

MASS Action

Museum As Site for Social Action

Pre-Work: Preparing for the Journey

Readiness Assessment

Purpose:

The MASS Action Readiness Assessment is designed to help you determine where your museum is now with respect to your journey towards equity.

A note about the language you will encounter: We use “equity” as our framework for MASS Action in an attempt to capture a mutable approach to inclusion and access that is rooted in social justice. Equity asks us to acknowledge our position in relation to identities that give us privilege, access, class, money and power, and to consider these experiences when designing solutions to make society more fair and just. And equity, unlike equality, is used to refer to conditions or processes that, while fair and just, will not look the same way for everybody.

However, in order to create a concise assessment, and one that connects more broadly to the work that you may already be doing, we will also refer here to DEAI (diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion) as a shorthand. With the caveat that DEAI is an institutional acronym that is often applied loosely and can create complacency when used in a vague way without opportunity for reflection or definition.

We further want to acknowledge that working toward and defining equity is messy, entangled work (to paraphrase the anthropologist Anna Tsing), and that each journey begins with assets and will grow in different ways.

Instructions:

1. Form an interdepartmental team, preferably with a member of your leadership included.
2. Distribute the Readiness Assessment to team members in advance and ask them to review and record some thoughts before your preparation meeting.
3. During your preparation meeting: Appoint a scribe who will be responsible for capturing notes and agreement on the responses. Share and analyze your personal responses, and move towards a consensus on the assessment.
4. Once you have reached consensus, the scribe should then create a single assessment. This will become your baseline. The Assessment can be revisited by your team annually to measure progress.

MASS Action Readiness Assessment

PART 1 (Quantitative)

The following section is divided into six domains: **Strategic Leadership, Culture & Climate, Policies & Practices, Programs & Services, Engagement & Advocacy, and Evaluation and Accountability**. Each domain includes statements that reflect effective museum-focused equity practice, which were outlined by the MASS Action Advisory Committee. The statements are based on an assessment model called the *Protocol for Cultural Responsive Organizations* developed by the Center to Advance Racial Equity.

Please answer the questions in each domain on a scale of 1 to 5 (see scale) based on where your museum is today.

Use the *comments column* to capture your insights, questions and potential needs that you would like to explore during the Convening.

Response Scale:

- 5 = Fully integrated policy/practice/process
- 4 = Making progress/beginning to implement
- 3 = Initial action/planning efforts are underway
- 2 = In the assessment phase
- 1 = We are learning/thinking about it
- 0 = No actions at this time

MASS Action Readiness Assessment

PART 1 (Quantitative)

Domain: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP							Domain Total: 45 Points Max
Question	5	4	3	2	1	0	Comments
Museum has incorporated a commitment to inclusion and equity on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability. Board and staff are oriented about this commitment and its impact on the organization.							
Museum's vision, mission and values reflect a deep commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, decolonizing and mutuality in relation to the population of its region.							
Museum believes it has a role and responsibility to be used as a site for social action.							
Museum has a policy statement that explicitly states its position to advance inclusion and equity.							
DEAI-related work is stated as a priority in our museum.							
All departments/divisions understand the importance of and are committed to this work (it is not siloed in one department).							
Museum has specific goals and plans that advance DEAI work.							
Museum makes decisions that reflect a commitment to DEAI.							
Museum's board reflects the diversity of the communities served.							
Museum's leadership reflects the diversity of the communities served.							
Museum staff is diverse and is fully representative of the constituencies we commit to serve.							

Domain: CULTURE & CLIMATE						Domain Total: 35 Points Max	
Question	5	4	3	2	1	0	Comments
Museum has taken vigorous initiative to transform itself with expanding awareness, acceptance and action for diversity, equity and inclusion.							
Museum's culture is viewed by staff as welcoming, engaging, empowering in an interculturally vital way.							
Museum's culture prioritizes the perspective and needs of staff and visitors of different races and cultures.							
Museum creates opportunities for staff and board to engage in collective dialogue, learning and training around developing an analysis of equity related to race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.							
Staff involvement opportunities in DEAI work are available and encouraged.							
Museum's work on DEAI and cultural responsiveness is visible to staff and the public.							
Museum takes steps to address low morale, disengagement, diminished performance or conflict in departments, divisions, or groups experiencing DEAI-related challenges.							

