



ARTS ADMINISTRATORS OF COLOR
Strategic Plan Final
1-31-22

INTRODUCTION

Founded in July 2016, the Arts Administrators of Color Network (AAC) is a service organization that focuses on networking and community building through the arts. We are advocates who continue to fight for equity in the arts through collaborations, forums, and outlets that provide a voice for arts administrators and artists of color where there may not be one.

AAC is a 501(c)3 organization, made possible through generous donations.

Since its creation in 2016, the Arts Administrators of Color Network has held over 25 events, served over 1,000 arts leaders in DC/Maryland, over 200 arts leaders nationally and maintains a facebook private group that reaches nearly 3000 members.

Since its inception, the organization has:

- Built an incredible network of arts administrators and creatives in our Facebook group with over 2,500 members worldwide.
- Hosted the only annual convening for and by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) individuals in the arts every year since 2017, reaching up to 500 attendees annually.
- Created a year-long, nationwide mentorship program with over 40 participants over the past three years.
- Established the Accomplices Leadership Institute (ALI)—which is geared toward white folks in the arts field who are interested in dismantling systems of oppression and racism in their everyday lives and workplaces and ultimately achieving liberation for all.
- Set up an Arts Leaders of Color Emergency Fund to support BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) artists & arts administrators impacted by COVID-19 through \$200 microgrants.
- Produced a podcast entitled, Art Accordingly, broadcast frequently.
- Curated joyful and graceful spaces to network, decompress, and connect with peers and advocates continuing to fight for equity.

In the wake of Quanice Floyd, AAC's co-founder and Executive Director, stepping down, it is time to step up our game. Currently, AAC is led fully by a volunteer board of directors. While this model has gotten us far, we are transitioning to a new phase of development to better serve our artists and arts administrators of color.

Serendipitously, we have also been given a series of transformative gifts that will allow us to deepen our impact and truly support BIPOC arts administrators and artists nationwide. As we implement our strategic plan, Arts Administrators of Color Network will be in a position to create true change in our industry.

INTRODUCTION (Cont'd)

Developed by ALJP Consulting in collaboration with the AAC Board of Directors.

AAC builds on the historical work of our elders and ancestors, drawing inspiration from organizations like the National Negro Congress, Cultural Division, The Association of American Cultures, and more. AAC has its roots in Washington, DC, making advocacy a natural extension of its work in the arts and culture sector. AAC works from the “about us, for us, by us, near us,” relying on the rich abundance of resources and creative ideas within our own communities.

For more information about the terminology used in this plan, please refer to these resources -

[Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)

[Racial Equity Institute Glossary](#)

[Council Office of Racial Equity Glossary](#)

THE PROCESS

In 2021, AAC engaged ALJP Consulting to guide a strategic planning process to map the organization's future for the next three years. ALJP convened monthly strategic planning meetings with a committee made up of the board of directors -

Dr. Antonio C. Cuyler*	Erika Hawthorne*
Ariel Davis*	Kendra Williams
Camille Kashaka	Kenney Elkomous
Daniel Guzman	Ozoemena Nnamadim*
Deliasofia Zacarias	Stacey Williams
Elizabeth Thompson	Anika Kwinana*

* Denotes Strategic Plan Task Force

In October and November 2021, ALJP hosted stakeholder meetings, to collect feedback about the organization from a variety of interested parties including students served by the organization, professors at arts management graduate program and longtime AAC volunteers.

On November 22, 2021, we hosted a Town Hall meeting over Zoom webinar to share our progress and hear from a variety of voices about the organization. Approximately 90 people attended.

Feedback from AAC volunteers via online surveying, was not as successful. Very few people filled out the surveys. However, the AAC board seriously considered the limited comments that were submitted.

November thru January - a small task force of the board was assembled to further provide input and edits to the Strategic Plan. Drafts were shared with the Full board and a list of constituents for comment via zoom and phone calls.

January - Final edits were incorporated in and the full board assembled for adoption at the end of January.

Winter 2022 - The Plan will be shared with the sector.

MISSION, VISION, VALUES

CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT

The Arts Administrator of Color Network's (AAC) mission is to empower artists and arts administrators by providing tools and resources to advocate for equity, inclusion, access, and diversity in the arts.

NEW! MISSION STATEMENT

The Arts Administrators of Color Network is a support network that harnesses the power of artists, arts administrators, and organizations of people of the global majority to connect and expand BIPOC leadership across the U. S. creative sector.

