

Fresh Ink Theatre Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

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Introduction, Mission, & Values

Introduction

As writers, artists, and administrators dedicated towards crafting fresh new work, we also understand that new work requires evolving practices. Fresh Ink rejects the status quo of doing what has been done before; instead, we are dedicated to suiting our practices to the needs of our community with a spirit of generosity, collaboration, and letting the best idea prevail.

The following document is an overview of Fresh Ink's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policies and practices to achieve a safe, welcoming space for everyone who spends time in our community. We recognize that this is not an exhaustive list and that the policies represented are intersectional in their nature. As we continue to learn from the multitudes of perspectives encompassed by our community members, we will continue to evolve our policies and practices to make sure we are centering our values and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. By creating a robust set of EDI practices and guidelines, Fresh Ink is working towards fulfilling our mission.

Mission

Fresh Ink Theatre Company is committed to developing fresh, inclusive, innovative new work with theatre artists in the New England area. We believe that representation onstage and community-building offstage has the power to inspire audiences, shift worldviews, foster understanding, and challenge the status quo. We are dedicated to programming artistic work and curating artistic collaborations that uplift and celebrate the diverse range of voices in New England. We seek to empower writers with the tools to craft plays that showcase their creative vision, and we challenge the Boston community to engage in the evolution of dynamic new work as it transforms from first draft to first production, and beyond.

Values

We value artistic excellence, institutional transparency, community involvement, and ongoing collaboration. In our room, we require respect towards other collaborators and a deep desire to learn from every point of view present.

Ethos

Fresh Ink acknowledges that racism, homophobia, transphobia, and many other intersectionalities deeply affect all of our work, whether on and off stage or in audiences. Our ethos is to continually challenge the status quo using Antiracist, harm reduction/prevention centered, and person-first practices to repair relationships, build safe spaces, and promote trust.

Fresh Ink models our Gender Inclusion Ethos off of the Gender Explosion Initiative and Harm Reduction practices from the Line Drawn Initiative. We acknowledge that theater in New England is an overwhelmingly cisgender experience, and the world is rapidly moving forward. It is necessary that we all do our part to create space for transgender artists in our theaters. We are also dedicated to creating safer, more equitable workspaces for all members of our community.

Definitions

We have included definitions that are important for all collaborators and members of the Fresh Ink community to know. While some of these terms are referenced within this document, not all are. However, for the sake of clarity, transparency, and operating from a common set of terms, we have included definitions that are important for common understanding within our company.

- The definitions of Racism and Antiracism, and the concept of an Antiracist Theatre Ethos come directly from [Nicole Brewer](#)'s *Anti-Racist Theatre: A Foundational Course*.
 - The definitions that align with Gender and Sexuality are from G M. Forristall, John Meredith, and the [Gender Explosion Initiative](#).
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- **Ableism:** discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities
 - From [Merriam Webster](#)
 - **Ageism:** prejudice or discrimination against a particular age-group and especially the elderly
 - From [Merriam Webster](#)
 - **Antiracism:** practices and policies that actively acknowledge and interrogate racism, anti-blackness and other discriminatory practices, and promote ideas, values, and other policies that counter the oppression of any people and center the experiences of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color).
 - **Cisgender/Cis:** A person who exclusively identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth. Simply put, it's anyone who isn't trans or non-binary. This is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, or biological characteristics.
 - **Fat Liberation:** A social movement seeking to change anti-fat bias in social attitudes by raising awareness among the general public about the obstacles faced by fat people experiencing the stigma of obesity.
 - [From Wikipedia](#)
 - **Fatphobia:** irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against obesity or people with obesity
 - From [Collins Dictionary](#)
 - **Gender:** A multi-dimensional interrelationship between a person, their body, their sense of identity, social constructs, and societal norms of behavior and presentation.
 - **Gender Non-Conforming/GNC:** A person who does not follow a culture's ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on their sex assigned at birth. It is sometimes used as an umbrella term for nonbinary genders, though people who identify as gender non-conforming may also identify as cis.
 - **Harassment:** any unwanted behavior, physical, verbal, or suggested, that makes a reasonable person feel uncomfortable, humiliated, or mentally distressed.
 - **Harm:** Incidences of physical or emotional damage.
 - From [Merriam Webster](#)

