

# Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access (IDEA) Action Plan

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**Wave Hill is committed to supporting our community of staff, board, artists, educators, volunteers and visitors by creating a diverse, equitable, inclusive and accessible culture both internally and externally. We strive to embed these values in everything we do including our workplace, programs and communications.**

In 2016 Wave Hill embarked on a new strategic plan to establish organizational goals for the coming decade. During its development we reached out to everybody: constituents, board and staff. The plan we created together is now being implemented, and at its core, makes a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion including ambitious plans for improving accessibility at Wave Hill. In 2018 we took further steps by developing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan for our workplace. This plan includes specific goals for new strategies and

practices for hiring, interviewing, orientation, training and career development, with a particular focus on underrepresented communities. We began implementing the DEI Plan in 2019 and created a DEI Committee of staff to help measure and track progress.

Over the past year we have expanded our IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity and access) work to include our programs and visitor experience. As our work progresses and the needs of our community change, we see even more opportunity to expand this work. Thus, we have created this IDEA Action Plan incorporating all our work so far and outlining our future priorities, goals and actions to guide us as we move forward.

This IDEA Action Plan is a living document that will be updated periodically to remain relevant and responsive. This summary makes clear our intentions and the concrete steps we are taking and will continue to take to become a more equitable and inclusive organization.

## Action Plan

### COMMUNITY AND VISITORS

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**Overarching Objective: Enhance diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in our programs and overall visitor experience.**

We want the circle of those we serve to grow and fully reflect the cultural vibrancy of New York City. Our strategic plan includes substantial investment in accessibility both through expanded physical

access across the grounds and by embracing those of various backgrounds and abilities through digital technology and on-site tools. It also sets goals for community engagement, expanding Wave Hill's reach and the impact of its programs beyond our grounds. Our IDEA Action plan calls for new strategies to ensure we embrace and support a broader audience with emphasis on access and inclusion.

#### I. Community and Visitors – Programs

##### *Actions and Goals:*

- ▶ Establish guidelines for program development that incorporate IDEA goals and incorporate these in planning the long-range program calendar.
- ▶ Examine existing programs to ensure equitable and inclusive language, content and presentation.
- ▶ Consider IDEA goals in the development of interpretive materials and presentations.
- ▶ Establish an internal evaluation system for programs that includes IDEA goals.
- ▶ Expand program reach beyond Wave Hill property with an emphasis on underserved communities.



- ▶ When considering partnerships, prioritize partners that help reach our IDEA goals.
- ▶ Implement access and inclusion programming developed for specific nondominant groups to experience Wave Hill while knowing their needs will be met.
  - » For example, nature connection sessions with families from Bronx homeless shelters and women veterans and their families; nature and art programs for adults with dementia and their caregivers; and job skills workshops with college-aged students on the Autism Spectrum.

## II. Community and Visitors – Visitor Experience

### *Actions and Goals:*

- ▶ Develop and implement a public-facing nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policy that incorporates a process for visitors and staff to report discriminatory behavior.
- ▶ Update public garden etiquette guidelines to be more culturally inclusive and sensitive to the needs of people.
- ▶ Train frontline staff in bystander intervention and conflict de-escalation techniques.
- ▶ Provide mandatory training for all staff in unconscious bias.
- ▶ Improve accessibility on the grounds through signage, interpretation and physical improvements to the site.
- ▶ Refresh didactic materials onsite and online, and revamp tours to reflect the context for Wave Hill's evolution including pre-European history.
- ▶ Expand staff to include designated drivers to support shuttle service and courtesy cart service.

## III. Community and Visitors – Communication and Outreach

### *Actions and Goals:*

- ▶ Develop text guidelines for website, social media, print and email communications that address IDEA goals.
- ▶ Improve onsite way-finding by incorporating accessibility and international symbols in signage.
- ▶ Enhance communications for non-English speaking audiences.
- ▶ Create access map and guide, and communicate accessibly across multiple platforms.
- ▶ Expand efforts to be inclusive of images with people of different abilities in communication and outreach materials.
- ▶ Include accessibility technology in website.
- ▶ Implement assistive listening devices/induction loops and ASL signing for programs on request.