CURRENT VISION STATEMENT

We create community within ourselves and create opportunities to represent our communities. We cultivate emerging arts administrators and artists of color. We collaborate and network with one another. By creating, cultivating, and collaborating, we will build a pipeline for arts administrators and artists of color.

NEW! VISION STATEMENT

We envision an anti-racist, anti-oppression, human-centered creative sector where intersectional and transformational justice are the norm and most cultural institutions are led by People of the Global Majority.

NEW! CORE VALUES

- **Community** – We believe in connecting People of the Global Majority to advance, learn from, and uplift each other and celebrate the full diaspora of our experiences and identities.
- **Equity** – We believe that we can only achieve liberation when the U. S. creative sector has adequately addressed the compounded effects of historic inequity and injustice, and anti-racism, anti-oppression, equity, radical truth telling, and transformational justice are permanent practices sector wide.
- **Support** – We believe that people are helped, authentic relationships are formed, and problems are solved, when we uplift, uphold and nurture our community.

Other Values: hope, honesty, excellence, discipline, courage, inspiration, interdependence, innovation, authentic relationships, collaboration, engage, cultural, heritage, support

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

AAC does not subscribe to traditional analyses of industry and competitive advantage which are based within a white-supremacist and capitalist framework. Instead, AAC draws inspiration from frameworks such as [Collective Impact](#) which do not necessitate competition between similar organizations, but promotes collaboration within the industry to achieve a common goal. This approach is seen manifested in programs such as [The Cousins Regime](#).

Industry Definition: Arts service organizations in the United States

Buyers: Folx and organizations who help sustain AAC through financial means.

- BIPOC Arts Administrators
- Individual Funders & Grantors
- Foundations

Sellers: Folx and organizations who AAC contracts or pays money to.

- Conference Venues
- Consultants (like ALJP)
- Conference Speakers

Similar Organizations: Organizations within the defined industry who AAC shares common goals and/or programming with. We view this list as a list of possible collaborators within our industry. Per the Collective Impact framework, we are open to and do share resources and information with organizations who are aligned with our mission and are working with us toward a shared goal.

- Intercultural Leadership Institute
- Theatre Communications Group
- Americans for the Arts
- Local Arts Service Organizations
- Rising Leaders of Color of TCG
- Arts Conferences (i.e. Tessitura)
- The Black Theatre Commons
- Latinx Theatre Commons
- National Association of Latino Arts & Cultures
- WESTAF
- First Peoples Fund
- American Alliance of Museums

By viewing these similar organizations as collaborators rather than competitors, AAC disrupts the capitalist impulse to hoard market share. Instead, we work to differentiate our programs and services to best serve the diverse needs of our buyers.

Substitutes: Organizations and/or individuals outside of the defined industry offering similar services.

- Professional Coaching
- Individual Networking
- Local Arts Organizations (i.e. finding a "home")
- Facebook Groups
- MeetUp
- LinkedIn
- University / Graduate School
- Social Clubs
- Affinity Groups
- Local leadership programs (i.e. [LEAD Atlanta](#))

Rather than view these substitutes as a threat to AAC or the industry, we prefer to view these as additional ways that our buyer can be served. Many of these substitutes, such as Facebook Groups and MeetUp, also offer tools and potential collaborators to help AAC further our mission.

Differentiating Factor: What sets AAC apart from the other similar organizations and substitutes. Within the Collective Impact approach, it is important for each collaborator to be specific about how they are working to further the Collective's goals and make sure that they are addressing different needs within the industry. We have identified AAC's differentiating factor as

“By BIPOC Arts Professionals, with BIPOC Arts Professionals, for all BIPOC Arts Professionals.”

AAC is unique in that we started as a Facebook Group to address a need for community and support among BIPOC Arts Professionals. AAC's focus on BIPOC rather than specific races or ethnicities within the BIPOC diaspora differentiates it from the important work that organizations like the Black Theater Commons and the Latinx Theatre Commons are doing. Likewise, AAC has included and supported BIPOC Arts Professionals at all stages of their careers, including college students, young professionals and established professionals. This inclusive lens sets us apart from vital programs and organizations such as TCG's Rising Leaders of Color and the Intercultural Leadership Institute. By intentionally focusing on this differentiating factor, we continue to fill a need within our community not currently served by other organizations in the industry.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

FOCUS AREA GOAL #1: BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE (OPERATIONS/GOVERNANCE) AND SCALE AAC

Outcomes:

AAC has advanced its mission to serve BIPOC artists, administrators and organizations by building a strong anti-racist/anti-oppressive infrastructure, tripling its membership and expanding its physical/digital presence in every major regional hub.

