



Defending Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Arts & Entertainment

From civil rights to gender rights to labor rights, DEI is a centuries-old movement dedicated to upholding the freedom of all Americans to access life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Currently, there is a multi-pronged attack on DEI efforts taking place across the country that attempts to roll back years of progress and restrict access to the American Dream.

American Pride Rises is here to support arts and entertainment leaders like you in championing DEI.

Below is guidance to empower you to use your voice and influence to stand up for DEI.

DEI and the Power of Storytelling

DEI is essential to telling truthful, compelling stories that engage millions of different people around the world. It is not a set of policies you can throw away without consequence.

- **Diversity simply means all people.** Organizations, stories and media that reflect the diversity of America are best positioned to reflect and connect with audiences today.
- **Equity is fair access to opportunity.** America was founded on the idea that everyone should have a fair chance at success. Without equity, the promise of opportunity fades away and so does your competitive edge.
- **Inclusion is participating in the American Dream.** We are made stronger when we use our collective voice and skills to move our nation forward. If we abandon efforts to strengthen inclusivity, we risk limiting our talent pool for art, media and business.

DEI and Representation

Diverse, equitable and inclusive art allows consumers to see and hear their stories reflected in movies, television, music and more. What we see reflected in our art signals what stories are worthy of being told, and highlights the experiences of communities that differ from us in a variety of ways including age, race, sexual orientation, gender expression, religion and more.

- 72% of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race and ethnicity” and 73% agree that the arts “helps me understand other cultures better.” ([Americans for the Arts](#))



- 75% of audiences don't currently feel represented in media and entertainment – embracing diversity in hiring, casting, advertising and more can help secure more interest, spend and loyalty with these audiences. ([Deloitte](#))
- Audiences demand more diverse characters and more authentic portrayals and intersectional representation that moves beyond a “check-the-box” mentality. More scrutiny falls on decision-makers “behind the scenes”; diversity in leadership ranks and managerial positions drive the creation and distribution of more diverse content. ([World Economic Forum](#))

DEI and the Bottom Line

DEI drives innovation, growth and success. Research shows that audiences desire to see diverse art and put their financial support behind projects that prioritize diversity.

- Black, Latinx and LGBTQIA+ audiences represent a third of the \$717 billion U.S. media and entertainment market. Combined, these three audiences spend more than \$250 billion annually – brands and businesses that do not engage in diverse storytelling lose access to this sizable revenue. ([Deloitte](#))
- 71% of current media spend among Black, Latino and LGBTQ+ audiences is driven by feelings of inclusivity. ([Deloitte](#))
- In 2023, theatrical films with casts that were from 31 percent to 40 percent BIPOC enjoyed the highest median global box office receipts, while films with casts that were less than 11 percent BIPOC were the poorest performers – echoing a pattern evident the last four years. ([UCLA's 2024 Hollywood Diversity Report](#))

DEI and Your Brand

You have direct power to defend DEI through your action, voice and influence on projects within your organization/business, in your industry and brands that wish to work with you.

- **Use your platform to make industry shifts:** Take opportunities where you have the ear of the industry – interviews, awards shows, contract negotiations and publicity – to lift up the essential role of DEI in driving creativity and profits.
- **Diversify your talent pipeline:** Encourage diversity of talent at all levels of an organization or production by hiring and recommending talent that reflect diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- **Ask about DEI before accepting a brand deal:** Before you endorse a product, brand or business, take the time to ask them some key questions about their DEI commitments and require evidence of progress toward DEI goals. Here are a few key questions to consider:
 - Does the company have a DEI department or lead? If so, do those people report to leadership?



- Is DEI integrated throughout the company's operations?
- Are they currently investing in capturing and maintaining a diverse customer base?
- If they have made DEI commitments, does the data support their claims?

DEI and the American Dream

How you can do your part as a member of the arts and entertainment industry:

- **Speak Up** — Tell us about your experiences: Are you facing pushback on DEI on projects in your business or in your industry? Have you experienced challenges with DEI at the brands you represent? Do you have success stories to share? Your stories are powerful and help us to help you and others like you.
- **Stand Firm** — Do not retreat at the first challenge: Make clear the case for DEI in your situation — tying it to the goals of the project, organization or industry. Make sure every anti-DEI claim or pushback is interrogated against those goals and what is permitted under the law (not levels of fear).
- **Stay In Touch** — Reach out to American Pride Rises and your fellow arts and entertainment leaders for support and to share information and help build a cross-sector, nationwide coalition of DEI support.

We cannot afford to sit back and let the progress of American values and rights be halted by baseless attacks — anti-DEI legislation and litigation must be contested and DEI champions must be supported.

Speak Up. Stand Firm. Stay In Touch.

For more information go to www.aprnetwork.org or contact: info@aprnetwork.org