

**Annual Benefit Report
2016**

Turnstile Tours, Inc.
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New York State statute A4692-a, Article 17, Section 1708

Introduction

Who are we?

Turnstile Tours is a New York City-based social enterprise that researches, develops, and operates intensely-researched, site-specific tours and public programs in partnership with non-profit organizations and consults with government and non-profit institutions on public engagement and place-making efforts, including the development of tours, programs, and exhibits.

What is this report?

Turnstile Tours was incorporated in New York as a benefit corporation on May 9, 2012. New York's benefit corporation statute provides a legal framework for for-profit companies that seek to create a general public benefit, defined by the state as "a positive material impact on society and the environment." In an effort to ensure accountability and transparency, all benefit corporations in New York are required to post a benefit report annually on their respective areas of general public benefit based on a third-party assessment standard. Based on analysis of Turnstile Tours' operations during the calendar year of 2016, this benefit report provides an introduction to the company itself; insight into the company's pursuit of general and specific public benefits in 2016; and quantitative and qualitative analyses of the company's performance measured against the metrics of the B Impact Assessment, a third-party standard that evaluates overall social and environmental impact, and the results are outlined below.

In addition to a legal commitment to make a positive material impact on society and the environment, Turnstile Tours has defined specific areas of public benefit through establishing a clear mission statement, as well as core commitments to guide the company in living up to that statement. As part of our public benefit mission, Turnstile Tours partners with non-profit organizations based in local communities, and dedicates at least 5% of total tour ticket sales towards supporting select non-profit partners. Through tours, public programs, and related multimedia content, Turnstile Tours seeks to raise awareness about the missions and work of our non-profit partners. In 2016, we also launched Turnstile Studio, the consulting arm of our company that enables us to share our skills and talents to support cultural institutions and non-profit organizations in their place making efforts through content production, historical research, curriculum design, training services, and technical assistance.

Mission Statement

Turnstile Tours seeks to advance public knowledge about the meaning of place, foster connections and understanding between people of diverse backgrounds, and inspire and reflect a culture of community participation through providing welcoming, well-researched, inclusive, and engaging educational experiences and resources to people of all ages and abilities.

Core Commitments:

- **Conduct original research**

Turnstile Tours conducts original scholarly research with primary sources, including archival and field-based research, and documents place-based stories, both historical and contemporary, that are underrepresented in the public realm.

- **Contribute to public history**

We incorporate original research into projects, including tours, exhibits, public programs, and multimedia content, and are committed to depositing primary source materials in publicly-accessible archives for posterity.

- **Encourage cooperative learning and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and inclusivity**

We create experiences that facilitate active participation and are inclusive of and accessible to people with a wide range of learning styles, abilities, backgrounds, and knowledge.

- **Support non-profit partners**

Turnstile Tours contributes at least 5% of all ticket sales to select non-profit projects or organizations based in our local communities, educates the public about partners' missions and activities, and provides opportunities for customers and other Turnstile stakeholders to connect with and support projects that support community-building and place-making.

Turnstile Tours: Year Five

Turnstile Tours operated a total of 407 public and private group tours for 5,449 visitors in 2016. The company's tour portfolio consisted of different theme-based tour offerings built around four central programs: the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the Brooklyn Army Terminal, Public Market Tours, and Food Cart Tours. Turnstile Tours also offered special one-off tour programs, including Fleet Week boat tours of New York Harbor, a walking tour of Brooklyn Bridge Park, and bicycle tours of Green-Wood Cemetery. We continued to achieve a five-star rating on both Yelp and TripAdvisor, as well as "Top Rated" status on Viator.

We also continued to make major contributions to the historical record and scholarship about the sites where we operate tours. At the Brooklyn Navy Yard, we developed interpretive content about the history of the Naval Cemetery Landscape for the Yard and the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative. We also worked with Steiner NYC's research team to support a commemoration plan for the Admirals Row site, and co-hosted an event to dedicate a plaque from the USS *Constellation* Association to commemorate the lives that were lost in a fire aboard the ship on December 19, 1960, which tragically killed 50 shipyard workers.

