

Together We Shine Initiative

Mission Statement:

The purpose of the *Together We Shine Initiative* is to find equitable solutions for any unintentional consequences of systemic racism in our policies, and/or language in our constitution/bylaws; with a goal to promote diversity, inclusion, and a more tolerant working environment for all members. Through education and community partnerships, the objective will be to normalize an IATSE culture of inclusivity, that is a viable career in entertainment for all who have the skills and qualifications necessary to become a member; regardless of their actual and perceived age, race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or disability.

Implementation of The Together We Shine Initiative:

The Together We Shine Initiative is a philosophy of ensuring equitable solutions that will be composed of a series of investments (time and/or resources) and direct actions that reflect not only fair and equal policies for all members, but also a definitive and forward change in the working culture among members in our locals. While every Local is structured differently and may have its own unique issues, there are four major stages of progress we all share along our path as IATSE members:

- I.** Initial awareness and/or first work experiences in chosen field.
- II.** Membership qualification and initiation into respective IATSE Local.
- III.** Production work culture, best practices and experiences. Understanding responsibilities of being an active Union member.
- IV.** Retirement.

This initiative has assessed each of these stages with the following three step process:

1. **Self-Check:** Identify if there are any intentional/unintentional inequalities for underrepresented groups.
2. **Equitable Solution:** If inequalities are found, find equitable solutions that are fair and equal for all members.
3. **Continuity:** When addressing issues on a leadership, committee, or production level, refer to Step 1.

Findings and Solutions:

1. Review and Study Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Data of respective Local.

Before one can address issues of diversity within their Local, they must first understand the current levels of diversity of their Local.. Labor Unions are required by law to collect EEO data, and this can be accessed by members in good standing.¹ The EEO data can also be used to

¹ The EEOC collects workforce data from employers with more than 100 employees (lower thresholds apply to federal contractors). Employers meeting the reporting thresholds have a legal obligation to provide the data; it is not voluntary. The data is collected using the reports below and is used for a variety

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monitor the effectiveness of the DEI initiatives, as well as inform what areas may need to be addressed.

I. Initial awareness and/or first work experiences in chosen field.

Each member to join an IATSE Local has their own unique journey and path towards membership. However, one thing we all share is first becoming aware of the possibility of having a career within our chosen craft. While some members first learned of our craft through relatives, having friends in the industry, or through higher education classes, many people outside of our industry are only aware of the positions that get the most publicity: producers, directors, actors, and musicians. It's important to create more awareness of the hundreds of other positions on productions through community partnerships.

The focus of the community partnership program(s) will be to: engage with communities that are underrepresented within our industry, inspire future filmmakers of all backgrounds, and educate them on what we do. The importance of Unionism will also be a main tenet. While only a small percentage may go on to join an IATSE Local, the overall net benefit will be a strengthening of the public's understanding of the importance of Unions.

Solution:

After consulting with several educators at national and local levels on how best to increase awareness of our profession with younger age groups, the consensus of the educators² was to focus on 6th grade students, because:

- 6th grade is where their school curriculum switches to more substantial subjects. Prior to 6th grade, they are too young, on average, to fully grasp the concepts we wish to teach.
- Children at that age, 12-13 years old, become more independent and start thinking about the possibilities of what careers they can do when they get older.
- It's right before they go to high school, and it can give them a focus of what to work towards while in high school.

of purposes including enforcement, self-assessment by employers, and research. Each of the reports collects data about gender and race/ethnicity by some type of job grouping. This information is shared with other authorized federal agencies in order to avoid duplicate collection of data and reduce the burden placed on employers. Although the data is confidential, aggregated data is available to the Public. (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission)

² On August 29th, 2020, the IATSE Local 728 DEI Committee met with: Matt Gainsley - President of American Federation of Teachers Local 4128; Robyn Charles - Director of Media Education, LLC; and later consulted with Lena Liu, IATSE Local 884, to better understand the education system, and how best to reach out to school age children and develop an educational package about possible future careers in Film and Television.

