



Updates as of April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Our Commitment to Anti-racism**

**Approved on 9-29-21**

**Status Update on 11-3-22**

**Status Update on- 4-16-2025**

**OUR BASELINE HISTORY AS OF BOARD APPROVAL ON SEPTEMBER 29, 2021**

Geva's staffing, leadership, and storytelling have always been predominantly white. To explore this, in 2020, we completed a racial equity audit of our history.

- Over our 48-year history, 92.3% of all playwrights and composers on the Wilson Stage were white, and on the Fielding Stage, 83% of all playwrights and composers were white.
- 83% of plays developed through our new play programming have been written by white playwrights/composers.
- The overwhelming majority of creative teams (directors, designers, choreographers, dramaturgs) over the last 20 years have been white, including a three-year period where only white artists were hired to direct and design Geva productions. The last fully-produced season, in 2019-20, showed an increase to 25% of all creative team members being BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color).
- Until 2017, the principal actors in the cast of Geva's celebrated *A Christmas Carol* were 100% white.
- In the past few years, we have made efforts to increase representation on our stages: since 2017, principal actors on our stages have been 52% white. That's a large shift from our history, and yet we recognize that this work is ongoing.
- As of August 1, 2021, Geva's Board of Trustees was 25% BIPOC.
- As of August 1, 2021, Geva's full-time staff was 10% BIPOC.

This data does not reflect the ways in which we have not proactively included or prioritized other marginalized communities – those that are not straight, cis-gendered, able-bodied and neurotypical – nor the way that we have left out certain BIPOC communities even more than others.

We want to acknowledge that significant effort and courage have been required of anyone, especially BIPOC staff, artists, and community members, who wanted to provide feedback to Geva. We acknowledge the consequences of our actions and inactions. We are grateful to everyone who has generously demanded that we do better, particularly our own Black and Iranian-American staff members and the *We See You White American Theatre* authors and signatories. We acknowledge our role in perpetuating these systems, and take responsibility for repairing the harm caused. This is the critical work that we must do, that we are ready and eager to do, and we acknowledge that we are late in beginning the work.



## 1. Disrupting Inaccurate Histories and Exclusions

### Original Plan Language

### Status

<p>We have investigated the history of the land on which Geva sits, and acknowledge that it is the ancestral and unceded territory of the Onöndowa'ga, known in English as the Seneca. We offer gratitude and respect to their elders past and present, and we pledge to disrupt our comfort in the colonizer's story of how that land was taken from them. We have shared this story on our blog, on our website and in our playbills. We commit to offering land acknowledgements in our public and internal gatherings, and we are beginning a dialogue to identify the ways in which we can be of service to the Indigenous communities in and around Rochester, which is only a first step towards a right relationship with the people who have stewarded this land from time immemorial.</p>	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>In partnership with Friends of Ganondagan and Native Voices, Geva hosted the Indigenous Theatre Symposium in June 2024, which included a presentation of Kaha:Wi Dance Theatre's The Mush Hole. Geva is continuing to partner with Friends of Ganondagan and Native Voices on a 2025 production of Pure Native and is discussing further partnership.</b></p> <p><b>The Land Acknowledgement was initially created with Peter Jemison of Ganondagan and is shared on Geva's website, large screen lobby monitor, playbills, and in print at Board and Staff meetings. Geva intends to re-examine its current land acknowledgement practices with input from members of local and national Indigenous communities.</b></p> <p><b>(2022 Update)</b>          We have deepened our relationship with Ganondagan, and are building a new partnership, exploring possible artistic collaborations and planning for the future.</p>
<p>We also acknowledge that the founding of the regional theatre movement mirrored social constructs of a time that afforded privilege to some and excluded others on the basis of factors including (but not limited to) race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, class and ability. We commit to actively disrupt the vestiges of those structures through our anti-racist policies and practices at our theatre.</p>	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>The Strategic Framework, approved by Geva's Board of Directors on December 6, 2023 and revised on January 29, 2025 calls for becoming a more inclusive organization through growth of staff, Board, visiting artists, artistic partners, and community partners specifically in areas of race, people with (dis)abilities, and gender identities.</b></p>



