



**Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium  
Thomas Edison Film Festival**

*"fueling the independent spirit since 1981"*

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[www.TEFilmFestival.org](http://www.TEFilmFestival.org)

**Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium  
ADA Compliance Plan - FY2024-26**

**Organization:**

Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium

**Executive Director & Primary Contact:**

Jane Steuerwald

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**Organization's website address:**

[www.tefilmfest.org](http://www.tefilmfest.org)

## **Organization's Mission:**

Since 1981, the mission of the Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium has been to promote and advocate for innovation in the art of the moving image and celebrate the unique value of short films to teach, inspire and entertain. The films that become the centerpiece of the Thomas Edison Film Festival (TEFF), the Consortium's flagship project, honor the vision of Thomas Edison, inventor, and creator of the motion picture. We have embraced our mission for forty+ years through the promotion of films which also address issues and struggles within contemporary society.

## **Programming Offered:**

The Thomas Edison Film Festival (TEFF) is known for its support of spirited, cutting-edge films that provide insight into the human condition and the natural world. TEFF is an open-genre competition of short films – animation, documentary, experimental, narrative, and screen dance. These exceptional works range from comedy to drama to the exploration of pure form in film and video. The films chosen each season for TEFF are never sidebars to feature length work, they are the heart and soul of the festival. Not a conventional destination film festival, TEFF reaches out to diverse audiences across NJ and beyond. Its annual collection of international films is screened to audiences either in-person or streaming-on-demand via the Festival's website.

## **Types of Events:**

- Lectures/Workshops
- Film screenings in-person and virtually
- In-person Q&A's with individual filmmakers and panels
- Virtual talks with filmmakers

**Chair of the Consortium's ADA Committee: Steven Gorelick**, former Executive Director of the NJ Motion Picture and Television Commission.

**Chair of the Consortium's DEAI Committee: Diane Moss**, Counsel, Lowenstein Sandler, LLP.

**ADA Committee Members:** Jane Steuerwald, Executive Director; Don Jay Smith, Trustee; Robert Foster, Executive Director, Hoboken Historical Museum; Elizabeth Kirshtein, TEFF Assistant; and \*Debi Glennon, steering committee member. Ms. Glennon assists and advises Jane Steuerwald by reviewing the Consortium's ADA plan, and by providing updates in regard to ADA compliance issues. Ms. Glennon is a person with disabilities due to her long-time diagnosis of MS and has also served on the ADA steering committee for the City of Ridgewood, NJ.

Representatives from the A. Harry Moore School in Jersey City, a comprehensive academic, therapeutic, pre-vocational and social-emotional enrichment program for students with disabilities aged 3-21, has worked with the Consortium to review its ADA Plan and to offer oversight and input into how the Consortium can best serve communities of people with disabilities.

The process of sharing our organization's ADA-DEAI progress is presented to the full board at either a regularly scheduled board meeting, or in a report from the Executive Director, which is sent to the full board typically once or twice a year in sync with the end of the Consortium's fiscal year.

The Consortium's staff member, TEFF Assistant Elizabeth Kirshtein, is also included in reports from the Executive Director and is present at board meetings. Decisions regarding ADA Compliance and DEAI policies are presented to the full board for discussion and vote, when necessary, at a board meeting.

### **DEAI Policies and Initiatives:**

The content and presentation of TEFF's film programming is determined annually. Executive Director, Jane Steuerwald, and Advisory Board members, Henry Baker and Margaret Parsons, serve as formal jurors for the Thomas Edison Film Festival. Each year, Baker and Parsons determine which film(s) will receive the Festival's annual DEAI Stellar Award. Consideration for this award is merit-based and open to all filmmakers who receive qualifying scores from the TEFF team of pre-screening jurors.

Launched in 2024, **TEFF instituted an initiative to caption every film in its annual touring collection.** TEFF did outreach to filmmakers and

requested film files with captioned options and offered services to filmmakers unable to caption films themselves. TEFF's 2025 festival tour is proud to announce captioning of every film with dialog in the collection - whether for an in-person or virtual program.

Jane Steuerwald is responsible for conducting **Host Venue Assessments for ADA Compliance**. As ED, she reaches out to every potential host on the festival's annual tour. As a touring festival that travels throughout NJ and beyond, **the Consortium employs an ADA Rider and Survey for Host Venues**, to assist in determining ADA compliance. Hosts presenting TEFF programs are required to follow ADA policies and procedures at all times. Since TEFF is a touring festival, each venue is vetted carefully for ADA compliance. Jane Steuerwald personally contacts each venue she cannot visit personally to insure ADA compliance.

