



**Request for Proposals (RFP):
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Consultant
(April 18, 2022)**

About ZACH Theatre

ZACH Theatre (“ZACH” or the “organization”) is a non-profit organization based in Austin, Texas, that creates intimate theatre experiences that ignite the imagination, inspire the spirit, and engage the community. As Austin’s leading professional producing theatre, ZACH employs more than 300 actors, musicians, and designers annually to create its own diverse array of nationally recognized plays and musicals under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Dave Steakley and Managing Director Elisabeth Challener. Prior to the pandemic, ZACH served nearly 140,000 Central Texans annually - 57,000 of which were children and youth who participated in our education and outreach programs. Founded in 1932, ZACH is the longest continuously running theatre company in the State of Texas, and one of the ten oldest in the country.

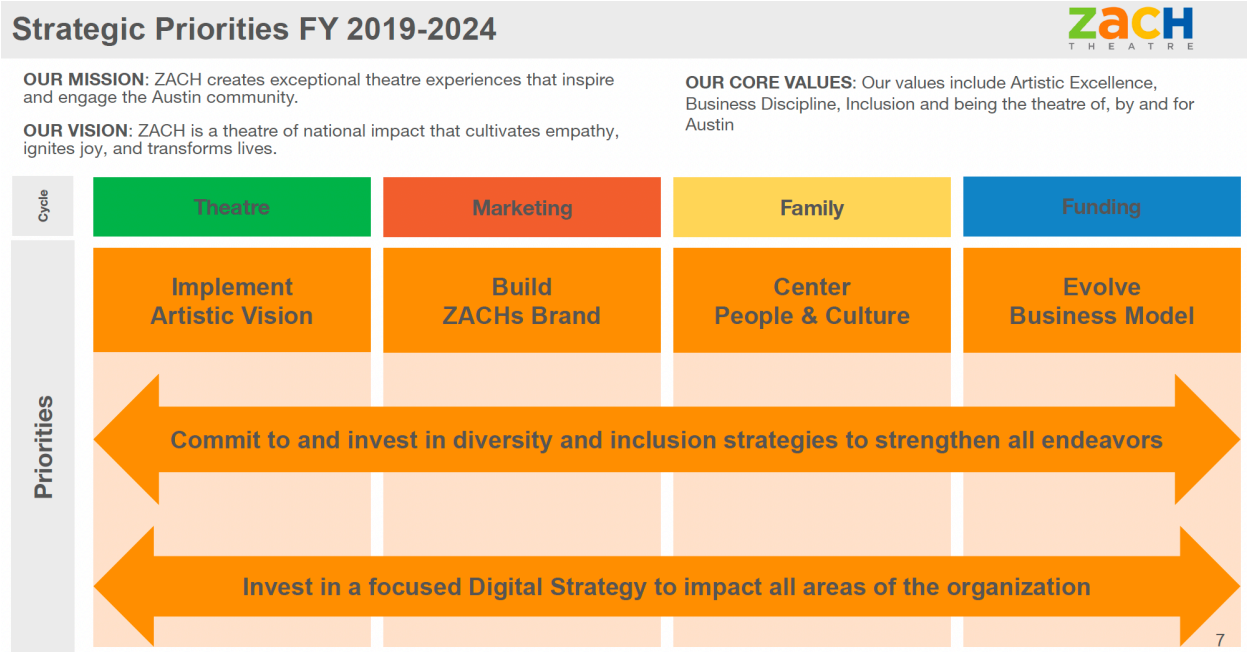
Visit www.zachtheatre.org for more information.

ZACH’s Strategic Plan and DEI

ZACH is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (“DEI”). Diverse voices are essential to create theatre that speaks to the complexity of our world. Theatre is a place where all liberties are possible for all people. For the dialogue to truly be inclusive, it means that ZACH’s staff, Board of Trustees, artists, students, teachers, donors, volunteers, and audience must also grow in diversity. ZACH will consistently strive to reflect the Austin community, cultivate equity through the organization, and identify ways to create a more inclusive culture.