## 2. Revising Policies and Practices to Adhere to Anti-Racist Values

Original Plan Language	Status
We have begun the process of articulating new institutional statements of our mission, vision and values to make sure they honor our anti-racist ethos. We commit to evaluating these statements on an ongoing basis.	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>Geva's vision statement was revised during the strategic planning process and approved by the Board on December 6, 2023. Subsequent to that meeting, three of Geva's six core values: Boundless Hospitality; Anti-Racism and Inclusion; and Empathy and Transparency were revised by the Board's IDEA Committee and approved by the Board in 2024 and 2025.</b></p> <p><b>(2022 Update)</b>  This was completed in 2021, and a new evaluation of those statements will happen again during our strategic planning process.</p>
We have made a commitment to ongoing and consistent anti-racism training for our staff, volunteers and board, with a budgetary and time commitment.	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>Engaged in Anti-Racism Training with ArtEquity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Trustees (Nov. 2023)</li> <li>• Staff (Jan. 2024)</li> </ul> <p><b>Subsequently engaged Coordinated Care Services, Inc. for additional training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff - Microaggressions &amp; Implicit Bias (May 2024)</li> <li>• Staff – Our Local History- Redlining in Rochester (Jan. 2025)</li> </ul> <p><b>Simeon Banister, President and CEO of Rochester Area Community Foundation -IDEA Presentation with the Board of Trustees and Senior Staff - Board Retreat (March, 2025)</b></p> <p><b>(2022 Update)</b>  We have hired ArtEquity to lead us in this training and are beginning the process of building a core team and setting training times for both staff and board, to happen concurrently.</p>
We are creating new policies to enshrine anti-racist hiring practices. These include: reevaluating job descriptions/postings to eliminate any unnecessary requirements that could limit who may apply; including pay ranges in job postings; expanding our networks to promote opportunities; and, evaluating candidates' commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and anti-racism work.	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>Geva continues to evaluate language and consult with experts in the field and current publications to monitor job listings, posting sites, participation in job fairs, leveraging partnerships, and interviewing techniques to ensure best practices toward hiring through an anti-racist lens. Geva remains committed to upholding IDEA values.</b></p> <p><b>(2022 Update)</b>  We have created these policies and these practices are in effect.</p>
We are developing a 360-degree feedback process for executive leadership that will include surveying staff, trustees and artists.	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>Geva conducted a 360-degree feedback survey of executive leadership in 2023. This survey included staff and Board, but did not include artists. Plans are underway to work with an outside consultant on a</b></p>

	<p><b>combined 360-degree feedback/staff survey in 2025. A separate survey will be distributed to artists.</b></p> <p>(2022 Update)</p> <p>The Board completed this plan in May, 2022, and the plan is to implement these reviews in spring, 2023</p>
<p>We are evaluating partnerships, sponsorship arrangements, and advertising relationships with media outlets and will engage with organizations that are committed to becoming anti-racist. We are seeking out BIPOC vendors and those who share our anti-racist values.</p>	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b></p> <p><b>We informally seek values alignment with all vendors. We intend to create a formalized vendor policy.</b></p> <p>(2022 Update)</p> <p>We ended paid advertising with media companies that did not share our anti-racist values and have built on our relationships with Blaque/Out Magazine and CNY Latino media, specifically</p>
<p>We are examining our policies around the scheduling and platforms for media appearances of guest artists to protect their time and avoid problematic media interactions.</p>	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b></p> <p><b>We invite but do not require participation of artists in development and press activities.</b></p> <p><b>Our press engagements are also voluntary and with consent from our guest artists, we share individuals preferred pronouns and cultural context for each production with media outlets ahead of all appearances.</b></p> <p>(2022 Update)</p> <p>We no longer ask actors to present Prologue before performances, or make any other appearance before a performance (including toasts). They are paid when they participate in Sunday Salons or other Education programming. Artists are not currently being asked to participate in Advancement activities. And we do not send artists to appear at media outlets who do not share our values. And when issues have occurred with specific media hosts, we have addressed those issues in real time. We are also trying to be mindful of time – not asking too much of any one artist, and being careful about the timing of media asks (not during tech, for example)</p>
<p>We are revising our formal paid holiday recognitions, which will now include Native American Heritage Day, Martin Luther King Jr. day, and Juneteenth. Also, in recognition that our staff comes from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds, we will add two additional floating holidays to our official holiday policy to allow for individuals to observe holidays that are not recognized within our current calendar.</p>	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b></p> <p><b>If productions require individuals to work on the designated holidays, they may take off another day in place of that holiday.</b></p> <p>(2022 Update)</p> <p>We have made this revision to our holiday recognitions.</p>