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Educational Outreach:

Middle School:

2. Create a digital package for 6th grade teachers that includes short videos and class discussions/activities. The digital package will include:

- A PDF that tells students about who we are, what we do, and has class activities. (i.e., Take a selfie with half your face lit.)
- A variety/series of 5 min videos. One highlighting what your Local does. (Theoretically, this same video could then be used by other committees, and/or posted on our websites.)
- Other videos would cover/incorporate different subjects (Math, Science, Art, etc.), and show how those subjects relate to our craft.
- Subjects for the video modules would be based on standardized lesson plans teachers use. Examples of 6th grade lesson plans can be found here:

Math (<https://www.ixl.com/math/grade-6>)

Science (<https://www.ixl.com/science/grade-6>)

High School:

3. There are numerous programs throughout the nation geared towards training highschool aged students in Arts, Media, and Entertainment (AME) programs. IATSE Locals should consider partnering with established programs that have proven track records. Also consider giving a demonstration of what your respective IATSE Local does at various local high schools (Think Career Day). In 2022 The California Department of Education funded the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) High School Outreach and Career Pathways Training Program in twelve Title I high schools across Los Angeles as part of the [AME Workforce Training Initiative](#).

4. New York and California have a number of high school programs dedicated to educating students about the skills needed for careers within our industry. For the IATSE Locals outside of those states, consider finding local established programs similar to the following:

New York: The [High School Broadway Shadowing Program](#) connects New York City public high school students with behind-the-scenes professionals including general managers, stage managers, press agents, and marketing and advertising staff, who share what goes into mounting and maintaining a Broadway production.

California:

“The California Department of Education established the [Arts, Media, and Entertainment](#)

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[industry sector](#) to support high school students interested in pursuing careers in California's thriving creative workforce. AME programs align with California Career Technical Education (CTE) Model Curriculum Standards which define the knowledge, skills, and practical experience students should have to pursue their chosen profession through post-secondary, professional skills training, and/or apprenticeship training. AME programs build on traditional arts programs to include a comprehensive career readiness component. In 2023, the sector has grown to serve approximately 231,000 students and is the largest CTE sector in the state of California. In 2022 IATSE members from several locals served on the California Department of Education's Industry Advisory Board to write the new state standards for AME Middle and High School programs and contribute to the [Arts, Media, and Entertainment 2023 Industry Recommendations and Guidance for Model Programs and Advanced Training](#) which will be updated and expanded annually to ensure teachers stay current with industry." (California Department of Education).

IATSE members, with a high school diploma and at least 3,000 provable hours of work or combined work and educational experience may, qualify for a CTE teaching certification, and may seek part/full time work as credentialed CTE teachers in high schools throughout California, offering AME programs. (See Attachments for steps on how to get a CTE certification through the The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing or email ameprograms@cde.ca.gov for more information)

College:

5. The IATSE Training Trust has created mentoring opportunities for IATSE members to speak with and mentor college aged students of the [Brotherhood Crusade](#), [Manifest Works](#), and [Hollywood CPR](#) programs. Consider contacting the IATSE Training Trust, and see how your Local and it's members can become involved with their programs.

6. Community Partnerships:

Consider having your IATSE Local participate in Martin Luther Jr. King parades, food banks, and other similar events in your area. This brings awareness to your Locals, and creates an opportunity for others to learn about who we are, what we do, and possible career pathways.

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II. Membership qualification and Initiation into IATSE Local 728

7. Mentoring: The skills we have learned to excel at our jobs have been passed down to us from member to member. We are an extension of those who worked on the first theatrical production, and we continually evolve the art of lighting motion pictures. The knowledge we carry has been passed through time, from production to production. When new members join our ranks, there is a higher expectation of professionalism, and often a more intensive pace than they may have experienced prior.

Solution: Set up a Mentorship Program for new members of the IATSE Locals to be paired with seasoned veterans of their respective Local.

8. Help ease the financial burden of initiation fees for new members:

Economic surveys are replete with studies that demonstrate that people of color suffer from greater economic disadvantages. For example, according to a 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF), “White families have the highest level of both median and mean family wealth: \$188,200 and \$983,400, respectively. Black and Hispanic families have considerably less wealth than White families. Black families' median and mean wealth is less than 15 percent that of White families, at \$24,100 and \$142,500, respectively. Hispanic families' median and mean wealth is \$36,100 and \$165,500, respectively” (Bhutta, Chang, Dettling, and Hsu, 2020).

