

## **IBPOC Network Statement of Support**

To whom it may concern,

This letter is written in support of your employee/colleague/volunteer who would like to attend one of our professional development sessions.

The BCMA's IBPOC Network was created to address the needs of racialized people who work and volunteer in the cultural sector. We host monthly networking sessions called "Tea and Talks" as well as online workshops that are open to anyone who identifies as Indigenous, Black, or a Person of Colour. These affinity spaces are designed to be accountable places where participants can share openly about the challenges they face in the sector.

All sessions hosted by the IBPOC Network are free of charge, and therefore provide a professional development opportunity that comes at no extra cost to your organisation.

We describe these sessions as professional development opportunities because they aim to introduce IBPOC museum, arts, and culture professionals and volunteers to each other and build relationships between them. The goal of these sessions is to create a wide-ranging peer support network between IBPOC professionals across the province that ultimately strengthens our representation in this sector and meets our diverse needs. In the case of the workshops, there is an additional goal of building specific skill sets to help IBPOC professionals navigate challenges in the workplace that pertain to our racialized positionalities.

Why is this needed? Folks who identify as Indigenous, Black, a Person of Colour, or racialized are currently underrepresented in this sector, comprising 23% of the workforce in galleries, archives, and cultural institutions (2021 Census). IBPOC workers are often the only people of racialized backgrounds on their team, and as organisations work towards accomplishing equity and inclusion goals, the majority of this labour tends to fall on IBPOC team members (whether this is intended to or not). Some of this labour may even be unpaid, as it relies upon relationship-building and processing of emotional needs and experiences that take place away from a desk setting.

These statements are informed by the numerous experiences shared by IBPOC folks in these network sessions. While your team members may not always feel comfortable sharing these experiences in a workplace setting, these network sessions provide an accountable space for them to do so among peers who have lived experience of similar challenges. By creating these spaces where we can support each other and co-navigate these challenges, they are better able to return to our workplaces energised and equipped to deal with these unique issues.

Additionally, the sessions create a space where we are able to help each other combat feelings of isolation, "otherness", and experiences of institutional racism. While these



experiences may not pertain to your workplace, participating in these sessions enables your team members to support others in navigating these challenges. These sessions may be informal in format, but they contribute to a larger dismantling of foundational systems of oppression that we can all benefit from.

Lastly, encouraging IBPOC team members to participate in these sessions during paid work time is a very simple way to meet any equity and inclusion commitments your organisation has committed to. Testimonies have shown that they also contribute to longer employee retention, as well as higher workplace wellbeing. It's always great to see a public statement about inclusion being made, but supporting your colleagues' participation in our network directly translates those statements into accountable action (and results).

Please support your employee/colleague/volunteer's participation in these affinity spaces, and be an ally. We all want to create a more inclusive sector that genuinely supports and cares about its racialized workers. This is the first step.

Sincerely,

Jazmin Hundal  
IBPOC Network Coordinator, BC Museums Association

*If you have any questions about the IBPOC Network or would like to learn more about our sessions, please do not hesitate to contact Jazmin at [communications@museum.bc.ca](mailto:communications@museum.bc.ca).*