)

  Verification documents can include:

  - Unexpired U.S. passport or passport card
  - Unexpired temporary resident card
  - Unexpired employment authorization card
  - Unexpired temporary resident card
- ☐ Submit employee information to State New Hire Reporting Agency
- ☐ Equal Opportunity Data From (Only needed for companies with more than 100+ employees. This varies depending on if your company handles federal contracts.)
- ☐ Direct deposit form
- ☐ Employee benefits enrollment forms
- ☐ Employee handbook review
- ☐ Policy documents handled (i.e. NDA or non-compete)

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**Pro Tip** — *It can be quite daunting to collect and store the above information in an organized and compliant fashion. Learn how Zenefits' all-in-one People Platform collects, stores and manages all HR related information so you can get back to doing the work that you love.*

# One week prior to start date

Even though your hire hasn't officially started, the week prior to their start date represents a critical prep time. This is when you'll build your schedule, begin building rapport and communication with their future colleagues, and provision the tools they'll need to have a fast and lasting impact.

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### Set a meeting schedule

- ☐ New hire training or onboarding (if applicable, connect with HR to ensure your new hire is included in their plans)
- ☐ Check-ins with your broader team to get introduced and connect on joint initiatives
- ☐ Check-ins with leadership to touch base and say welcome
- ☐ Cross-functional partners

  ***Pro Tip —*** *Reflect on the responsibilities of your new hire and brainstorm who will be key collaborators in their day to day. Set these meetings up early so your existing team has time to prepare.*

### Provision required tools and equipment

- ☐ Computer and equipment (keyboard, mouse, monitor if applicable)
- ☐ Email account set up
- ☐ Add to appropriate email alias groups
- ☐ Add to company calendar and relevant recurring meetings
- ☐ Badge for building and office access (if applicable)
- ☐ Grant access to tools and systems (passcodes and/or accounts)

  **Pro Tip —** *Whether this action falls into your court or HR's, be sure to be thinking about integral tools early on. System access can take time, and you want to ensure early access so your new hire feels productive on day one.*

### Send new hire welcome email

- ☐ Prepare and send new hire welcome email
  (more information on new employee email available here)
  - ☐ Date and time of arrival
  - ☐ What to bring
  - ☐ Parking and building access
  - ☐ Who to ask for upon arrival
  - ☐ Dress code or appropriate attire
  - ☐ Office map and directions for how to enter your office
  - ☐ Attach employee handbook (employee handbook template available here)

# First day checklist

A first day on the job is like any other first meeting – *first impressions matter!* By taking the time to go through the following, you'll lay a strong foundation for a great chapter with your team. Be friendly, organized, and efficient in your schedule – get started with the below.

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- ☐ **Clean and set up desk or work space**
  - ☐ Collect swag (if applicable) and include on desk or station setup. New hires love sporting new company gear!
  - ☐ Arrange applicable equipment (computer, mouse, keyboard etc.)
- ☐ **Introduce your team**

  **Pro Tip —** *If you can get everyone together for a team meeting, play a friendly ice breaker. This can ease tension and allow your group to get to know one another without the stress of completing a task or deadline.*
- ☐ **Host your first check-in to go over:**
  - ☐ The week's agenda
  - ☐ Their role and key responsibilities

    **Pro Tip —** *This is a good time to give them a first assignment that they can be thinking about as connections are made.*
  - ☐ Typical expectations about work hours, procedures for overtime, use of flexible work policies, vacation and sick leave
- ☐ **Take an office tour and highlight:**
  - ☐ Fire exits
  - ☐ Fire extinguisher
  - ☐ Bathrooms
  - ☐ Stations for clocking in/clocking out (if applicable)
  - ☐ Smoking areas or smoking restrictions (if applicable)
  - ☐ First aid areas
  - ☐ Supervisor's office

    **Pro Tip —** *As you tour with your new hire, be sure to make introductions in person. It's always easier to draw connections in real life versus email — creating community is key to retention!*
  - ☐ Other locations as they relate to safety procedures