- **Homophobia:** irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or gay people.
 - From [Merriam Webster](#)
- **Intersectionality:** A term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 as a lens for seeing the ways various forms of inequality—such as race, gender, class, sexuality, disability—operate together and exacerbate each other. They are interdependent, and an individual’s experience is more than just the sum of each aspect’s parts. For example, the misogyny a Black woman faces (also called “misogynoir”) is different from the misogyny a white woman faces. The transphobia a disabled person experiences is different from that of their non-disabled peers.
- **LGBTQIA+/Queer:** Umbrella terms for people of marginalized gender identities and sexual orientations. Unless a person has specified they prefer that term, be cautious when referring to someone as queer. "Queer" has a complex history as a reclaimed slur.
- **Microaggressions:** verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward stigmatized or culturally marginalized groups.
- **Misogyny:** hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against women
 - From [Merriam Webster](#)
- **Neurodiversity:**
 - 1. Individual differences in brain functioning regarded as normal variations within the human population
 - 2. The concept that differences in brain functioning within the human population are normal and that brain functioning that is not neurotypical should not be stigmatized
 - From [Merriam Webster](#)
- **Non-binary:** An umbrella term for people who experience gender outside or between the binary categories of man and woman. Depending on the person, this may or may not fall within the umbrella of transgender. Related terms may include genderqueer, gender fluid, agender, and Two-Spirit (a specific cultural role within some indigenous communities).
- **Pronouns:** A substitute for noun or noun phrases (such as names) that are understood within the context they are used. Some gender pronouns include: they, him, her, herself, and ze. Pronouns are not necessarily indicative of a person's gender. According to GLAAD, 56% of people under the age of 20 know someone who uses gender-neutral pronouns.
 - From [GLAAD](#)
- **Racism:** the combination of racial prejudice and power used to codify and enforce prejudice in society.
- **Sexuality/Sexual Orientation:** An interpersonal dimension of identity based on emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction. This is separate from gender identity. Examples include gay, straight, bi, and asexual.
- **Sizeism:** discrimination or prejudice directed against people because of their size and especially because of their weight
 - From [Merriam Webster](#)

- **Transgender/Trans:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. This does not necessitate any form of medical transition process. Trans and transgender are adjectives, someone cannot be "a trans" but they can be "a trans person".
- **Transphobia:** The violence, oppression, and abuse toward trans and nonbinary people, fueled by hatred, disgust, and bias. Transphobia is perpetuated by individuals, whereas cissexism is systemic.

Expectations of Individual Behavior in Fresh Ink Spaces

- Some of the language in the Expectations of Behavior section is taken directly from We See You White American Theatre's [BIPOC Demands for White American Theatre](#) and from Stage Source's [Line Drawn Community Standards](#)
- Some of the language in the Audience-Performer Relationship and Engagement section is taken directly from Dominique Morisseau's [Rules of Engagement](#).

Community Responsibility

Everyone in the Fresh Ink community, including staff, board members, artists, volunteers, donors, and patrons, is responsible for helping to create an inclusive theatre space and actively reducing harm, preventing harm, and repairing relationships.

Drugs and Alcohol

- For rehearsals, performances, and meetings, Fresh Ink expects all artists to show up and show up sober minded and not under the influence of recreational drugs or alcohol.
 - Alcoholic beverages may be served at Fresh Ink sponsored functions or celebrations and an artist's choice to use alcohol moderately at these functions will not be considered a violation of this policy.
 - If we find that someone has been excessively drinking or poses a harm to themselves or others, we reserve the right to remove them from our spaces in order to protect themselves or others they may endanger unintentionally.

Responding to Racism and Other Incidents of Harm

- All Fresh Ink community members are responsible for helping to create opportunities for relationship repair through acknowledging and interrupting racist, transphobic, and homophobic actions when they occur, by utilizing the Fresh Ink procedures for reporting

harm ([How to Report Incidents of Harm](#)), or by following up with impacted individuals directly, if appropriate.