Tactics (to include, but are not limited to), AAC will:

Ongoing

- Transition from volunteer run to staff run model by hiring three (3) to four (4) full-time employees (ED, Gen Op, Institutional Advancement, Programmatic, Member Services).
- Shift its Board of Directors from a working board to a non-hierarchical governing and fundraising board.
- Define organizational structure and/or business model (i.e.: financing, [free/paid/PWYC] membership model, advocacy org, educational services, program mix, etc.).
- Equitably expand digital services and presence (CRM, online learnings/networking, social media presence).
- Expand and build deeper relationships with the [Cousins Regime](#).
- Decolonize and untangle AAC's practice of Arts Management from the Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture and imbue them with anti-capitalism, anti-oppression, and anti-racism.

FY22

- Engage in a renaming and rebranding process (logo, style guide, name, etc.).

FY23

- Increase/expand/scale current membership (artists, organizations, for profit sector) and member services (expanded online learning, digital technology/tech entrepreneurship, etc.).

FY24

- Conduct and analysis of the feasibility of aligning with a larger institution for infrastructure support (HBCU, etc.)

FOCUS AREA GOAL #2: OPERATIONALIZE/INCREASE/EXPAND/ENHANCE/GROW OUR ORGANIZATIONAL OFFERINGS

Outcome:

AAC has expanded career development, deepened the knowledge and supported the professional development, growth and promotion of thousands of and AAC members and is a strong “go-to” place for recruiting skilled and healthy BIPOC prospective employees and leaders.

Tactics (to include, but are not limited to), AAC will:

Ongoing

- Expand the peer networking opportunities for the BIPOC cultural sector.
- Expand online learning, workshops, classes, and courses.
 - Train members in Board Service, annually.
 - Broaden, deepen and institute yearly preparation workshops on topical, urgent, critical and disaster/emergency related issues based on Carol Foster’s [Performing Arts Readiness](#) learning.
 - Expand annual grant making opportunities (travel, travel for working families, fellowships, PD).
- Build Partnerships/relationships with professional search firms (especially BIPOC firms).

FY22

- Build Job Board/Bank (esp. for BIPOC orgs).
- Build mentorship programs (big/little sibling and buddy program)
- Collect and disseminate resources for decolonized arts management pedagogy, methodology, curriculum and scholars.
- Build programs that support Radical self-care/healing from racialized trauma programs.
- Support members with job interview prep, resume workshops and contract negotiations workshops.
- Support members by partnering with pro bono legal counsel for HR, finance and legal issues.
- Build best practices in hiring for arts organizations & institutions.

FY24

- Build a professional coaching program.

FOCUS AREA GOAL #3: DEVELOP AND EXPAND A LEGISLATIVE ARTS ADVOCACY AGENDA AND EFFORTS

Outcomes:

AAC and it's membership is competent about their role in advocacy (local, state, national), new relationships with AAC members and legislators have been created, equity is incorporated in legislation for the arts and the voices of BIPOC creatives are being considered when legislation and funding considerations are made.

Tactics (to include, but are not limited to), AAC will:

Ongoing

- Hire/consult with lobbyists, economists, policy makers and lawyers.
- Conduct surveys of BIPOC artists, arts administrators, and cultural organizations to determine our advocacy agenda.
- Advocate for equitable funding support to the legislation (local, state, national).

FY22

- Build on the impacts of COVID-19 on BIPOC Artists and Arts Administrators study to develop a research and evaluation protocol to inform our annual advocacy efforts.

FY23

- Provide training/toolkits for members in the power of advocacy.
- Train members on how to build relationships with legislators.
- Mobilize and galvanize the AAC network to contact legislators and get their voices heard, regularly and as needed.

FINANCIALS AND TIMEFRAME

The financials linked in the document are a philosophical statement of the intentions of this strategic plan. Given the main dream of converting the organization into a staff run model, the infrastructure costs are high. It should/could be used as a guide for AAC's annual budgeting process and planning. This philosophical budget does not include operating/programming costs not mentioned in the tactics of the plan. As AAC builds its infrastructure and fundraising capacity (board and staff), the organization will have to plan for an annual deficit throughout the course of this plan.

[Strategic Plan Budget](#)