# First day check list continued

## Technology

- ☐ Review how to operate telephone systems
- ☐ Note who to contact for repairs or IT support
- ☐ Arrange training dates for any new or unfamiliar technologies
- ☐ Required access codes (if applicable)
  - ☐ Point of sale and scheduling software
  - ☐ Customer relations training
  - ☐ How to log time and attendance for hourly workers (if applicable)
- ☐ Scheduling procedures and timelines (how to request change in schedule or shifts)
- ☐ Schedule 30-Day check-in session

## Introduce company culture

- ☐ Assign a buddy
- ☐ Coordinate a welcome lunch
- ☐ Compile company information including values, mission, neighborhood or area map, contact information etc.
- ☐ Review organizational and reporting structure
- ☐ Explain dress code
- ☐ Review social media policy (if applicable)
- ☐ Create a list of who's who so your new hire knows who they'll be working with

# First week checklist

Use the first week to ensure the proper policies and procedures are learned and absorbed, and to check in that your new hire is getting introduced to the culture and the tools they need.

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- ☐ Safety training
- ☐ Sexual harassment training
- ☐ Job training
- ☐ OSHA compliance training (if applicable)
- ☐ Review of employee handbook and guidelines
- ☐ Review of expense policy
- ☐ Review of HR point of contact and how to:
  - Request support
  - File a complaint
  - Navigate employee concerns
- ☐ Familiarity and comfort with role expectations and responsibilities
- ☐ Familiarity with navigating point of sale software, time and attendance procedures

# First 30 days check-in

After a month, you and your new employee will have a better grasp on the workplace and working relationships. This is an important time to check in and review assignment completion, any blockers and needs for both employer and employee.

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- ☐ Review and record what's working well
- ☐ Review and record what's not working well or needs attention
- ☐ Review performance with day-to-day systems and address any concerns
- ☐ Ensure employee has all necessary equipment, tools or resources required
- ☐ Examine first project or work product
- ☐ Solicit feedback from relevant managers and colleagues
- ☐ Solicit feedback on their onboarding experience and what went well and what could use more attention (and use for future onboarding!)
- ☐ Schedule 90 day check-in meeting

# We're Not That Hard to Find: Hiring Diverse Museum Staff

## Guidelines to implement change in your museum and identify a pipeline of diverse employees.

By Joy Bailey-Bryant

In 2015, the Mellon Foundation released a report that stirred conversation among many cultural workers of color—not because the data was shocking, but because it supported the experiences of many. The study, which quantified the demographic reality of the museum workforce, enumerated the long-felt absence of people of color occupying or in the pipeline for high-level positions in museums, particularly art museums. Here was the quantifiable data, undeniable truth of what workers of color noticed every day. It was both affirming to have evidence and disheartening to see that conversations started years ago and actionized in documents such as AAM's 1992 publication *Excellence and Equity* had had virtually no lasting effect.

The conversation spread throughout the country. In Washington, DC, at the 2016 AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, I moderated a panel on the topic. The discussion brought together colleagues Omar Eaton-Martinez, intern and fellows program manager at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History; Tracy Lauritzen Wright, director of museum partnerships and compliance at the National Civil Rights Museum; and Sheila McDaniel, deputy director of finance and operations at the Studio Museum in Harlem.

We called the panel and the conversation "We're Not That Hard to Find: Hiring Diverse Museum Staff" because there are thousands of cultural workers of color, and many of them want to

# First 90 days check-in

At this point, creating routine meetings to touch base on employee performance and contentment on the job are critical to retention. Give feedback on how your new hire has been performing and address the following:

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### Employee work performance

- ☐ Are tasks completed on time?
- ☐ Are tasks of quality?

### What needs improvement

- ☐ Consider feedback from other employees and peers
- ☐ Consider areas of opportunity to help enhance the employee's performance

### What's going well

- ☐ Tease out a project that they've contributed to and highlight their success
- ☐ Deliver positive feedback you've heard from others
- ☐ Ask what they've enjoyed working on and weave it into their next 90 days

### A look at the next 90 days

- ☐ What does the employee need to be aware of in the coming weeks and months?
- ☐ Goal set for how to achieve maximum potential
- ☐ Plan for deadlines, initiatives and imminent changes

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We called the panel and the conversation "We're Not That Hard to Find: Hiring Diverse Museum Staff" because there are thousands of cultural workers of color, and many of them want to

work in or with mainstream organizations. We are here. Whether or not workers of color are given opportunities to rise at cultural organizations depends on the answers to two key questions—the same as with all staff, by the way—what is the organizational or institutional will, and how does that play out in recruitment, hiring, and retention?

