

OVERVIEW

As part of its commitment to fostering equity in dance and culture, Dance/NYC seeks to dismantle ableism* in dance and amplify the voices and autonomy of disabled people. It seeks to advance a cultural ecosystem that expressly includes disabled artists and disability communities.

In doing so, it puts disability front and center as a positive artistic and generative force and addresses artistic development from the public school classroom to the stage. It recognizes generations of people and organizations engaged in this work and seeks to contribute to their efforts.

Dance/NYC's vision for a just, equitable, and inclusive dance ecology is short- and long-term, and encompasses changes to policy, investments, programs, attitudes, and actions impacting disabled artists, cultural workers, and audiences. Dance/NYC recognizes that disability equity and justice do not exist individually or siloed from additional issue areas and interrelated forces of oppression (e.g., racial justice, immigrant matters) in its work nor in the lives of its constituents. Instead, disability equity and justice require an intersectional* approach that builds upon multiple areas that together create a more just, equitable, and inclusive dance ecology.

As Dance/NYC considers 2018 and beyond, it demonstrates its commitment to disability equity and justice by:

- Addressing the full and meaningful participation of disabled New Yorkers in its programming and operations;
- Collaborating with colleague service organizations that are mission-focused on disability arts. Learn more about Dance/NYC's Justice, Equity & Inclusion partners ([Dance.NYC/equity/equityinclusionpartners](https://www.dancenyc.org/equity/equityinclusionpartners));
- Improving and scaling up disability-focused programming that has been effectively piloted; and
- Developing and implementing discrete new disability-focused programming.

Dance/NYC recognizes that the planning and execution of disability equity and justice work requires the investment of emotional labor*, financial resources, and time. To ensure the sustainability and well-being of the organization, its staff, and its constituents, Dance/NYC only undertakes activities for which there are sufficient resources available. Detailed in the section on the following page are commitments that reflect confirmed funding and additional opportunities Dance/NYC has identified for 2018-2020 that cut across the organization's core programs—research, convening, promotion, and regranting—and all aspects of its operations.

The purpose of this agenda is to outline Dance/NYC's commitments to addressing disability* equity and justice within the organization and in the dance field it serves. The agenda builds on Dance/NYC's Disability. Dance. Artistry. initiative (2014–present) that has:

- Delivered a major Disability. Dance. Artistry. Fund ([Dance.NYC/equity/disability/fund](https://www.dancenyc.org/equity/disability/fund)) for local productions;
- Produced three research reports, *Discovering Disability* ([Dance.NYC/DiscoveringDisability15](https://www.dancenyc.org/DiscoveringDisability15)), *Disability. Dance. Artistry.* ([Dance.NYC/DisabilityDanceArtistry16](https://www.dancenyc.org/DisabilityDanceArtistry16)), and *Performing Disability. Dance. Artistry.* ([Dance.NYC/PerformingDDA18](https://www.dancenyc.org/PerformingDDA18));

- Generated online resources available at Dance.NYC ([Dance.NYC/equity/disability/resources](https://www.dancenyc.org/equity/disability/resources));
- Initiated dialogue, including a Disability. Dance. Artistry. Conversation Series, Disability/Arts/NYC Convening, Disability. Dance. Artistry. (Inter)national Voices, and a seminal conference presented as part of ADA25NYC, in partnership with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities ([Dance.NYC/equity/disability/events](https://www.dancenyc.org/equity/disability/events));
- Built relevant organizational expertise, capacity, and networks, including an ad hoc task force of disabled artists, educators, and disability advocates; and
- Positioned the organization as a leading advocate for disability dance artistry.

This agenda is a living document and is intended to be revisited annually by Dance/NYC's staff, board, committees—11% disabled as of May 2018—and Justice, Equity & Inclusion partners ([Dance.NYC/equity/equityinclusionpartners](https://www.dancenyc.org/equity/equityinclusionpartners)). Dance/NYC seeks and values feedback from disability communities impacted by its work.

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*KEY TERMS

Ableism: Ableism is a system of power and privilege that discriminates against people who are or are perceived as being Disabled and that privileges those who are or are perceived to be nondisabled. Its expression can take many forms, including social relations, institutions, and practices, and it can take the form of prejudices, discrimination, violence, and stereotyping. Ableism is an active force in history, a force that also served and serves settler colonialism. (Susan Burch, "Disorderly Past: Kinship, Diagnoses, and Remembering in American Indian-US Histories": unpublished manuscript, 2015, 32); This working definition draws on extensive conversations with others, including Eli Clare, Alison Kafer, Kim Nielsen, and Katherine Ott.