Having to meet an extraordinary financial burden in such a short period of time likely removes a potential employee of modest economic means from the membership pool, thus diminishing diversity. People who are eager to take advantage of the opportunities afforded in our industry through our union are left out. The employer is disadvantaged as there is a smaller pool of people who will qualify for membership and thus be available to service the needs of the business. This is effectively financial gatekeeping, unintentional as it may be.

Solution: If applicable, extend the time allowance for reporting of non-compliance to 9 months (270 days). Not only would the new member have far more time to earn the balance due, but the financial strain would be amortized over a greater period thus having a lesser negative impact.

Furthermore, should the new member enter the industry at a time period where work is sparse, the impact would be lessened. A longer compliance period would help raise the chances that work could be found in sufficient quantity to both allow a new member applicant to earn both enough to meet their obligations and to continue paying their costs of living.

III. Production Work culture, Best Practices and Experiences. Understanding Responsibilities of Being an Active Union Member.

Joining a labor union is not the end result of one's achievements, but the next chapter of one's career. As such, we must also remember that our membership consists of people from diverse

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cultural backgrounds. This is one of our strengths, and we must endeavor that our Local reflects, and works for all our members.

9. Coordinate Union and Community Activities with Other IA Locals. The DEI Committees should coordinate activities with other DEI committees within their shared cities. This not only strengthens ties with other Locals, but also ensures that DEI related initiatives/activities may be shared to the benefit of all, as well as to strengthen ties amongst the various DEI Committee members.

10. Set up a web page that contains all pertinent information about the *Together We Shine Initiative*, that's easily navigable from the IATSE and its Local's website. This will create access to the information for communities across the country, and around the world.

11. We must endeavor to continue to provide our members with training opportunities that not only strengthen their skill sets, but also increase their knowledge of our craft, and strengthen Leadership development. This is currently done through the IATSE Training Trust, CSATTF, on the job experience, and a robust list of additional classes offered by our Local.

Solution:

- Establish a video library that consists of videos that help reinforce skills members may already know, as well as videos addressing talents they may not have learned yet through on the job training. This provides another opportunity for all members to learn the skills necessary to advance and/or be more competent in their careers.
- Create a series of videos as part of a Future Members Orientation Presentation. The video series should detail the process and benefits of joining the Local.

12. Employer Sponsored 'Unconscious Bias Awareness training'

Being that productions consist of people from an array of departments and cultural backgrounds, we must also understand that not everyone has the same upbringing and awareness. Because of these differences, we must also recognize that we all carry various levels of Unconscious Bias to the worksite. According to a study by the **University of North Carolina**, they found that “Unconscious biases in the workplace can stymie diversity, recruiting and retention efforts, and unknowingly shape an organization's culture. Unconscious bias can skew talent and performance reviews. It also affects who gets hired, promoted, developed, and this unwittingly undermines an organization's culture” (McCormick, 2016).

Solution: During the **2020 IATSE District 2 Convention**, a resolution for Unconscious Bias Awareness Training (See attachments) was submitted by IATSE Local 728 and accepted without objection. The purpose of the resolution is to: *“endeavor to request and attend*

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employer-sponsored Unconscious Bias Awareness Training, and make available that training to all their Union brothers, sisters, and kin so that they may be sensitive and aware of potential discriminatory actions and biases... All Delegates identify and rectify systemic racism and biases that may be codified in its Local Constitution and By Laws, removing any and all unfair financial barriers to entry and gatekeeping.”

13. The Local’s Print and Digital Materials Should Reflect All Our Members. It is important that underrepresented communities see members like them in the IATSE and its Locals print and digital media. We must be vigilant about showing the diversity of the IATSE, through photos and/or videos across all media. (i.e. Bulletin photos, social media, Vlogs., etc.) Images are powerful. While it may seem like a small thing, there’s a huge amount of impact more inclusive images have on those who see them. Not only will people see others like them featured, which improves morale, it also normalizes the image of what set life looks like with inclusive crews. As a Labor Union, we can’t tell anyone who to hire, but if inclusivity is normalized, then it will stand out when a crew is not.