## Benefits of Diversity

Diverse staff are valuable. As publicly funded institutions, museums have a responsibility to serve their communities. Fostering museums' shift toward visitor-centric environments takes creativity and change; in turn, hiring diverse staff helps museums innovate and create, and ultimately changes the tenor of the stories we tell.

Studies have identified the creative benefits of working in diverse environments. *Scientific American* has shown that diverse environments fuel creativity, diligence, and hard work. According to the McKinsey Foundation, gender diverse companies are 15 percent more likely to outperform competitors, and those that are ethnically diverse are 35 percent more likely to outperform.

Here are a few guidelines to propel museum leadership forward with making change at their institutions.

## The Process of Change

Some cultural institutions and museums, such as the Studio Museum in Harlem—one of the only art museums in the country with a mission centered on artists of the African Diaspora—have been working toward ensuring their workforce is diverse for years. As discussed by museum executive Sheila McDaniel, to make change, leadership must first examine the institutional will to tackle the issue of diversity. There are three basic components of institutional will:

1. **Intention.** Determine what the organization wants to do. Hopefully, recognizing that the world and our communities are diverse, your institution is reflecting on the issue of workforce diversity and wants to make a change. But the reality is that executive or deputy directors may have received a mandate requiring more diversity—whether because of expectations—or requirements—of state, local, or private funders. Regardless of the scenario, it is important to look at the intentions and understand them. The organization needs to be clear about its underlying motivation for creating change.
2. **Commitment.** Once the museum has identified its intention, staff must then identify its commitment. Organizationally, you need to have a strategic conversation about the degree to which you are committed to any initiative. Working toward diversifying your workforce is no different.
3. **Action.** Based on your intention and commitment, you can identify what you are going to do and how you will do it. Use your understood intention and commitment to the issue to evaluate your action plans.

Following these three steps will allow you to address workforce concerns in your own context.

## Finding the Candidates

Once institutions recognize the benefits of a diverse workforce, set their intention, and evaluate their commitment, the first step toward taking action is finding candidates. In a study conducted by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 75 percent of organizations cited a lack of diverse candidates as a major challenge. While this may be the case in some communities, organizations need to commit to proactively identifying such applicants within the pool. Below are strategies for identifying and developing diverse candidates.

- **Partner with educational institutions.** Museums are places of learning. As such, they should partner with outside learning institutions to create a pipeline of staff.
- **Get staff involved.** Diversity already exists in your organization. Invite diverse staff into the process. Ask if they would be interested and able to assist in applicant searches.
- **Maintain access to leadership training.** With proper education, a frontline worker may become the next director of your institution. Empower those who enter the field—on all levels—with training, access to leadership, and opportunities for decision-making roles.
- **Learn to read a resume.** Work with institutional and educational partners to recognize social clues that applicants may have valuable experience. Perhaps an applicant has written articles or publications on topics relevant to diverse collections or has worked with diverse organizations.
- **Prefer paid internships over non-paid.** Compensation allows people from all socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in museum internships and gain that all-important experience. This will facilitate entry into an often closed profession and allow new connections to be created. There are some cultural organizations, such as the National Civil Rights Museum and Lord

Cultural Resources, that only offer paid internships to ensure a more level pool of candidate interest and ability.

- **Create an environment for experimentation.** Give experiential learning space to sometimes get things wrong. Some call it room to try; provide support for staff to make unconventional hiring decisions along with the training that may be necessary.
- **Create mentorship relationships among staff.** Many disdain the idea of an institutional mentoring program. However, such a program can create ties among different levels of staff that might not normally exist. This is especially important when hiring, training, and promoting diverse staff. Some bonds that may normally occur due to affiliations—same alma mater, membership in similar organizations, familiar family background, etc.—may not be present. Reciprocal activity between emerging professionals and those further in their career will benefit both parties as they learn from each other.
- **Cultivate relationships with the community and partners.** It seems like a no-brainer, but many of your best staff will come from the areas right outside your doors. Cultivate relationships with the community and partners in the area who would be interested in working with you.
- **Access existing pools of candidates.** Reach out to organizations such as Museum Hue, where there are existing pools of diverse job seekers.

