



# idea summary

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity  
and Accessibility









## at our core

Team, Trust, Integrity and Inclusion are core values at Omaha Performing Arts. We appreciate and value ideas that come from a diverse work environment, and we believe in fostering an inclusive culture that can provide an atmosphere which allows all individuals to attain their greatest potential, achieve a welcoming environment for our patrons and artists and provide deep, enriching engagement for the communities we serve.

This document serves to summarize more than five years of progressive work both internally and externally. Several addenda are also included at the end of the summary which provide greater detail.

**04 Strategic Plan**

**06 Administration**

**10 Taking Action**

**14 Accessibility**

**16 In the Community**

# strategic plan

## **Arts Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Strategic Plan** (2017 - 2021)

The IDEA Strategic Plan has informed our work over the past years. It is a dynamic document that is updated annually. These efforts have been advocated and supported by President Joan Squires and the initiatives and programs have been developed and led by VP of Human Capital and Inclusion Jillian Davis. VP of Programming and Education Andy Cassano has joined the leadership of these efforts, and the work is guided by an internal committee of more than 10 staff members from across all departments. It is incorporated into the institutional Strategic Plan which is discussed, reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors annually.







**↑15%**

**BIPOC NEW HIRES  
HAVE RISEN 15% SINCE  
IMPLEMENTING THE  
IDEA STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **Key Initiatives**

**01**

Improve representation of people of color at all levels of the organization

**02**

Promote fair and equitable practices.

**03**

Create an inclusive work environment that fosters creativity and innovation

**04**

Engage external stakeholders to further promote O-pa values and common goals

**05**

Hold leadership and staff accountable for achieving goals and objectives



# administration

## Administrative Recruitment

Omaha Performing Arts is committed to a diverse and dynamic workforce and has implemented fair and equitable workplace practices across our entire organization, including hiring, strategic planning, volunteers and third-party contractors and daily operations. The work began several years ago and is ongoing.

Our recruitment, hiring, compensation and professional development practices are built with our organization's core practices of Team, Trust, Integrity and Inclusion. Formal relations have been developed as part of our efforts to increase the diversity of our candidate pools with the following organizations:

- National Black MBA Association (NBMBA)
- Association of Latino Professionals For America (ALPFA)
- National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP)
- Urban League Young Professionals
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- UNO Inclusion Services
- Empowerment Network



38%  
↑

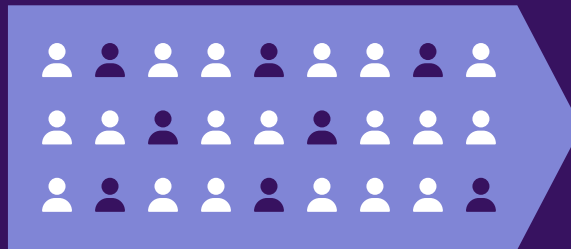
Since 2016, we've had a 38% increased in internal promotion of BIPOC employees. In 2019, 5% of BIPOC staff were promoted.



## Staff Demographics

30%

BIPOC STAFF  
IN 2021



OF  
THAT



WHITE COLLAR  
POSITIONS

29%

NEW HIRES  
ARE BIPOC



11%  
DECREASE

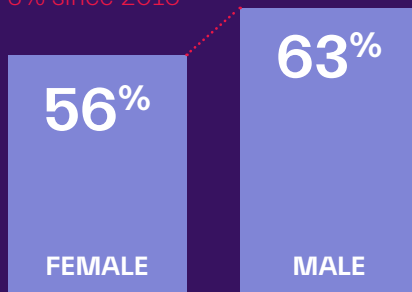
BIPOC  
TURNOVE  
RATE

Within 3 years  
the annual  
rate has gone  
down 11%

10%

BIPOC SENIOR  
STAFF

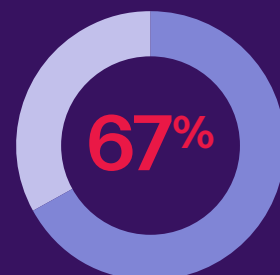
The gender gap  
has narrowed by  
3% since 2016