The intention is not to show a false representation, but to be far better at showing respect for the contributions of all our members and stand in solidarity with the diversity of the IATSE as a whole. This not only shows solidarity with our current membership, but also shows future members that people like them can thrive in our industry.

Several IATSE Social Media Committees have added **#IATogetherWeShine** to the list of hashtags they use on Instagram to highlight diversity and inclusion on set, by posting images of diverse crews, and members from underrepresented groups.

IV. Retirees

Our retired kin are our living institutions of knowledge and experience, and are often the most active contributors within our Locals. As such, they are an important resource wherein all members can benefit from their wealth of knowledge about our craft. We must endeavor to root out any acts of ageism, as well as nurture initiatives/programs that they can contribute to.

Solution: The programs/initiatives mentioned in this document are available to all members of the IATSE to participate in. That said, our retirees may be more available to participate, due to a less intensive schedule, and could also find continued satisfaction/purpose in sharing their knowledge with those who are eager to learn, as well as gain an additional source of income. This also helps strengthen our Community Partnerships, the knowledge pool of our current and incoming members, strengthens the IA through the promotion of various departments by those who have worked in them, and by default, promotes the importance of unionized labor.

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Background:

During 2020, industries and life as we knew it, were put on hold due to Covid-19. As the weeks and months progressed, and without the distractions of our daily lives, the effects of centuries of institutionalized and systemic racism were laid bare. Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), Asian and Pacific Islander (API), LGBTQIA, and other disenfranchised communities have been disproportionately affected by various combinations of poverty, discrimination, violence, healthcare issues, and economic inequity; showing us we are in, and have always been in, a pandemic of systemic racism. There has been a re-awakening of awareness of unequal treatment among Union workers across the country. International President Matthew D. Loeb expressed the responsibility that the industry has “to actively participate in making crucial change by aggressively attacking inequality and racism.” (Loeb) On July 2nd, 2020, in response to the times and President Loeb’s call to action, the IATSE Local 728’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee responded with the development of the *Together We Shine Initiative*.

Historical Context:

For over a hundred years, Labor Unions have been at the forefront in protecting Labor rights, fair wages, and better working conditions for their members. The strength and influence of Labor organizations led to the enactment of the National Labor Relations Board in 1935. Throughout the history of Labor organizations, their influence has also directly led to the protections of all workers, with a long list of protections, from the five-day work week to overtime pay, that have their origins in policies fought for by Labor Unions. The impetus of the labor movement was to protect *all* worker’s rights, and people of all backgrounds are accepted into the ranks of labor unions. However, that has not always been the case.

There are numerous historical examples of “gatekeeping,” systemic racism, bigotry, and discrimination, that were carried into the Labor movement, including many of our own Locals, through the beliefs of some of its members. The 1930’s saw both a rise in labor unions, as well as a rise in discriminatory practices, with policies across many different organizations that promoted the discrimination of Black, Chinese, and women from joining Labor Unions. Prior to the amalgamation of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations³(CIO), the two organizations had dramatically different views on integration. The CIO was working towards a more inclusive work force, while several people from the AFL were actively working to exclude non-white members, and in some cases, even teaming up with the Klu Klux Klan (Honey, 1993). This was due in large part by the influence of many southern whites, who held white supremacist beliefs, joining the ranks of labor unions in droves. Perhaps one of the greatest champions of those beliefs was none other than self-proclaimed white supremacist and anti-Semitic Vance Muse.

³The CIO was originally an AFL committee before it split from them in the 1930’s. Their 1955 amalgamation agreement included a Civil Rights clause calling for non-discrimination in union benefits.

