

Mixed Blood Theatre Disability Initiative:
Deepening, Strengthening and Broadening Relationships
With Disability Communities of Minnesota

Goals:

- To broaden participation of members of the disability communities at disability-focused productions at Mixed Blood Theatre, while developing audiences for all Mixed Blood productions
- To increase Mixed Blood networking within disability communities
- To expand individual, corporate and foundation support for Mixed Blood Theatre

Strategies:

- Identify key opinion leaders and people of influence within the disability communities.
- Develop close ties with members of disability communities by working with a designated liaison and an advisory group of those connected with a variety of disability communities.
- Seek candidates for Board of Directors from the disability communities.
- Commission new works focused on content of special interest to disability communities.

Background:

Mixed Blood Theatre's vision is to be the definitive destination where theater artists and audiences representing the global village can create and share work that spawns a ripple effect of social change and revolutionizes access to theater.

To that end—and with a history of producing work by, with, for, and/or about individuals with and affected by disabilities—Mixed Blood seeks to deepen, strengthen, and broaden relationships with the disparate disability communities of Minnesota. A strategic merger of marketing/audience development, outreach/internal activities, fundraising, and artistic efforts is key to successful realization of this institutional imperative. This initiative is funded in part by the Wallace Foundation.

Programmatically, we seek to procure and/or create the finest theatrical literature that showcases the finest on-stage talent, with content aimed at engaging the target audiences. Diminishing past barriers—quality of programming, cultural content, transportation, and finances—is key. Producing, presenting, and touring are all appropriate avenues for this work. As with all Mixed Blood programming, audiences should see themselves reflected on stage in important ways.

As Mixed Blood seeks to be the theatre of choice for all populations, the organization must also develop new audiences for the canon of high quality theatrical literature with a disability focus. The techniques devised, discovered, and implemented should be replicable and shared with the local and national non-profit marketers of performing arts.

Audience and artist retention among disability-specific programs and between disability and non-disability programming is also a desired outcome of Mixed Blood's initiative. And, as identity becomes a more rapidly moving target by the day, this program must be ever flexible and open to new approaches in finding and rewarding audiences and artists.

At the end of the Wallace grant period, the programming and methodology for relationship-creating within disability communities should be deeply ingrained in Mixed Blood, with lessons that can be extrapolated to other areas of operation. With research and analysis as tools, the goals of this program can be transformative for Mixed Blood and for the performing arts of Minnesota and America.

Action Plan:

Step 1: Conduct qualitative research

Given the importance of the all communities to the strategic priorities of the company, Mixed Blood would benefit significantly from the knowledge of opinion leaders and influencers in the Twin Cities disability communities. To that end, Mixed Blood will conduct qualitative research (such as interviews, surveys, focus groups) with identified opinion leaders to help shape audience development efforts. The goal is to understand current barriers to attending Mixed Blood shows, an understanding of how disability communities obtain information about events and what ultimately influences them to attend one event vs. another.

Step 2: Expand grassroots efforts

A key step is to expand and enhance Mixed Blood's grassroots marketing approach by contracting a community engagement liaison from the disability communities. This liaison will spearhead formation of a specific advisory group of volunteers to serve as community advocates and content advisors.

Disability Initiative Job & Volunteer Descriptions (see pages 3-5)

Mixed Blood Theatre will hire two contracted positions, plus convene a community advisory council, for its Disability Initiative:

- Community Researcher
- Community Engagement Liaison
- Community Advisory Council Members

Position: Community Researcher (estimated 30-day contract)

Mixed Blood Theatre seeks an experienced qualitative researcher to assist the organization in identifying opinion leaders in the disability communities and subsequently interview them regarding audience development efforts.

Essential Job Duties

- Identify key opinion leaders and influencers in disability communities.
- Develop research questions in collaboration with Mixed Blood and a research advisor.
- Conduct qualitative research with identified leaders
- Assist in analysis of research findings

Job Requirements

- 5+ years experience in qualitative market research.
- Familiarity with Theatre Arts

To Apply

Re: Community Researcher
Mixed Blood Theatre
1501 S Fourth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55454
Email: pj@mixedblood.com

Position: Community Liaison (part-time, annually contracted position)

Mixed Blood Theatre seeks an organized, self-motivated, technologically savvy, strategic thinker to assist in the planning and implementation of comprehensive marketing and communications strategies focused on building relationships with disability communities.

Essential Job Duties

- Recruit and coordinate community leaders for the Disability Advisory Committee, which will advise and support Mixed Blood's programming and mission.
- Assist in the planning and implementation of grassroots marketing plans.
- Assist in networking with the target communities to communicate Mixed Blood's programming and mission.
- Assist with community and press events on behalf of Mixed Blood Theatre.
- Assist with audience research, including surveys and focus groups.
- Flexible time commitment, dependent upon Theatre productions

Job Requirements

- 2–3 years experience in marketing, public relations or a related field, with demonstrated ability to think strategically and work collaboratively.
- Intimate knowledge of the Twin Cities disability communities.
- Knowledge of local arts and entertainment industry preferred.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Demonstrated ability to connect positively with diverse groups of people.
- Ability to work on deadline and manage multiple projects.
- Desire to advance the mission of Mixed Blood Theatre.

To Apply

Re: Community Liaison Search
Mixed Blood Theatre
1501 S Fourth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55454
Email: pj@mixedblood.com

Position: Advisory Council Member (volunteer position)

Mixed Blood seeks individuals who are strongly connected to the disability communities and businesses in the Twin Cities metro area.

Essential Duties

- To provide feedback on scripts under consideration for production.
- To participate in audience development, marketing and networking to promote disability-focused programming.
- Plan and participate in events related to disability-focused programming.

Time Commitment

- One year service
- Quarterly meetings
- Attendance at related productions and events

To Apply

Re: Disability Advisory Council
Mixed Blood Theatre
1501 S Fourth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55454
Email: pj@mixedblood.com
Phone: 612.338.7959

Founded in 1976, Mixed Blood Theatre is a multi-racial theatre promoting cultural pluralism and individual equality through artistic excellence. Using theater as a vehicle for artistry, entertainment, education and social change, Mixed Blood Theatre addresses artificial barriers that keep people from succeeding in American society through its mainstage, touring, and customized workplace productions.