- Individuals who have been harmed will be given agency in deciding what action will be taken after an incident of harm.

Language

- Racially charged, transphobic, homophobic, ableist, and other discriminatory and insensitive language will not be used in regard to marginalized community members including BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, or other marginalized community members whether written or verbal, including on Fresh Ink social media accounts.
- All members of the Fresh Ink community are to be held responsible for educating themselves on unacceptable language. An example resource of [inclusive workplace language guidelines can be found here](#).
- If the rehearsal process involves discussions of race, ethnicity, and culture, the onus of these discussions should not fall solely to the BIPOC artists in the room. Facilitation needs will vary by production; however, there will always be input from a culturally competent facilitator.
 - This facilitator may be a production staff member hired to do extra facilitation duties in these circumstances, or an outside facilitator hired for the sole purpose of facilitation and cultural consulting work.
- If a rehearsal process involves discussions that include sensitive information or sensitive topics, participants will be notified of these conversation topics in advance, with appropriate content advisories. No participant will be obligated to share anything that they do not wish to share.
- The race, ethnicity, cultural background, body size, disability status, mental health, or upbringing of an artist should not be discussed unless that artist has volunteered their own information and brought their experiences into the conversation.
- Ask for pronouns at first rehearsals and each time a new collaborator is in the room. Pronouns are, at their core, critical for respectful communication.
- Use correct pronouns. When you mess up, there are many ways to reframe in the moment: either correct yourself immediately, or apologize, correct, and move on. This depends on preferences in the room.

Microaggressions

- Microaggressions will not be tolerated in Fresh Ink spaces and all members of the Fresh Ink community are responsible for educating themselves on microaggressions to prevent them, unintentional or otherwise, in our spaces. All community members are expected to read the below example and guide on microaggressions.
 - [Here are some examples of microaggressions to avoid, sourced from GrubStreet.](#)

Body Language / Physical Interaction

- Continuous Consent
 - In any context, on or offstage, touch (sexual or otherwise) will be preceded by consent. For moments repeated daily (such as blocking or quick changes), exact expectations of process and accepted contact will be clearly defined in advance.
 - All intimacy moments are to be rehearsed with the Intimacy Director present. Zero intimacy moments will be rehearsed outside of the rehearsal room.
 - [The IDC Resource Guide](#)
- Body Language
 - Body language is non-verbal form of communication. Body language that communicates hostility, derogation, or negative attitudes toward stigmatized or culturally marginalized groups will not be tolerated in Fresh Ink spaces.
 - Some individuals express themselves with different physical language (e.g. fidgeting, walking around, little to no eye contact). We expect that these modes of expression will be met with respect.
 - We encourage community members to seek advice about navigating conversations when these expressions might cause undue distraction or distress for another community member.

Fresh Ink Staff and Advisory Board Responsibilities

Use of Images and Text in Social Media

- Fresh Ink will ensure that the use of images from our shows is equitable and accurately reflects all cast members, including, to the best of our ability, images used in press articles.
- Commit to including alternate text in all images posted/shared.
- Pronouns will be included in any internal Fresh Ink marketing materials. Any external press will be issued corrections if any production collaborator's pronouns are incorrect.
- Any comment made on a Fresh Ink social media post in violation of Fresh Ink's inclusion policies will be immediately blocked and all harmful comments will be deleted.

Fresh Ink Staff and Advisory Board Mental Health

- Fresh Ink is dedicated to not programming plays whose storytelling methodologies may traumatize or re-traumatize audiences and artistic participants. We have no interest in further harming the individuals that we seek to create safe, inclusive spaces for.
- Content advisories will be included with any script sent to review.

- Staff and Advisory Board members are encouraged to express their mental health access needs with each other; no staff member will be required to fulfill obligations to Fresh Ink during a mental health emergency.
- We recognize that staff and Advisory Board members are volunteers; as such, we encourage staff to not take on any amount of responsibility that will lead to burnout. Mental health longevity is a priority, and we expect staff and Advisory Board members to self monitor and self report mental health access needs.