### 3. Creating Greater Equity in our Artistic Process

Original Plan Language	Status
We will continue to compile our racial equity data annually and be transparent with the results.	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>We are developing survey systems to ensure all data is being self-identified.</b></p> <p>(2022 Update)            Data about creative teams - in the 21-22 season, casts were approximately 27% white, 73% BIPOC. As of August 1, 2022, our Board of Directors is 28% BIPOC, our full-time staff is 10% BIPOC and our part-time staff is 21% BIPOC.</p>
We created an Artistic Council to incorporate the invaluable perspectives of a broader range of underrepresented communities into the season planning process.	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>The Artistic Council of local community partners evolved into a Curation Team currently composed of the Artistic Director, Resident Director/Associate Producer, Director of Connectivity, Literary Manager/Artistic Associate, and Artists in Residence. The Curation Team brings multiple perspectives and lived experiences to bear from national artists and curators, and the Director of Connectivity connects the programming to Engagement, Education, and Accessibility; Partnerships; and Engagement Committee. The Artist in Residence program commissions a new work from a BIPOC artist every season while also bringing the Artists in Residence into the company's strategic planning, senior staff and curation planning.</b></p> <p>(2022 Update)            The Artistic Council was invaluable in the planning of our 21-22 and 22-23 seasons. We are currently evaluating how we want to proceed, and have added Director of Engagement Rachel DeGuzman and Playwright in Residence Harrison David Rivers to our season planning process in the meantime.</p>
We have committed to producing on our stages at least one play written by each of the four playwrights from the Recognition Radio festival (the radio plays Geva produced during the 2020 Covid shutdown) celebrating Black stories over the coming years.	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>Geva has added Harrison David Rivers' adaptation of A Christmas Carol to its annual programming, and continues to pursue productions of playwrights from Recognition Radio playwrights (Christina Anderson, Harrison David Rivers, Kirsten Greenidge and Chisa Hutchinson) while also programming work celebrating Black stories from other playwrights (including Christina Ham and August Wilson in the 24-25 Season and ak payne and Baron Vaughn in the 25-26 Season)</b></p> <p>(2022 Update)            In '21-'22, we produced Christina Anderson's play <i>How To Catch Creation</i>. In '22-'23, we are producing Harrison David Rivers' play <i>we are continuous</i>, and Harrison is our Playwright in Residence.</p>

<p>We commit to assembling dynamic, inclusive and equitable creative teams addressing the cultural competency needed for each project. Our teams will include a range of artistic, cultural and identity perspectives with BIPOC artists and female artists in each team. To be transparent in our efforts we commit to annual reporting on our creative team demographics.</p>	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b></p> <p>Once the survey system has been established, we will collect self-identifying demographic information from creative teams for the 24-25 season and then implement an onboarding process for the 25-26 season where self-reporting data will be a part of that process.</p> <p>Geva added a cultural liaison position to the creative team of <i>Pure Native</i> (April 2025). Future cultural liaisons will be considered on a show-by-show basis.</p> <p>(2022 Update)</p> <p>From August 2021 to July 2022, creative teams for our subscription shows were 51% BIPOC (adding in <i>A Christmas Carol</i> brings the percentage to 43%). And 63% of creative teams were female-identifying (adding in <i>A Christmas Carol</i> brings the number to 57%). In this same period, the writers and composers were about 32% BIPOC and about 23% female-identifying.</p>
<p>Over the past 25 years, Geva has fully produced 29 world premieres on our stages, 17% of them authored by BIPOC writers. In order to build new relationships that might lead to future premiere productions, we commit to focusing on commissioning and developing the new plays of BIPOC writers. For the next five years Geva will dedicate funding of no less than three quarters of our commissioning and workshop budgets to developing the plays and musicals of BIPOC writers.</p>	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b></p> <p>Geva launched the Artist in Residence program in 2022, a residency for BIPOC playwrights and theatre makers that spans two seasons. Artists in Residence receive a commission for a new work, developmental support for their works-in-progress, and an artistic home.</p> <p>Geva Artists in Residence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harrison David Rivers (2022-2024)</li> <li>• Baron Vaughn (2023-2025)</li> <li>• DeLanna Studi (2024-2026)</li> <li>• Jeffrey L. Page (2025-2027)</li> </ul> <p>Developmental Workshops:</p> <p>22/23 SEASON: <i>Proximity</i> by Harrison David Rivers; <i>Russian Troll Farm</i> by Sarah Gancher (co-produced); <i>Ask for the Moon</i>, book and lyrics by Darko Tresnjak, music by Oran Eldor (co-produced); <i>The World is Not Silent</i> by Don X. Nguyen; 23/24 SEASON: <i>Newtown</i> by Dan O'Brien + Baron Vaughn and Kiran Deol in <i>The Work Out Room</i>. 24/25 SEASON: <i>A Christmas Carol</i> by Harrison David Rivers, in collaboration with Sally Lobel; <i>Cycle Breaker</i> by Baron Vaughn; writing residency with DeLanna Studi + Gabe Mollica and one other in <i>The Work Out Room</i>. 80% of Geva's commissioning and development has supported new work by BIPOC artists (100% of commissions, 73% of development to date, knowing most of these commissions will have workshops once their first drafts are completed which haven't yet happened)</p> <p>(2022 Update)</p> <p>In '21-'22, we produced one workshop of <i>Somewhere Over the Border</i>. In 22-23, we are producing 4 new play workshops, 3 of which are developing plays by BIPOC writers. Our commitment to Harrison David Rivers as playwright in residence also contributes here. And we are continuing to develop new relationships with BIPOC writers as well as Deaf writers.</p>
<p>We have created an anti-racist code of conduct for the rehearsal room and the theatre at large, which articulates a process for responding to acts of bias, thereby prioritizing the needs of people over product.</p>	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b></p> <p>The code of conduct has been enhanced with the establishment of Geva's Respect in the Workplace policy. This is being shared with and acknowledged by all staff, over hire staff, Board, guest artists, volunteers, and future producing partners.</p>