2016 was an excellent year for growing and deepening our relationships with our non-profit partners. After working with the Essex Street Market Vendors Association and the New York City Economic Development Corporation to launch free tours of the market in 2015, in 2016 we launched regularly-scheduled public tours to promote the market and its vendors. We also worked with the Vendors Association to organize and moderate a free public program in December about the role of the baking industry in New York City, with guest speakers including Lee Wellington, executive director of the Urban Manufacturing Alliance, Gene Davidovich, CEO of Davidovich Bakery, Uliks Fehmiu, co-founder and president of Pain D'Avignon, and the general manager of Eataly in Lower Manhattan.

At the Brooklyn Navy Yard, we provided complimentary private tours to local senior centers, including the Walt Whitman and Ingersoll Senior Centers. We also offered our Yard Inspectors Family Tour as part of the inaugural Community Day, a pilot day of free programs for local community members hosted by the Brooklyn Navy Yard Center at BLDG 92. In 2016, more than 10 different businesses were featured on our Brooklyn Navy Yard Inside Industry Tours, including Scott Jordan Furniture, Bien Hecho, Woodside Press, SITU Fabrication, Honeybee Robotics, Final Frontier Design, IceStone, Ferra Designs, New Lab, and Refoundry. This series of industry-focused tours seeks to educate the public about the role of manufacturing in New York City through first-hand experiences at local businesses at the industrial facility.

Turnstile Tours offered a number of different programs that focused on exposing high school students and adult learners to career pathways and employment programming at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. For Pratt PreCollege, a summer program based at Pratt Institute, we put together a three-hour itinerary at the Navy Yard that included tours and hands-on workshops

with artists and designers, who shared with students about their own creative process and the paths they took to build their own businesses. We also supported the educational programming of the Brooklyn Historical Society by providing professional development trainings and leading tours for their after-school programs.

With the Street Vendor Project, our staff participated in a rally and march in Lower Manhattan in April, and president Cindy VandenBosch delivered testimony to the New York City Council in November, all in support of legislation to increase New York City's cap on the number of street vending permits. Turnstile staff also volunteered extensively to help organize the Vendy Awards, the organization's biggest annual fundraiser, and we continued to educate all of our Food Cart Tour participants about their "Lift The Caps" campaign. In addition to offering our Food Cart Tours weekly throughout the year, the Street Vendor Project contracted Turnstile Tours to develop and lead a special series of free community walking tours of East Harlem that started and ended at Vendy Plaza, an outdoor marketplace for street vendors to sell food and merchandise.

Finally, at the Brooklyn Army Terminal, our public and private tours offered hundreds of visitors the opportunity to learn about the new development projects underway at the Terminal that will add nearly 1 million square feet of new space for industry and manufacturing. For the fourth consecutive year, our staff volunteered to deliver free tours for Open House New York weekend and Chashama Open Studios, reaching well over 1,000 visitors, in addition to our ticketed customers.

Measuring Impact: B Impact Assessment

New York State requires all benefit corporations to select a third-party standard for assessing performance in their specifically-defined area of public benefit. In 2012, 2013, and 2014, we decided to adopt the non-profit organization B Lab's B Impact Assessment, which we chose to use again in 2016. When considering an acceptable third-party assessment tool to adopt, the B Impact Assessment's broad scope and flexibility made it most applicable to our company, as we deem this the most comprehensive assessment tool for measuring our triple-bottom line performance (for information on why we originally chose this assessment tool, please see our [2012 Benefit Report](#)). The B Impact Assessment measures the company's practices and outcomes in five main areas, which will be discussed in detail below:

- Governance
- Workers
- Community
- Environment
- Impact Business Models

Companies that complete and pass this assessment (achieving a score of at least 80 out of 200) are eligible to become Certified B Corporations, a voluntary certification process that has been adopted by companies of all types, not just benefit corporations. New York State law does not require that benefit corporations become certified with a third-party standard, simply that they use a third-party assessment tool, and the B Impact Assessment is available online for any company that wishes to use it, regardless of whether they plan to become fully certified.