Rehearsal Hours

- Fresh Ink commits to never having a 10 out of 12 rehearsal schedule.
- Fresh Ink will rehearse up to five sessions a week, excluding tech week.
- Over tech week, Fresh Ink will release artists early enough to take public transportation home.
- Fresh Ink will maintain an [equity break policy](#).
- Fresh Ink acknowledges that production teams often work outside of rehearsal hours scheduled for actors, including for production meetings, giving notes, casting conversations, etc. We strongly encourage production team members to take breaks between rehearsals and any external conversations or meetings. We also encourage individuals to speak up if they feel they need a break.
- Fresh Ink recognizes that both physical and mental fatigue are common, and commits to rehearsal hours and schedules that actively reduce the likelihood of either.

All Artists Responsibilities

Artist Safety

- All actors will be invited to actively engage in any conversation regarding their hair, makeup, and costuming.
 - Conversations about an actor's hair are to be actor-led, with collaboration from the director and designer.
 - Actors are encouraged to speak up if any aspect of their costume and/or hair & makeup create any distress or discomfort; the costume design is in the hands of the costume designer, but actor comfort is a priority.
- Based on Line Drawn guidelines for company safety, any rehearsals, press interviews, fittings, and work-related meetings with only two people in the room must be documented at least 24 hours in advance and notes/video recordings must be shared in an accessible space to others in the company, in order to create a record of the meeting. All artists are entitled to documentation, and never should feel pressured to meet off the record one-on-one in any way. Ways to document include: setting up a zoom meeting on the Fresh Ink account, informing the stage manager when a director and designer are having a meeting, etc.

- Fresh Ink commits to staffing an Intimacy Director and Fight Choreographer for each season.
- Fresh Ink commits to staffing additional cultural competency consultants if the identity is not already accounted for in the room. This could include but is not limited to geographical, physical, and gender consultants.
- Fresh Ink commits to solicit information about allergies and create allergy-free zones as necessary.
- While our permanent offices are not currently ADA-compliant, we commit to providing accessible audition and rehearsal spaces based on the needs of cast and creative members of each production.
- Our performance spaces are ADA-compliant, and we commit to exploring opportunities to expand and diversify our accessible offerings during performances. This includes, but is not limited to: open captioning, providing assistive listening devices, audio description, ASL interpretation, and sensory-friendly performances.

Artistic Leadership Responsibilities

All Fresh Ink Staff serve as Artistic Leadership. Specifically on productions, Artistic Leadership also includes Directors, Playwrights, Dramaturgs, and Stage Managers.

Anticipating the Needs of the Show

- Artistic Leadership is expected to identify the particular needs of the show, including anticipating triggering racial, sexual, or harmful narratives that may come up in the rehearsal process. These topics will be disseminated to all collaborators, and no conversation on any topic that could be potentially triggering or harmful will happen in a rehearsal without advance notice to actors from a member of the artistic leadership team.
- Directors are expected to create a plan of action, with support from Fresh Ink staff, for how to set the tone of discussion to reduce harm with artists at the beginning of the rehearsal process.
- Fresh Ink supports and encourages directors to take whatever steps appropriate to reduce harm in the rehearsal space, including pausing or stopping rehearsal, releasing artists early, or rescheduling a rehearsal for a different time.
- If the artistic team anticipates needing additional resources in the rehearsal room in order to reduce and prevent harm, they are expected to communicate these needs to Fresh Ink staff in advance, and Fresh Ink will work to help provide these resources. This includes looking for outside help, when necessary, to help everyone navigate any triggering moments of the show.