**The TEFF website posts an ADA information overview and ADA -DEAI Compliance Plan. It may be accessed by clicking "ABOUT" from the Menu Bar and scrolling down to "ADA - DEAI"**

### **Employment Non-discrimination Policy:**

It is the policy of the Consortium to maintain a working environment and a program exhibition environment free from all forms of unlawful discrimination. The Consortium is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

The Executive Director offers assistance in filling out employment forms and conducting personal interviews with applicants and offers enlarged forms whenever necessary or requested. All printed materials provided by the Consortium are available at all times in 16pt. in order to aid people with vision loss.

The Consortium does not own or rent a physical office for meetings or interviews. Rather, the Consortium's homebase – the Hoboken Historical Museum - may be reserved, if necessary, for the purpose of a meeting or interview. The museum is fully accessible to persons with disabilities. The museum is fully accessible to ground floor parking with designated parking zones for people with disabilities, full-width entryway doors, bathrooms, etc.

The Executive Director meets weekly with Festival Assistant, Elizabeth Kirshtein at the Mahwah Public Library in one of the library's "quiet rooms" which are reserved weekly by Ms. Kirshtein for that purpose. The library is also available for meetings or interviews and is fully accessible with ground floor parking with designated parking zones for people with disabilities, fully automated full width entry doors, bathrooms, water fountains, etc.

Whenever possible, the Consortium welcomes interns and volunteers and provides a positive working environment for all. In past years the Consortium employed a part-time bookkeeper with mobility disabilities, who received designated parking. Student interns with disabilities have been welcomed on a formal and informal basis.

With the increased use of remote technology, such as Zoom, it has become possible for the Consortium to work with more individuals with disabilities as volunteers and/or interns, such as for TEFF's annual pre-screening process.

### **Job Descriptions Including Marginal and Essential Functions:**

**Executive Director:** Full-time employee.

**Essential functions:** Sufficient mobility, eyesight, hearing and physical stamina to travel to host sites throughout NJ and at selected venues across the US. The Executive Director must be physically able to maintain a rigorous travel schedule that includes but is not limited to travel by car, train, and airplane.

The ED is required to engage in public speaking and create presentations for large and small audiences at varied venues including museums, colleges, universities, libraries, etc. The ED is responsible for maintaining the Consortium's extensive database, website, program development, curation of film programs, grant writing and development, and to enter and maintain data electronically. The ED is also responsible for writing checks for accounts payable and for depositing all checks received by the Consortium at the Consortium's physical bank location.

Communication with host sites, filmmakers, volunteers, grant organizations, and more is required daily via email, text, Zoom and phone. Throughout the year the ED is responsible for managing on-line presentations via Zoom and Vimeo and interviewing and editing talks with filmmakers from far-flung

locations around the world. The ED is also responsible for program presentations that sometimes require weekend travel and lodging, and the occasional set-up of complex video projection equipment including video projectors, sound systems, portable screens, and more.

**Marginal functions:** Directing the Consortium's social media initiatives, managing mass mailings through email and postal service, contacting filmmakers, and maintaining the TEFF archive.

**TEFF Assistant:** Part-time employee.

**Essential functions:** Sufficient eyesight to manage extensive data entry and communication with filmmakers via email and viewing films for pre-screening purposes either on-line or projected. Sufficient hearing to communicate via phone or adaptive phone technology for assisted listening and listening while reviewing film submissions. Sufficient physical ability to label, open, and process mail.

The ability to enter and maintain submissions data and donations data electronically via computer keyboard and to effectively facilitate communication via email, phone, and in-person with jurors, interns, filmmakers and host site representatives.

**Marginal Functions:** Managing the Festival's administration system and all festival submissions, planning of special events, attending festival screenings and special events, and maintaining the Consortium's MailChimp and Instagram accounts and other social media.

**Link to Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium Board Approved Organizational Employment Non-discrimination Policy Statement:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/tb2nxanvb4cdzu3sq54b/TAEMAC-BOARD-APPROVED-ORGANIZATIONAL-EMPLOYMENT-NON-DISCRIMINATION-POLICY.pdf?rlkey=l26rtbcwaa7imfyhi3azm2na&dl=0>

**Virtual Programming Initiative:**

In response to Covid-19, the Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium launched a Virtual Film Festival on April 6th, 2020 – initially showcasing award-winning selected shorts from the 2020 season and the festival's

archive. Viewing any of the films on our site was and is still offered to the public free of charge. To date we have logged more than 20,000+ views by individuals around the world. This model has allowed us to reach out to communities and individuals who are in isolation, people with disabilities, people unable to travel to in-person film screenings, and those who do not have the funds or the access to participate in, in-person arts events.

