



Chow Chow: An Asheville Culinary Event Series - Values Agreement

As a sponsor of or participant in Chow Chow 2021, we would like to share with you our work and goals concerning shaping a more equitable festival and organization. Through your sponsorship of Chow Chow 2021, we ask that you read the below and acknowledge that you will endeavor to support this work during your involvement with Chow Chow, and we also invite you to hold us accountable to this work. In addition, we love to celebrate and share accountability with businesses and individuals that are also undertaking equity work--please feel free to share with us what you are doing to build a more equitable world.

Equity around the Table

Chow Chow is a majority volunteer-led organization. We are Asheville business owners, artists, activists, and neighbors committed to our mission to celebrate and enrich the unique foodways of the Southern Appalachian region. We have a rich cultural history in this region, and much to celebrate, and we acknowledge the responsibility of culinary events and festivals to honor community and celebrate justly. In a society where the food industry has become a reflection of larger systemic injustices, we recognize that culinary events and festivals require a new precedent. As such, Chow Chow is exploring ways to incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion into our organization and festival, and to set new and inventive benchmarks for the way we do our work. We love what was created with the first year of Chow Chow, and we also acknowledge and hope to repair harm that was caused to members of our local community. We acknowledge our need to grow this non-profit with purpose and intention, and to serve our community more fully and fairly. We are listening, learning, and working with a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion professional to create more equitable policies and practices, with the goal of building an antiracist culture at Chow Chow, both internally and in the festival design. We believe this work will inspire even greater growth and connection in Asheville's creative community. We welcome the collective sum of differences, life experiences, knowledge, self-expression, and talent our makers and guests bring to Chow Chow, and we look forward to celebrating and exploring equity around the table.

As we work toward the following goals, we recognize that we have a long road ahead of us. We are holding ourselves accountable to this work and ensuring that it outlasts our current board and staff. We are committed to upholding realistic goals, and not making empty promises to our community. Since beginning this process of realignment, we have incorporated a plan to compensate all Chow Chow participants, are centering marginalized voices in programming, and have created a range of ticket prices. These are but beginning steps in a multi year evolution of breaking the mold of culinary events and festivals.



Chow Chow's Equity Goals (2021):

The board and staff at Chow Chow understand that centering equity in any organization or business is an ongoing journey that will not be solved in a single step. Chow Chow has engaged a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion professional to assist us with the beginning stages of our journey. This consultant has led Chow Chow on a seven month equity training as we work toward meeting the following goals:

- Assist the current board members in educating themselves about the ways in which inequity is expressed in and reinforced by culinary festivals in general, and Chow Chow in particular, so that we are better positioned to propel change in our industry.
- Position the existing board toward confident planning for a more equitable 2021 festival while still meeting financial goals. This includes but is not limited to centering marginalized voices in festival programming, consideration for fair compensation, representation and support through sourcing and business relationships, festival accessibility and pricing, and organizational community engagement.
- Inform the organization toward the inclusion of marginalized voices within organizational leadership.
- Guide Chow Chow's efforts to expand the means by which we listen to and process feedback from our community, and advise us in communicating our efforts, plans, and progress back to our audience.
- Assist the existing board in the development of additional goals, or the enhancement of these stated goals: 1) That reflect a commitment to antiracism and equity within Chow Chow; 2) are measurable with accountability checks in place and; 3) will carry forward in ongoing programming, policies and procedures regardless of board turnover.

If you wish to share with us what you are doing to build a more equitable world, you may send any information or materials to Rebecca Lynch, Executive Director at rlynch@chowchowasheville.com.