WHITE COLLAR  
STAFF BY GENDER



FEMALE  
STAFF



FEMALE  
SENIOR STAFF



**At O-pa, we believe  
an inclusive work  
environment allows us  
all to reach our greatest  
potential and achieve  
the greatest benefits  
for our patrons.**

**Gennean Scott**

## Vendors and Contractors

Two of O-pa's largest contractors are minority-owned companies:

**Lions Gate Security** – venue and performance security

**Total Cleaning Solutions** – housekeeping services



## Volunteers and Governance

The O-pa Board of Directors Governance Committee is actively cultivating and recruiting board candidates that reflect more diversity of ethnicity and gender. A committee of board members has identified several candidates and discussions are underway.

Efforts are also moving forward to further diversify in our volunteer groups to reflect our community, including both the Ambassadors and the Presenters Circle.

## 2020 HRAM Award

The Human Resource Association of the Midlands (HRAM) IDEAL Award for inclusion, diversity, equity, advocacy and leadership recognizes Omaha companies and organizations for their diversity and inclusion initiatives, research, implementation and successes at all levels.

In 2020, Omaha Performing Arts was named as one of three local organizations that exemplified a dedication to diversity and inclusion efforts. The award specifically recognized O-pa's ongoing commitment to implementing our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility policies.





# taking action

## IDEA Committee

In 2017, O-pa formed an employee committee, IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility), focused primarily internally to ensure these values are carried through organization-wide. Along with the IDEA strategic plan, the following three pages highlight activities and training initiated by the committee.





## staff activities

Collaboration with the Autism Action Partnership to develop sensory-friendly performance toolkits and social narratives

Monthly IDEA features in employee newsletter (starting in March 2020)

Annual participation in community events that celebrate diversity and inclusion such as Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo and Pride

Monthly IDEA blogs on O-pa website, shared on O-pa's social media and emailed to patrons

Annual professional and volunteer development resources to further personal education, including HR quarterly newsletter and emails

Establishment of the Accessibility Sub-Committee (see page 14)



## Training

While work continues, accomplishments include, but are not limited to:

## 2018



### 02.18

Lunch-and-learn called “The Break” to educate staff on different cultures represented by staff

### 09.18

2-hour all-staff and volunteer training on cultural sensitivity, unconscious bias, stereotypes, microaggressions and relationship building by Moniki Gunn-Cannon, Gunn & Cannon Empowerment Group

### 11.18

Lunch-and-learn called “The Break” to educate staff on different cultures represented by staff

## 2019



### 02.19

2-day professional training for managers and other select staff and volunteers by Kaisha Johnson of Women of Color in the Arts to discuss community building, equity, inclusion and diversity terminology

### 02.19

Lunch-and-learn called “The Break” to educate staff on different cultures represented by staff

### 03.19

Staff-led book club for staff on *So You Want To Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo

### 04.19

Staff outing to include Joslyn Museum Exhibit: *30 Americans* followed by a luncheon and self-guided tour at Big Mama’s Kitchen



### 05.19

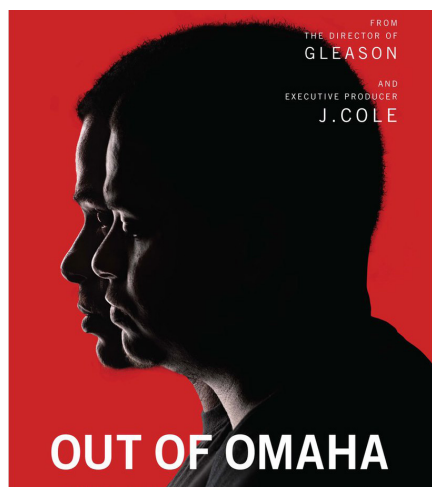
Sexual harassment training for all staff facilitated by HR on sexual harassment, timeline of laws and the “Me Too” movement, how to recognize harassment, organizational costs of harassment, bystander training, intervention, organizational policies regarding reporting, investigation and prevention

