



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT OF The Gala Pride and Diversity Center (GPDC)

In working with and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, queer, Indigenous identities, and similarly identified (LGBTQ+) communities in San Luis Obispo County, The Gala Pride and Diversity Center (GPDC) acknowledges that white supremacy and settler-colonialism are enduring systems of hierarchy, division, and exploitation. These systems create significant inequities in our communities, but they do not operate in isolation. Oppression is mutually constructed based on categories including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, social class, disability, religion, and immigration status. Just as all forms of inequality are interconnected, so are all forms of justice. Working for racial justice, Indigenous sovereignty, economic justice, and all forms of social justice are part of the core mission of the Gala Pride and Diversity Center.

The Gala Pride and Diversity Center is located on the unceded land of the yak tit'yu tit'yu yak tilhini – Northern Chumash Tribe of San Luis Obispo County and Region. We are aware that this land was taken from Indigenous peoples violently - without agreement, consideration, or compensation. We are committed to including local Indigenous history in our training and we set the intention of relationship with and support of local Indigenous peoples. Additionally, we acknowledge our responsibility to protect the natural environment.

To effectively support all people within the LGBTQ+ community, the Gala Pride and Diversity Center commits to proactively working in solidarity against white supremacy, settler-colonialism, xenophobia, ableism, capitalist exploitation, religious bigotry, and all forms of cis-heteropatriarchy.

The following Organizational Policy details (1) current organizational priorities and practices in transformative work of dismantling oppression and (2) a transparent structure for ensuring community-responsive policies that will grow over time.

Organizational Practices

- Celebrate diverse cultures and heritage in solidarity with trusted community leaders.
 - Seek out cultural celebrations in the community to find appropriate ways to include and support LGBTQ+ community members.
 - Be consistent and inclusive of all Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) groups to demonstrate commitment and build trust.
- Prioritize BIPOC experts, communities, and needs in the majority of programs.
- Offer interpretation/translation and multiple formats of engagement in all programs.

- Create relationships with multiple vendors who can provide Spanish-language interpretation, Indigenous-language interpretation, live captioning, and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation.
- Feature the capacity, including equipment and staffing, to allow for hybrid participation (virtual/face-to-face) in programs, as well as synchronous and asynchronous engagement per public meeting protocols and guidance.
 - Follow all relevant guidelines and procedures for safe gatherings.
 - Document, record, and publicize all public programs (not including discussion groups, private community spaces, etc.).
 - Maintain and grow community spaces in-person and online.
- “Nothing about us without us”: Center the voices of affected community members in programs, panel discussions, and sponsored events.
 - Build meaningful relationships with BIPOC community leaders, including LGBTQ+ allies (see also, Leadership section).
 - Support leadership development among multiply marginalized communities to increase capacity for self-determination and participation in collaborative efforts.
 - Value BIPOC expertise through paid opportunities to lead programs and consult on a range of topics, including but not limited to race and racism.
 - Create a speaker’s bureau of relevant experts to participate in panels and events.
- Publicize appropriate collaborations and diversity work to help raise the visibility of partner organizations and demonstrate positive inclusion.
- Work against the lasting impact of bias and exclusion that have been experienced within LGBTQ+ spaces.

Communications

- Commit to reaching diverse community members in public communications.
 - Translate website, newsletter communications, and social media content into Spanish.
 - Include image descriptions in all social media captioning.
 - Work with BIPOC community leaders and collaborate with community networks to ensure that all sectors of the County and Region are aware of opportunities and programs.
- “Stand in the gap”: Create inclusive communication by meeting people where they already are.
 - Work with allied organizations to identify gaps in services and resources for shared constituencies.

Growth

- Counter the isolation that disparately affects BIPOC and lower-income communities by expanding efforts into more places throughout the County.
 - Partner with existing community leaders and allies in a collaborative manner.
 - Close equity gaps by holding space to serve North County.
 - Rotate the location of in-person events (when safe and appropriate).

- Develop organizational capacity for diversity, equity, and inclusion work.
 - Provide ongoing professional development support for staff members and volunteer leaders to increase and refresh their fluency in anti-racist, decolonial, and other anti-oppressive practices.
 - Include work toward diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in all performance evaluations and consideration for promotions and raises.
 - Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into development goals.
 - Commit a portion of general operating funds to these projects.
 - Prioritize grants and donors with dedicated support for equity and social change work.

Leadership

- Build pathways for leadership and representation among BIPOC and other historically underrepresented groups.
 - Publicize Board meetings and opportunities for community members to observe meetings and get involved.
 - Create a training program that orients potential Board members from historically underrepresented groups to learn more about the organization and how to get involved.
 - Welcome young board members, including minors (with no voting capacity).
- Hire and cultivate internal leaders with the expertise to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - Recruit staff members, volunteers, and organizational leaders from historically underserved groups, including LGBTQ+ allies.
 - Prioritize hiring individuals with experience leading efforts with historically underserved groups.
 - Establish bi/multilingual fluency as a preferred qualification for all job postings.
 - Include specific items in descriptions of job duties to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout organizational processes.
 - For example: Participate in strategic partnerships with coalitions led by affected groups.
 - Include lived experience and relevant professional background equivalent to formal credentials in job qualifications for staff and contract positions.
 - Advertise job postings to reach a wide range of eligible candidates (see also, Communications section).
 - Practice transparency with salaries and job postings for potential candidates, speakers and consultants.
- Engage in ongoing evaluation and strategic planning with a lens for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - Address progress toward diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in the organization's Annual Report.
 - Create regular space in Board meetings to address diversity, equity, and inclusion issues as a group.