In 2017, we completed our B Impact Assessment for 2016 – with an audited score of 119 – and renewed our Certified B Corporation status, which will last until the spring of 2018. While New York State law requires us to complete a benefit report and use a third-party assessment tool every year, B Corporations are required to complete an audited assessment only every two years, so the evaluation discussed in this report has not been audited.

❖ Governance

This section of the B Impact Assessment evaluates corporate structures, policies, and practices that are in place to define, measure, and evaluate the impact and implementation of the company's social mission. Corporate accountability and transparency with stakeholders are the two major areas of focus in the Governance section. Turnstile Tours is structured as a benefit corporation, and the following information provides an overview of how social impact is built into the foundational structure of the company.

General public benefit

- Turnstile Tours' commitment to social impact is reflected in the company's Articles of Incorporation and the by-laws. Turnstile Tours incorporated on May 9, 2012 in New York as a benefit corporation, broadly dedicating itself in the Articles of Incorporation to creating "general public benefit," which is defined by the state as having "a positive material impact on society and the environment." As a benefit corporation, Turnstile Tours is dedicated to an annual review of its overall social and environmental performance through conducting an assessment based on third-party standards.

Specific public benefit

- Beyond creating general public benefit, benefit corporations may also designate a specific public benefit based on seven categories defined by the New York state statute. While Turnstile Tours aims to have an impact that creates benefit in several of these areas, including preserving the environment and serving low-income communities, the company identified "promoting the arts, sciences, or advancement of knowledge" as its primary focus in its by-laws. This area of specific benefit is adapted and incorporated into the mission statement of the company. Customers learn about Turnstile's mission during the introduction of each tour we offer and new employees are educated about the relevance of the mission to the operations and performance of the company at employee meetings and in orientation materials.

Turnstile's Mission Statement

- Turnstile Tours has integrated an explicit commitment to social impact into its corporate mission and by-laws and includes the mission on its materials and website: "Turnstile Tours seeks to advance public knowledge about the meaning of place, foster connections and understanding between people of diverse backgrounds, and inspire and reflect a culture of community participation through providing welcoming, well-researched, inclusive, and engaging educational experiences and resources to people of all ages and abilities."

Corporate Accountability and Transparency with Stakeholders

- Turnstile Tours **published its fourth annual benefit report**, which covered the calendar year of January 1 – December 31, 2015. The 2015 benefit report was filed with the New York State Division of Corporations and was posted on the company's website for stakeholders to access. The benefit report provided clear statements of mission, goals, and values; descriptions of our mission-related activities; quantifiable targets and results related to our mission; consistent variables of measurement that allow for comparisons from year to year; and third-party validation of the company's mission performance.

Areas of Improvement:

- Turnstile Tours submitted dual applications in October of 2016 to become a New York State and New York City-registered Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) and expects to be officially certified in 2017.

◆ Workers

This section of the B Impact Assessment evaluated Turnstile Tours' worker compensation, benefits, and work environment. Some notable achievements included:

- By the end of 2016, Turnstile Tours had **four hourly employees and one working owner**, one fewer employee than the previous year. As with the previous year, we consciously decided not to hire an additional staff member in order to guarantee more hours for the individuals who are on staff.
- **Our company's lowest hourly wage in 2016 was \$25 per hour**, more than 25% above the minimum wage, and above the travel and hospitality industry hourly employment average. As most staff are paid on a per-tour basis, rather than an hourly wage, the effective hourly rate for most workers was closer to \$30 per hour.
- **The pay ratio between our highest-paid and lowest-paid worker was lower than 5:1.**
- **Hourly and part-time staff were offered paid skills-based training that both related to core job responsibilities and cross-job functions.** Staff meetings included intensive trainings on content for Brooklyn Navy Yard and Food Cart Tours. Turnstile Tours also trained staff on administrative functions within the company, including using our reservation and ticketing systems.

Areas of Improvement:

- While we have a number of training materials, notifications, and written agreements that are shared with staff in accordance with all applicable laws, we would like to consolidate much of this material into a more comprehensive staff handbook and training manual in 2017.
- As we operate programming in diverse communities and serve a diverse range of customers, in 2017 we seek to explore a recruitment strategy for new guides that will enable us to reach beyond our social networks and access local talent through workforce development organizations and/or local universities.