### 06.19

Implicit bias training for Ambassadors (volunteers)

### 07.19

Staff-led book club for staff on *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin Diangelo



### 10.19

Ally training for all staff facilitated by Inclusive Communities trainers to discuss staff identities and how they influence communication and interpersonal relationships, microaggressions, allyship and creating inclusive spaces

### 10.19

Optional documentary viewing for staff of *Out of Omaha*

## 2020



### 01.20

Sensory-friendly performance training for all staff and volunteers by Autism Action Partnership on learning autism characteristics understanding how autism affects patrons' experiences and what staff and volunteers can do to help improve experiences of patrons with autism and their families

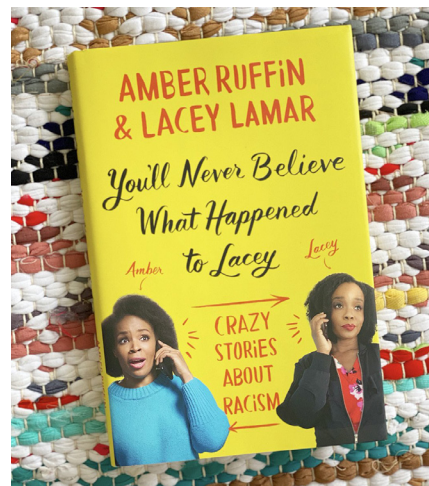
### 03.20

Optional viewing for staff of *American Son*

### 08.20

Mandatory Implicit Bias Test, Discussion and Roundtable

## 2021



### 02.21

Staff-led presentation on the Harlem Renaissance Experience

### 03.21

Mandatory 2-part mental health in the workplace training for all staff

### 04.21

Mandatory 2-part ADA Training for all staff

### 05.21

Staff-led book club for staff with author Lacey Lamar on *You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lacey: Crazy Stories about Race* by Amber Ruffin and Lacey Lamar

### 10.21

Mandatory Unconscious Bias Training – Video course by Vernā Myers at The Vernā Myers Company and small group discussions



# accessibility

## Accessibility Committee

O-pa has established an Accessibility Committee that is finalizing a comprehensive plan for auditing our venues, services, technology and communication. We are committed to ensuring every patron's experience is convenient, safe and remarkable. We use feedback from audiences and community partners to improve accessibility features at both the Holland Center and the Orpheum Theater.

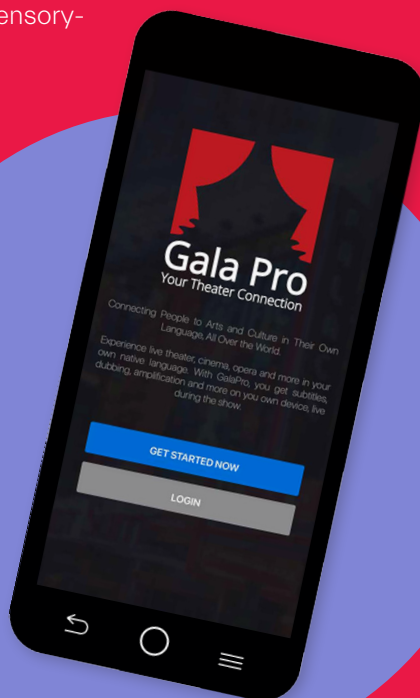
A list of our Accessibility offerings can be found at [o-pa.org/our-venues/accessibility](https://o-pa.org/our-venues/accessibility).





## services

American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, assisted listening devices, a hearing loop, braille and large print programs, sensory-friendly toolkits and more.



## technology

Full Wi-Fi access in the performance halls in order to utilize the GalaPro app which provides audio description and live captioning.