Accessibility

- Ensure physical access to programs and events for people with disabilities.
 - Ensure availability of ramps, guard rails, assistive equipment, technological resources, and all reasonable accommodations including, but not limited to, those required under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - Utilize the principle of universal design to create accessible spaces that minimize the need for accommodation.
 - Apply these requirements to outside spaces rented for public programs and events.
- Create free and sliding scale participation options for a majority of public events.
- and events.
 - Provide bus vouchers, parking reimbursement, and gas cards for attending events.
 - When possible, select locations that are easily accessible by public transportation.
 - When possible and appropriate, provide transportation directly to community members in need.
- Create access for families and communities by creating programs that are open to multi-generational groups.
 - Create family-oriented events and community programs inclusive of allies to encourage participation by entire families.
 - Assess potential for child-care services or create opportunities for guests to self-organize child care.

Advocacy

- Take an active role in working against injustice in the San Luis Obispo County and Region, including racism, white supremacy, settler-colonialism, xenophobia, and exploitative capitalism.
 - Sign on to relevant letters of support and campaigns against systems of oppression.
 - Participate in meetings and coalitions with key partners.
 - Fund collaborative efforts to address local equity gaps.
- Sponsor regular research and evaluation to provide evidence of the existence and experience of diverse LGBTQ+ peoples.
- Elevate BIPOC and historically underrepresented voices when providing input and training to relevant institutions like City and County Governments, Dignity Health, Sierra Vista, and Community Health Centers.
- Ensure that all vendors at events, including Pride and other public programs, acknowledge and affirm the Gala Pride and Diversity Center's policies on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Work toward economic justice by supporting local producers to counter corporate Pride (i.e., rainbow-washing).

- Continue to sponsor, collaborate with, and promote LGBTQ+ owned and LGBTQ+ friendly businesses, along with BIPOC-owned and BIPOC-friendly businesses.

Methodology, Accountability and Living Policy

This document was created through a collaborative process between The GPDC Board, staff, community constituents, and QueerProfs. The organization recognized the need for a statement to strategically organize policy for diversity, equity, and inclusion within GPDC. The first round of development included reviewing organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and reflecting on findings within the QCares study and other relevant research.

QueerProfs synthesized this feedback in conversation with the staff and Board to identify the context that guides current diversity, equity, and inclusion work at the GPDC. These priorities helped inspire a Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Listening Session, which was held on August 17, 2021. This session included community members and representatives of local BIPOC organizations. The conversation allowed participants to share experiences and provide direct feedback on organizational policies and programs. In addition to the discussion over Zoom video conference and chat, participants and community members were invited to share written feedback through an anonymous form.

The policies identified here were created by systematically coding the content of these conversations. Data used were the audio recording and transcript of this Listening Session, along with feedback submitted by Zoom chat and through the standalone Google Form. QueerProfs coded this data by extracting relevant themes from each of the responses. When possible, codes were used reflecting the exact language shared by participants. These codes identified specific experiences as well as direct recommendations for the GPDC. Themes that appeared multiple times were noted for importance and relevance, as well as complexity. When BIPOC and non-BIPOC voices converged on a single theme, the content of BIPOC perspectives was centered to inform effective policy recommendations. Themes were then grouped according to the actionable steps available to the organization in the areas presented above: programs, communications, growth, leadership, accessibility, and advocacy.

This document will be made available to the public, including the GPDC supporters and constituents (see also, Communications section). Individuals can provide feedback by [writing a Comment in Google docs](#) or contacting the QueerProfs at queerprofs@gmail.com. This is a living document, which is meant to be updated continuously. For example, the goals set out in this document should be accomplished and expanded to address new ambitions and address emergent problems.

Further practices for this Living Policy are:

- Host regular listening sessions (at least once per quarter) to bring a wide range of BIPOC voices into the process of evaluating progress and setting new goals.
 - Staff and leaders will be responsible for providing indicators of effort and progress concerning the goals included in this document.

- These listening sessions will include opportunities to provide direct feedback on this living policy document.
 - Additional listening sessions would be helpful to center the specific needs of transgender individuals, bisexuals, people with disabilities, religious minorities, women, and immigrants.
- Completed goals will be removed and logged in a separate section celebrating accomplishments.
- The current effective document and past versions will be available to the public on The Gala Pride and Diversity Center's website at www.galacc.org along with instructions on providing feedback or suggestions.