

**UPDATED MARCH 1, 2022 WITH LINKS TO PAAC'S FACEBOOK PAGE INSTEAD OF TO ITS OLD WEBSITE HOMEPAGE URL**

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## **Members of local arts organizations form Pittsburgh Arts Administrators of Color**

Administrators at three local performing arts organizations and Carnegie Mellon University have created [Pittsburgh Arts Administrators of Color](#) (PAAC), an organization to unify and connect arts administrators of color in the Greater Pittsburgh Area. The group is a meeting place for socialization, mentorship, information sharing, and community. Its goals are to promote and expand knowledge and opportunity for arts administrators of color in the Greater Pittsburgh Region.

PAAC's founders are:

- Rebekah Diaz, [Pittsburgh Opera's](#) Manager of Community Engagement and IDEA Initiatives
- Monteze Freeland, an Associate Producer at [City Theatre](#)
- Natalie Hatcher, an Outreach Program Manager at Carnegie Mellon University's [Computer Science Pathways](#)
- Joanna Obuzor, an Operations Manager for the [Pittsburgh Cultural Trust](#)

"It's been really wonderful to see the support for the creation of this group; not only from those for whom the group was intended, but also from allies within our organizations," says Diaz, a Bronx native and former opera singer. "The impetus to create this group came as a way to connect with other BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Person of Color) arts administrative and creatives here in Pittsburgh. There may not be many of us within each organization, but when we come together we are a stronger representation of BIPOC arts leaders in our community."

PAAC's mission includes fostering comradery, sharing resources, and networking. It will provide opportunities for personal and professional growth, and offer a holistic approach to the needs of arts professionals of color. "We're really excited for the fellowship, networking and healing that will come from this group of brilliant minds," says City Theatre's Freeland. "Growing up in Baltimore afforded me an opportunity to create and learn from those who shared my cultural background, that doesn't come so easily in Pittsburgh- but that doesn't mean we can't build a stronger and deeply diverse foundation for future generations. In fact, we are doing just that!"

PAAC began having monthly happy hours in late April. The events will be on Zoom initially, but as the COVID-19 pandemic eases PAAC will eventually transition to in-person get-togethers. In addition to socializing, events will provide members opportunities for professional development and mentoring. "Mentoring is crucial because it fosters connections with others in the industry as both parties build lifelong pathways; sustainable pipelines in Pittsburgh's artistic community. Knowledge from a mentor regarding process as well as two-way information sharing can help mentees navigate the terrain of arts administration so goals become more attainable," says Obuzor, a North Side native who spent 10 years as a stage manager.

Membership in PAAC is free. Members will receive access to a membership directory, and have the ability to list their own businesses. A job listings portal and newsletter are also planned. For more information, please visit PAAC on [Facebook](#).

*Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 82nd season in 2020-21. Established by five intrepid women in 1939, Pittsburgh Opera is viewed as one of the most vibrant opera organizations in the U.S., with a rich artistic tradition, outstanding educational programs, an acclaimed artist training program, and a progressive outlook toward the future. Its green initiative culminated in LEED® Silver certification for its Strip District headquarters, and its capacity as a true community partner has increased significantly under General Director Christopher Hahn's leadership.*