

Annual Benefit Report 2018

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 initiatives, 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 2018, this benefit report provides an introduction to the company itself; insight into the company's pursuit of general and specific public benefits in 2018; 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 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 and supporting 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: Expanding Partnerships

2018 was an exciting year for growing and deepening our relationships with our non-profit partners and expanding our reach to new audiences and organizations.

- Turnstile Tours operated a total of 448 public and private group tours for 5,941 visitors in 2018, nearly identical to 2017. **54% of all visitors came from New York City, and 71% from the metro area**, which both represented slight declines over 2017, as we reached more visitors from other parts of the country. Additionally, for our tours offered in partnership with public institutions on public property (Brooklyn Navy Yard, Brooklyn Army Terminal, NYC Public Markets, and Prospect Park), 22% of visitors came from the local catchment areas (defined by adjacent ZIP codes) for each of those facilities.
- In 2017, Turnstile Tours crafted an Inclusion & Diversity hiring policy as part of the Best for NYC initiative and in consultation with the Brooklyn Navy Yard Employment Center. As a result of this policy, **we brought on three interns in 2018**, two students at CUNY City Tech as part of the Brooklyn Navy Yard's paid internship program, and a third attending St. Joseph's College's Hospitality and Tourism Management program on a GI Bill benefit. At the conclusion of their internships, two interns were offered and accepted part-time positions with Turnstile Tours.
- Turnstile Studio consulting developed projects related to content development and placemaking. We were contracted by the New York City Economic Development Corporation to **create resources to support marketing, media, and public outreach related to the 100th anniversary of the construction of the Brooklyn Army Terminal**, including assembling and annotating archival photographs and documents and writing an historical narrative.
- Following the successful limited-run tour series to mark the 150th birthday of Prospect Park in 2017, **Turnstile Tours was engaged by Prospect Park Alliance to develop a weekly tour program for 2018**. As part of this agreement, Turnstile Tours offered a series of free community tours in conjunction with special events, including BKLYN Designs, Open House New York Weekend, and community visioning sessions for the park's Rose Garden renovation.
- **We launched a new tour program in 2018 of de Royal Dinges Factory**, the commissary and commercial kitchen of popular street food brand Wafels & Dinges in Gowanus, Brooklyn. This tour gives us the opportunity to take visitors behind the scenes to see both how a mobile food vending commissary garage works, and how a food manufacturing facility operates, deepening visitors' understanding of two major thematic areas of focus across our tour programs. Like our other street vending-related

tours, 5% of all proceeds from this tour goes to the Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center.

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. We are using B Lab's categories of evaluation for this benefit report. The B Impact Assessment measures the company's practices and outcomes in five main areas, which will be discussed below:

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

❖ 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, operations, and performance evaluation of the company.

❖ Workers

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

- By the end of 2018, Turnstile Tours had **five hourly employees and one working owner**.
- As a result of our new Inclusion & Diversity hiring policy, we brought on three interns in 2018, two students at CUNY City Tech as part of the BNY's paid internship program, and a third attending St. Joseph's College Hospitality and Tourism Management program on a GI Bill benefit. At the conclusion of their internships, two interns were offered and accepted part-time positions with Turnstile Tours.
- **Our company's lowest hourly wage in 2017 was \$20 per hour**, nearly 50% 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 **average hourly rate across the company was \$35.15 per hour**.
- **The pay ratio between our highest-paid and lowest-paid worker was lower than 5:1.**

❖ 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 2017 included the following:

- Our stated commitment is to contribute at least 5% of our total sales to select non-profit organizations. In 2018, we came up slightly short of this goal, contributing \$7,628, or 4.7% of total revenue. This shortfall was due in part to a change in the profit-sharing agreement with NYCEDC, who requested that we no longer pay 5% of sales for our public market and Brooklyn Army Terminal programs. In 2019, we intend to find other community partners related to these tour programs to donate the portion of sales to.
- **65.6% of Turnstile Tours' expenses in 2018 supported local independent businesses and organizations (excluding labor, per the standards set in the B**

Impact Assessment). 14.3% of Turnstile Tours' expenses supported locally-owned and operated street vendors and public market vendors.

- **18.2% of 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 22% of Turnstile Tours' total visitorship, more than doubling the share in 2017. However, very few visitors took advantage of AIA credits (we issued only six certificates), and we chose to discontinue our accreditation for 2019.
- **In 2018, 40.5% of all private tours visitors came with educational or non-profit groups**, constituting half of all private group visitors. While the number of groups declined in comparison to 2017, the number of students served increased slightly.

❖ 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.

- **With the addition of Prospect Park Tours to our regular offerings, environmental education** became a larger part our tour programming in 2018, with **9.4% of all visitors joining an environmental- or sustainability-focused tour**, including the Prospect Park tours, and Sustainable Architecture and Industry and Urban Ecology Tours of the Brooklyn Navy Yard.
- 2018 continued a trend of **reducing our use of buses for tours**. We cut our use of the Brooklyn Navy Yard buses by 16% year-on-year, and we hope to continue to reduce our reliance on motor vehicle transport for our tours and increase the number of walking and bicycle tours we can offer at the Yard.

❖ 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 2018 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. 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 2018, we came up slightly short of that mark, donating 4.7%.

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.