

Deep Vellum Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Statement

Vision

From its origins, Deep Vellum has believed in bringing stories from the world to the world. In our programming and model, Deep Vellum builds a community of literary artists and staff members who seek to challenge what readers might think of history and sexuality, gender and race, ethnicity and nationality, class and ability in literature and publishing. In Dallas we strive to be a literary center that offers both a model and a set of literary tools that allow us to envision a more equitable future, and we strive to collaborate with literary artists and partner organizations worldwide to interrogate carefully what it means to tell the stories of all people, to speak to the world we live in here and now.

History and Goals

Historically, the publishing community has promoted the voices of heterosexual, male, white, abled, and well-off wealthy communities while marginalizing the voices and stories of other groups and individuals. Likewise, publishing companies have for too long been staffed by individuals who reflect these same publishing priorities and biases. Although this has begun to change as major and independent publishers begin to expand their publisher catalogs to include other voices, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, women, disabled, and low-income writers and storytellers are still largely underrepresented in the publishing world both as published writers and as staff members.

From its founding in 2013, Deep Vellum has pursued a different model, by building a community of writers, translators, and literary artists who hail from many different backgrounds. We are proud to present a publishing catalog that includes literary artists from a spectrum of racial and ethnic heritages, gender identities, sexual orientations, and nationalities, including books originally written in over 60 languages, by authors from over 80 countries, including those authors from Dallas and across Texas.

Yet for Deep Vellum, there is more work to be done. As we have grown from a staff of one to a larger organization, we must aim to ensure that our internal community, including our staff and board of directors, reflects the same diversity as our publishing list so that Deep Vellum can continue to build equity into the publishing world to ensure that everyone has a seat at the table.

Deep Vellum also commits to continuing to grow our reading audience, the audiences we serve through literary events, and our community of collaborative partners with the goal of making our programming accessible to new and different groups in Dallas and across the United States. For us, this means expanding the reach of our literary publishing and discussion-driven events programming to children and students and to people and communities that have been historically and intentionally excluded from literary programming.

As we expand our audience reach and our internal community, we are committed to continuing to build a list of published books and a roster of events that reflect the diversity of our world in order to amplify the stories of people everywhere.

Strategies and Next Steps

We commit to supporting and publishing works of literature that address systemic and structural inequalities in the past and present and attempt to envision better paths forward.

Action Items: This is already an important goal for Deep Vellum as we select books for publication, and we will continue to make this a priority in perpetuity, especially as it reflects our choices about Dallas- and Texas-focused titles.

We commit to working with a diverse group of literary artists (authors, translators, illustrators, designers, editors) who represent a spectrum of races/ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, heritages, nationalities, abilities, and income levels.

Action Items: This is already an important goal for Deep Vellum, and we will continue to make this a priority in perpetuity. In particular, we will aim to publish more works by disabled and low-income writers, as well as individuals from marginalized communities in Dallas and across Texas.

We commit to hiring staff members and recruiting board and advisory board members who have a variety of backgrounds and identities and to building a workplace that empowers all of its members.

Action Item: As Deep Vellum continues to recruit new board members and grow our staff, we will continue to implement a search policy guided by equity considerations. We welcome applicants of diverse races/ethnicities, genders and sexual orientations, socioeconomic backgrounds, and abilities. In addition, our search policy includes ensuring that our board nominating committee is fully versed on equity concerns when identifying and nominating new board members.

We commit to expanding our audiences served to better reach marginalized communities through partnerships and collaborations with other organizations and by hosting events in spaces and neighborhoods that have historically lacked access to cultural programming.

Action Items: Over the next three years, we will expand our programming efforts to reach new neighborhoods and communities in our home city, including working in schools and public libraries and with partner organizations that reach underserved city residents.

We will also continue to ensure that all events are held in accessible facilities and aim to produce books and events that are accessible to new audiences through different formats, including audiobooks, closed-captions on our virtual events, and large-print editions.

We commit to leading by example to create an organization that respects employees', contractors', and audiences' needs, efforts, and life priorities through both daily communication and interactions among staff and through concrete workplace policies.

Action Items: In 2021, Deep Vellum will approve and publish a safe workplace policy; an equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion statement; and a family leave policy. As of 2020, Deep Vellum will offer healthcare insurance to all full-time employees. Deep Vellum is also developing policies and best practices for employees who work remotely and/or live outside Dallas, in particular to match state employment requirements for employees who live outside Texas.