ZACH’s current Strategic Plan expressly commits to DEI in all pillars of the organization. Our Mission, Vision, and Core Values are imbued with a commitment to including

diverse perspectives and voices. The graphics below identify our Mission, Vision, and Core Values and provide a summary of the Strategic Plan.



The Strategic Plan consists of four pillars focused on achieving and maintaining success in our artistic and business endeavors, and all four pillars are committed to and will invest in diversity and inclusion strategies. In doing so, ZACH aims to create a more inclusive and equitable culture, be a reflection of the diverse Austin community, and strengthen the ZACH experience for all.

RFP Goals

To achieve the priorities and outcomes as stated in the Strategic Plan, ZACH requests proposals for a DEI Consultant (“Consultant”) to help devise, refine, and implement organizational policies, practices, programs, and behaviors that foster and nurture authentic DEI. Notice of awards is expected by the end of June 2022. Consultation services are anticipated to begin in the summer/fall of 2022.

DEI Background

For many years, ZACH has focused on hiring diverse actors and voices, producing inclusive shows and educational programs, and reaching out to diverse communities. In recent years, and despite the obstacles raised by the pandemic, ZACH has improved

the diversity and awareness of our staff and Board of Trustees, which has further invigorated our commitment to DEI.

In 2020, ZACH partnered with a consultant to assess staff, board, and community DEI experiences at ZACH and to identify areas where ZACH could improve. The assessment process included the following:

- A confidential survey was distributed to all ZACH staff, artists, teachers, board members, and other members of our community asking them to tell us more about their experiences regarding DEI at ZACH. Responses were collected.
- One-on-one interviews and group discussions were held to dive deeper into the survey responses and gain a fuller understanding of the feedback.
- The survey results were presented to staff, board members, and external stakeholders.
- Staff and board members participated in workshops entitled “Understanding Cultural Bias and Racial Equity” to strengthen our DEI knowledge.
- ZACH received feedback and recommended next steps from the consultant, which may serve as a baseline leading into this DEI engagement.

In December of 2021, following the assessment process described above, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to pass a Strategic Plan that expressly embraces a commitment to DEI in all pillars of the organization, as shown in the graphic above.

Scope of Work & Deliverables

ZACH seeks to develop and implement specific and understandable policies, practices, programs, and behaviors aimed at successfully carrying out the Strategic Plan’s directive to commit to and invest in diversity and inclusion strategies to strengthen all endeavors.

The Consultant will have an initial assessment period of ZACH, our DEI work and discussions of ZACH’s Strategic Plan, values and goals. The Consultant will have the benefit of prior assessment results and is expected to continue assessing the then-current state of ZACH’s culture and DEI to further develop the appropriate consulting work and recommendations.

The Consultant will collaborate with the Board, staff and other appropriate ZACH stakeholders to produce the following deliverables:

- develop concrete, understandable goals and recommendations for expansion of ZACH's DEI initiatives;
- provide Board updates on at least a monthly basis, or upon request by the Board, and attend Board, committee and/or staff meetings if requested;
- develop and curate clear strategies and plans for implementing those goals and recommendations;
- propose and manage an intentional timeline for implementation, including interim deadlines for specific actions and deliverables;
- develop methods to measure success toward achieving the goals and plans; and
- work with ZACH on best practices for implementing such strategies and plans.

Qualifications

ZACH requests proposals from a qualified DEI consultant with specific experience and success in assisting non-profit arts organizations with the following: assessment, development and implementation of organizational programs, policies, practices, and behaviors related to DEI. **(Please also refer to the "Qualifications" section on page 5)**

- Demonstrated, extensive experience with and knowledge of DEI.
- Demonstrated, extensive experience developing and implementing DEI strategies and action plans for nonprofits (preferably arts nonprofits).
- Proven success collaborating with staff, senior management, and board leadership.
- Understanding of the nonprofit sector (preferably arts nonprofits), and the various compounding factors (funding, staff capacity, infrastructure) that affect operations.
- Proven ability to work independently and autonomously, and both develop and meet deadlines.
- An effective, inclusive communicator and facilitator of positive and productive discussion in both small and large groups, in person and remote.
- An understanding of best practices for non-profit organizational management strategies and operating procedures.
- Demonstrated experience successfully implementing change to established organizational policies and procedures.

