

SPARC EDI COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

September 2021

Staff = all Programs, Development, Finance, Operations and Executive Staff

Instructors = Adjunct faculty, resident faculty, production overhires, guest artists

Board = All members of SPARC's Board of Directors and non-board members that sit on sub-committees

Youth = children and young people of all ages engaged in SPARC programs, in-school, out of school, on campus, or in community programs

1. CREATE A CULTURE OF BELONGING

All programming (art, artforms, themes, subject matter, and other content) will be accessible and affordable to all communities and culturally relevant to BIPOC communities, immigrant communities, LGBTQ+ communities, and/or people with disabilities.

- a. Provide clear, accessible information and system transparency for financial aid, programming costs, and program enrollment
- b. Make programming free for youth that attend Title 1 schools in Richmond City, Henrico Co., Hanover Co., and Chesterfield Co.
- c. Increase programming that is culturally relevant and specific to BIPOC communities and other marginalized communities (this will require research and partnerships)
- d. Partner with schools and other organizations in the community to support inclusive opportunities for youth, particularly in communities of color and neighborhoods beyond the West End and Southside
- e. Increase no fee/low fee opportunities for 14-18-year-olds
- f. Programs are all developed with accessibility in mind, such as locations, times, financial aid, transportation, costs, etc.
- g. Provide opportunities for staff and instructors to learn and participate in all programming areas

2. SPARC WILL UPHOLD EDI VALUES WITH ALL CONSTITUENTS

- a. Provide clear, consistent, mandatory EDI training and support for all board, staff, and instructors
- b. New Executive Director must have experience upholding EDI practices and be prepared to provide EDI leadership at SPARC

- c. Properly vet teachers prior to hire, including fair hiring practices, thorough interviews with discussions of EDI practices, and sample workshops
- d. Recruit and retain BIPOC board, staff, instructors, and students
- e. Provide training and resources to instructors to prepare them to build inclusive creative spaces, such as:
 - i. Onboarding packet that includes curriculum guides, a games dictionary, and teaching guides
 - ii. Child development and Creative Youth Development trainings and guides
 - iii. Fundamentals of building safe space - SPARC Norms (collaboratively created space agreements), learning students' names and pronouns, respecting differences and boundaries, maintaining age appropriate conversations
 - iv. Develop communication channels between SPARC and instructors to increase resource sharing opportunities and overall program awareness
- f. Develop an evaluation and assessment process that provides opportunities for board, staff, instructors, and students to provide feedback and recommendations, in order to make expectations clear and maintain accountability.

3. SPARC'S SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES WILL REFLECT OUR COMMITMENT TO EDI

Implement EDI practices in day-to-day workings of the organization (systems, policies, procedures, committees, meetings, etc.) as well as big picture strategic decisions.

- a. Develop inclusive decision-making practices - those most affected by a decision are at the decision-making table.
 - i. Establish an ongoing EDI Advisory Board
 - ii. Establish a Youth Advisory Board
- b. Review Employee Handbook in conjunction with staff to ensure alignment with EDI values
- c. Increase advocacy for BIPOC individuals engaged in SPARC programming and in the community
- d. Cohesive messaging of inclusivity across all programming
- e. Engage a diversity and inclusion officer to be the point person to ensure accountability and day-to-day coordination
- f. EDI plan with measurable outcomes incorporated into the organizational strategic plan, evaluated annually

NEXT STEPS

1. Staff Leadership + Board will create a tactical implementation plan for recommendations presented today
2. 2021-2022 plan to be shared back with EDI Commission by January 2022
3. A permanent EDI subcommittee will be in place by early 2022 to take on support and leadership on implementation of recommendations + advising on current and future EDI points of interest and need. Current EDI Commission will be invited to join, and will work together to develop committee structure.