## Starting at the Top

An example of testing the institutional will from the very top—the board of directors—is offered by National Civil Rights Museum (NCRM) executive Tracy Lauritzen Wright. As a museum focused on a deeply diverse story—the African American struggle for civil and human rights—it is important for NCRM to have a board of directors that reflects the diversity of the community, even if the staff's diversity is strong.

When the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis faced a renegotiation of its lease agreement with the state of Tennessee, the museum identified two key internal issues:

1. **A gap in the operational budget:** NCRM's original agreement with the state of Tennessee required very little contribution by the state to the operation of the museum.
2. **A lack of diversity on the board of directors.** In communities where corporations may not have many people of color in leadership, diverse board presence can be a challenge.

To secure new funding resources from the state (five percent of the operating budget), the museum established a memorandum of understanding. Part of the MOU stated that the board must be ethnically and socially diverse to match the Memphis community. Through setting this intention and committing fully to it, the museum has successfully diversified the board.

To ensure the diversity is ongoing, the museum has established a position on the board for a member of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFSCME Local 1733. This ensures a more diverse socioeconomic perspective—giving labor an active place at the table—while historically linking to the organization's founding: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel while visiting Memphis to support the sanitation workers' strike. The museum also has a position on the board for a young person from the community.

## Moving Forward

The diversity of museum professionals decreases further with specialism and seniority, with less than five percent of those in management positions reflecting any type of diversity. There is no doubt that focusing on diversifying institutional and organizational leadership is ongoing and intentional. By examining your institutional will and earnestly following through with intention, commitment, and action toward diverse leadership, you will be well on your way to success.

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*As managing director, Joy Bailey Bryant is responsible for the US operations of Lord Cultural Resources, a cultural consulting firm that provides strategic, business, and community engagement support to cultural institutions, municipalities, developers, and others.*
*Rebecca Frerotte from Lord Cultural Resources provided valuable assistance in the research for this article.*

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Elise Couture-Stone

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# Barriers to Entry: An Infrastructure of Exclusion in the Museum

Elise Couture-Stone Aug 5, 2019 · 9 min read

I've been wanting to write this article for a while now, but I have been struggling with the content of this particular topic. In part, because it requires me to confront racism in the museum, and my own complicity in shaping policies and hiring practices that have unintentionally created barriers to entry for those of color and non-traditional backgrounds. While non-intentional, this banal negligence, nevertheless, spills out into every aspect of the museum and reinforces antiquated frameworks of restriction and exclusion that have systematically denied women and people of color equal access to the most fundamental of human dignities within the workplace. The ever-complicated stratification system of museum staff, boards of directors, governors, members, donors, and museum-goers complicates the policy-making process and traffics a reticent enemy: racism; sexism; — *exclusion*.

Our work as museum employees often challenges our visitors to confront their own discomfort, and even abetment on issues of race, gender, sexuality, violence, and economic class. But how often do we, as museum staff, force ourselves to look inward and confront our own discomfort with these topics in relation to how we conduct ourselves in the museum workplace? We work tirelessly to make long invisible histories visible for the public. But in our museum actions, work place practices, policy-making procedures, hiring practices, staff training programs, membership strategies, and paths to advancement, we continue to create barriers to entry in the field that overwhelmingly

exclude a wide range of individuals and perspectives. In turn, this network of defense systems secures a culturally curated, predominantly white, and often affluent — or affluent adjacent — working population. This process of exclusion makes cultural diversity and perspectives nearly invisible in our museum workplace and in the museum work-product.

This article asks the museum community to look at their own complicity in building infrastructures that prevent a wide range of people from participating in the museum experience and that prevent women (in general) from entering the field, leading the field, and *staying* in the field. *Where are your institutions' specific pinch-points of restriction*?