Response Proposal Requirements

The following guidelines are provided for standardizing the preparation and submission of proposals. Proposals shall contain the following information in the order listed:

A. Cover Letter: The letter shall include the Consultant or Organization's name submitting the proposal, their mailing address, telephone number, website, and contact information. The letter shall address the Consultant's understanding of the project based on this RFP and any other information the Consultant has gathered. Include a statement discussing the Consultant's interest and qualifications for this type of work. A principal of the firm authorized to legally bind the firm shall sign the letter.

B. Table of Contents: The Consultant shall insert a comprehensive table of contents denoting sections.

C. Work Plan: The work plan must state the Consultant's ability to meet each specification as outlined in this document and include a project outline and timeline. Phased timelines are acceptable. The plan should be simple, easy to read and follow. Additionally, the Consultant may include recommended actions and deliverables not specifically identified in this RFP which meet Zach's intent for improving our DEI posture.

D. Supportive Information: This section may include tools, graphs, charts, and examples of work-product. At least one work-product sample is highly recommended.

E. Fee: This section should include the cost for requested services outlined in the Scope of Work. Consultants shall clearly describe and outline fees for the services to be provided for self-identified segments of the project. Provide your proposed fee, with detailed information about what expenses will be covered by the fee, and any variable expenses (e.g., travel reimbursement). If selected, upon completion of each segment, the Consultant will notify Zach and request payment for the products and services by submitting an invoice and a brief description of work performed during the billing period. Upon receipt of the invoice, Zach will review in a timely manner the products and services noted, verify completion, and authorize payment. No cost increases shall be passed onto Zach after the proposal has been submitted.

F. Qualifications: Highly qualified bidders will possess proven expertise in leading DEI Assessments and developing DEI action plans across a large diverse stakeholder

group including multiple levels of staff, Board members, students, and other key partners. The Consultant will have a track record of success in the nonprofit sector and, ideally, with arts organizations. Zach is looking for a bidder with the ability to move quickly, work collaboratively, listen carefully, maximize resources, surface and steward a variety of interests, and clarify a direction and plan for moving forward within a relatively short time frame. Identify any experience developing strategic plans that include DEI initiatives. Please include any other relevant information in support of the Consultant's qualifications.

G. Experience: Brief explanation of why this project is of interest. Describe the Consultant's capability for undertaking and performing the work, including any professional licenses and certificates held by the Consultant. List types, business names, and locations of similar work performed by the Consultant in the last five (5) years that best characterizes quality and past performance. Specify if Consultant has or does not have experience working with other non-profit arts organizations for a DEI engagement. Include resumes of the specific team members who would be assigned to perform this work on this initiative. References may be requested and contacted as part of the selection process.

How To Apply

Proposals must be received by ZACH by 5:30 p.m. Central Daylight Time on **Monday, May 16, 2022**. Proposals must be submitted to Regina Pyne, Human Resources Director, via email: regina@zachtheatre.org.

Questions regarding this RFP are to be directed to: regina@zachtheatre.org. Such contact shall be for clarification purposes only. ZACH must receive all questions no later than **Friday, April 29, 2022**. Material changes, if any, to the scope of services or proposal procedures shall only be transmitted by written addendum.

Notice of award is expected by June 30, 2022. Consultation services are anticipated to begin summer/fall 2022.

ZACH has an amount budgeted for its DEI initiative and final pricing will be negotiated with the awarded Consultant. Please feel free to offer a phased proposal or menu of options.

Terms and Conditions

This RFP is an invitation for proposals and ZACH is under no legal obligation to accept any proposal nor to proceed with the RFP. ZACH reserves the right to amend the RFP or any requirements at any time.