	<p>(2022 Update)</p> <p>This is shared in actor packets in the apartments, and is posted in the rehearsal room and in the theatre.</p>
<p>We commit to examining and eliminating production practices that disproportionately impact BIPOC artists. These practices include the industry-wide standard of requiring overly long days during technical rehearsals.</p>	<p>(2025 Update)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We have eliminated “10 out of 12s” (12 hour technical rehearsal days with a two-hour break) from our processes.</b></li> <li>• <b>We have prioritized the selection of culturally authentic prop, costume, scenic, and sound/music elements in our productions.</b></li> <li>• <b>We have removed gender-specific language and language that implies size-based-judgement in the process of fittings and measurements in costume work.</b></li> <li>• <b>We are supporting hair care for Black hair with knowledgeable designers as well as outside expertise.</b></li> <li>• <b>We have added multiple colors of stock to our microphone equipment to better blend in with dark skin tones.</b></li> <li>• <b>We have regularly engaged Intimacy Directors for our sensitive rehearsal and performance work.</b></li> <li>• <b>We have been transparent with guest artists with our materials budgets for our productions.</b></li> <li>• <b>We will continue to identify more places to make changes that add up to a more welcoming and a less harmful environment.</b></li> </ul> <p>(2022 Updates)</p> <p>As a general rule, we have tried to eliminate 10/12s, but this is still an area we need to continue focusing on.</p>





#### 4. Building Inclusive Community Relationships

Original Plan Language	Status
We are re-imagining our front of house and ushering policies and procedures, as well as our approach to audience engagement, to ensure that our space is a welcoming space for all.	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>The Spanish language playbill is ongoing for all productions.</b></p> <p><b>The Respect in the Workplace policy will now be included in the volunteer handbook and will be reviewed at the start of the season.</b></p> <p><b>Geva piloted a Black Out Theatre performance during <i>Nina Simone: Four Women</i> (February 2025) and a Haudenosaunee performance during <i>Pure Native</i> (April 2025).</b></p> <p><b>Geva maintains its commitment to providing ASL interpreted, open captioned and audio-described performances for all productions.</b></p> <p><b>(2022 Update)</b>  We are exploring barriers to access, specifically around language, and have begun an exploration of this with <i>Somewhere</i>, providing a synopsis and credits in Spanish, with a full Spanish language playbill online. This will be re-visited.</p>
We have articulated Geva's Invitations to Play, which recognizes the many and diverse ways that audiences experience theatre together, and makes clear the expectation that all will be welcomed and respected in our spaces. This will be shared with all audiences.	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>The Invitations to Play are under review by Geva staff.</b></p> <p><b>(2022 Update)</b>  These are posted in our lobby, in our playbills and on our website.</p>
As a non-profit organization incorporated for the public good, and with our center city location that has served as a gathering place for the region since 1868, we continue our longstanding commitment to supporting peaceful social justice demonstrations. For example, in 2020 we opened our lobby for respite and medical supplies, and we will remain responsive to local social justice organizers in the future whenever possible.	<p><b>(2025 Status Update)</b>  <b>This commitment remains in effect.</b></p>
We will establish a Board Working Group dedicated to our engagement activities, as part of prioritizing that work throughout our season, not on a show-by-show basis.	<p><b>(2025 Update)</b>  <b>The Engagement Committee was established in the 23/24 season and first met in the spring of 2024. The Committee is led by Geva's Director of Connectivity, who reports on its activities to the IDEA Committee of the Board. The Committee reconvened in February of 2025 and as of that time had 21 members, composed of community partners, artists, activists, and educators. The Committee functions to provide opportunities for collaboration, relationship building and advisement for artistic and cultural inclusion within Geva's Engagement programming and Geva's connectivity to Rochester's</b></p>



	<b>multiple communities.</b>  (2022 Update) Director of Engagement, Rachel DeGuzman, will be making reports to the IDEA committee this season.
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While these commitments represent a significant shift for Geva, we recognize that they are only the beginning of becoming an anti-racist organization. Our actions and policies will evolve as we strive to address future harm and repair harms of the past. We will make mistakes, and we will actively listen and make corrections. Our staff and board are wholeheartedly committed to this anti-racist journey, through which Geva will contribute to a more just and equitable society. We humbly ask that you join us in this work and hold us accountable for fostering an anti-racist culture within Geva Theatre.