

Request for Proposal

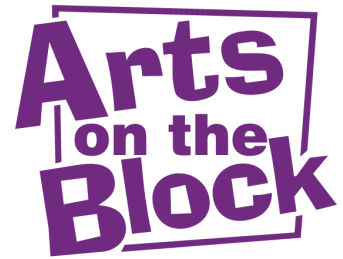
**Racial Equity Training for
Youth-Focused Creative
Social Enterprise**

**Issue Date: October 2021
Closing Date: December 2021**

Request for Proposal

Consultants for Racial Equity Training

October 22, 2021



INQUIRIES AND PROPOSALS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Arts on the Block
900 Wayne Avenue, 1A
Silver Spring, MD 20910
proposals@artsontheblock.com
301-502-5623

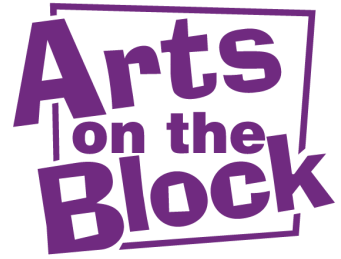
PROJECT SUMMARY

Arts on the Block seeks consultants with the capacity and expertise to steward an intergenerational Board and Team member Racial Equity learning and alignment process. We seek consultants that can help design and facilitate cross-cultural change processes that build individual and organizational capacity and skill level on critical issues of racial equity and racial justice. The ideal consultant will have experience working with leaders of varied racial and ethnic backgrounds who have differing levels of knowledge and experience with these topics. We seek a partner who can provide content on the impacts of racism and racist structures while exhibiting multicultural competency and expert facilitation techniques. Partners who understand the issues that affect racial equity, specifically within the arts, and respect the arts' distinctive role in creating change and community are ideal. This process will take time, and the partner must have the flexibility needed to ensure program goals are met. It is presumed that the scope of work will span beyond the initial consulting period of one year and begin at the start of 2022.

ABOUT US & BACKGROUND

Mission: Arts on the Block (AOB) empowers creative youth to imagine and shape fulfilling futures, join the creative workforce, and contribute to the quality of life in their communities. AOB achieves its mission by providing real-world experiences in the arts and entrepreneurial training to open new pathways to learning, self-discovery, and achievement.

History: Founded in 2003 under the umbrella of a larger organization, AOB initially offered a creative apprenticeship program twice per year in Montgomery County, MD. In 2007, Artpreneurs, Inc. was formed and adopted Arts on the Block as its trade name. By July 2009, AOB had become an independent 501c3 nonprofit. In 2012, AOB expanded its programs to incorporate both high school and middle school age groups in multiple locations throughout Montgomery County, MD and Washington,



DC- reaching over 2,000 young artists since its inception. Today, Arts on the Block operates a working mosaic studio in Silver Spring, MD, and provides annual direct service programs for over 400 participants from ages 6 to 24, including 70 families in our dual-language (English/Spanish) program. Since our founding, we have secured multi-year, high profile art commissions with over 250 public art works visible throughout the region.

AOB is the only hands-on studio art apprenticeship in the region offering youths and young adults the opportunity to learn about art, design, and business by engaging them in real-world public art commissions. We support youth and young adults by recruiting, training, placing, and supporting program participants with art and design aptitudes that might not ordinarily see a career path in the creative industries.

Our Teaching Philosophy:

AOB staff sees art as a fundamental tool to help participants realize their voice and vision for their future. The Teaching Philosophy at Arts on the Block aligns with [Progressive Education](#) methods of teaching and learning. Progressive methods focus on the whole child, learning through experiential opportunities, developing one's ability to problem solve and think through participant-driven choice making. The creative process entails accepting moments of failure. We believe that new opportunities can be borne out of exploring these mistakes with constructive reflection, feedback, and revision from oneself, peers, and program facilitators.

AOB's youth-centered, [Positive Youth Development](#) approach acknowledges the strengths of our young creatives, supports their social-emotional, academic, professional, and aesthetic development, and provides them with opportunities to learn, lean into the challenges afforded by the creative process, and be prepared to lead peers, staff, clients, and community members.

