



OFFICE OF ARTS & CULTURE
SEATTLE

ARTS Strategic Plan 2025-2030



Table of Contents

3 INTRODUCTION

Why and how we created this plan

6 OUR PROCESS

The methodology behind the plan

14 OUR VISIONS

And the goals that make them actionable

- #1. ARTS is a values-driven organization that centers racial equity in all policies and programs
- #2. ARTS provides leadership for Seattle's creative sector
- #3. ARTS is a trusted partner with artists and communities
- #4. ARTS demonstrates the value of its work as an accountable steward of public resources
- #5. ARTS stewards spaces under its care by centering community
- #6. ARTS is an adaptive organization that responds to the needs of the creative ecosystem
- #7. ARTS is a collaborative workplace where everyone is valued
- #8. ARTS staff have the training, tools, and processes they need to be effective

25 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

A complete and comprehensive list for all of ARTS

35 HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

36 LOOKING AHEAD

Cultural planning in 2025-2026

37 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover Image: *Here Lies Love* at Seattle Repertory Theatre. Photo by Navid Baraty
Table of Contents Gallery (top to bottom): 1. *From Hiroshima to Hope*. Photo by Jenny Crooks 2. *Sawhorse Revolution* outside Estelita's Library. Photo by Rafael Soldi 3. LHPAI 50th Anniversary. Photo by Marcus Donner 4. *Khu.éex'*. Photo by Jenny Crooks 5. Gabriel Marquez with Rather Severe, *Hallucinations of an Uncharted Territory*. Photo by Anna Kooris 6. Broadview Thomson K-8 students visit Pacific Northwest Ballet. Photo by Jazzy Photo



Introduction

Why and how we created this plan

3

Since 2020, the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS) has undergone a series of significant transitions and faced a number of major challenges: crises triggered by the pandemic, sharp shifts in leadership, changes in program direction, heightened needs in the creative sector, and staff attrition and burnout. Together, they have left the ARTS staff—like the community more broadly—feeling uncertain and overwhelmed.

Gülgün Kayim arrived as the new Director of ARTS in July 2023, followed by Kelly Davidson as the new Deputy Director in May 2024. They quickly recognized a pressing need to strategize the Department's work and articulate a new vision for ARTS in the community.

In response, ARTS set out to create a strategic plan that not only charts the Department's future direction but also fosters healing, collaboration, and empowerment within our divisions. We aimed to build this plan

on trust, clarity, and inclusivity, taking into account current staff challenges, such as high workloads, and minimizing disruptions while engaging everyone in the process. By doing so, we aimed to ensure that the strategic planning process would be not only effective but also genuinely reflective of the needs and priorities of our Department.

To achieve this, we partnered with UDrK, a consultant with expertise in facilitating inclusive, staff-centered planning processes. The process was carefully guided by Ele Watts, our Impact and Assessment Manager. Together, we crafted a planning framework that prioritized transparency, positive engagement, and staff well-being—all of which were essential to their buy-in after an unsuccessful and divisive 2019 planning process that ended before a plan was completed.



NEVER AGAIN IS NOW

4

Never Again is Now by Erin Shigaki.
Photo by Eugene Tagawa

Early on, we recognized that the Department's mission, vision, and commitment to racial equity were essential foundations, and we also needed to gather in-depth feedback from staff about their work. Staff provided input through a series of in-person sessions, beginning with a Design Camp where division managers helped shape the planning framework. This was followed by two full-staff planning sessions designed to break down silos, share aspirations, and realistically assess what could be accomplished.

The planning process also included creative and healing activities to help staff process past frustrations and engage in productive, forward-thinking discussions. For example, sessions included a series of creative interruptions during which staff engaged their peers in fun and collaborative activities designed to stimulate inter-

action and creativity. We also created a Story Map to collect and celebrate staff experiences, and reinforce the meaningful impact of their work. And with support from Pottery Northwest, we offered trauma-informed creative sessions where staff could explore their concerns through art and reflection.

Throughout the process, staff engaged in deep conversations about their hopes for the future of ARTS, while also acknowledging the constraints that might limit those aspirations. These discussions laid the foundation for the department's goals and objectives, while also helping to rebuild a sense of trust, community, and connection among divisions that had been separated for so long by remote work and siloed efforts.