Here are just a few to consider…

## Access to Education

Access to education disproportionately affects people of color and those outside of the American middle- and upper-class systems and is a systemic issue that plagues all American industries — not just museums. That said, working in the museum or preservation fields often requires multiple higher degrees, which leaves most college attendees swallowed in debt. It is this *debt* that is barrier number one for entering the museum field.

One of the key elements of building and sustaining a diverse pipeline of applicants is encouraging a wider range of students to enter the humanities fields while in high school. The only way we can encourage this participation is by creating affordable programs where graduates can enter the field without having to sustain crushing debt following graduation. Because as every current museum staffer knows, *museum jobs don't pay*! If museums and high-schools, trade-schools, community colleges, and universities, worked more closely together to build affordable programs for a wider-range of students, then the museum applicant pool would be far more diverse than it is today, and may well prove the museum and its contents far more relevant to the communities it serves.

## Language in Job Announcements

Not too long ago, a long-time friend of mine moved to Boston and started looking for a job. I pointed him in the direction of museums because he has a rich background in

education and thematic-curricular programing. Plus, I thought it would be a great way for him to get to know his new city. After reading a few job postings though, he said, “what on earth does that mean?”, pointing to the first few lines of a job description. Riddled with buzz words and industry-speak, my friend said, “that type language is a red flag for me. If the people there speak like this all the time, then that seems like they might have unrealistic modes of communication, expectations, and are likely have a toxic work environment as a result.” I was so embarrassed. In one job description and new to the field, my friend was able to detect a strong undercurrent of exclusion in the museum workplace.

My friend has years of teaching experience, two post-graduate degrees, and knows American political history well — he would be an asset to any museum or historic site’s education department. But *one line* repelled him. And it truly is the museum’s loss. How many countless other qualified candidates who read museum job descriptions are put off by the exclusionary and internalized rhetoric we use?

As heritage institutions, we also tend to use binary forms of gendered language in job postings, which equally affects the applicant pool. One of the issues with gendered language is that most people don’t recognize it when they see it — it’s a subtle nuance that most people aren’t in tune with unless they are in a gender studies program or have a personal connection to being excluded in this way (Baldwin and Ackerson 103). According to the blog, *Catalyst*, the following words tend to reflect the accepted norms of masculine behavior:

Dominant

Boasting

Determined

Lead

Challenging

Competition

Superior

Decisive

Independently

Competitive

While the following list of words tends to represent more universally accepted female characteristics, norms and tropes:

Committed

Connected

Cooperative

Dependable

Interpersonal

Loyal

Responsible

Supportive

Trust

Considerate

So, when a woman reads a job description that is riddled with the aforenoted masculine traits, she is less likely to apply for the position — especially if she identifies keenly with being feminine or female. The kicker is here is, that most leadership positions in the museum field are peppered with langue like this and creates a barrier to entry for anyone who does not identify with these masculine behavioral patterns. The same goes for industry buzz words. All of this langue sends subtle messages about the internal working culture of a museum office and their exclusionary behavioral practices. How do you think someone who identifies as, “they” might respond to these types of job descriptions? We’d likely miss out on their talents as well.

## Barrier by Omission

It is not uncommon for museums *not to post a job* when it becomes available. Instead, we hire internally — cycling through the same outlooks and perspectives. I know this process well, because I was hired from within following an internship, and the moment I accepted the job, while non-intentional, it made me complicit in this type of hiring practice. The museum that hired me in this way, was in the process of being accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), which presumably would promote fair and equitable hiring practices, but that's not the reality of all AAM accredited museums or their applicants. More often than not, internal candidates are given positions as they become available, which makes it near impossible for qualified candidates to break into the field.

Ok, so let's say you're privileged enough to make it through these first three barriers — what happens next?

## The (Not-So-Blind) Application Process

What's in a name? Well, turns out, a lot! While the American Alliance of Museums has gone to great lengths to address this issue and now abides by a blind application process, the American museum industry, as a whole, does *not* abide by this kind of application process. Which, leaves people of color and people of non-affluent means at a particular disadvantage, further homogenizing the museum workforce. (quick aside. I'd like to point out the exclusionary nature and the *irony* of some of AAM's DEI articles — unless you're a paying member, you can't read some of their articles on diversity, equity, and *inclusionary* hiring practices).