Domain: POLICIES & PRACTICES							Domain Total: 55 Points Max
Question	5	4	3	2	1	0	Comments
Resources are allocated to staffing and building the museum's DEAI capabilities.							
Museum routinely analyzes operational decisions (hiring, HR policies/procedures, budget, etc.) to determine impact based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.							
Museum routinely analyzes programmatic decisions (exhibitions, public programs, engagement, etc.) to determine impact based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.							
Museum routinely analyzes communications (messaging and products) for appropriateness and alignment with its inclusion and equity commitment.							
Museum uses language that explicitly acknowledges inclusion, equity and/or social justice related to race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability. For example in strategic plan, speeches, board/leadership meetings and publications.							
Museum has a policy that serves to increase board and staff diversity.							
Museum works to build a pipeline of diverse talent (board and staff).							
Museum has a vendor diversity policy and purchasing procedure and works to diversify its vendor pipeline.							
Museum funding priorities enable staff to be fully inclusive and creatively responsive to all constituencies we serve.							
Museum is transparent in its decision making process and in its quality and connection improvement processes.							

Domain: PROGRAMS & SERVICES							Domain Total: <i>20 Points Max</i>
Question	5	4	3	2	1	0	Comments
Museum staff understands the communities they serve, in a non-static manner, including their culture, values, norms, history, customs, and particularly the types of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion they face in the USA. This knowledge is applied in a responsive, non-limiting and non-stereotyping manner.							
Museum analyzes and remedies barriers to access to full engagement based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.							
Museum collections policies and archives demonstrate and consistently improve intercultural rigor, connection, and impact based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.							
Museum's interpretive processes fully connects with the diversity of its audiences and assessing impact based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.							

Domain: ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY							Domain Total: 25 Points Max
Question	5	4	3	2	1	0	Comments
How the museum listens, learns, connects and educates resonates with the diversity of constituencies we currently engage and intend to engage.							
Museum creates internal space to explore and speak openly about race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.							
Museum consistently evolves its paradigm of engagement to match the changing profile of audience and constantly strengthen our relational capacities to develop and sustain high resonance with and use by diverse audiences.							
Respect is maximized under conditions of solidarity, and advocacy for social justice is a part of the core work of the organization.							
Museum uses its position in the community to lead and/or actively engage in advocacy efforts that support and build relationships with non-dominant communities.							

Domain: EVALUATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

Domain Total:

20 Points Max

Question	5	4	3	2	1	0	Comments
Museum leaders have diversity, equity inclusion and accessibility-related goals and are accountable for results.							
Museum board reviews and monitors progress and holds the institution accountable for diversity, equity inclusion and accessibility-related progress and outcomes.							
Museum has clear metrics for work and outcomes related to diversity, equity inclusion and accessibility.							
Museum uses data to identify and close gaps where the disparities.							

Total Scores for Each Domain

Domain	Score	Reflections
Strategic Leadership		
Policies & Practices		
Culture & Climate		
Programs & Services		
Engagement & Advocacy		
Evaluation & Accountability		
TOTAL SCORE		

Discussion Questions

Review your total scores.

What domain(s) are strongest?

Which one is the weakest?

MASS Action Readiness Assessment

PART 2 (Qualitative)

Reflection Questions:

1. What is compelling the Museum, if anything, to take vigorous initiative now, and how well is it **engaging diversity** in its processes of awareness, acceptance and action?
2. Imagine that our DEAI work is stunningly successful five years from now. **What do we hope will be different** for our organization? For our community? (Also, be explicit in how you are defining community.)
3. What issues, **challenges** and/or **opportunities** do you see on the horizon that could profoundly impact your role and implementation of effective DEAI initiatives and practices?
4. What in your museum's culture supports a successful DEAI initiative? What **values (beliefs)** and/or **principles (action that reflect your beliefs)** exist or could be developed or instituted to ground the work and support authentic engagement?
5. What **patterns of resistance** are most alive in the museum, and how does (or does not) the Museum demonstrate awareness, acceptance and action to change these patterns?
6. What **new territory** of equity and social justice work are you planning to explore or pursue in the next 12 months?
7. What are the **key action steps** the Museum will take next to advance a commitment to decolonizing its self-image and relational engagement processes to deepen diversity, equity and inclusion?