

# SMAC Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement

*Approved 5-28-19*

We believe that all people deserve art and culture in their lives – from a moment of personal inspiration, to a neighborhood musical gathering, to a glorious production that brings thousands to their feet, to the greatest of all: uniting people through creative expression.

Tackling the issues of equity and inclusion requires commitment, respect, patience, determination, and flexibility. SMAC understands that there is no one single way to achieve equitable results, however we are committed to a sustained effort in breaking down barriers and building bridges across communities.

The Southwest Regional Arts Council acknowledges the Dakota Nation as the original people of the land in which we live and work.

SMAC recognizes we can build increased connectivity and economic strength through supporting cultural and artistic expression of all social identities including race, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic background and the intersectionality of these identities.

SMAC acknowledges that systems currently in place have historically marginalized and underserved indigenous people of the Americas and communities of color. We are committed to closing access gaps in the arts with urgency and accountability.

As stewards of public funds, SMAC embraces the unique opportunity to ensure that all residents of our designated eighteen-county region have access to quality arts experiences. SMAC is committed to engaging in the relationship building, self-reflection, community discourse, and hands-on work imperative to make our region a place where all artistic communities can thrive. Our willingness to engage in participatory processes requires trust to be built, and that visioning, ideas, and feedback will be incorporated and credited/attributed appropriately. SMAC will focus our resources to educate ourselves, modify our practices and shift our own organizational culture to challenge disparities as we move toward equitable arts communities. We embrace our responsibility to lead equity work in funding, while informing and learning from equity and inclusion in the artistic practices and programming of our constituents.

## DEFINITIONS

**Diversity.** The presence of difference within a given setting which may include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, education, geographic region, national origin, and more.

**Equity.** Equity is the act of identifying and eliminating the barriers within the procedures, processes and distribution of resources by institutions or systems that have prevented the full participation of marginalized groups while guaranteeing the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people.

**Inclusion.** Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued. An inclusive climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions so that all people can fully participate in the organization's opportunities.

**Underserved / Underrepresented.** Refers to a population of individuals who have historically been outside the purview of arts and humanities programs due to factors such as a high incidence of racial discrimination, income below the poverty line or to geographic isolation. Being underrepresented means to have insufficient or inadequate representation in decision-making or program support.