## STAFF

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### **Overarching Objective: Enhance diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in our workplace and organizational culture.**

We believe that our staff should reflect the cultural vibrancy of our city and country. We strive to create a diverse workforce, provide equitable opportunity and support for staff and to engender an inclusive organizational culture. Once on board, we want our staff to grow within the organization, developing

their skills and competencies. We are committed to equal opportunity and follow recruitment and selection practices that comply with all applicable employment laws. However, we acknowledge that more needs to be done to recruit, hire and retain people who add diverse perspectives to our staff.

We endeavor to foster an organizational culture that encourages and celebrates diversity and enables staff to feel comfortable in their work environment. Thus,



we strive to improve communication and opportunities to interact meaningfully interdepartmentally and across hierarchy. Through the strategic planning

process, we developed committees for staff from different departments and career levels to work together on strategic goals and priority areas.

## **I. Staff – Hiring and Recruitment**

### ***Actions and Goals:***

- ▶ Review job description language, recruitment outreach and interview processes to ensure we fully encourage a diverse pool of applicants.
- ▶ Assess current recruiting and hiring practices to increase access to all.
- ▶ Create a working environment from date of hire that allows new staff members to feel included and empowered with knowledge about the work culture, policies and procedures.
- ▶ Monitor salary structure, benchmarking with similar organizations, so that potential inequalities are addressed at all staff levels.

## **II. Staff – Retention and Promotion**

### ***Actions and Goals:***

- ▶ Clearly communicate organizational goals and recognize staff contributions.
- ▶ Develop mechanisms to foster the growth of staff and pathways to leadership.
- ▶ Institute an annual process for measuring performance and individualized goal setting.
- ▶ Create ongoing formal and informal training that is open and accessible to staff at all levels.
- ▶ Be flexible and responsive to staff needs by providing accommodations, including for those experiencing personal challenges.
- ▶ Create a working environment that provides equitable opportunities for advancement.

## **III. Staff – Inclusive Organizational Culture**

### ***Actions and Goals:***

- ▶ Institute unconscious bias training for all staff.
- ▶ Provide formalized opportunities for knowledge sharing and mentorship throughout the institution.
  - » For example, a Lunch and Learn series was developed during which any staff member can engage other staff informally on an area of expertise.
- ▶ Develop accessible, ongoing informal and formal organizational learning opportunities that encourage and embrace diversity, equity and inclusion.
  - » For example, trainings already held include Digging into Institutional Change and Understanding Trauma.
- ▶ Develop a mechanism for implementing and reviewing the IDEA efforts at the institution.
- » For example, the DEI Committee developed a goal measurement and tracking mechanism for our DEI Plan, the Accessibility Committee was created to oversee the implementation of accessibility goals in the Strategic Plan, and shorter-term working groups are created to address emergent and pressing needs, such as the development and implementation of a re-opening plan after the NYC PAUSE restrictions were lifted.
- ▶ Improve communication throughout the organization so that the voices of those who come from underrepresented communities or historically marginalized groups are supported and included in decision-making processes.
- ▶ Create a new staff Code of Conduct to be included in orientation process and handbook.



## DIVERSE AND EQUITABLE LEADERSHIP

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### **Overarching Objective: Diversify leadership within the organization and board.**

We strive to recruit and develop staff and board members who demonstrate leadership skills, understand and are committed to the organization's mission, align with the organization's needs and reflect the communities we serve. We have created opportunities for interaction between the leadership team and board with other staff members. For example, we have developed committees that consist of staff from various departments and career levels to work together on specific strategic goals and other high priority areas. We also recognize efforts are needed to clarify decision-making processes and increase transparency.

### ***Actions and Goals:***

- ▶ Develop steps for recruiting diverse candidates for leadership positions as they become available.
- ▶ Create additional management opportunities and levels to allow greater growth and skill development for the staff.
- ▶ Create mentorship opportunities and increase areas for staff to work collaboratively to expand organizational knowledge and engagement.
- ▶ Improve staff communication around organizational goals and decision-making.
- ▶ Create opportunities for staff to interact with Board through Board meetings, programs and volunteer projects.
- ▶ Engage the Committee on Directors of the Board of Directors to recruit new members for the board with a focus on increasing diversity.
- ▶ Create guidelines for exploration of prospective Board members and a ladder for outreach and interaction to increase and deepen overall engagement.