### **Organizational Policies and Practices:**

The Consortium works internally with our established committee to review policies and procedures as they relate to ADA compliance within the scope of our organization. Plans are reviewed, host venues discussed where in-person programming is presented, and adjustments are made accordingly based on the facilities, policies, and venues ability to comply with ADA regulations specifically. Plans are reviewed and updated annually, and additional accommodations are made as technologies evolve, such as providing captioned films.

**The Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium has a Board-Approved Policy for ADA and DEAI Compliance which was adopted in 2021.**

#### ***Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium Board Approved DEAI Plan - Diversity, Equity, Access and Inclusion***

*The Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium is dedicated to what is necessary to maintain an inclusive and diverse organization. Not only does Consortium board recognize the importance of a diverse administration, but the mission and goals of our organization mirror our structural goals. We support and affirm the plurality of our culture and our audiences across NJ and beyond. Our commitment to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion as an institution is resolute. To this end, we established a DEAI Committee in 2021 to oversee all DEAI policies and procedures, to promote inclusion and to ensure compliance.*

*Since 1981 the mission of the Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium, Inc. has been to promote and advocate innovation in the art of the moving image with a primary focus on non-commercial film and video. The Thomas Edison Film Festival, advances and exhibits the work of diverse filmmakers from across the US and internationally. These artists often represent an under-served constituency who might not otherwise have the opportunity*

*for live public exhibition nationwide or abroad. Our programs and partnerships seek to amplify and celebrate diverse filmmakers and media artists and to shine a light on issues surrounding DEAI issues. The Thomas Edison Film Festival (TEFF) focuses on animation, documentary, experimental, movement-based and narrative films that push boundaries. The festival's juried collection of short films addresses issues and struggles within contemporary society, such as public health, people with disabilities, race and class, climate change, substance abuse, family, sustainability, immigration, LGBTQ+ issues and more.*

*We reach out to varied audiences in settings including colleges, museums, libraries, community organizations, and arts venues, with custom-curated programs.*

*The Consortium's Global Insights/ADA Collection draws work from the Thomas Edison Film Festival archive for exhibition - specifically films that focus on people with disabilities, racial equity, issues of the environment, diversity, and social justice. Annually, works selected for inclusion by the jury and festival director are taken on tour to colleges, museums, libraries and cultural institutions throughout NJ, the US, and abroad.*

*Our actions to reach and maintain our goals include board diversification, and the ongoing development and access to our archived film collection focusing on films that reflect DEAI principles. We are continually striving to grow and engage our audiences to include underserved communities such as senior citizens, communities of color, people with disabilities, and those without the financial wherewithal to attend ticketed arts events.*

*Through our due diligence and our success in seeking out grants to support our efforts, we are firmly on a path to embrace and implement our DEAI program initiatives.*

**Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium, DEAI Plan was adopted in 2021**

**DEAI Advisory Board** – Chair, Diane Moss: ED, Jane Steuerwald; Board President, Steve Gorelick; and TEFF Assistant Elizabeth Kirshtein.

Jane Steuerwald and Elizabeth Kirshtein attend ADA - DEAI Plan Workshops and/or Access Thursday Roundtables provided by the Cultural Access Network Project regularly.



Jane Steuerwald, the ED, presents all in-person programs for the Thomas Edison Film Festival. At each event, there is a Q&A providing her with the opportunity to gather direct feedback from patrons with disabilities regarding the Consortiums marketing, programming, and the host venues visited. Should there be questions, comments, suggestions, notes are taken and contact information recorded for future communication. The Consortium also collects feedback from patrons who email the ED directly with comments. Every printed program distributed at an in-person TEFF screening provides patrons with contact information through which they may contact the ED with feedback directly.

### **Grievance Procedure:**

#### **Link to Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium Board Approved Grievance Procedure Policy Statement:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/11c5wpyzbdg6te9wspifj/TAEMAC-BOARD-APPROVED-GRIEVANCE-PROCEDURE.pdf?rlkey=j9yt5t7lhmlp2iscllp35yuon&dl=0>

### **Virtual/Digital Programming:**

Jane Steuerwald, ED, is responsible for curating and presenting, all virtual programming for the Consortium. Costs of presenting virtual programming are built into the Consortium's annual operating budget.