## venues

Wheelchair and companion seating, accessible parking, accessible restrooms, public access to our stages, baby-changing stations, lactation rooms and more.

## communication

O-pa recently conducted a website audit and made several changes including descriptive alt text on all images, updated website copy for increased readability, increasing color contrast and font size and simplifying navigation.





# in the community

## Programming

O-pa is dedicated to presenting a variety of performances that actively engage our diverse populations in Omaha and the greater metropolitan area. As the largest arts nonprofit in the state, we present the best of Broadway, jazz, blues, dance, comedy, family and popular entertainment. Since the founding of O-pa, we have and will continue to create engaging experiences that promote inclusion, with open dialogue and to cultivate community relationships through a diversity of artists, performances and events that are reflective of our community. (For statistics see Addendum A – page 20)

To activate engagement and community partnerships, many artists and shows enable us to explore important and relevant topics of today through workshops, pre- and post-concert activities, lectures and talkbacks. Audiences participate in lively conversations with national and local artists and experts before many concerts through our Curtain Warmer programs which most recently have included presentations by the Great Plains Black History Museum, Ranky Tanky and the African Culture Connection.

Past workshops have included the MEMPHIS Diversity Forum, the WICKED Anti-Bullying Summit, the Cultural Inclusion Summit with COME FROM AWAY and a mentorship summit with A BRONX TALE. We also provide sensory-friendly events, with accompanying activities every year.

## Education and Community Engagement

Our Education and Community Engagement programs reach more than 100,000 students and adults per year across Nebraska and in parts of Iowa through a variety of opportunities including student matinees, master classes, professional development workshops and more. (For listing see Addendum B – page 21)

To further connect our community to the arts as well as develop O-pa's relationships and events outside of our venues, we partner with several Omaha organizations such as 75 North, Salem Baptist Church, Miller Park, Partnership 4 Kids, Inclusive Communities, Autism Action Partnership, Omaha Girls Rock and more. O-pa also offers Arts Access which provides underrepresented populations with free tickets to select performances. (See addendum C – page 23)



**We've partnered with  
artists and community  
organizations to present  
workshops, curtain  
warmers and talk backs**



**20<sup>+</sup>** BIPOC  
EVENTS

We've held over 20 Voices  
AMPLIFIED! events including  
performances, discussions and  
workshops with BIPOC artists



## Voices AMPLIFIED

The long, rich history of education and engagement activities, along with a desire to expand those activities and make a stronger impact, have informed our program, Voices AMPLIFIED!, a multidisciplinary arts and social justice initiative to amplify artists in diverse cultures. More than just a one-time experience, Voices AMPLIFIED! is a season-long series of interconnected performances, events, panel discussions, workshops and talkbacks that intersect local and national artists with community partners in food, health, education and other social services around a central theme.

Voices AMPLIFIED! is led by a committee of ten community members comprised of educators, artists, local leaders and O-pa employees who meet every other week to collectively design each program, establish the best locations, collaborators and featured guests, help with grassroots marketing and identify barriers, challenges and solutions in reaching marginalized communities.

This year's committee includes Jillian Davis, Andy Cassano, Alexis Arai, Raydell Cordell III, Aaron Gregory, Bill Grennan, Dara Hogan, Matt Mason, Marcos Mora, Victoria Ortega, Jade Rogers, Gennean Scott, Kathy Tyree and Hugo Zamorano, along with community partners at No More Empty Pots, The Simple Foundation, Film Streams, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the UNO College of Community, Fine Arts and Media.

## O-pa as a Community Partner

Omaha Performing Arts serves as a resource and an example to other local, regional and national arts organizations for hiring policies, retention practices and trainings provided for employees.

O-pa's Human Resources department has been conducting diversity training for the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands since 2018.

O-pa is also a participant in their newly developed BIPOC Leadership group and serves as a committee member for the HRAM Diversity & Inclusion Committee since 2017.