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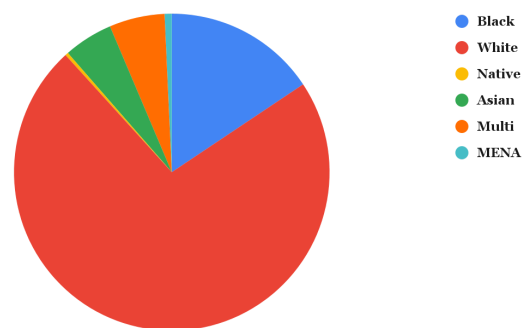
We must also recognize that the birth of the “Hollywood blockbuster” started in 1915, with the release of D.W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation*.⁴ For over a century after, people of color and LGBTQIA characters have more often been presented as the punchline of jokes, versus authentic storylines and characters, and have been disproportionately represented on and off screen. It wouldn’t be until the second half of the 1900’s that many of our Locals would begin to integrate, and another few decades more until women joined all of our ranks. While the principles of the Labor movement are similar to the Civil Rights movement, it took dedicated Labor leaders and the Civil Rights movement to course correct the Labor movement.⁵

“At the turn of the century women earned approximately ten cents an hour, and men were fortunate to receive twenty cents an hour. The average work week was sixty to seventy hours. During the thirties, wages were a secondary issue; to have a job at all was the difference between the agony of starvation and a flicker of life. The nation, now so vigorous, reeled and tottered almost to total collapse. The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old age pensions, government relief for the destitute, and above all new wage levels that meant not mere survival, but a tolerable life. The captains of industry did not lead this transformation; they resisted it until they were overcome. When in the thirties the wave of union organization crested over our nation, it carried to secure shores not only itself but the whole society.” -**Dr. Martin Luther King, AFL-CIO Convention, October 1965**⁶

In 2014, almost a century after the premier of *The Birth of a Nation*, the Sony hacks revealed racism, sexism, and discrimination within the executive levels of Sony Studios (Holpuch, 2014).

In the years that followed, there have been a number of high-profile grassroots campaigns addressing the underrepresentation of people of color and LGBTQIA on screen and in key positions on productions and in studios, from the #OscarsSoWhite to #RepresentationMatters; as well as the #MeToo movement which prominently featured stories of the “casting couch” and the treatment of women in our industry. To understand how these conditions can

Share of All Film Roles, by Race, 2018 (n=1,089)
Data From UCLA's 2020 Hollywood Diversity Report



⁴ *The Birth of a Nation* was also the first American motion picture to be shown at the White House.

⁵ Our Constitution and Bylaws also contains language found in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

⁶ Dr. King felt unions were essential to the advancement of Civil Rights. In 1961, and again in 1965, he spoke before the AFL-CIO; in 1967 he met with ILWU Local 10; and on April 3, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. traveled to Memphis to support AFSCME sanitation workers. That evening, he delivered his famous [“I’ve Been to the Mountaintop”](#) speech. The next day, he was assassinated.

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flourish, we simply must look at the conditions in which they are born.⁷⁸ There is a historical lack of diversity at the studio level. This leads to a lack of diversity in casting, production hiring, and stories and perspectives produced, which has operated as the norm in Hollywood since its inception. In other words, the lack of diversity that affects all aspects and departments within our industry, starts at the top.

Over the past twenty years, with eerie similarities to the 1930's-1960's, there has been an increase in 'right to work' and voter restrictions bills; while the embers of intolerance, racism, anti-Semitism, and discrimination have rekindled into raging fires. No longer hidden behind closed doors, or under hoods and sheets, it has resurged and found roots in communities and politics around the world. To do nothing would mean to go against everything that we as a Labor Union stand for.

"We will all have to do more, fight more and be better to assure that the rights and privileges of Black, indigenous and people of color are respected. To do any less makes us complicit in supporting discrimination, injustice and brutality."

-International President Matthew D. Loeb

We have an obligation to our past, present, and future members to live up to the highest ideals of what it means to be a member of a Labor Union. We do not choose our members, our members choose us, and the phrase 'Live Better, Work Union' extends far beyond the hours of call to wrap. In order to better serve our membership, we must understand the greater context of systemic racism and discrimination, and how it affects member's lives in and outside of work. We must develop partnerships with underrepresented communities, and continue to strive to find equitable solutions for all our members, including better pathways to membership and better working conditions. When we find equitable and sustainable solutions for our most vulnerable, we exponentially strengthen our union for the whole.