Disability: "Disability" and "Disabled" as used by Dance/NYC are intended as markers of identity and membership within a specific minority group connected by social, political, and cultural experiences. The use of the term disability is not intended to assign medical significance. This use of language follows movements in disability studies and disability rights, discussed in detail in Simi Linton's seminal *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity* (similinton.com/about_claim.htm). Further, this formulation of disability encompasses all impairments—mobility and physical, sensory (including, but not limited to, vision and hearing), intellectual, cognitive and/or learning, and psychological, whether readily apparent or not.

Intersectionality

The study of overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination (art Equity, theory first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, artequity.org)

Emotional Labor

Emotional labor is the exertion of energy for the purpose of addressing people's feelings, making people comfortable, or living up to social expectations. It's called "emotional labor" because it ends up using—and often draining—emotional resources (Everyday Feminism, everydayfeminism.com/2016/08/women-femmes-emotional-labor). Dance/NYC uses this term to acknowledge the particular kind of labor individuals, often recipients of oppression, engage in for the purposes of educating, supporting, or appeasing oppressors and/or people in more privileged positions.

The definitions above are borrowed from Dance/NYC's learning with Race Forward and established leaders and experts in disability equity and justice. Dance/NYC recognizes that language is constantly in flux and that words might have different meanings depending on their context and use. Please refer to a full glossary and resource directory: [Dance.NYC/JEIdirectory](https://www.dancenyc.org/JEIdirectory).

PROGRAM COMMITMENTS

I. Advocacy & Action-Oriented Research

- Advocate policy, funding, and program recommendations that support the full and meaningful participation of disabled New Yorkers to government, foundation, and nonprofit sectors in the metropolitan area, with a focus on New York City's diversity, arts education, and cultural planning (CreateNYC) initiatives;
- Support artswide developments, for instance, Disability/Arts/NYC (DANT) and independent recognized leaders in the field of disability inclusion in the arts;
- Make the case for considering Disability as a category to cultural data sources and include disability in all Dance/NYC demographic research, including forthcoming research on immigrant and small-budget dance makers;
- Undertake additional quantitative and qualitative research to extend the learning and impact of any new disability-focused programming; and
- Support the development of national standards by sharing local models through an alliance with the national organization Dance/USA.

II. Technology & Visibility

- Lead by example in the use of language and access features by following Dance/NYC's communications guidelines and review guidelines annually;
- Create visibility for disabled artists and provide disability resources to dance companies by maintaining existing pages available at Dance.NYC and adding, in 2018, an events accessibility guide and an event venue accessibility self-evaluation toolkit;
- Ensure usability of web environment through regular updating and monitoring compliance with the latest WCAG protocol;

- Produce accessible content, for example, by deploying closed captioning functionality available on Dance/NYC's YouTube channel for new videos, and by creating accessible digital e-communications and public print materials;
- Encourage best practices in field marketing by offering educational material to registered [Dance.NYC](https://www.dance.nyc.org/) users (for example, tools for accessing content and features on Dance.NYC, creating accessible listings and ads on Dance.NYC, and designing accessible organizational materials) and review material annually;
- Grow base of disabled registered Dance.NYC users through targeted marketing and partnerships, for example, with service colleagues Art Beyond Sight, Disability/Arts/NYC (DANT), independent experts in the field, and other means;
- Capture demographic information and monitor progress toward greater representation at least annually;
- Partner with Art Beyond Sight on "Careers in the Arts Toolkit," supported by the National Endowment for the Arts;
- Promote NEW YORKERS FOR DANCE visibility campaign for integrated and disability dance artistry creators, performers, advocates, educators, and audiences; and
- Grow targeted online network of audiences for integrated and disability dance artistry.

Additional Opportunities for which Dance/NYC May Seek Funding

- Produce additional online educational content in the form of short-videos organized by issue area, for example, language or universal design; and
- Produce and promote inclusive casting protocol and additional tools.

III. Leadership Training, Networking & Convening

- Formalize accessibility guidelines for public events to share with stakeholders and constituents, and review guidelines annually;
- Present all public programming in facilities that are at a minimum demonstrably compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Provide accessible communications environments; ensure Dance/NYC-generated content is accessible, highlight access features, and provide ASL and other services as needed;
- Foster best practices for speakers and partnering venues by providing guidelines on accessible media, events management, and preferred disability equity and justice language;
- Ensure disability representation among planning committees and speakers;
- Ensure disability is a part of discussions about diversity, equity, inclusion;
- Grow base of disabled attendees through targeted marketing and partnerships, for example, with service colleagues Art Beyond Sight and Disability/Arts/NYC Task Force, and independent experts in the field, and other means; and
- Capture demographic information and monitor progress toward greater representation at least annually.

