

## **Race Equity and Diversity Action Plan**

**Touchstone Theatre**

**Created: September 2024**

**Updated: July 2025**

### **Preamble**

It is widely understood that systemic discrimination exists in Canada, intentionally aimed at IBPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, as well as those living with a disability. The colonial institutions which our country is built on were designed to erase identities, voices, as well as practices which do not align with colonial standards. At Touchstone, our goal is to be part of a force which seeks to dismantle these systemic inequalities.

This policy is designed to help us craft the future we want to see by opening up dialogue around sensitive issues, providing opportunities, challenging stereotypes, honoring people's lived experience and intersectionalities, and addressing discrimination head-on. We want all of our artists, staff, and associates to have access to an environment where they can grow, develop, and do their best work free from the barriers often faced by people who are categorized as “other” by the dominant paradigm.

As we are constantly learning, growing, and responding to the evolving needs of our community- this will be a living document which receives regular updates. If you have any feedback about what you see in this document, or other thoughts you'd like us to hear, please feel free to reach out to Touchstone's Managing Producer, Libby Willoughby, via email at [libby@touchstonetheatre.com](mailto:libby@touchstonetheatre.com). We are always happy to connect with you.

### **Contents**

This action plan lays out several actions/goals that Touchstone Theatre will work toward in the coming two years. Included in the breakdown of each year's actions (if applicable) are: key

objectives, component tasks, responsible personnel, as well as

any success criteria for each action. As part of this plan, we have prioritized what we feel are the most pressing objectives, but we acknowledge that there is always more work to do.

The contents of this action plan come from several places:

- Our inclusivity/diversity statement
- Findings from an internal audit of our policies, procedures, productions, and personnel
- Our updated strategic plan
- Articulated community need

### **Year 1: 2024/25**

**Objective #1:** Create a “first day of rehearsal” letter

**Persons Involved:** Managing Producer, Board members, community consultants

**Success Criteria:**

- Language in the letter reflects current best practices;
- Content of the letter reflects Touchstone’s stated values;
- Content of the letter is responsive to the stated needs and priorities of our community

**Component Tasks:**

- Prior to the start of our programming, MP to research policies at other arts organizations to ensure we are in line with current industry standards and best practices;
- MP to draft the letter and send to Touchstone’s Board HR committee for feedback;
- After review by our board of directors is complete, provide honorariums to community members from historically/systemically excluded communities to have them review the document and offer feedback;
- The final draft of the document goes to Touchstone’s Board of Directors for approval.

**Project completed in November 2024.**

**Objective #2: Indigenous Cultural Perspectives Review**

**Persons Involved:** Artistic Director, Managing Producer, Michelle Olson, Yvette Nolan (external consultants)

**Success Criteria:**

- AD + MP develop a broader sense of Indigenous Cultural Perspectives through meetings with Michelle Olson and Yvette Nolan and assigned readings;
- Increased competency for AD + MP in working with and caring for Indigenous Artists;
- AD + MP feel prepared to attend more formal/advanced workshops and trainings in this area.

**Component Tasks:**

- Meetings throughout the year between AD, MP, and external consultants (Michelle Olson and Yvette Nolan);
- Building a reading list for AD + MP;
- AD + MP work through reading list and discuss with consultants at meetings.

**Project “completed” June 2025, however this work is still very much ongoing.**

**Objective #3: Creation of an “Accessibility Plan”**

**Persons Involved:** Managing Producer, Artistic Director

**Success Criteria:**

- Formation of a planning document for internal use that breaks down common barriers to accessibility for artists and community members (audience) and includes resources and ideas for how to meet these challenges.

**Component Tasks:**

- Research similar plans within the industry and/or in adjacent industries;
- Determine areas of focus for this iteration of the plan;
- Research available resources, breaking down services offered, community impact, cost, etc.

**Draft of plan completed May 2025.**

## **Year 2: 2025/26**

**Objective #1:** Board Development with a focus on Board Diversity

**Persons Involved:** AD, MP, Board of Directors

**Success Criteria:**

- Recruitment of 2 - 3 new board members who bring a unique perspective to our board;

**Component Tasks:**

- Current board members contact people in their networks who may be interested in joining;
- Public calls on various arts boards, volunteer boards, etc;
- Public call on social media;
- Prospective board member(s) meet with a current member and either AP or MP;
- Prospective board member(s) audit a board meeting;
- Confirmation of new board members at 2025 AGM.

**Objective #2:** Put together an Artist Safety policy specific to working with trans, nonbinary, 2-spirit, gender-queer, and gender non-confirming artists.

**Persons Involved:** Managing Producer, TBD external consultant, Touchstone Board

**Success Criteria:**

- Implementation of safety plan
- Positive community feedback
- Note: in the past, our existing policies have felt sufficient in this area. However, with the rise of anti-trans sentiment and legislation in our country and in our communities, we feel it is important to solidify our stance as a company with respect to how we engage trans and other gender-expansive artists in our community.

**Component Tasks:**

- Managing Producer, with an external consultant from the trans community, meet to set goals and create a more comprehensive action-plan;
- Research equivalent policies/statements/guides for inspiration;
- Create a draft that is in-line with our stated goals, Touchstone's values, and community need;
- Board approval process.

**Objective #3:** Attend anti-racist theatre course to ensure staff are up to date on current best practices, this will inform the policy audit that will be part of our next E.D.I. Action Plan.

**Persons Involved:** Artistic Director + Managing Producer

**Success Criteria:**

- Course completed;
- Notes stored for future reference;
- Increased competency for AD + MP.

**Component Tasks:**

- Register for training, 2025/26 dates not yet announced:  
<https://www.nicolembrewer.com/anti-racist-theatre>
- Note: the specific training we'd like to take has been on hold for the last couple years. If upcoming trainings are not announced by January 2026, we will research alternative courses.