As stated in the IATSE's Equality Statement, *"Equal rights are the cornerstone of the labor movement. Unions were founded on the principle that all people are equal and all people are deserving of respect and fair treatment. Equality issues run through all areas of trade union activities – from health and safety to wage negotiations."*⁹

⁷ [UCLA's 2020 Hollywood Diversity Report](#)

⁸ [USC's Annenberg School for Communications and Journalism: The Prevalence and Portrayal of Asian and Pacific Islanders across 1,300 Popular Films](#)

⁹The IATSE's Equality Statement was unanimously approved at the 2015 Winter General Executive Board Meeting in Hollywood, Florida, and updated at the 2018 Mid-Summer General Executive Board Meeting in New York City. It outlines the IATSE's commitment to creating an inclusive working environment where differences are valued and equality is celebrated.

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There are many slogans related to Labor Unions. Be it “Live Better, Work Union”, “Stronger Together”, “Union Strong”, etc... but they are more than just slogans, they are living historical touchstones to significant eras in our collective history. For example, in 1881 the American Federation of Labor (AFL) promoted the slogan “A fair day's wage for a fair day's work”. This slogan evolved in 1911, when the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) called for dignified working conditions as well as fair wages by using the slogan “Bread and Roses.”¹⁰ Today, we use “Live Better, Work Union,” which is a direct reflection of Labor’s achievement in attaining both of those goals, and a promise to current and future members. While there are far more slogans than those mentioned, one message remains clear: we stand together in protecting all our kin!

As we move forward, we must remember the history that is enshrined in our slogans, and Constitution and Bylaws, that are ever evolving with the times. While we recognize ‘Strength in Numbers’, we must also recognize that our membership consists of people from Death Valley to Katmandu, and everywhere in between. We are the artists, craftspeople, and technicians operating at the highest level of our professions. A continuum of the first storytellers, the first plays, and the first flicker of motion pictures on the screen. We must identify and rectify systemic racism and biases that may be codified in our practices and policies; and endeavor for our Union to be inclusive, and as diverse as the demographics of the nations we operate in and the audiences we entertain around the world. May we never forget that none of us are as strong as all of us, for Together We Shine!

ATTACHMENTS

2020 D2 Convention Resolution

Submitted by Malakhi Simmons, Local 728 Diversity Committee Co-Chair
and Greg Reeves, Vice President

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced a historic work stoppage; and

WHEREAS, the shootings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Jacob Blake and countless Black people showed us we are in, and have always been in, a pandemic of systemic racism; and

WHEREAS, Black, indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized workers have been disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination, violence, and healthcare issues, suffering economic inequity since prior to this nation’s inception; and

¹⁰ The ‘Bread and Roses’ slogan was originally inspired by a speech given by Helen Todd, an Illinois state factory inspector, on the history of the women’s suffrage movement and conditions of the working women at the time.

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WHEREAS, the lack of work has been an opportunity to bring workers of all races together and on the right note proclaiming in unison that Black lives matter; and

WHEREAS, there has been a re-awakening to unequal treatment among Union workers across the country, with many reflecting on the need for unconscious bias awareness; and

WHEREAS, International President Loeb expressed the responsibility that the industry has to actively participate in making crucial change by aggressively attacking inequality and racism; and

WHEREAS, the Alliance champions the diversity of its membership; and

WHEREAS, Leadership Development is one of the Pillars of Strength; and

WHEREAS, the rise in intolerance due in part to the Trump Administration and centuries of systemic racism, demands that we educate all our members, as well as ourselves, so that we can better support each other;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the IATSE General Executive Board, its Locals, and the Delegates convened at the 2020 District 2 Convention endeavor to request and attend employer-sponsored Unconscious Bias Awareness Training, and make available that training to all their Union brothers, sisters, and kin so that they may be sensitive and aware of potential discriminatory actions and biases.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, All Delegates identify and rectify systemic racism and biases that may be codified in its Local Constitution and By Laws, removing any and all unfair financial barriers to entry and gatekeeping.

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<https://annenberg.usc.edu/news/research-and-impact/asians-and-pacific-islanders-are-erased-silenced-and-stereotyped-popular>

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