❖ Community

The portion of the assessment looks at community engagement through charitable giving, volunteering, local economic development, and working with local suppliers. Turnstile Tours is structured to benefit non-profit partners through financial and in-kind contributions, as well as through public education, volunteerism, consulting, and technical assistance. As demonstrated below, community engagement is central to our mission and work. Accomplishments in 2016 included the following:

- **In 2016, Turnstile Tours partnered with a wide range of local non-profit organizations on tour and public programming.** For our regularly offered public tour programs, in-kind support was provided to the Brooklyn Navy Yard Center at BLDG 92, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the Essex Street Market Vendors Association, the Moore Street Market Vendors Association, and the Street Vendor Project of the Urban Justice Center. Turnstile Tours also developed and offered special tours that were offered in partnership with or on behalf of other organizations, including bicycle tours of Green-Wood Cemetery for their staff and donors, a public walking tour with the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy, and a grant-funded series of free community walking tours of East Harlem offered on behalf of the Street Vendor Project. The East Harlem Tour that we developed engaged community partners which included a donation to Chenchita's Angels Community Garden, a major source of fresh fruit, vegetables, and herbs and community programs for hundreds of residents in East Harlem, and financial support for local businesses that were featured, including a local botanica owned by a family from Guatemala, a Latin music shop, and street vendors who are starting their own businesses.
- **Turnstile Tours develops and offers tour programs to the public that have non-profit or community based partners,** meaning that visitors are not just supporting Turnstile Tours and our work, but the work of these organizations as well. We have a stated commitment in our company governance as well as to our customers to contribute at least 5% of our total sales to select non-profit organizations in New York City.
- Through our tours, public programs, documentation efforts, and social media, we seek to add value and help our partner organizations build capacity and increase their impact by raising public awareness about their community-based work. **In 2016, we dedicated significant in-kind support to our non-profit partners,** including leading family day programs at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, supporting commemorative and interpretive planning and programs at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, co-hosting free public programming at the Essex Street Market, and planning both of the Street Vendor Project's annual fundraisers, the Vendy Awards and the Great Street Meet.

- In 2016, Turnstile Tours collaborated with non-profit partners to offer free tours and public programs at various sites across the city, including a free film screening co-hosted with UnionDocs and the NYCEDC at the Moore Street Market of a 1984 documentary about South Williamsburg, *Living Los Sures*, and providing free tours at Brooklyn Navy Yard community days for local residents.
- **Turnstile Studio**, the consulting arm of Turnstile Tours, provided technical assistance and training services to several non-profit organizations to help them more effectively engage the public through the programs they offer. We consulted on visitor engagement and accessibility techniques and practices with the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, The Ringling Museum of Art, and the Singapore Tourism Board. Turnstile Studio was also hired by the FDR Four Freedoms Park Conservancy to conduct research and develop content about the past and present of affordable housing in New York City for their K-12 school programs. Finally, Turnstile Studio was hired by the New York State Council on the Humanities to lead a half-day training workshop for PhD students on project management skills, as well as specific strategies for effectively engaging and working with community organizations when creating public programs.
- **We seek to help organizations increase their capacity to better serve the public, especially people with diverse abilities and backgrounds.** Through that work, we engage all relevant staff members and produce training resources and programs that can be implemented and used internally and can also be adapted for use by other visitor-facing cultural and non-profit organizations. In 2016, we consulted with the Brooklyn Botanic Garden to support the design and official launch of an early morning opening program at their Discovery Garden to welcome in parents of children with disabilities for free before the garden opens to the general public, complete with newly established resources and services that include ASL interpretation, tactile maps for children who are blind, and visual supports for individuals with communication disabilities or who have autism spectrum disorder. The pilot program sought to develop partnerships with local schools and disability organizations, as well as parents, in order to foster future success. The Brooklyn Botanic Garden has since offered a second early morning opening which doubled in attendance figures and will continue offering this program on a quarterly basis using the guides and tools we created to help them get the program off the ground.
- Turnstile Tours dedicated **50 hours of paid staff time towards supporting non-profit partner organizations** through volunteer time. The largest proportion of this volunteer time was in support of the Vendy Awards, an annual fundraiser for the Street Vendor Project. Two of our staff members participated again this year in the Vendy Awards planning committee, and Cindy VandenBosch delivered testimony at a city council public hearing in November 2016 to demonstrate support for a bill proposing to lift the caps on mobile food vending permits in New York City.

