



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Plan



OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2018, the Board of Trustees established an ED&I task force chaired by trustee Warren Buliox. The following year, the Board adopted a new 5-year strategic plan with three priorities, one of which being ED&I. The ED&I task force was transitioned to a permanent standing board committee with the chair joining the executive committee. The expansion of ED&I committee is comprised of trustees, staff leadership and community members.

Our collective work has been guided by engaging with an outside consultancy, the Kaleidoscope Group. The Kaleidoscope Group conducted an organization wide ED&I analysis and review as well as numerous stakeholder interviews. A visioning session was led by KG with the leadership team to develop a vision for our ED&I work. In June 2020, we brought on our first chief diversity officer, Tammy Belton-Davis, to serve as an accelerant for the work.

The work to get us to this place has been emotional, challenging, eye-opening, and incredibly rewarding. Perhaps the most inspiring aspect of this work has been the tremendous leadership shown by our staff in moving Milwaukee Rep forward.

Milwaukee Rep's talented team, committed Board of Trustees and these many months of crucial conversations, honest introspection, and ongoing education have given us a strong foundation on which to build an inclusive and welcoming culture. Milwaukee Rep is building a brand story that reflects our commitment to ED&I and shows our aspirations to be an anchor institution both locally and in the theater industry.

This report provides a review of our strategic plan and our successes to date, along with the priorities for the future.

Strategy

Using ED&I principles – valuing diversity, being consciously inclusive, supporting and modeling anti-racism, and continuously learning – Milwaukee Rep will work to be the change it wishes to see inside and outside its walls. To accomplish this, Milwaukee Rep will focus on these key areas:

- **Workforce:** Ensure diverse representation throughout the organization.
- **Workplace:** Build a culturally competent organization that embraces and celebrates differences.
- **Community:** Continue building stronger relationships with marginalized communities and partners.

	Goals	Actions
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization-wide diversification • Diverse talent pipeline • Professional growth and development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate recruitment plans, update job descriptions, develop recruitment materials. • Strengthen young talent pipelines through partnerships. • Managers’ proactive talent development by providing skill-building opportunities, career mentorship, coaching and talent amplification.
Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive culture • Safe environment for expression • Staff support for ED&I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop ED&I roadmap for learning providing formal and informal training opportunities at all levels of the organization. • Evaluate and update EPR, PTI and Internship programs. • Launch CUE, build internal ED&I champions and create performance metrics to measure progress.
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming that resonates with BIPOC communities • Milwaukee Rep a pillar of ED&I • Milwaukee Rep as ED&I policy community advocate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct partner listening sessions and assess programming through ED&I lens • Foster diverse organization and academic institution partnerships for regional ED&I goal advancement • Serve as a regional convener for ED&I change agents • Evaluate, monitor and track theater vendor diversity

CUE – Champions Uniting Experiences Focus Areas

Milwaukee Rep’s work group, Champions Uniting Experiences (CUE) comprised of staff from across the company has been leading and implementing our REP Forward work. CUE is prioritizing these focus areas:

- **Inclusion**
- **Cultural competence**
- **Compassion resilience (self-care)**

OUR WORK TO DATE: SUCCESS & HIGHLIGHTS

CUE Goals: Inclusion

- **Black History Month Celebration** - We launched “We Rise: MKE’s Celebration of Black History Month” in partnership with 88Nine Radio Milwaukee to honor the tremendous contributions that Black artists, administrators have made to Milwaukee Rep and our entire city.
- **Celebration of AAPI Culture, Art & Activism** - May was Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month and Milwaukee Rep continued our commitment to celebrate diversity through several virtual opportunities to hear from AAPI artists and leaders, including a video from stage and screen actor Paolo Montalban, a panel discussion with AAPI artists and a panel discussion with Milwaukee-area AAPI leaders.
- **Celebration of Pride Month** - In June, we celebrated LGBTQ+ Pride to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan, which was the tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the U.S. and Juneteenth to commemorate the ending of slavery in the United States. Led by CUE, we held interviews with local LGBTQ+ leaders and facilitated a full staff virtual educational sessions on both Juneteenth and LGBTQ+ culture.

CUE Goals: Compassion Resilience

- **Milwaukee Rep Mindfulness** - To continue our work internally to make Milwaukee Rep a more productive, inclusive, and healthy space, we asked Carrie Murphy to lead our team in mindfulness sessions in the months of April and May to help our team dissolve stress within their body, create a greater level of self-awareness, and to more easily find happiness, joy and meaning in life.
- **Leading with Empathy** - We continue our work to lean in to compassion and empathy. We understand the success of our efforts is rooted in empathy, defined as the ability to understand and share the feelings of another through a session facilitated by Tammy Belton-Davis.

CUE Goals: Cultural Competence

- **Historical Perspectives on Culture in Milwaukee and Cultural Competence** - Reggie Jackson of Nurturing Diversity Partners facilitated a session with Milwaukee Rep staff in March, 2021 to guide us in understanding how our country’s racial hierarchy developed historically, its impact on our lives today, and how we can realize America’s promise for all its citizens.
- **Fireside Chat with Dr. Bert Davis on Juneteenth** – In recognition of the Juneteenth holiday, the Milwaukee Rep team spent time with Dr. Bert Davis of America’s Black Holocaust Museum to challenge us to understand the significance of the holiday as celebration of freedom for all - and what we as a company can do to apply those principles as we advance our REP Forward work.