This strategic planning process laid the groundwork for a plan that will guide ARTS's growth priorities and decision-making over the next five years. For ARTS staff, this plan provides clarity during ongoing changes and ensures their voices remain central in shaping future priorities, effectively fostering a positive, transparent, and collaborative work environment. It also helps prepare us for the impacts of environmental changes—such as 4Culture's significant new King County funding program, Doors Open—and readies us to create a comprehensive cultural plan in 2025–2026.

This strategic plan is the culmination of our collective efforts. It reflects both the dreams and realities of our staff, offering a clear vision for the future of ARTS. As a living document, it is designed not only to guide our work over the next five years but also to evolve as our department adapts to new challenges and opportunities.

Who is this plan for?

This strategic plan is for everyone within ARTS, from leadership to division managers to staff members at all levels. It is specifically designed to engage and reflect the needs, aspirations, and experiences of all ARTS staff, especially those who have been directly impacted by recent challenges.

Beyond ARTS staff, this strategic plan is also for our external stakeholders, including other City departments, partners, and Seattle's broader creative community. The input gathered from these stakeholders, as well as the partnership obligations identified during the planning process, has helped to ensure that the plan aligns with the Department's larger goals and contributes to our overall impact on the community.

Divisions at ARTS

- Leadership & Policy
- Communications (Comms)
- Public Art (PA)
- Partnerships, Education, and Grants (PEG)
- Cultural Space
- Finance & Operations
- Facilities
- King Street Station (KSS)

Changing Form by Doris Chase

5



Our Process

The methodology behind the plan

Day 1 of strategic planning.
Photo by Ottis Bolisay

Process Design

To create a strategic planning process that truly supports our staff's well-being and success, ARTS leadership selected Dr. Brenda Kayzar, of Urbane DrK Consulting (UDrK), to guide its development. UDrK is an experienced cultural strategist and social justice geographer, specializing in community-informed, research-based strategies. The goal was to design a process centered on positive engagement, ensuring that staff felt heard and supported throughout the journey.

To kick off the process, we organized a Design Camp session with division managers. This collaborative session allowed the division managers to actively participate in creating the strategic planning framework. They helped shape the process, provided input on how the staff sessions would unfold, and shared ideas that would make the planning more inclusive and supportive.

Throughout the planning process, UDrK worked closely with a steering committee, which included ARTS's Director, Deputy Director, Finance Director, Executive Assistant, Impact & Assessment Manager, and Communications Manager. This committee played a key role in reviewing session plans, discussing staff feedback, and ensuring that the process stayed on track. The committee received regular updates to address any emerging concerns and make necessary adjustments to the process.

By keeping the planning process flexible and responsive, we were able to create a path forward that reflected the needs and well-being of our staff, ensuring that the final strategic plan would center their needs while also allowing leadership to shape ideas generated by staff and engage those directly involved in day-to-day operations.

Engagement Overview

ARTS leadership, division managers, and UDrK worked together to ensure the process offered multiple opportunities for positive engagement, while also providing a variety of digital and in-person feedback mechanisms to make sure staff would feel safe sharing their thoughts. All sessions were held in person and required light preparation.

UDrK facilitated a series of planning sessions and discussions with ARTS leadership, division managers, and staff to better understand their expectations, experiences, and ideas. These sessions helped direct the creation of goals and objectives for the strategic plan.

One key activity was a “de-siloing” exercise in which division managers gathered in small groups to reflect on their division’s work, what others thought their division did, and the Department’s assets, mission, and funding sources. These reflections were captured on sticky notes and posted on “team” sheets around the room. With a clearer understanding of each division’s role, leadership then discussed a framework for gathering input from staff in upcoming sessions and established a process for reviewing and refining the Department’s goals and objectives.

Staff engagement was structured in two phases: The first was a two-day session in March 2024 aimed at breaking down silos among Department divisions, discussing dreams, and voicing concerns. A second two-day session followed in late April 2024 and focused on drafting the strategic plan’s goals and objectives.

Overall, the engagement process was designed to create a balance between gathering valuable input and promoting healing and well-being. Ultimately, the process not only set the course for the Department’s future but also supported staff in addressing past challenges, fostering a healthier, more connected team.

In addition to working with ARTS staff, UDrK facilitated 16 conversations with members of other City departments and external stakeholders to better understand ARTS’s partnership obligations and explore new opportunities for collaboration.



ARTS hired Natalie Dupille, a Seattle-based artist, to create visual notes of our team dream share-outs.

Work Sessions

The all-staff working sessions facilitated by UDrK fostered collaboration, encouraged creative thinking, and helped staff reconnect. All four days of working sessions were hosted at ARTS's own Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (LHPAI), allowing staff who don't normally work at LHPAI to become better acquainted with and appreciate the culturally significant community institution.