- **Turnstile Tours contributed 6.0% of all company revenues to non-profit organizations in 2016.** We have a commitment to contribute at least 5% of sales of all of our tours to select non-profit partner organizations. non-profit partners that receive financial support include the Street Vendor Project of the Urban Justice Center, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), and the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation.
- Turnstile Tours continued to **support our non-profit and small business partners through tours, printed materials, and online content.** We provide tour attendees with the opportunity to sign up for the e-newsletters of partnering organizations, purchase memberships to select nonprofit partners, and we aim to raise awareness about their missions and programs.
- **Turnstile Tours has sought to advocate for improved environmental and social impact standards and practices in the tourism and travel industry in 2016** through presentations at conferences and engagement with the following local initiatives:
 - **Supported the first-ever Best for NYC competition in New York City,** a partnership between B Lab and the New York City Economic Development Corporation to encourage more businesses across New York City to examine, measure, and score their impacts on community, environment, workers, and governance structures. Turnstile's founder Cindy VandenBosch co-led an informational workshop about the B Impact Assessment with the B Impact Fellow for Brooklyn-based colleagues in the tourism and hospitality fields.
 - **Organized a session for the New York Travel Festival in 2016 entitled, "Sustainable Tourism in NYC,"** which introduced mechanisms for measuring and reporting on impacts in the travel and tourism industries, that included panelists from the Best for NYC competition, visit.org, and Travel+Social Good's founder and Executive Director.
 - **Participated in the Travel + Social Good Summit at the United Nations** which brought together innovators in socially and environmentally responsible travel practices to support a white paper focused on the role the travel and tourism industry can play in supporting the UN goals for sustainable development.
 - **Our founder Cindy VandenBosch joined the Board of Directors of a new non-profit organization Travel Unity,** dedicated to increasing diversity and equity in the travel and tourism sector.
- **In terms of economic impact, 75% of Turnstile Tours' expenses** (excluding labor, per the standards set in the B Impact Assessment) in 2016 **supported local independent businesses**, the vast majority of which are based in New York City. Almost one in six dollars (16.1%) of Turnstile Tours' expenses (again, excluding labor) supported locally-owned and operated street vendors and public market vendors.

- **11% of our tours were reviewed and accredited by the American Institute of Architects** to issue continuing education credits for qualified designers, engineers, and architects for select tours, including the Brooklyn Army Terminal Walking Tour, and the Sustainable Architecture & Industry Tour, Urban Ecology Tour, and Inside Industry Tours at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. These accredited tours made up 7.5% of Turnstile Tours' total visitorship.

Areas of Improvement:

- With new relationships and programming at the Essex Street Market, we recognize that we have a lot of work ahead of us to familiarize our staff with the community of vendors and other stakeholders at this Lower East Side institution. As all of our tour locations continue to grow and change, it is an ongoing process of engagement and relationship building not only at the markets, but at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Brooklyn Army Terminal. We hope that we can engage more staff members in attending community events, conducting interviews, and being connected with a wider range of stakeholders in these neighborhoods.
- Turnstile Tours has served as a consistent and active voice within the tourism sector for city- or borough-led initiatives that incentivize responsible practices, including living wages for employees and developing tourism in the outer boroughs in a way that benefits local residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Turnstile Tours will continue to educate peers in the tourism and travel trade about how to operate using a triple bottom-line stakeholder model and will advocate for increased engagement of small businesses, local cultural institutions, and neighborhood-based organizations as in tourism development efforts as tourism expands in the outer boroughs.