AOB offers safe, engaging, creative environments dependent on program participants' contributions. Staff will use a range of teaching strategies that fall under a Progressive Education approach, such as inquiry-based learning, experiential learning, and project-based learning. Additionally, the broadly accepted [8 Studio Habits of Mind](#) are presented, applied, and reviewed to the level of a mantra for one's [creative practice](#).

AOB staff embraces, includes, and explores with our young creatives aesthetics and artists from our global community while providing a solid foundation in visual art theory and content through [Elements of Art](#) and [Principles of Design](#).



Art is an essential tool for gaining agency toward defining one's world and being an active participant in a global society. The development of a strong aesthetic sensibility and experience with a rigorous creative, [human-centered design](#) process is essential for any [21st Century](#) student, employee, and/or owner. AOB sees art as a common denominator, bringing together a wonderful mosaic of creatives to our community. We celebrate and embrace what we have in common and what makes us different. We strive to exercise racial equity in staffing and program recruitment in all of our practices so that we all may contribute our best to an ideal AOB community that exists both within and well beyond the walls of our studio.

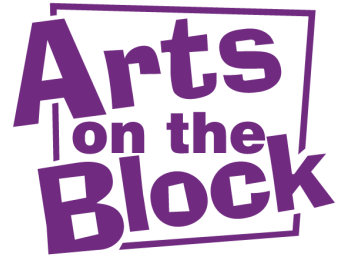
SCOPE OF WORK

Background: Under the expert guidance of our board of directors, AOB is undertaking a planning process (AOB 2.0) through three special projects: Racial Equity, Human Resources, and IT. In FY22, through this ongoing planning process, AOB will: institute foundational racial equity training with the board, staff, and program participants, introduce a new Community Handbook, and improve our human resources processes; and advance our capacity to acquire and use data and technology in alignment with our values. All through the lens of racial equity.

Building on last year's planning work, AOB is primed to focus on and establish foundational training in racial equity to augment our organizational and community development capacities. A recent publication by Scaling Pathways suggests that [Using Data to Power Scale](#) must be grounded in equity to avoid scaling bias.

A Racial Equity facilitator will support the integration of our ongoing IT and HR work to ensure the equitable use of data and technology and inclusive human resource practices throughout AOB programs. By examining each step of the participant experience through a racial equity lens, this project will guide the organization in fine-tuning programs and supporting the sequential progress of creative youth, including tracking college and career trajectories and their continued engagement as alumni, mentors, creative practitioners, and community leaders. These metrics are intended to improve existing programs in real-time.

AOB has worked on integrating a racial equity lens into its programs, projects, and the organization in an incremental manner. The next step is formally integrating a race equity lens and framework into our overall organizational development work. Through highly-customized racial equity training, the AOB board, professional team, studio crew, apprentices, and families will examine how we relate to and understand each other in becoming proficient in methods to ensure AOB artworks equitably engage and authentically represent the communities with whom we collaborate.



AOB seeks to remove and transcend internal systemic and structural barriers to equity and inclusion within the organization. We hope to co-create a process with consultants, board, and staff centered upon the learning and integration of key concepts and best practices for individuals and organizations that will help AOB become an anti-racist, multicultural institution through this ongoing process.

Project Overview:

The future viability of AOB sits squarely on the long-term relationships and community bonds we form over time, necessitating today’s conscious and intentional HR practices and use of technology modeled on racial equity best practices. While we have made incremental steps toward this, no organization can assume long-term viability without fully integrating racial equity throughout its current operations and vision for the future. We seek to fully integrate racial equity into our programs from the beginning of an individual’s AOB journey (at any entry point to the organization).