Dreaming and Dreaming Realistically

The first set of sessions, Dreaming and Dreaming Realistically, took place on March 28 and 29, 2024, and focused on allowing staff to reflect on their work, dream big, and then evaluate those dreams realistically within the context of current constraints. Staff prepared for this session by reflecting on their current roles and responsibilities

in advance, helping them enter the session with thoughtful insights. During the two-day session, staffers shared their work, broke down silos, and built mutual understanding within and across divisions. This approach was based on the work from the Design Camp, in which division managers had begun to familiarize staff with the different functions, practices, and challenges across the Department.

The first day focused on small group activities designed to build awareness and empathy. Staff were divided into small groups to share what their divisions do as well as their assets, their mission, and their funding streams. Each division later went on to present to the whole ARTS staff, helping everyone understand the Department's work more holistically.

The final part of the session focused on “dreaming realistically.” In this phase, staff were given the opportunity to acknowledge the challenges and capacity limits that might make it difficult to turn their dreams into reality. Staff again gathered in small groups

Goals and Objectives

The second set of sessions, Goals and Objectives, took place on April 30 and May 1, 2024, and focused on translating dreams into concrete and actionable goals. In both pre-session homework and at these in-person working sessions, staff were tasked with writing goals (the “what”) and objectives (the “how”) using the TRAMS framework (see sidebar on page 11). Staff workshoped division goals, which divisions later refined, fleshed out, and prioritized. These collaboratively drafted goals and objectives became the backbone of the ARTS strategic plan.



ARTS hired Natalie Dupille, a Seattle-based artist, to create visual notes of our team dream share-outs.

Poetry In Place

Bureau of Fearless Ideas,
8414 Greenwood Ave North

For National Poetry Month 2024, Seattle's Civic Poet Shin Yu Pai launched Poetry in Place. This public poetry project included the work of five local artists on the theme of Seattle places and sustainability at sites all across the city.



Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute

104 17th Ave South

Built in 1915, the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (LHPAI) is a historic landmark in the historic Central Area of Seattle. Designed by B. Marcus Priteca, and formerly the Jewish Synagogue of Chevra Biku Cholim, the building became a community center and part of the City of Seattle's facilities in 1972.

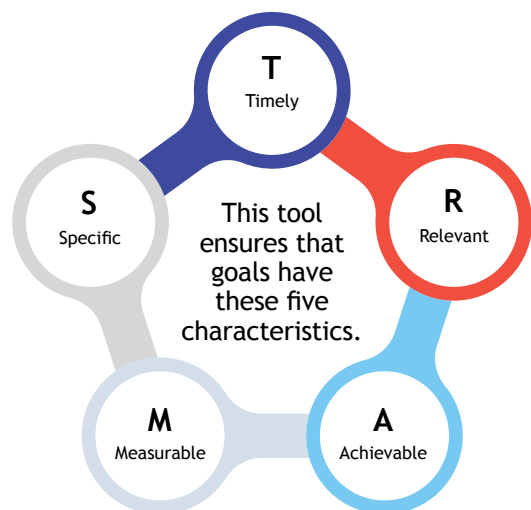


10

Seattle ARTS Story Map

At the end of the first all-staff session in March, UDrK shared the concept of the Story Map, and staff were encouraged to submit their stories. Based on staff submissions, this Story Map illustrates meaningful or proud moments from the Department's work. The purpose of the Story Map is to boost morale by reflecting back to staff the positive impact of their work in the creative sector.

The TRAMS Framework



Process Design

The impact of the sessions was evident in the energy and enthusiasm of the staff. After a long period of remote work and separation, gathering in person allowed staff to reconnect, share ideas, and feel a sense of collective purpose. The sessions helped staff identify shared challenges, such as disconnections in data and incompatible systems, and enabled them to begin problem-solving through collaboration. For example, divisions offered to help activate the ARTS at King Street Station gallery, showcasing the creative solutions that emerged from working together. Staff appreciated the opportunity to dream together, address real challenges, and contribute to shaping the future direction of the Department.

In summary, the work sessions allowed staff to engage in meaningful discussions, express creative ideas, and collaborate across divisions. These sessions not only laid the groundwork for the strategic plan but also helped strengthen relationships within the teams, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose as the Department moves forward.