Artist Mental/Physical Health

- Fresh Ink is dedicated to not programming plays whose storytelling methodologies may traumatize or re-traumatize audiences and artistic participants. We have no interest in further harming the individuals that we seek to create safe, inclusive spaces for.
- Fresh Ink supports artists prioritizing their mental health however that may manifest, including pausing during rehearsal, or leaving space after rehearsal or performances to process potentially triggering content.
- Content advisories will be included whenever a script is sent out.
- Artistic Leadership will encourage collaborators to share mental health access needs with them at their own discretion; Artistic Leadership will not require actors or other collaborators to fulfill obligations to Fresh Ink during a mental health emergency.
- When dealing with difficult or potentially triggering source material, Artistic Leadership, alongside any intimacy consultants, will create a container for any difficult content in ways best suited for the process (Ex. tap in/out before and after rehearsals and performances).
- Artistic Leadership will create rehearsal and performance spaces that account for any chronic illness flareups and physical disabilities (both acute and chronic) that are brought to their attention.

Audience Responsibilities

Audience/Company Relationship

- Fresh Ink is dedicated to not programming plays whose storytelling methodologies may traumatize or re-traumatize audiences and artistic participants. We have no interest in further harming the individuals that we seek to create safe, inclusive spaces for.
- Content Advisories
 - Fresh Ink will post content advisories for any potentially distressing material. This includes but is not limited to material relating to identity-based trauma, sexual assault, graphic violence or images, nudity, etc.
- Audience Engagement
 - White supremacist, ableist culture has infiltrated our creative spaces. Fresh Ink would like to encourage and validate all forms of audience reaction and engagement that are not harmful or excessively distracting to artists and other members of the community. Fresh Ink welcomes and encourages:
 - Laughing audibly
 - Audibly vocalizing reactions to moments in a performance
 - Audibly reacting in non-verbal ways, such as clapping or snapping
 - Fresh Ink will train artists to center empathy for audience members who engage with their work in different ways.
 - If audience members choose to not engage with Fresh Ink procedures, even when prompted, it is within Fresh Ink's right to ask them to leave.

- For audience misconduct and reporting, please reference Procedures for Responding to/Reporting Harm below.

Audience Mental/Physical Health

- Fresh Ink supports audience and other community members prioritizing their mental health however that may manifest, including leaving a show.
- Fresh Ink will work with the venue to ensure that space will be held for audience members to process content which requires a content advisory for relevant shows.
- Fresh Ink will work to better prepare audiences to enter our space. We recognize that this involves both raising the call to meet us where we're at, and expanding our offerings to meet audience members where they're at.

Procedures for Responding to/Reporting Harm

Fresh Ink is committed to fostering an inclusive and safe environment. We are dedicated to reporting when incidents of harm occur, and offering a restorative justice focused approach that centers the wants and needs of the person harmed. The person who experienced the incident, or a bystander, can choose how to inform Fresh Ink and whether or not further action needs to be taken. This procedure can be used by anyone in a Fresh Ink space, including artists, staff, Advisory Board members, and audience members. The step-by-step guide to our harm-reduction procedures can be found here:

[How to Report Incidents of Harm](#)

[Fresh Ink Incident Reporting Form](#)

Hiring + Season Planning

- Some of the language in Anti-Racist Hiring + Season Planning is taken directly from We See You White American Theatre's [BIPOC Demands for White American Theatre](#)

Fresh Ink Theatre strives to attract a diverse community, both for our staff, advisory board, artistic teams, and audiences. BIPOC individuals, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and individuals of all ability levels are encouraged to participate in the Fresh Ink community.

Fresh Ink recognizes and owns that we don't currently have the resources to address all of our needs. However, we are committed to training, learning, and growing to be better for ourselves

and our audiences in the long term. We recognize that we are making the changes that we can reasonably manage at this time and that our efforts are significant based on our size and resources, as we strive to do increasingly better over time.

Fresh Ink aims to give space for artists to advocate for what they need. As a company, we will trust that our directors, actors, collaborators, and creative teams will make reasonable accommodations as needs arise. We will remain agile in our response to these needs and will not let concerns about access needs keep us from engaging with and hiring artists of varying abilities.

Antiracist, Gender Inclusive, and Disability Justice Oriented Hiring

Advisory Board

- Fresh Ink will diversify the membership of our Advisory Board to be no more than 50% white by the FY2025-2026 season.
- Fresh Ink will solicit new LGBTQ+ Advisory Board members, with a goal of having no more than 50% of the advisory board be cis, straight individuals by the FY2025-2026 season.

