

**California Presenters  
Diversity Task Force Plan  
August, 2013**

Overview

Over the past fifty years, population demographics in California have undergone a tremendous shift with “minority” ethnic groups now outnumbering the “majority” white population by over 20 percent. This shift in population is transforming the communities and constituents that our state’s presenters serve and is altering the role and focus of many performing arts institutions. As a result, the presenting field must actively engage with and represent the changing communities of which they are a part to stay relevant, responsive and successful. California Presenters (“CP”) recognizes that diversity must be a central and critical focus and that diversifying CP’s membership, programming perspective, and professional associations is essential in order for it to continue to provide national leadership in presenting the performing arts and to ensure a viable and relevant future. CP recognizes that diversity has myriad definitions. The first phase of the CP Diversity Committee work will be to initiate projects that address disparities in geographic, socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity. As other needs arise and inequalities are identified, the CP Diversity Committee will remain committed to adapting its recommendations to the relevant groups and communities who require support.

The CP Board has convened a Diversity Task Force to develop a plan to sustainably and meaningfully increase the diversity of CP membership. Partnering with culturally-specific presenting arts organizations will be an important strategy and opportunity for California Presenters to engage more deeply with the diverse communities they serve. Task Force membership includes: Michael Alexander, Karim Baer, Eddie Cota, Adam Davis, Julia Diamond, Phil Esparza, Ernest Figueroa, Heather Rigby, Carolyn Van Brunt and CP President Lenore Naxon, ex officio. Two conference calls were organized where committee members discussed possible strategies, the history of diversity initiatives at California Presenters and other associations, and potential programming that would begin to engage new and diverse membership to the organization. The Task Force recognizes that diversity initiatives take time to build trust and traction and is taking a long term approach benchmarked by specific, achievable goals. The Task Force recommends the following diversity language to be included in the 2013 CP strategic plan:

4. Commit to diversifying our board, membership and participation to better reflect current state demographics.

- a. Actively engage a wider range of members in committees, mentorship program and leadership opportunities.
- b. Create Diversity Task Force to introduce California Presenters to professional presenting arts organizations in underserved and or culturally diverse communities and encourage them to become active participants in California Presenters programs.
- c. Work with membership committee and regional leaders to ensure that California’s rich cultural landscape is more equitably represented in our organization.
- d. Develop, leverage and secure existing and new funding to support these efforts.

Guided by these principles, the Diversity Task Force has identified the following possible initiatives to foster cultural, racial and social diversity of its members, the artists they present, the audiences they serve, and the professionals within their organizations.

1. **Conference Activities.** Design and conduct a survey to ascertain the interests, needs, challenges and goals of CP member organizations and other professional associates, relative to diversity and engagement. Integrate “diversity” in both the broadest and most specific ways into the annual activities undertaken at California Presenters conferences through panels, talks, and plenary sessions and provide opportunities for culturally-specific presenters to attend the conference on a scholarship basis and become active members.

First Year Goal: Schedule a panel session on diversity during the 2013 California Presenters conference and select a speaker to address diversity during a plenary session. Invite and provide support for four individuals representing culturally-specific presenter organizations to attend the conference. Include questions in the conference survey to collect panel and plenary session feedback and request what sessions, topics and resources would be valuable to CP members in future conferences. **ACHIEVED.**

Second Year Goal: Build upon the achievements in the first year. Utilize the survey information to plan a panel and plenary speaker for the 2014 California Presenters conference. Continue communications with the culturally-specific presenters that attended the conference in 2013 to continue to build a relationship with their organization. Invite and provide support for four new individuals representing culturally-specific presenter organizations based in the conference host city (San Diego) to attend the conference. Plan a site visit to learn more about the guest attendees’ organization/s and community/ies.

2. **Cultural Exchange.** Initiate a Cultural Exchange Program which will pair a participating California Presenters member organization with a culturally specific non-member presenter to share information and resources about building diversity and infrastructure for their organizations. Participants will co-mentor one another and engage in site visits and meetings to discuss operations, programming and engagement philosophies, and explore potential partnerships and collaborations. Representatives from non-member participants will receive support from California Presenters to attend the annual conference at the beginning and end of the program with an eye toward securing ongoing support for their organization’s annual membership.

First Year Goal: The Diversity Task Force will identify two CP member organizations in the Northern California area, and two CP member organizations in the Southern California area to pair with a local culturally specific presenter. Participating organizations will develop and schedule a plan to exchange meetings as appropriate for their organizations and seasons. Meetings may include performances, organizational site-visits, attendance at workshops or local convenings relevant to professional development operations, cultural exchange, public engagement, or other events where participants can engage in discussions or illustrate topics important to their work. Oversight for the program will be modeled on the CP Mentorship Program and will include a professional facilitator that will conduct intake interviews, regularly scheduled check-in meetings to monitor participants’

quality of experience as well as exit interviews to report on outcomes and provide recommendations on future program improvements.

- 3. Next-Gen Mentorship.** Expand the existing California Presenters Mentorship Program to focus on next-gen/emerging leader mentee participants employed in culturally-specific CP member and/or non-member organizations. With the goal of providing information to help build leadership, advance management skills, and develop a diverse cadre of emerging leaders in the presenting field, selected participants will be mentored by a senior manager/director from a CP member organization. Representatives from non-member participants will receive support from California Presenters to attend the annual conference at the beginning and end of the program with an eye toward securing ongoing support for their organization's annual membership.

First Year Goal: Up to three mentees representing culturally-specific presenting organizations (which may or may not be members) will be selected through competitive application process to participate in the program. Each mentee will be paired with a senior manager/director from a CP member organization to serve as a mentor. Mentees and mentors will develop a personalized syllabus and meeting schedule, coordinate a site visit at the mentor's organization, and participate in check-in calls with the mentor-mentee cohort. Oversight for the program will include a professional facilitator that will conduct intake interviews, regularly scheduled check-in meetings to monitor participants' quality of experience as well as exit interviews to report on outcomes and provide recommendations on future program improvements.

- 4. Engagement with the Field.** Convene meetings of presenters in Northern California and in Southern California to engage in discussions centered around needs specific to presenters in those regions. These meetings will be opportunities to engage culturally specific presenters, presenters of non-traditional venues, and municipal presenters (many of which serve diverse or culturally specific populations). CP representatives will learn about the challenges these presenters face which will inform future Task Force initiatives. Meetings will also focus on facilitating collaborative partnerships and resource sharing, communicate what support CP currently offers, and generate ideas about what CP can do to attract and retain diverse/culturally specific/non-traditional presenters. This will also serve as a platform for presenters to share ideas and interests which may lead to collaborative projects, co-presentations, and block bookings.

First Year Goal: One meeting will be convened in the Northern California and in the Southern California area to engage up to 10 non-traditional and ethnic-specific presenters in each area in dialogue about assessing their strengths and challenges, and to identify opportunities for support by California Presenters.

- 5. Information Resources.** Establish a diversity resource bank on the California Presenters member site. This resource bank will amalgamate member lists, professional development scholarship opportunities, organizational diversity policies and resources, papers and reports related to topics in diversity, listings of culturally-specific arts organizations in California, consulate information, and other resources in a central location on the CP Web site to make available to the general membership.

First Year Goal: Research and list existing resources on the California Presenters member site that relate to topics in diversity. Research and request recommendations for relevant research papers, statistics, policy samples, publications and other information sources from general membership, culturally specific centers, state and national policy institutes, and compile for future listing on a resource bank.