❖ Environment

This section looks at the company's environmental impact through areas including energy use, operations, supplies, and waste, as well as environmental education. Because Turnstile operates out of a home office, and we do not produce a product in a traditional sense, measuring our environmental impact can be a challenge using this assessment.

- **Environmental education** was a significant part our tour programming in 2016, with **9% of all visitors joining an environmental- or sustainability-focused tour**, such as the Sustainable Architecture and Industry and Urban Ecology Tours of the Brooklyn Navy Yard.
- The company uses an **office-wide recycling program** that includes paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, metal, electronics, and compost. Turnstile Tours considers environmental impact when purchasing and printing paper-based materials. We recycle supplies in

the office, including printing on scrap paper, purchased primarily recycled paper, and our printing supplier for marketing and tour materials uses vegetable-based inks.

- We shifted from using disposable plastic bags to **corn-based, biodegradable “Biobags” for collecting trash from guests on our food tours**. We also began training tour guides to encourage visitors to keep their disposable forks throughout the tour, reducing by one-half to two-thirds the amount of disposable tableware that our guests use.

Areas of Improvement:

- Closely tracking our emissions and waste remains a challenge while we operate out of a home office, but as we grow, we hope to find creative ways to reduce or counterbalance our impacts.
- Turnstile Tours will produce a written policy regarding the purchase and use of environmentally preferred products and practices for company purposes.

❖ Impact Business Models

As a registered Benefit Corporation, Turnstile Tours was founded with a social enterprise model built into its corporate mission and structure, as was discussed in the Governance section above. Analysis of Turnstile Tours' performance in 2016 qualified the company for credit in three main categories defined by the B Impact Assessment:

- ***Benefiting consumers through the support of general knowledge, art, or cultural heritage:*** Turnstile Tours is dedicated to advancing public knowledge through its mission statement, has defined advancement of knowledge as its specific area of impact, and evaluates performance in this realm through tracking customer feedback, supporting the work of non-profit partners and cultural institutions, and conducting original research to be publicly archived and disseminated.
- ***Conserving the environment through providing information to solve environmental problems:*** Many of our tour programs have a strong focus on issues related to the environment and sustainability, and we collect data from our tour participants to measure our impact on knowledge and engagement with these issues. Turnstile also engages a sustainability expert who searches for ways to integrate these topics into all of our tours and programs.
- ***Donating at least 2% of sales to charity:*** Turnstile Tours has an official policy to set aside 5% of all revenue from public and private tours to support select non-profit

partner organizations, and in 2016, 6.06% of revenue going to non-profit organizations, an increase of more than a percentage point over 2015.

The best way to demonstrate how Turnstile Tours has a lasting impact is by providing concrete examples that relate to each of our four core commitments.

- **Commitment to original research:** We regularly conduct research archival- and field-based research to uncover historical and contemporary stories we feel are underrepresented in the public realm. We work with our partners to conduct and archive oral history interviews with people who have connections to the sites where we work. We continue to disseminate our research through social media and our blog, where we have crafted dozens of articles that not only contribute to the public record about these sites, but also contain information about primary source material for future research.
- **Contribute to public history:** We incorporate original research into projects, including tours, exhibits, public programs, and multimedia content, and are committed to depositing primary source materials in publicly-accessible archives for posterity.
- **Encourage cooperative learning and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect:** We create experiences that facilitate active participation and are inclusive of and accessible to people with a wide range of learning styles, abilities, backgrounds and knowledge.
- **Support non-profit partners:** In addition to providing significant contributions of volunteer time and money to our non-profit partners, we also work to expand their mission and capacity, and reach a wider audience.
- **In 2016, 40% of all private tours visitors came with educational or non-profit groups,** and the vast majority of these tours were offered at a discounted rate. This is similar to what we achieved in 2015, and we have increased this percentage from 2012, when these groups made up just 12% of visitors.

Areas of Improvement:

- We would like to find more ways that we can support educational and career-focused programming at the Brooklyn Navy Yard through our tours and public programs.
- We would like to continue and improve our ongoing trainings with our staff to make sure that they are equipped with up-to-date information about the work of our non-profit partners.