Staff

- Fresh Ink will diversify staff membership to be no more than 50% white by the FY2025-2026 season.
- Fresh Ink will diversify staff membership to be no more than 50% cis and straight by the FY2025-2026 season.

Design Teams

- Starting in FY2020-2021, Fresh Ink will only hire design teams, which includes sound designers, lighting designers, scenic designers, costume designers, prop designers, musicians, run crew members, fight choreographers, intimacy directors, and any other behind-the-scenes artist called for by a production, that are more than 50% BIPOC.
- Starting in FY2023-2024, Fresh Ink will ensure that design teams contain no less than two individuals holding key identities centered in the story being told by that production. Ex. On a production centering LGBTQIA+ individuals, at least two designers will hold LGBTQIA+ identities.

Artistic Teams

- Starting in FY2020-2021, Fresh Ink will only hire artistic teams, which include directors, assistant directors, playwrights, dramaturgs, stage managers, and assistant stage managers, that are more than 50% BIPOC.
- Starting in FY2023-2024, Fresh Ink will ensure that artistic teams contain at least two individuals holding key identities centered in the story being told by that production, at least one of which being the director or the dramaturg. If the playwright is writing from outside of their lived experience, both the director and the dramaturg will hold the identities centered by the play.

Auditions

- Fresh Ink will never have only white representatives from an artistic team at the table during Fresh Ink auditions.
- On plays centering LGBTQIA+ stories, Fresh Ink will never have only cis and/or straight representatives from the artistic team at the table during Fresh Ink auditions.
- On plays centering disability, Fresh Ink will never only have able representatives from the artistic team at the table during Fresh Ink auditions.
- No audition will ever take place with only two people in a room, virtual or in-person.

Pay Equity

- Fresh Ink will pay all actors and designers the same amount for each individual production; rates vary on scope and duration of each production
- Fresh Ink will pay all assistant positions the same amount for a production

Antiracist, Gender Inclusive, and Disability Justice Oriented Season Planning

Playwrights

- Fresh Ink will never produce a season that does not include plays written by self-identified BIPOC playwrights, starting with our FY2021-2022 season.
 - We acknowledge that our 2022-2023 season contains no plays written by self-identified BIPOC playwrights. The marginalized identities represented are aligned with whiteness. Fresh Ink is committed BIPOC plays represent at least 50% of programming by our FY2025-2026 season.
- Fresh Ink is committed to explicitly and widely sharing submission opportunities with BIPOC playwrights and with outlets that support BIPOC playwrights in order to increase awareness and access to our application process from a wider network.
 - Outreach includes individual outreach via email, posting in BIPOC affinity groups online, and reaching out to partner organizations to promote our submissions processes.
- Fresh Ink adjusted our submissions model for our FY2023-2024 season to focus on a more diverse submissions pool. We also adjusted our residency model in order to ensure a more equitable season by limiting who can apply for which opportunity based on identities. We are offering a scaffolded approach to submissions in order to promote equity. Example opportunities for playwrights include:
 - Fresh Ink Production Residency: This residency is awarded to any BIPOC playwright who is a current, full-time resident of MA, CT, RI, NH, VT, or ME looking to develop their play with Fresh Ink for a season, culminating in a world premiere production.
 - Fresh Ink Development Residency: This residency is awarded to any LGBTQ+ playwright who is a current, full-time resident of MA, CT, RI, NH, VT, or ME looking to develop their play with Fresh Ink for six months.

- Ink Spot Residency: This residency is awarded to any playwright who is a current, full-time resident of MA, CT, RI, NH, VT, or ME looking to develop their play for 1-2 months.
- Fresh Ink reserves the right to update submissions opportunities year-by-year based on partnership opportunities, but we commit to offering at least one residency exclusively to BIPOC playwrights and one residency exclusively to LGBTQ+ playwrights. For example, in our FY2024-2025 season, we will host a residency exclusively for QTPOC playwrights with potential for partnering with another org, and one specifically for AAPI playwrights in partnership with Chuang Stage.