The concept of *fit* is particularly troubling in the museum hiring process, because it focus' on whether or not one's personality *fits* into to current office culture, rather than the skillset for the open position. Those doing the interviewing tend to hire those that are most reflective of themselves and the rest of the team.

Recent research has shown that the museum workforce is not reflective of the broader multi-cultural diversity of the United States, and efforts are underway to change this. But we're not there yet.

## Unpaid Internships

In an interview with Sarah Cascone, writer at news.artnet.com, Michelle Millar-Fisher, founder of Art + Museum, said this about unpaid internships: “When base salaries start at nothing, it has a distinct trickle-up effect on the rest of the field, lowering wages and depressing expectations around compensation as a whole […] Many of us were unpaid interns at one point or another, and we know their tolls personally. The debts accrued and savings delayed affect one’s entire career.”

And she’s right! Assuming one is privileged enough to attend college and take on large swaths of debt, working in a museum also often requires that its workforce work for free in the form of unpaid internships in the beginning of their careers. In order to be able to work for free — especially after having taken on a significant amount of debt for school — one must have access to outside sources of income to be able to meet the basic standards of living. Because not everyone can afford to work for free, unpaid internships filter out anyone of non-affluent means, and ultimately ensures a singularly wealthy, white working population.

During this period of a museum worker’s career, they are often told that the benefit for working for free is two-fold: 1) they are gaining experience that they would not otherwise have the opportunity to earn, do to their lack of practical experience in the field, and 2) they are being exposed to the inner-workings of the museum along with having exposure to powerful people in the museum world. But, as the old adage goes, *people die of exposure*. The body must be fed, clothed, and have a roof over its head, access to healthcare, childcare (if needed), and reasonable sick leave. Interns, for the most part, are not privy to these resources in the museum because they are not paid workers. But then, paid workers aren’t always privy to these resources either.

## Compensation

Ok, let’s say you made through the first four hurdles: you’ve taken on two post-graduate degrees or certificates (or both!); you’ve successfully completed two or more internships, flying through the initial application process, and now you’re finally ready to start paying back those student loans and apply for your first paying museum job. Stop right there. It is more than likely that A) you will not be able to pay off your student loan debt working in a museum — prepare to have these loans for the rest of your life. And, B) based on recent statistics put out by the nonprofit National Institute on Retirement Security, if you are a woman (which, in the museum field, you likely are) by

the end of your career, you will likely have earned 25% less than your male peers, who by the way, are more than likely to be less qualified than you are. That's right ladies! Marry up, or have a sex-change, because in the 2019 museum world, your contribution as woman is still not equal to a man's and it will negatively impact you for the rest of your life.

Pay equity becomes even more egregious when factoring in race and sexual orientation. According to Joan Baldwin and Anne Ackerson:

"studies point to the fact that lesbian employees earn the same and sometimes more than heterosexual women (which means they are still earning less than heterosexual men) while women of color are frequently paid less than their Caucasian colleagues. Transgender women — if they are hired at all — are the lowest on the salary food chain. Some studies have shown that their wages were almost one third less than their cisgender counterparts" (Baldwin and Ackerson 88).

All of these factors and more work together to weed out those who cannot afford a multifaceted range of degrees and professional certificates.

So what's the answer? How can we fix this? Conscious construction of policies and a continuous willingness to accept that our overwhelming whiteness poses a threat to the survival of relevancy for the museum in the modern American context. With every non-inclusive policy we enact; with every rigid belief system that we give forbearance to, we continue to chip away at the museum's relevance to, and reflectiveness of, the communities we are supposed to serve. It's not all bad though, change is happening. There's just a lot more work for us to do!

*Author's note:*

The American Alliance of Museums puts out a bi-annual report on museum salaries, and does collect data based on race, gender, and sexual orientation. However, the 2017 National Comparative Museum Salary Survey costs $100 (or $20 if broken up into sections) to gain access to this data. And rightly so. This kind of research needs continuous funding! That said, as an independent museum professional, I cannot afford these costs. For the purposes of this essay, I have used the 2014 dataset from this survey,

published in the text, *Women in the Museum: Lessons from The Workplace*, written by Joan Baldwin and Anne Ackerson.

