



## Membership Handbook

January 2023

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## **Mission Statement and History**

The New York State DanceForce is a statewide network of dance activists committed to increasing the quantity and quality of dance activity across the state of New York. The DanceForce program operates in partnership with the New York State Council on the Arts.

The DanceForce was created in 1994 by David R. White of Dance Theater Workshop, Ivan Sygoda of Pentacle, Beverly D'Anne of the New York State Council on the Arts Dance Program, and key partners around the state. From 1994 to 1999, the DanceForce was co-administered by Dance Theater Workshop and Pentacle. From 1999 to 2005, Dance Theater Workshop and Danspace Project administered the program. Since 2005, the DanceForce has been a program of American Dance Asylum, Inc., a dance production and service organization based in Corning.

The NYS DanceForce builds networks of artists, audiences and arts activists in New York State communities by promoting and supporting innovative projects in dance and the movement arts.

The DanceForce was originally conceived as a think-tank with the purpose of examining problems and opportunities facing the dance field within New York State. A group representing dancers, presenters, managers and art service organizations convened to focus on addressing the isolation of the state's dance professionals, with the goal of re-energizing the art form by increasing opportunities for meaningful exchange between dance artists and communities, particularly in upstate New York. The issues raised included dance literacy, audience development, community cultural development, and greater access to artistic and financial resources.

The DanceForce currently subsidizes a wide array of projects, all designed and implemented by its 19 members. These projects include artist residencies, arts in education programs, marketing initiatives, public performances, lecture demonstrations, and a regional regranting program. The DanceForce, through the work of its members, has created over 400 projects, raising more than \$4 million in support of these endeavors.

Equally important, the group comes together twice a year to view and discuss work, to share information, and to create new models for supporting the art of dance. Through the network and support provided by DanceForce, members connect to, engage with, and present artists throughout the entire state of New York. The impact of the DanceForce continues to grow through the innovation, dedication and passion of its members.

## **Criteria for Membership**

DanceForce members are individuals who function independently or in organizational contexts. They may happen to work as artists, presenters, administrators, educators, or writers. What matters most is their advocacy for the art form and their championing of its practitioners.

Members share core personal attributes:

- They are passionate about the art form of dance.
- They are independent and self-motivated.
- They work creatively with partners towards shared goals.

The DanceForce membership, taken as a whole, strives to be geographically, culturally, functionally and aesthetically *diverse*, insofar as it represents the diversity of the art form and of its constituents in New York State.

Members bring important capabilities to the DanceForce:

- They possess curatorial experience that reflects high artistic standards.
- They are experienced at creating dynamic dance projects.
- They can serve as a well-informed representative of their region (knowledge of the dance community and the changing opportunities and resources).
- They have access to resources such as space and people.
- They are able to garner support for their projects (cash, in-kind, volunteer support and political support).
- They are able to make a significant contribution to an artist's development and/or to audience development for dance. Audience development includes growth in attendance and/or increased dance literacy.
- They demonstrate a continuing commitment to the development of their own dance literacy (e.g., attending dance performances, participation in other dance meetings and conferences outside of this forum).

By fulfilling the general requirements listed above, and the specific responsibilities in the Member Responsibilities section, each DanceForce member shares responsibility for the infrastructural health and efficient functioning of the DanceForce itself.

## **Members**

Effective July 1, 2023, the NYS DanceForce includes Project Members and Advisory Members. All members have equal status and suffrage within the organization.

At that time, a 12-year window opens, during which all current DanceForce members will choose either to become Advisory Members or to retire from the organization. It is projected that four current members will voluntarily move from their Project Member status every three years until all have transitioned. Those choosing to leave the organization may rejoin as Advisory Members within two years of giving up their role as Project Members. By the 12-year mark (July 1, 2035), all current DanceForce members will have completed their Project Member terms.

If an insufficient number of current members volunteer to transition in a scheduled period, the Director will recommend an appropriate number of members to the Executive Committee for moving off Project Member status.