Plays

- Fresh Ink is committed to programming stories that explicitly include roles for BIPOC actors in every show that we workshop and produce going forward. In service of this goal, we will update our submission requirements and require that playwrights review these requirements before submitting plays to Fresh Ink. Plays that fail to align with our mission and commitments outlined here will not be eligible.
- Fresh Ink is committed to programming stories that explicitly include roles for LGBTQIA+ actors in at least one show that we workshop and produce each season going forward. In service of this goal, we will update our submission requirements and require that playwrights review these requirements before submitting plays to Fresh Ink. Plays that fail to align with our mission and commitments outlined here will not be eligible.

Partnership Commitments

Community Partnerships

- Fresh Ink acknowledges the importance of fostering partnerships within our communities and is invested in creating a plan to further enhance these partnerships. We commit to creating a more detailed plan for Community Partnerships by the beginning of the 2024-2025 season.
 - Currently as of the end of FY2023-2024, we are in the planning phases of creating a residency partnership with Chuang Stage. We will offer the following residency:
 - Fresh Ink Theatre X Chuang Stage Development Residency: This residency is awarded to any AAPI (Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander) playwright who is a current, full-time resident of MA, CT, RI, NH, VT, or ME looking to develop their play with Fresh Ink and CHUANG Stage for 6 months. CHUANG Stage is Boston's Asian American theatre company cultivating joyful and radical pan-Asian stories; this residency is curated in collaboration with CHUANG Stage to strengthen AAPI voices, communities, and futures.

Indigenous Community Partnerships

- Fresh Ink will incorporate [land acknowledgements](#) for all Fresh Ink events and first rehearsals starting January 1, 2021.
- Fresh Ink acknowledges the importance of recognizing and fostering partnerships with our indigenous communities and is invested in creating a plan to further enhance these partnerships. Fresh Ink commits to creating a more detailed plan for Indigenous Community Partnerships by the beginning of the FY2024-2025 season.

Press

- BIPOC press will be invited to all Fresh Ink productions.
- Fresh Ink will ensure that all photos appearing in reviews reflect all cast members involved in the production.

Bathrooms and Changing Rooms

- Wherever Fresh Ink procures space for meetings, rehearsals, and performances, Fresh Ink commits to providing gender inclusive bathrooms and changing spaces. This could include prioritizing renting spaces with all-gendered bathrooms, adding signage to create an all-gendered space, adding curtains to create a new space for changing, etc.

Continual and Evolving Strategies for Change

Advisory Board

- In FY2022-23, Fresh Ink reviewed and reinvented our Advisory Board, with the intent to invite individuals to work with us who will keep us accountable. We expanded by 5 members, all of whom will reflect the larger diversity within our community. We will continue to reevaluate who is on our advisory board based on continued interest and availability yearly.

Submission Process

- In FY2023-24, Fresh Ink updated our submissions policy and range of opportunities available for playwrights in order to promote equity and inclusion. These changes included 3 new residencies, detailed above in our Hiring + Season Planning Section. We have also implemented other new facets of our submissions process:
 - Readers:
 - At least two people will read every play in each round of submissions; at least one of these readers will be BIPOC individuals
 - Affinity readers will be matched to plays as possible (ex. LGBTQIA+readers for plays by LGBTQIA+ writers, BIPOC readers for BIPOC plays, readers with disabilities for plays about disability, etc).
 - Playwrights:

- 10 finalist playwrights will be interviewed by Fresh Ink staff and asked questions regarding ability to be an ethical collaborator, experience working with anti-racist and gender-expansive work, etc
 - **At least** 1 playwright per season will be BIPOC
 - **At least** 1 playwright per season will be LGBTQIA+
 - Playwrights of all ability levels are encouraged to apply.
- We hope to continue to explore and expand these submission guidelines in order to create as just and equitable a season as possible. In the spirit of transparency, the demographics of our FY2023-24 season submissions were as follows:
 - 68% cisgender
 - 32% transgender
 - 63% White
 - 37% BIPOC
 - 40% Heterosexual
 - 60% LGBTQIA+
 - By FY2025-25, we hope for **at least**: increase to 50% BIPOC playwright submissions, increase to 40% transgender playwright submissions, retain 60% LGBTQIA+ playwright submissions