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# How to Make the Hiring Process Accessible

November 7, 2018 Greg Thomson

The Employment Standard under the AODA states that employers must make the hiring process accessible to applicants and candidates with disabilities. This may leave people wondering how to make the hiring process accessible. Here we outline how employers can create accessible job postings and provide interview accommodations.

## How to Make the Hiring Process Accessible

### Accessible Job Postings

Many job-seekers with disabilities look for jobs online. You can make your online job postings accessible for people who use computers differently by ensuring that your business's website complies with WCAG 2.0 web accessibility standards for layout and content. Companies that comply will ensure that more qualified candidates can find out about and apply for positions.

### Distinguishing Essential and Non-Essential Responsibilities

When listing qualifications, you should list essential requirements separately from non-essential requirements. People can better determine whether a job is the right fit for them if they know which skills they must have and which skills might be helpful but are not necessary. For instance, many postings ask that candidates be "team players", an essential skill for some jobs but not others. This requirement could prevent employers from hiring candidates who have all the core skills a posting asks for but have difficulty interpreting social cues.

Another example is postings that require each candidate to have a valid driver's licence for jobs that involve travelling. This requirement means that employers miss the chance to interview candidates who do not drive but who are experienced at making alternative travel arrangements. Employers who recognize at this stage which job tasks are essential will also be better prepared to accommodate workers who need to trade non-essential tasks with colleagues, or workers who may need to perform only the essential elements of their jobs during periods of stress or illness. Clarity about which job skills are essential will bring you an applicant pool that is larger, more diverse, and more used to thinking outside the box.

## Willingness to Accommodate and Contact Information

Your job posting should state that you welcome applications from people with disabilities. You should also explain who applicants should contact if they need accommodations during the application process. This person or department should be available through multiple communication methods, such as phone and email. This is an easy way of how to make the hiring process accessible.

## Accessible Interviews

Accommodations people may request before interviews include:

- An American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter
- A quiet location
- An interview scheduled during a time of day when the applicant is most focused or best able to communicate
- A location accessible for someone using a mobility device
- Advance copies of interview questions
- Good lighting
- Seating arrangements where the candidate can see interviewers clearly

## Communication

Applicants who communicate differently will let you know how they will do so. Some communication styles and methods may include:

- ASL interpretation
- Speechreading
- Using hearing aids or Assistive Listening Systems
- Understanding straightforward language instead of figures of speech
- Not making eye contact
- Writing
- Using Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC) devices

Some general tips to keep in mind:

- If you are wondering whether a candidate needs help at any stage of the interview process, ask. The candidate may need help and explain what kind or the candidate may not need help.
- Unless an applicant requests otherwise, speak at a normal pace and volume.
- Speak to the applicant directly, not to a support person.
- Do not touch a service animal or mobility device without its owner's permission.
- If an applicant does not know how much information to offer in response to a question, let the applicant know when you have received enough information or when you need more.

## Accessible Interview Formats

Some applicants may request an alternative interview format, such as a telephone interview rather than a face-to-face one, or an interview over Skype instead of the telephone. Applicants who have difficulty thinking and responding quickly may benefit from more time to formulate responses during the interview. Applicants who have trouble answering hypothetical questions or interacting socially might be best able to show their skills in other ways, such as written questionnaires, skills-based tests, or simulations of job tasks.

## Disclosure of Disability during Interviews

Interviewers cannot request a medical diagnosis. They also cannot ask questions about an applicant's disability unless a question relates to how an applicant would perform certain job tasks. Applicants who disclose their disabilities before or during an interview may offer information about disability and accommodations, while others may focus on other aspects of their backgrounds, such as previous work or educational experiences, that they feel are more relevant.

Employers who know how to make the hiring process accessible will have access to a greater pool of qualified and eager applicants. They will also be able to hold successful interviews with workers who choose not to disclose their disabilities, accommodate existing workers who develop disabilities and do more business with customers or clients with disabilities.

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