Effective July 1, 2023, newly selected DanceForce members join as Project Members. Project Members serve up to three consecutive three-year terms, each term to be ratified by the Director in consultation with the Executive Committee. When their terms expire, they may elect to either leave the organization or become an Advisory Member. Those leaving the organization have two years to elect to become an Advisory Member.

Membership changes will officially take effect on July 1 of each fiscal year.

## Member Responsibilities

### 1. Project Members

Project Members are responsible for the creation, implementation, evaluation, and documentation of their own projects. Upon submission and approval of a project proposal, each Project Member receives an annual allocation for this purpose. The amount of that allocation is contingent upon the monies available for projects in any given year. Project Members are encouraged to be creative and innovative with their projects.

The fact that these project “grants” are not competitively awarded does not diminish Project Members’ responsibilities as project administrators. Each project reflects upon the DanceForce as a whole; it forms part of the DanceForce’s portfolio it presents to the NYSCA Dance Program.

Project Members receive a summer meeting honorarium, travel, housing and per diem during the period of their service, including the Summer Meeting immediately following their final project. They may also receive compensation for service on the Membership Committee and adjudication panels.

Lack of compliance with responsibilities and deadlines, including attendance at the annual summer meeting, can jeopardize a Project Member’s ability to receive funding for future projects and/or membership status.

#### a. Project Guidelines

1. Projects are funded according to the DanceForce fiscal year (July 1 to June 30).
2. Projects should support the mission of the DanceForce.
3. Projects should address a need in their own community or the project community.
4. Projects should be distinctive, i.e., not a duplication or extension of existing programs — and potentially exemplary, i.e., inspiration for future projects.
5. Project Members may not be the primary beneficiary of a project. Limited exceptions however may be allowed at the discretion of the Director if it is determined that the project allows significant other benefits to the community and/or other artists.

#### b. Project Timeline

1. Project Members submit a **Project Proposal Form** by January 31 for the next fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), using the on-line form available via the DanceForce website Members Page (<http://www.danceforce.org/member-resources-page>). Project Members are encouraged to consult with the Director about their projects prior to the submission deadline.
2. The Director notifies Project Members within 30 days after the submission deadline regarding the status of their proposals. If necessary, Project Members and the Director work together to amend the proposal in order for it to be approved.
3. Project Members comply promptly with any requests from the Director for updates and confirmation necessary for coordination with the NYSCA application process.
4. Upon approval, Project Members can request partial or full payment of project funds at any time during the project’s fiscal year. The request for funds should be submitted electronically using the on-line **Payment Request Form** via the DanceForce website Members Page. Because of the nature of the DanceForce’s own funding cycle, it is possible that funds might not be available at the time of the request. If this is the case, the requested payment will be issued when funds become available. Members should consult with the Director on this and related issues.

5. Project Members must acknowledge DanceForce support on all materials relating to the project, using the logos and crediting language found on the DanceForce website Members Page.
6. **Final Report Forms** are to be submitted electronically within thirty days after the project is completed. The link to the Final Report form can be found on the DanceForce website Members Page.

## 2. Advisory Members

Advisory Members advise, assist, support, and advocate for the NYS DanceForce on matters that will strengthen opportunities for and facilitate the work of Project Members and for the organization. Advisory Members share an expert knowledge of the dance field as well as a mastery of DanceForce project design and implementation.

Advisory Members receive a summer meeting honorarium, travel, housing and per diem during the period of their service. They may also receive compensation for service on the Membership Committee and adjudication panels.

## 3. Annual Summer Meeting

Project Members and Advisory Members are required to attend the annual 3-day summer meeting of the DanceForce, which usually takes place in July or August. Meetings are hosted by a different member each year, allowing the membership to visit the different communities represented throughout the state.

Attendees receive an honorarium, lodging and per diem. Reimbursement for travel costs is available by completing an **Expense Reimbursement Form** (accessible via the DanceForce website), printing it out, and mailing it to the Director with original receipts. Expense reimbursables must be submitted within 60 days of incurring the expense, or by June 15 of the current fiscal year—whichever comes first. Expenses that fall between June 15 and 30 will be processed as part of the next fiscal year.

