



## **ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE CHARTER & POSITION DESCRIPTION**

### **HISTORY**

#### **Accessibility Laws and Regulations**

The New England Foundation for the Arts is one of six regional arts organizations (RAOs) established with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Per the NEA's Guidelines, regional arts organizations (RAOs) must execute their projects in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of their disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance; and The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment (Title I), state and local government services (Title II), places of public accommodation, and commercial facilities (Title III).

The ADA extends the requirements of Section 504 to:

- All activities of state and local government under Title II; and
- Places of public accommodation and commercial facilities operated by private entities, including places of "public display or collection" such as museums, under Title III.

Therefore:

- Cultural groups operated by state or local governments are covered by Title II;
- Title III covers cultural groups operated by private entities as places of public accommodation, even if they do not receive federal funds; and
- Places of public accommodation that are also recipients of federal financial assistance must comply with the requirements of both Title III of the ADA and Section 504.

#### **NEFA's NEA Partnership Agreement**

As part of NEFA's partnership agreement with the NEA, the organization must appoint a staff member to serve as its Accessibility Coordinator. The Coordinator helps lead NEFA and its constituents in its efforts to comply with Section 504 and the ADA. The NEA and Accessibility Coordinator are in regular communication about best practices to ensure equitable access to an organization's programs, activities, and services.

One such recommendation is the establishment of an Accessibility Committee to evaluate and advise the organization's accessibility compliance, efforts, and outreach. The Board of Directors of the New England Foundation for the Arts will establish and appoint an Accessibility Committee to engage in this work with NEFA's Accessibility Coordinator and staff.

### **ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION**

#### **Mission and Values**

The Accessibility Committee will serve as a core resource for NEFA, advising on matters pertaining to providing access for people with disabilities and compliance with federal regulations and best practices regarding accessibility and inclusion.

The Accessibility Committee values:

1. Equal access for people with disabilities to NEFA's programs, activities, and services.
2. Opportunities to educate NEFA, NEFA's constituents and partners about disability and disability access issues within the arts.
3. Organizational communications that are accessible to people with disabilities.
4. Removing physical barriers and improving access within NEFA's facilities.



### **Membership**

The Accessibility Committee will initially be chaired by a member of NEFA's senior leadership staff and shall consist of at least six (6) additional members:

- NEFA's resident Accessibility Coordinator
- 1- 2 representatives from NEFA's Board of Directors
- At least 4 consultants, constituents, or experts who represent and/or have disabilities

Nominations for new or additional members shall be reviewed by the committee chair and approved by majority vote of the current membership.

Members will serve a two-year term, renewable if mutually desired. Members agree to allow NEFA to publicize their participation on the committee on the organization's website or in publications.

### **Accessibility Committee Priorities**

- Assist in evaluating the accessibility of NEFA's facilities, programs, activities, and services;
- Make recommendations for needed improvements;
- Provide guidance in developing NEFA's access policy and a plan for action;
- Serve as an access resource and review mechanism, which may include consultation on new programs, policies, and services;
- Assist in educating staff, board, and grantees concerning disability services and access issues;
- Advocate the inclusion of accessibility awareness to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) conversations

### **Meeting Schedule and Expectations**

The committee will meet two (2) times per year to review ongoing and incidental issues relating to accessibility matters concerning NEFA's facilities, programs, activities, services, constituents, or grantees. Additional meetings may be scheduled as necessary.

Meetings will be held on site at NEFA unless otherwise specified. NEFA will offer alternative methods for participation for committee members not able to attend in person. NEFA will provide necessary accommodations to ensure all committee members are able to participate fully.

Committee members are expected to participate in all meetings. If a member is not able, they should contact the Accessibility Coordinator at least one week prior to the meeting.

### **Remuneration**

NEFA staff and trustees will serve on the committee as volunteers and will not receive compensation for their participation. External advisors will be reimbursed for travel expenses.

NEFA will provide access accommodations, such as assistive listening devices, closed captioning, sign language interpreters, etc., for advisors if requested.