In partnership and with our consultants' expertise, AOB seeks recommendations for organizing and developing this process. To this end, we have identified four key areas for the consultant’s work:

1. Data & information gathering
2. Plan & design
3. Learning modules & training
4. Integration & practice plan

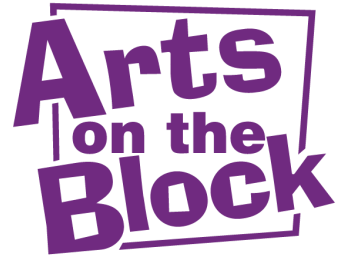
DATA & INFORMATION GATHERING

1. Conduct an assessment (audit, interviews, surveys, asset mapping, etc.) with staff and board to gauge organizational and individual understanding, perspective and skill level around key issues of racial equity, racial justice, inclusion, power, privilege, intersectionality, and more.
2. Acknowledge and respond to questions related to staff and board assessments and interviews.

PLAN & DESIGN

Co-design a process with the Racial Equity Core Team to develop and design strategic alignment, prioritize areas of work, and implementation including the development of goals, objectives and strategies that:

1. Integrate RE into the internal processes and systems at AOB;
2. Integrate RE into our externally facing work;
3. Build organization-wide commitment and infrastructure across each function of the organization that demonstrably advance RE-based transformation.



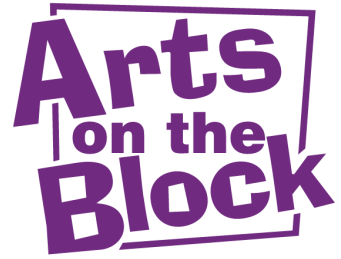
LEARNING MODULES & TRAININGS

Create content tailored for the staff and board based on information gathered from the assessments. With an intersectional racial equity lens, the consultant should develop a Racial Equity Training Plan that identifies organizational gaps and addresses those in an accessible and usable training plan AOB can commit to for continuous learning that includes:

1. Building a common language and shared knowledge about racial equity
2. Understanding implicit bias and its effects
3. Recognizing internal and external structural inequalities that limit our work
4. Sustainability of this work
5. Developing HR policies that address racial equity concerns in the workplace
6. Facilitating and fostering workplace change

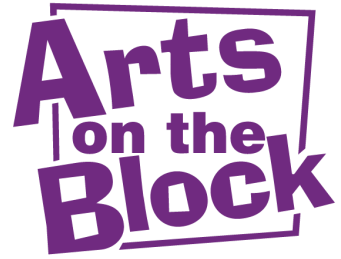
INTEGRATION & PRACTICE PLAN

1. Develop AOB skills with which to operationalize racial equity, including assistance with development and implementation of an action plan related to performance measures integrating racial equity into organization decision making.
2. Design an iterative process that supports staff and board to create and integrate a framework across the organization based on the identified racial equity goals.
3. Facilitate internal organization-wide community agreements.
4. Work with the Racial Equity Core Team to review and adopt our external facing communications guidelines.
5. Offer suggestions for software and/or modules of our existing operating systems that allows AOB to sustain this work on its own.
6. Develop a toolkit that responds to existing and changing social environments around racial equity that AOB can self administer as the organization grows.
7. Assist in creating HR content for onboarding in order to establish a baseline for “compliance”.
8. Advise the organization on the legal and psychosocial issues around racial equity conversations, language, and training with young adults.



PROPOSED DELIVERABLES:

- A. Develop, execute, and perform comprehensive racial equity analysis of the organization.
- B. Support the development and facilitation of dialogue that will engage community members, staff, and board.
- C. Undertake an analysis of existing organizational strengths and gaps with clear recommendations on how best to build upon strengths that will encourage racial equity across the organization.
- D. Explicitly identify opportunities for improvement with suggestions regarding how to operationalize those improvements.
- E. Provide knowledge and insight on best inclusion practices in our field.
- F. Guide and support development of a shared organizational goal on racial equity.
- G. Assist with the review of our public statement of principle regarding racial equity, that serves as the guidepost for how we operate and make decisions that impact budgeting, policies and procedures, operations, programming, outreach, communications, and management practices.
- H. Develop and execute a training and education strategy that will increase the awareness, knowledge, and skills of our staff as it pertains to racial equity.
- I. Develop a long-term roadmap that is aligned with AOB's strategic plan and will ensure that barriers to inclusion continue to decrease, while internal awareness, knowledge, and skills continue to increase. This roadmap should include methods of long-term monitoring and evaluation that consider several areas, including but not limited to HR practices, policies and procedures, community partnership, IT & data gathering, and ongoing staff education.
- J. Create defined metrics of success for aligning with racial equity goals for the Racial Equity Plan.