The importance of attendance at the annual summer meeting cannot be overstated. This meeting is the main opportunity for the membership to come together as a whole. Failure to attend can jeopardize a member's ability to receive funding for future projects and/or membership status.

## 4. Annual Winter Meeting

Every January, a half-day DanceForce meeting takes place in New York City during the annual APAP conference. This meeting is encouraged but optional. No honorarium is provided for this meeting, but travel reimbursement may be provided if funds are available. Members who seek such reimbursement should inform the Director well in advance of the meeting.

## Committees

The DanceForce currently has three committees. Additional committees may be formed at any time by a recommendation from members (individually or collectively), the Executive Committee or the Director, and the approval of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee and the Membership Committee are to be constituted by a balance of Project Members and Advisory Members to reflect a representation of the entire organization.

### 1. Executive Committee

#### **Tasks:**

- a) provide advice and counsel to Director as representatives of the general membership
- b) set tenure, salary, and regular evaluation of Director
- c) create and maintain policies governing organizational conduct and governance structure
- d) assist the DanceForce's fiscal sponsoring organization and the Director in maintaining fiscal sponsorship compliance

The committee shall have 5 members. Each member of the DanceForce is expected to take a turn serving on this committee. The term is for three years and rotates among the members. During an Executive Committee member's third year, the committee selects and invites a replacement member. Appointments run from October 1 to September 30, so as to bridge the transition period from one fiscal year to the next (June 30/July 1). Incoming members meet with the current Executive Committee at the annual Summer Meeting preceding their October 1 start.

### 2. Membership Committee

#### **Tasks:**

- a) Set up searches; review, vet, and recommend new members in consultation with DanceForce Director.
- b) Monitor the membership procedures and policy for the DanceForce to ensure that membership continues to represent the "best and brightest" forces throughout the state, represents diversity in all its forms, and includes leaders in the pursuit of sustainability of dance within the state.

The committee shall have 5 to 7 members. Members of this committee serve two-year terms. They will be compensated by a flat fee (determined by the Director) for each search process.

### 3. Advisory Council

Four current Project Members may move to the Advisory Council every 3 years over the next 12 years. There will be approximately 4 inaugural members of the Advisory Council who have voluntarily moved from their current Project Member positions. Positions and vacancies may be filled as the Council requires, specifically if there are areas of expertise required to meet the needs of the service population.

#### **Tasks:**

- a) Recommend the structure, policies, and procedures of the Membership Committee for recruiting and selecting new members.
- b) Recommend and constitute other committees with members and outside sources that benefit the organization.
- c) Develop Special Projects that will have access to funding to support these projects.
- d) Participate as a resource for new Project Members.

- e) Encourage and support the exploration of new artistic ideas in the field.
- f) Support the review of the organization's internal performance in regard to diversity, transparency, equality, and geographic inclusion.
- g) Offer recommendations to members and management that could improve effectiveness.

#### Organizational Structure of Committees

All committees will have a chair and recording secretary who are elected for one-year terms by the members of the committee. Positions shall be elected by the simple majority of members and may be held for multiple terms. Elections will be held at the first meeting of the year. Duties shall be those commonly ascribed to these positions.

A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of members. Committees will meet as per schedule designated by the committee, and all members of the committee will be notified in advance of meetings.

Minutes of each meeting will be kept. Copies will be provided to the Director and will be available to the organization's membership on request.

Committee recommendations and reports will be submitted in writing to the organization membership. Documents will include both suggested actions and justifications.

Members who are absent without reasonable cause from four successive meetings will be considered to have resigned their seat.

#### Other Member Responsibilities

- Engage in DanceForce outreach to legislators and other stakeholders
- Maintain current project and contact information on DanceForce website
- Look out for potential new DanceForce members
- Be aware of funding opportunities for DanceForce
- Look for PR opportunities for DanceForce

## **Review Procedures**

The DanceForce Director regularly monitors and reviews each member's performance as a DanceForce member, using "Criteria for Membership" and "Member Responsibilities" as the basis for evaluation. When appropriate, reviews will be conducted in person at the discretion of the Director. Yearly, the Director makes a recommendation to the Executive Committee regarding the status of each member for the coming year and follows up with members accordingly.