## Community Resource Group

O-pa has developed a Community Resource Group to provide resources and support to our employees and patrons. The CRG will serve as a conduit for leadership regarding community issues and needs, and work to connect O-pa and the community by sharing their expertise and experiences to improve inclusion and equity across all departments and activities. Invitations have been extended to key stakeholders in the BIPOC community.

## Addendum A – Programming

### O-pa Programming Statistics – Focusing on Diversity of Artists and Productions

The following represents the number of performances on the annual presenting season that featured BIPOC artists since the 2009/2010 season. The numbers below do not include Broadway, commercial touring or rental shows.

#### Shows had BIPOC artists

FY10	9 out of 32	28%
FY11	13 out of 36	36%
FY12	4 out of 20	20%
FY13	15 out of 47	32%
FY14	13 out of 42	31%
FY15	11 out of 45	24%
FY16	16 out of 73	22%
FY17	13 out of 40	33%
FY18	18 out of 42	43%
FY19	16 out of 59	27%
FY20	18 out of 45	40%
March - June 2020 (covid shutdown)	23 out of 36	64%
July 2020 - June 2021	25 out of 27	93%

#### Upcoming 2021/2022 Season:

BIPOC Artists represent 50% of our Presents programming and 50% of our artist budget

- 3 of 4 Jazz on the Green
- 9 of 17 O-pa Presents programs
- 3 of 7 Holland Music Club
- 2 of 3 National Geographic Live

Voices AMPLIFIED! will include 20 performances, discussions, workshops and conversations with BIPOC artists.

## Addendum B – Education and Engagement

### O-pa Education and Community Engagement Programs – Focusing on IDEA

O-pa's education and community partnerships in the Orpheum Theater, Holland Performing Arts Center and the community connect our artists with students and community members across the area and region.

#### In 2020/2021:

- 6 out of 11 artists hired for Theater Essentials Online are BIPOC
- 55% of Disney Musicals in Schools students are BIPOC
- 4 of 11 Disney teaching artists are BIPOC

Over past 7 years 50% of Nebraska High School Theatre Academy (NHSTA) students nominated to compete at the national Jimmy Awards in New York City are BIPOC, and the NHSTA Showcase has consistently been hosted by BIPOC artists from Omaha, NE.

In the fall of 2020, education staff hired local accessibility specialist Fran Sillau to provide training for the Disney teaching artists and participating elementary school teachers on inclusive theater practices.

In July 2021 education staff will hire K&R Strategies to facilitate a story circle dialogue series for BIPOC student alumni of NHSTA program.

#### **The following is a list of many activities designed to connect IDEA values and goals with the community:**

2009/2010 - "Journey Through Journaling" residency with THE COLOR PURPLE

2009/2010 - Bela Fleck: The Africa Project in partnership with African Culture Connection

2010/2011: Trey McIntyre Project

2010/2011: Step Afrika! Residency

2011/2012: community drumming residency with Mark Powers

2011/2012: Social dance workshops with Luna Negra

2012/2013: The Rite of Spring community celebration week with The Joffrey Ballet, Greg Proops and The Bad Plus

2012/2013: Diversity forum with MEMPHIS THE MUSICAL

2012/2013: Residency with Kevin Spencer's "Healing Magic"

2012/2013: League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with THE LION KING

2013/2014: Residency with Ron K. Brown Evidence Dance Company

2013/2014: League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with WAR HORSE

2013/2014: Anti-bullying summit with WICKED in partnership with the ADL

2014/2015: Workshops with Black Violin

2014/2015: League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with MOTOWN THE MUSICAL

2015/2016: "Get Up & Go" with NEWSIES in partnership with Girls Inc.