CANDIDATE CRITERIA AND QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate (consulting group) will demonstrate an alignment with AOB's mission, vision, and values as well as in-depth knowledge and experience with philanthropy, arts organizations, and multi-generational boards. Further, skills and experience designing, facilitating, and shepherding organizational learning and training, with a clear anti-racist and anti-oppressive pedagogical approach should also be described.

At a minimum the candidate should have:

- A. Five (5) years of experience advising organizations on the development and implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion centered strategies (racial equity in particular).
- B. Five (5) years of experience facilitating complex learning processes with small, medium and large groups.
- C. Experience engaging and working with young adult audiences in facilitating racial equity conversations and practice implementation.
- D. Strong communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to develop written and analytic documents.
- E. Experience working with non-profit and/or arts organizations that are at various stages in strategic plan development.
- F. Ability and experience in observing interpersonal dynamics and ensuring all voices are at the table.

SELECTION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

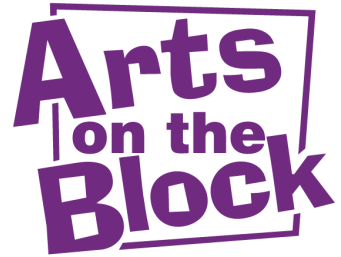
Following brief first round telephone interviews with selected applicants, AOB will conduct virtual interviews with up to five respondents to explore capacity and compatibility before making our selection to retain consultant(s).

Our anticipated timeline* is:

- December 3rd, 2021 - Proposals due by 5pm EST
- December 5th-10th, 2021 - Proposal review
- December 12th-17th, 2021 - Calls with selected applicants
- January 3rd-14th, 2022 - Virtual interviews of 3 – 5 applicants
- January 21st, 2022 - Contract awarded

*This schedule may be subject to change

We anticipate a minimum 12-month commitment from our chosen consultant with the opportunity to renew, as needed.



PROPOSAL SUBMISSION & REFERENCES

Arts on the Block has an estimated budget range of \$20,000 - \$30,000 for Racial Equity consultant work.

Proposals should address your recommended approach, anticipated work plan, a breakdown of timeline and budget/rate, professional resume, and relevant work samples including:

- A. Scope of Experience- Describe experience related to the scope of services above. Additionally, if applicable, provide a description of experience advising organizations comparable to AOB and/or arts organizations.
- B. Company Details- Describe the company/consultant group in terms of size, structure, areas of expertise, length of existence, types of services provided etc.
- C. Credentials and Qualifications- Identify the technical credentials that make the firm and/or consultant uniquely qualified for this work. Explain how each person will be key to the successful completion of the project and identify the individual(s) who will do the work on this project by name and title. Please include resumes.
- D. Technical Details- Include a comprehensive description of services relating to how the respondent intends to provide the services requested, including:
 - a. How the project will be managed and scheduled
 - b. How the data and materials will be delivered to AOB
 - c. Communication and coordination with AOB
- E. Cost and Budget- Identify all costs for performing services necessary to accomplish the contract deliverables.
- F. Please respond to the following additional questions:
 - a. Do you, or a member of your staff have Instructional Design expertise? If so, please describe.
 - b. Does your firm use a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion assessment tool? If so, what does it measure?
- G. State of being a small or minority-owned business.
- H. Provide a copy of Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action policy, if available.
- I. Provide at least three (3) references from current or past projects in the last five (5) years. With each reference, include a brief project description, project date, and contact information.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Please submit your proposal and any attachments electronically in PDF format by 5pm EST, December 3rd, 2021 with the subject line "Consultant Proposal for Racial Equity Training" to proposals@artsontheblock.com