TEFF is a touring festival visiting venues across the US and beyond, and presenting 60 or more programs a year, either virtually or in-person. Jane Steuerwald, ED, is responsible for carefully vetting, working with, and coordinating the resources of our host institutions to accomplish the highest level of ADA compliance possible. All of our host institutions such as The National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC; Crandall Public Library in Glens Falls, NY; Hoboken Historical Museum; Ramapo College of NJ; Princeton University; Secaucus Public Library; Mahwah Public Library; Justice Brennan Courthouse in Jersey City; A. Harry Moore School for Children with Disabilities; and many more, are ADA compliant and some provide Assistive Listening Devices on site upon request.

Ramapo College of NJ has provided a sign-language interpreter for a number of TEFF programs at the Berrie Center, by request of a student

with hearing loss. Each host site must confirm that they meet the Consortium's ADA Compliance requirements in advance in order to qualify as a host venue for a Thomas Edison Film Festival program, or for any program provided to the public as part of a Consortium initiative.

### **Accommodations:**

TEFF will always work directly upon request, with at least 2-weeks advance notice by a prospective audience member, to provide whatever accommodations are requested. The Consortium expects and requires its host institutions to respect and fulfill ADA Compliance guidelines. Under the ADA, offering an accommodation is always on a case-by-case basis, and the decision is based on what is "readily achievable."

For the Consortium, since we travel from one venue to another, this varies according to administrative and financial resources. The National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC is much more likely to offer sign language interpretation than a local library, for example. Moreover, sign language interpreters are available in some but not all locations.

Programs presented by TEFF are not live theatrical events, but are visual projections typically held in darkened rooms, theaters, classroom, screening rooms, and auditoriums. Therefore, in most instances sign language interpretation is sometimes impractical. Thus, the Consortium requires its host institutions to provide clear and concise information to people with hearing loss, as to whether sign language interpretation of performances will be available. Alternatively, all TEFF films with dialog, now have subtitles, and may be programmed upon request for people with hearing loss. Many festival presentations are visual experiences that utilize no dialogue, therefore sign language interpretation would not be applicable.

The TEFF website carries the Thomas Edison Film Festival's annual program booklet which includes essays by experts in the field of independent film, including history and aesthetics; synopses of all of the films in the annual award collection; and a list of the host sites to which the Festival will travel within the year. The program booklet is available for preview on-line by all patrons interested in reviewing an advance synopsis of any film in the Festival tour.

This allows for patrons to research the Consortium and preview a work to be included in an upcoming screening in advance and serves as an enriching opportunity. The annual program booklet (including enlarged print editions upon request) is provided to each host site in advance of each scheduled program via email. This allows each host site to email the program booklet link to patrons before film screenings, and for patrons to engage with program content appropriately. For example, a patron with vision loss can review the entire annual program booklet in an enlarged print version at home on his/her computer, smart phone or related device.

TEFF also distributes a postcard at every in-person program with QR Codes that take audience members directly to TEFF's on-line program booklet, allowing each viewer to enlarge print as desired.

The TEFF is a guest presenter across the US and abroad. As such we often must rely on the commitment to ADA guidelines by our host institutions. To accomplish our essential ADA compliance goals, the Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium has developed a "Host Organization Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA Compliance) Rider and Survey" which must be completed by every one of our host venues prior to booking a film program presentation. Through this survey the Consortium establishes a reasonable advance notification policy for patrons interested in utilizing ADA programs and services including large print programs, assistive listening devices, wheelchair accessibility, etc.

**Link to Thomas A. Edison Media Arts Consortium ADA Rider and Survey for Host Organizations:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ao1pj83m4ptpi1fvzmf0h/ADA-RIDER-AND-SURVEY-HOST-ORGANIZATIONS-TAEMAC.pdf?rlkey=1ixk3a2pj7xp0azxpiu6q6c1f&dl=0>

As a nationally touring film program, TEFF proactively supports and advocates ADA accessibility guidelines. People with disabilities and their companions or liaisons are encouraged to contact the festival office prior to a scheduled screening event in order to ascertain and confirm the specific accessibility features of the host venue. TEFF associates, either the ED or the Festival Assistant can supply the contact information for the host venue in order to confirm any needed accommodations. The Consortium continues its policy of working with each host venue to complete the

required Host Organization Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA Compliance) Rider and Survey annually and requires host venues to provide information on accessible routes from public transportation to individual host venues.

For further information, questions or concerns, please contact **Jane Steuerwald, Executive Director** via email at [Jane@TEFilmFest.org](mailto:Jane@TEFilmFest.org), or by phone at 551-999-8225.