Additional Opportunities for which Dance/NYC May Seek Funding

- Offer "Beyond Accessibility" in-person training for key segments; for example: educators, facilities managers, board members, and funders, and develop formal curriculum for beginning and intermediate level workshops;
- Convene and mentor disabled dance workers ages 21-30 through Dance/NYC's Junior Committee ([Dance.NYC/programs/jcomm/about](https://www.dance.nyc.gov/programs/jcomm/about)) to advance the future of integrated and disability dance artistry;
- Explore intersectional and interrelated forces of oppression (for example, racism and ableism) that impact disabled dance community members;
- Explore collaborative "Cultural Access Network" models to create efficiencies of scale in delivering leadership training and technical assistance, such as planning support for dance companies, among other resources; and
- Pursue activity in Bergen and Hudson counties in New Jersey, potentially with New Jersey State Council on the Arts and New Jersey Theatre Alliance.

IV. Re-granting Programs

- Use learning from Disability. Dance. Artistry Fund (through March 30, 2018) and captured in *Performing. Disability. Dance. Artistry.* to guide regranting programs;
- Guarantee disability representation on regranting panels;
- Lead by example in ensuring the usability of regranting communications, application, and reporting materials;
- Apply disability equity and justice framework to ongoing and new regranting initiatives, prioritizing equitable investment in dance made by disabled artists, performed by disabled artists, and grounded in disability culture, aesthetics and artistry; and
- Execute complementary programs to support disabled grantees, such as centralized technology and visibility, leadership training, and research.

Additional Opportunities for which Dance/NYC May Seek Funding

- Undertake additional rounds of Disability. Dance. Artistry. Fund to make possible integrated and disability dance artistry productions in the New York City area and support adaptations of the model in additional geographies; and
- Pursue additional re-granting, for example, program investments in residencies and capital investments to create accessible physical and communications environments.

V. Operations

- Recruit and retain disabled New Yorkers among Dance/NYC's board, committees, staff, and volunteers;
- Prioritize hiring of a disabled staff member, or a fellow focused on career advancement in the arts;
- Track diversity (race, disability, age, gender, LGBTQ identity), of board, committees, staff, and volunteers to measure progress over time;
- Make training on disability matters and additional resources a priority for board, committees, staff, and volunteers;
- Enhance internal physical and communications environment and ensure accessible facilities are made available as needed for internal meetings; and
- Prioritize accessibility in any future office space.

SELECT IMPACTS

Drives Policy & Investment

- Policy and funding developments attributable to Dance/NYC's research and recommendations; and
- Level and breakdown of funding and pro-bono services delivered by Dance/NYC to disabled artists (goal: all funding initiatives must serve disabled artists)

Serves Disability Communities

- Increased disability participation each year in Dance/NYC networking and convening, as measured by Symposium subsidies allocated annually (minimum goal: 20) and demographic data collected through speaker and attendee surveys;
- Increased disability participation in community of registered users of Dance.NYC, measured through demographic data collected on new users; and active participation in posting content listings on Dance.NYC by newly registered users who identify as disabled; and
- Readership of organizational content focused on disability matters and testimony.

Creates Organizational Change

- Increased percentage of board, staff, and committees who identify as disabled (goal: disability representation at all levels to reflect the demography of New York City, currently 10% disabled according to US Census data);
- Active participation by Board and Junior Committee in disability training;
- The number and range of partnerships with organizations focused on ethnicity, race, disability, and/or immigrant matters for project activities (goal: 5); and
- Percent of program and operation vendors whose leadership identifies as disabled and share Dance/NYC's priorities for advancing disability equity.

Seeds Innovation & National Activity

- Examples of comparative and national dance research using Dance/NYC benchmarks; and
- Programs adapted across disciplines and geographies.

ATTACHMENTS

Overview of Dance/NYC's Disability. Dance. Artistry. Initiative
([Dance.NYC/uploads/DanceNYC-OneSheet2018-DDAOverview.pdf](https://dance.nyc/uploads/DanceNYC-OneSheet2018-DDAOverview.pdf))

Prepared by Dance/NYC staff and reviewed by members of its Board of Directors, Advisory Committee, Junior Committee, Disability. Dance. Artistry. Task Force, Immigrants. Dance. Arts. Task Force, Symposium Programming Committee, and Justice, Equity & Inclusion Partners.
([Dance.NYC/about/people/boardcommittees](https://dance.nyc/about/people/boardcommittees))