

Allegany Arts Association Cultural Policy on Belonging

We work together with the David A. Howe Library, Allegany Artisans, the Wellsville Art Association, The Fountain Arts Center, The Wellsville Creative Arts Center and others to expand access to the arts to all.

Whereas the right to culture—to honor those who came before, to express ourselves, to take part in community life as creators of culture, and for our heritages and identities to be treated with dignity, respect, courtesy and kindness—is a core human right; and

Whereas we cherish and assert equal opportunity to contribute to and benefit from cultural life for all community members, whether our families are indigenous to this land, have lived here for many decades or just arrived, whether we live in cities or the countryside, and regardless of color, creed, orientation, or physical ability; and

Whereas the right to culture has often been transgressed, including (but not limited to) the history of tribal and other community displacement; bans on heritage languages and customs in public schools; hate speech including calls for exclusion from civil and legal society of immigrants, racial or religious categories; the harassment and imprisonment of community members who are targeted for conduct such as gathering on street-corners, dressing contrary to dominant social norms, traversing public thoroughfares, and dancing in public gathering-places; **we recognize the need for remedial action to assert and offer belonging to every resident, regardless of race, religion, ethnic heritage, gender, orientation, ability, or other condition or category;** and

Whereas, equity, justice, fairness, and welcoming are the hallmarks of all authentic support, protection, and promotion of the right to culture; and

Whereas, when we sanction or permit unwelcoming speech and conduct, and when we sanction policies that consign some community members to a status of less than full cultural citizenship and belonging, the entire community suffers the consequences of discrimination, the erosion of social fabric, and the resulting tension and conflict between groups;

Therefore be it resolved that The Allegany Arts Association of Allegany County, NY hereby adopts a policy requiring all public creative projects, statements, and actions to assert, protect, and embody the primacy of belonging to the health of local culture and community, and mandating that all public actions and statements reflect the letter and spirit of this resolution, guaranteeing full belonging to each and every community and resident within its range of creative and cultural services, including each of the sections and procedures described below.

Section 1a. “The Right to Culture” is asserted, embodied, and protected in statements and actions that mandate welcoming, equality, and inclusion to every resident, including but not limited to respecting sites of public memory such as elements of buildings, streets, natural lands, and parks that commemorate events of significance to local communities; valuing and preserving long-lived patterns of association and communication such as open markets, plazas, and other gathering places of significance to local communities; valuing and preserving embodiments of cultural heritage such as murals, concert venues, festival sites, other aesthetic assets, and sacred sites that support community members’ practice of their beliefs, and that support residents in pursuing valued patterns of cultural participation; and valuing and protecting other cultural expressions such as language, music, dance and other performing arts, visual art, customs, and commemorations such as holidays.

Section 1b. “Belonging” describes a condition in which each resident and community perceives that the right to culture is valued, preserved, and protected, and that the expressions, customs,

traditions, and contributions of all communities and residents are given equal value in relevant policy and practice.

Section 1c. “Cultural Citizenship” describes the condition of full and equal belonging for all residents, regardless of legal status, demographic characteristics, physical ability, creed, or specific heritage.

Section 1d. “Policymaking Entity” describes a body authorized to make policy and act for the entity adopting this policy, whether an elected or appointed public governing body or an elected or appointed governing board of a not-for-profit or a for-profit organization.

Section 2a. A review shall be required for any proposed public action undertaken by The Allegany Arts Association of Allegany County, NY which may adversely affect local practice of the right to culture, belonging, and/or full cultural citizenship, mandating further investigation.

Section 2b. The review may be requested in writing in a document signed by no fewer than ten (10) residents of the community the Policymaking Entity serves. In either case, the initiator(s) must specify the actions being undertaken that pose a threat to local practice of the right to culture, belonging, and/or full cultural citizenship; a description of the potential negative impact(s); and a range of acceptable alternatives to the proposed action in order of likely negative impact on belonging. In either event, the Policymaking Entity must respond to the request within thirty (30) days of its being initiated, either authorizing the review or providing specific reasons why it is not necessary.

Section 3a. In authorizing such a review, The Allegany Arts Association of Allegany County, NY invites members of the public to comment, allowing adequate time for public review of the written request described in Section 2. In no case shall this be fewer than thirty (30) days from the date on which the review was authorized.

Section 3b. The Allegany Arts Association of Allegany County, NY will complete each review in a timely fashion, rendering a response no later than thirty (30) days following the conclusion of public comment on the review. If thirty (30) days is deemed insufficient with respect to a particular review, a later deadline may be set, providing it is no more than ninety (90) days.

Each response will either: reject the proposed action for negative impact on the right to culture, belonging, and/or full cultural citizenship; recommend one or more of the alternatives set out in the request for review or a superior alternative emerging from the review process, indicating approval if the recommended alternative is substituted for the original proposed action; describe mitigating action necessary for resubmission of the proposed action for approval; or approve the action as proposed.

Passed and adopted by:

The Allegany Arts Association of Allegany County, NY at a duly noticed and adjourned meeting

held on February 12, 2019 at David A. Howe Library Wellsville, NY

Proposed by Sheila L. Kalkbrenner November 2018

Names & Signatures of AAA Board Members in Agreement

Betsy Orlando, Co-Chair

Kay Eicher, Treasurer

Joanne Allen, Secretary