Conversations with our Key Partners

To fully consider the work of ARTS within the broader context of City government and the city's larger creative sector, we needed to examine our relationships with both internal and external partners. Many of our programs intersect with other City departments. For instance, the Public Art division receives dedicated funding through the Municipal Art Fund; this Percent for Art program allocates 1% of infrastructure project costs to public art, with funding sourced from the City's utilities, transportation, power, and parks and recreation departments to commission public art works. The Partnerships, Education, and Grants (PEG) division collaborates with Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Center, and the City's economic development and parks and recreation departments to manage grant programs and provide youth arts education and workforce development programming. ARTS's facilities are co-managed in partnership with multiple other City departments and nonprofit organizations.

To better understand the dynamics of these partnerships, UDrK conducted 16 interviews with key external stakeholders (see list on page 12). The goal of these interviews was to clarify each partner's role, gather insights into the effectiveness of the relationship, and explore potential areas for improvement in processes or collaboration. These conversations provided valuable insights into the strengths and opportunities for improvement in our partnerships, helping us to refine strategies for future collaboration.

Please find a list of the individuals who participated in these interviews in the acknowledgement section of this report (see page 37).



Engagement Activities



Healing

Throughout the strategic planning process, we also focused on healing the frustration and emotional distress that some staff members had been feeling in the wake of significant change. To provide an outlet for these feelings, we offered staff two sessions at Pottery Northwest in Pioneer Square, where they could engage in guided creative

healing activities led by a specialist using trauma-informed techniques. These healing sessions provided a safe, supportive environment for staff to address their concerns and begin to move forward in a more positive and constructive way.



Creative Interruptions and Staff Collaboration

To keep the energy flowing and maintain engagement, all planning sessions included creative “interruptions” led by ARTS staff who are also artists. During these short breaks, staff participated in vocal exercises and other activities from the visual arts, theater, and music, all of them centered around themes of dreaming, celebrating, and energizing.

These activities made the sessions more enjoyable, relaxed, and personal, and allowed staff to share their creative talents within the group. These breaks helped foster a sense of creativity, community, playfulness, and openness, making the strategic planning process feel more creative, connected, dynamic—and fun.



Contributing External Partners

Interviews were conducted with these external partners:

- Seattle City Light
- Seattle Department of Transportation
- Seattle Office of Economic Development
- Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development
- Seattle Parks and Recreation
- Seattle Public Utilities
- Seattle Public Schools
- Office of the Waterfront
- Cultural Space Agency
- LANGSTON
- Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas
- Members of the Seattle Arts Commission





Our Visions

And the goals that make them
actionable

The pages that follow describe each of our eight visions, along with our priority goals under each vision. A comprehensive presentation of all the goals and objectives associated with each vision can be found starting on page 25.

to allow staff to trace their original goals to the final, consolidated departmental goals. This transparent approach was designed to build trust in the process and ensure that the intent of each division and individual goal is preserved and honored.

While each vision serves as a long-term direction, it is through clearly defined goals and objectives that we turn each vision into actionable steps. Goals articulate what we aim to achieve, while objectives represent the concrete steps or strategies that will help us reach those goals.

Each division has built a workplan that includes their specific objectives and action steps, moving ARTS closer to its collective goals. Both the comprehensive strategic plan and the division workplans are accessible to all Department members, providing clarity and guidance as ARTS moves forward in achieving its visions.

Evolving circumstances and our adaptability

Of course, the environment in which we operate has a major influence on our ability to achieve our objectives—including funding availability, staffing resources, and broader institutional initiatives. External factors, such as budget cuts or changes in elected leadership, may necessitate a shift in priorities or delay certain goals. Conversely, positive trends or increased support can enable us to accelerate progress and deliver results sooner than anticipated.

As such, this plan should also be viewed as a living document—one that will evolve as goals are achieved (and celebrated) or as changes in the institutional environment occur. For this plan to remain effective, we must use it not only to track progress but also as a measure of both departmental and divisional success. Adjustments may be necessary over time, and that's expected. What matters most is that the underlying framework of the plan remains

A series of eight guiding visions shape the strategic direction of ARTS and serve as the cornerstone of this strategic plan.

These visions were developed in alignment with the goals and objectives that ARTS created, reviewed, refined, and consolidated during the planning process. Through careful iteration, they reflect staff's original intent and provide a clear direction for the future of the Department.

To organize the division's goals and objectives into broader Department goals, leadership—namely our Director and Deputy Director—created a series of visions statements outlining who ARTS wants to be and the role it wants to play in the community. These statements emphasize ARTS's core identity, our service to the public, our role as a resource provider, and our commitments as an employer. This process also helped identify goals that were similar but had different emphases or intentions.