*continued*



## Addendum B - Continued

2015/2016: League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with NEWSIES

2015/2016: Holland Stages Festival

2015/2016: Heroes Night with WIZARD OF OZ

2015/2016: Dance Theatre of Harlem residency

2016/2017: Residency with BASETRACK LIVE

2016/2017: Residency with Carolyn Dorfman Dance in partnership with Institute for Holocaust Education

2016/2017: Residency with LA Gay Men's Chorus "It gets better" project

2016/2017: Heroes Night with WHITE CHRISTMAS

2016/2017: League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with SOMETHING ROTTEN

2017/2018: Heroes Night with AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

2017/2018: Cultural inclusion summit with THE KING AND I

2017/2018: League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with THE KING AND I

2017/2018: Residency with Spectrum Dance Theater: A Rap on Race

2018/2019: Residency with Artist in Residence for Dance, Ray Mercer

2018/2019: Cultural inclusion summit with COME FROM AWAY

2018/2019: League/ATPAM Diversity Initiative with ALADDIN

2018/2019: Heroes Night with ALADDIN

2019/2020: Heroes Night with A BRONX TALE

2019/2020: Mentorship summit with A BRONX TALE

2019/2020: Residency with Ailey II

2019/2020: Residency with Artist in Residence for Dance, Ray Mercer

2019/2020: Residency with Camille A. Brown & Dancers

## Addendum C - Arts Access

Omaha Performing Arts partners with numerous community organizations in a variety of ways. Through Arts Access, O-pa distributes thousands of free tickets to organizations each year that do not have regular access to the performing arts. Below are current O-pa Arts Access community partners.

75 North	Crossroads of Western Iowa	NE Methodist College Upward
Abide	Douglas County Youth Center	Bound Program
AIM Upward Bound (Bryan)	EITC Coalition - Americorps	Nebraska Chinese Association
AIM Upward Bound (PLV Public Schools)	ENCOR	NorthStar
All Communities Outreach Services (formerly Christ Cathedral)	Girls Inc. Omaha	Omaha Girls Rock
Angel Guardians, Inc. (VSP Club)	Girl Scouts	Orchard Gardens Assisted Living
Autism Society of Nebraska	Heartland Family Youth Shelter	Partnership 4 Kids
Autism Society Omaha	Hope Center for Kids	Pear Tree Performing Arts
Banister's Leadership Academy	I Am Dance	Project Everlast
Bethlehem House	Immanuel Pathways	Refugee Empowerment Center
Big Brothers Big Sisters Midlands	Immigrant Legal Center	Rejuvenating Women
Boys and Girls Club of Omaha	Inclusive Communities	Royale Oaks Assisted Living
Boys Town	Intercultural Senior Center	Salem Baptist Church
Carole's House of Hope	Iowa Western Community College	Seven Oaks at Notre Dame
CASA	IWCC - TRIO Student Support Services	St Luke's Teen Center (United Methodist Church)
Catholic Charities Christ Child North	JCC	Start Center for Entrepreneurship
Center for Holistic Development Inc.	Kids Can	The Council Bluffs Schools Foundation (STARS)*
Centro Latino of Iowa	Kroc Center - Senior Recreation Group	TRAC Re-entry Services
Child Saving Institute	Learning Community Center of North Omaha	TRAClife (Teen Reach Adventure Camp)
Collective for Youth	Learning Community Center of South Omaha	Upward Bound Math & Science: MCC/Northwest High
Completely Kids	Lutheran Family Services	Upward Bound: Methodist
Creighton Intercultural Center	MCC - TRIO Single Parent Program	Upward Bound Math & Science: Methodist
Creighton Student Support Services	Mexican Dance Academy of Nebraska	Urban League of Nebraska
(ICC and Native American Advancement Program)	Minority Outreach Resource Education (M.O.R.E.)	VA Medical Center Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program
Creighton TRIO Talent Search	Morton Boys & Girls Club	VODEC
Creighton TRIO Program	Mosaic	YMCA of the Okobojis
Upward Bound Classic: Creighton	NE Methodist College Upward Bound Math & Science	
Upward Bound Math & Science: Creighton		

# omaha performing arts

1200 Douglas Street  
Omaha, NE 68102  
[o-pa.org](http://o-pa.org)