Community - Successes

- **REPair Divides** - The work to engage our community is also realized through REPair Divides programming. REPair Divides is a virtual dialogue series in partnership with the Zeidler Group that focuses on a piece of performance art that positively provokes conversation and action among audience members.
- **August Wilson Monologue Competition (AWMC)** - The AWMC empowers high school students around the nation with the legendary playwright's language. Students took the stage with a lens on the Black American experience throughout the 20th century and 20 Milwaukee area students performed in the virtual regional finals on March 29. Yexuanj Rivera Melendez and Fardowso Shidad represented the greater Milwaukee area in the virtual national finals in May and Rivera Melendez finished in the top six.
- **YWCA Stand Against Racism 2021** - We joined our friends and community partners at the YWCA Southeast Wisconsin in April's Stand Against Racism 2021. Milwaukee Rep's team gathered virtually to recite the pledge and continue our commitment to be a catalyst for equity issues and actively engage in conversations to create positive change.
- **Four Original Music Videos in Support of the COVID-19 Vaccines** - Milwaukee Rep released four original music videos performed by local hip hop artists, as part of Milwaukee Rep's Community Engagement Neighborhood programming, with community partners Kiran Vedula and Cody Laplant, to encourage the community to seek more information about COVID-19 vaccines.
- **Let's Talk Vaccinations: A Conversation on COVID-19** - On March 31, we hosted a panel discussion with health experts and community leaders, Dr. Ivor Benjamin, Andres Gonzalez, Paula Penebaker, and Ericka Sinclair, on how we overcome vaccine hesitancy within BIPOC communities and encourage these communities to receive the benefits of these life-saving vaccines.

Workplace - Successes

- **Engaging Our Board of Trustees** - We held our crucial conversations session with the Board of Trustees in February, 2021.
- **Crucial Conversations Training** - In December and January, our leadership team and ED&I staff workgroup participated in Crucial Conversations training with leadership coach, Alonzo Kelly, to strengthen our work in creating an environment that celebrates and promotes equity, diversity and inclusion.
- **Launched a Book/Media Club** - Created a book/media club for staff that are interested in learning and self-education by reading/watching/listening to a monthly media selection and participating in a discussion session each month.
- **Developed an ED&I Roadmap** - We have designed a roadmap focused on learning, champion engagement and continuing to deepen our ED&I work. Milwaukee Rep is providing learning at the various levels of the organization, quarterly cross departmental sharing/celebrations of REP Forward successes, equipping champions, who serve as liaisons between staff and leadership, to address issues as they arise and internalizing this work so it is fully aligned with our mission.

Workforce - Successes

- **Focus Groups with Artists, Staff and Community** - We facilitated focus groups with artists, staff and community members to understand our role as a community partner and institution and how we can become a more equitable company.
- **Action Planning for Diverse Representation** - Working collaboratively with the ED&I board committee, Milwaukee Rep leadership team and CUE, we have developed actions to recruit for future employees that are representative of Milwaukee's diverse community (including looking internally).
- **Examination of HR Processes** - We have been examining company handbooks and policies, job descriptions (Personnel, Safety, and all appendices of policies) to make sure that those documents reflect and promote our inclusive ideals, define and set goals for diverse representation (BIPOC; LGBTQ+; Ability: etc.) and socializing changes internally and externally.

HOW ARE WE MEASURING SUCCESS FROM OUR OWN VISION OF SUCCESS?

Vision of Success

- Milwaukee Rep team members working together in the spirit of generosity, teamwork and collaboration.
- Sharing, hearing, and considering everyone's differing viewpoints for high-level, game-changing artistic expression.
- Engaging a diversity of voices theater-wide to promote an inclusive and welcoming culture.
- Actively and respectfully navigating uncomfortable conversations and inevitable tension for the enrichment of all.
- Measuring our progress to ensure a sustained, long-term ED&I commitment.

Measuring Success

- Develop an ED&I Pulse survey of 5 questions to track ED&I progress and report organization wide.
- Incorporate an ED&I performance measure in performance management documents to ensure accountability and integration of our work.
- Develop curriculum for achieving our learning and education goals.
- Sharing, hearing and considering everyone's differing viewpoints for the highest level of artistic expression.

WHAT ARE WE FOCUSED ON FOR THE FUTURE?

Workforce Opportunities

- Identify diverse representation gaps throughout the organization and prioritize key areas of focus
- Work to create a pipeline for opportunities and to allow the development of positions as a point of entry for diverse representatives

Communications & Evaluation

- Develop a long-term communications strategy which identifies new ways and language regarding how Milwaukee Rep will describe itself to achieve this objective
 - Identify some short-term talking points that everyone in the organization and at the board can begin using to make the shift
 - Create marketing tools for recruiting staff representing all marginalized communities.
 - Continue building our brand story around about REP Forward work and impact.
 - Expand our work on measuring success and communicating quarterly to our stakeholder groups.

Community

- Serve as a driving advocate in the region for other organizations/entities/government, etc. to address policy changes which support ED&I.
- Develop and launch a baseline community survey which measures Milwaukee Rep's progress in the community
- Conduct community focus groups and neighborhood partners to see where there are gaps and where improvements in community connections can be made in marginalized communities and what's needed to change the narrative for the future.
 - Conduct one on one listening session with our neighborhood partners and their key stakeholders.
 - Assess progress in connecting with residents through neighborhood partnerships.



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