



Vancouver Fringe Festival  
Box 203-1398 Cartwright St.  
Vancouver, BC, V6H 3R8  
[vancouverfringe.com](http://vancouverfringe.com)

## **Vancouver Fringe Festival** **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Audit** **2018**

### **Executive Summary**

In 2017 the Vancouver Fringe Festival partnered with ShapeShift Arts to undergo an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Audit. The purpose of the audit was to research and analyze the internal and external factors that contribute to a lack of diversity within the Vancouver Fringe Festival, and to assemble a range of recommendations to advance EDI both internally and externally for the organization.

While the Vancouver Fringe Festival maintains a non-curated, non-adjudicated selection process for artists, and operates under the vision of "Theatre for everyone," its modes of communication, outreach, production, and presentation have resulted in a festival where the majority of artists are white and come from euro-centric, able-bodied theatre traditions.

Recommendations from ShapeShift Arts were developed based on both an internal audit consisting of a questionnaire and one-on-one interviews of Fringe staff and board members, as well as an external audit consisting of three focus groups with underrepresented artists who have not participated in the Festival, as well as an Artists Forum with past and present artists.

### **Recommendations (Internal):**

1. To set up internal meetings for board and staff to share EDI information and work.
2. To deliver training to both staff and board to build capacity around EDI work.
3. To perform visioning, strategic planning and operations to align staff and board and create consistent EDI policies and plans.
4. To collect data to measure and evaluate the progression of EDI policies, plans, and practices and ensure accountability.
5. To develop a communications plan and strategy that advances outreach to and relationship-building with underrepresented artists.
6. Hardwire EDI practices into Policy, Procedures, and Operations, such as clarifying intentions in EDI documentation, and create mechanisms for measuring equity achievements.
7. To recognize and commit to long-term, sometimes slow-moving, EDI work that emphasizes processes as much as outcomes.
8. To work with consultant(s) on implementation of EDI work.
9. To focus on increasing the representation of diverse identities on the board and staff



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and strive to increase resources for underrepresented communities, including compensating underrepresented individuals for their time and involvement in this work.

Recommendations (External):

1. To perform community consultations and forums with underrepresented communities on an annual basis prior to strategic planning sessions as part of an ongoing evaluation and accountability process.
2. To develop partnerships with other arts organizations that are doing similar work and that expressly serve those marginalized by the conditions of society in order to form a community of practice and advance the establishment of trust.
3. To provide mentorship opportunities and programs to underrepresented artists, including workshops and/or performance spotlights.
4. To provide bursaries and funding for underrepresented artists that support their entry into, and ability to participate in, the Festival.
5. To develop comprehensive access plans, building on existing resources and attention given to ASL services, physical access, washrooms, signage, and childcare.
6. To engage in a long-term outreach strategy that emphasizes relationship development.
7. To delay and reconsider the implementation of a Diversity Lottery due to concerns and issues raised by participants and instead to focus on other EDI capacity-building efforts.

Both an internal and external recommendation is to execute EDI initiatives in a phased approach as to not overwhelm currently overextended staff, board members, and artists and to ensure that the process is genuine and builds over time.

While the EDI report is an important first step in identifying gaps and opportunities around EDI at the Vancouver Fringe Festival, there is a significant amount of difficult work ahead to advance EDI and embed EDI principles and actions into strategic plans, policies, and operations. The Vancouver Fringe recognizes that this is long-term work that requires commitment from staff, board, funders, and resources and openness, willingness to learn, and self-reflection.