Pay-What-You Want Writing Programming

- In the FY2023-24 season and beyond, Fresh Ink is increasing free & pay-what-you-want programming outside of productions in order to foster building community connections, provide accessible access points into the Fresh Ink community, and create dedicated third-space for writers. In FY2022, we introduced our Scribble Sesh Program.
 - Scribble Sesh
 - Fresh Ink's Scribble Sesh is a monthly-ish event for playwrights where they can gather, relax, network, and write together. These gatherings are extremely low-key, and are focused on providing a space for writers to generate writing together and find community and peer-mentorship. In order to increase access, writers are not required to bring a pre-written project, or even to write a play at all. Sessions consist of introductions, dedicated quiet writing time, and time at the end for playwrights to network and solicit feedback from each other. Scribble Sesh is free, with recommended donation.
 - We hope to increase the frequency of Scribble Sesh to be a dedicated monthly event.
 - We also hope to create a dedicated Scribble-Sesh to Submissions pipeline in order to continue to facilitate bringing fresh new plays and new playwrights into the Boston theatre ecosystem.

Community Appreciation and Outreach

- As an entirely volunteer-led organization, Fresh Ink recognizes volunteer time as labor and follows the principle “Time is valued equally as money” (from [Community Centric Fundraising](#)). As such, Fresh Ink strives to express gratitude for volunteer labor through:
 - Appreciation Events (such as submissions reader appreciation events, playwright nights, etc)
- We will host our first two appreciation events in the FY2023-24 season, and hope to expand the scope of our events each year.
- Fresh Ink also strives to be good stewards and citizens of the Boston Playwriting Community. As such, we have committed to seeing new plays around the community to practice what we preach and support the development of new work.

Access

- Fresh Ink has begun the process of exploring and offering specific access opportunities for our artists and audiences.
- Beginning in 2024, we aim to offer our first Open Captioned performance. From there, we will continue to explore the possibility of expanding our access offerings to include audio description and/or ASL interpretation.
- For each production, beginning with our Spring 2024 mainstage show, we will create a “social story” to welcome and better prepare our audiences for their theatre-going experience.
- Fresh Ink has committed to making our company digitally accessible. This includes updating our website and including alternate text on all social media and e-blast images.
- We are actively working to sign on with a consultant to deepen our understanding of, and better address, the community’s needs.

Ongoing Staff Education

- Fresh Ink acknowledges that our efforts are continuously evolving. That said, Fresh Ink staff are expected to uphold our organization’s mission and values. To do so, staff are required to participate in yearly trainings, paid for by Fresh Ink. These trainings will align with our values of inclusion and can shift depending on availability and community need.
- Fresh Ink will budget \$3,000 yearly for the first three years to invest in these trainings. This number will be evaluated and adjusted in 2024.
- When a new staff member joins the company, they will complete the training offered that year as well as an antiracism training. They are also expected to review notes from past training sessions.
- We understand that there is an abundance of resources available in the world today for anyone who is striving to be antiracist. To help streamline relevant educational materials, Fresh Ink is working on a toolkit to be shared in 2024.
- Trainings completed to date:
 - Antiracism training with Nicole Brewer (A.R.T.), 2020
 - Bystander training with StageSource and Impact Boston, 2022
 - Gender Explosion Inclusion workshop with StageSource, 2022
 - Trans Inclusivity Workshop with Shira Helena Gitlin, 2024

Conclusion

Thank you for your time thoughtfully reading this document and working to be a good community citizen at Fresh Ink. This EDI policy is a living document and we will reevaluate our procedures formally every summer. It will be updated and added to ad hoc throughout the season as well.

We encourage [feedback](#) to this document at any time, and appreciate the dedication of all community members towards creating spaces that are inclusive, just, and equitable for all.