Leadership then consolidated these goals without compromising the original intent behind them. Once sorted and refined, the leadership team developed broader departmental goals that captured the core objectives of each division and individual goal.

Throughout this process of sorting and refinement, leadership preserved earlier drafts

intact, offering a clear vision for the future while keeping staff voices central in future prioritization and decision-making.

By revisiting the plan annually, we ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to changing conditions, allowing us to continue making meaningful strides toward our long-term vision.

DREAM

Staff developed individual goals and objectives, and workshopped them extensively. Then each division drafted a slate of division-wide goals.

REFINE

ARTS leadership organized division goals under Department-wide visions, consolidating similar goals and clarifying language.

REVIEW

Staff reviewed and provided feedback to further refine the visions, goals, and objectives.



What is our desired **future state**?



• GUIDING PRINCIPLE

1. ARTS is a values-driven organization that centers racial equity in all policies and programs



• WHO ARTS SERVES

2. ARTS provides leadership for Seattle's creative sector
3. ARTS is a trusted partner with artists and communities



• PUBLIC RESOURCES

4. ARTS demonstrates the value of its work as an accountable steward of public resources
5. ARTS stewards spaces under its care by centering community



• INTERNAL COMMITMENTS

6. ARTS is an adaptive organization that responds to the needs of the creative ecosystem
7. ARTS is a collaborative workplace where everyone is valued
8. ARTS staff have the training, tools, and processes they need to be effective

VISION #1

ARTS is a values-driven organization that centers racial equity in all policies and programs

ARTS has a long history of commitment to racial and social equity, as seen in our stewardship of facilities (e.g., the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute and ARTS at King Street Station) and our programming (e.g., Centering Art & Racial Equity and The Creative Advantage). Our values call us to uplift the identities of underserved communities and provide affordable space for artists and arts organizations that have been historically marginalized by the arts ecosystem. This vision emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive environment where every action, program, and policy prioritizes the needs and voices of historically marginalized communities. We remain dedicated to ensuring that racial equity is woven into the very fabric of our work, allowing us to be a force for positive change, advancing our commitment to be a values-driven, equity-centered organization. Our work aims to not only reflect our dedication to racial justice but to transform the arts and culture sector into a more inclusive, accessible, and socially just space for all.

PRIORITY GOALS

1.1 Review and workshop existing vision, mission, and value statements.

Our review process will involve both internal staff and external community stakeholders, ensuring diverse perspectives are incorporated. We will assess whether the current statements adequately reflect our commitment to racial equity and if they serve as clear, actionable principles that guide our decisions and programs.

Expected Outcome: A refined set of guiding statements that creates consistency and clearly articulates ARTS's racial equity commitments within our mission, vision and values. If necessary, revisions will be made to reflect the evolving needs of the community and the arts sector, with a focus on equity, access, and inclusion in every aspect of our operations.

1.2 Ensure that racial equity and social justice principles are embedded into all aspects of ARTS's internal and external policies.

We will undertake a thorough review of all our existing organizational policies—ranging from human resources to grantmaking, community engagement, and program design—to ensure racial equity is consistently prioritized. This will involve developing specific policy recommendations, training programs, and equity assessments that will help guide staff in their decision-making processes. We will also work to integrate community voices in the development of policies that impact their lives.

Expected Outcome: All ARTS policies will explicitly incorporate principles of racial and social equity. Staff, leadership, and key stakeholders will be equipped with the tools and knowledge to evaluate policies through an equity lens, which will help ensure that racial and social equity isn't an afterthought but an essential part of every program, initiative, and policy we implement.

VISION #2

ARTS provides leadership for Seattle's creative sector

ARTS will strengthen our role as a leader in the sector, ensuring that arts and culture are integral to citywide policy, decisions, and practices. By deepening collaboration, enhancing transparency, and providing strategic leadership, ARTS will not only support the creative economy but also foster a more connected and culturally vibrant city.

By strengthening internal and external relationships, offering policy direction, facilitating transparent communication, and creating avenues for community engagement, ARTS will enhance its credibility and influence as a key leader in the city's arts and culture ecosystem. We will ensure that the arts are a central component of Seattle's community and economic development and civic life, ultimately driving cultural conversation, civic engagement, and artistic innovation. Through these goals, ARTS will fulfill its mission as both a facilitator and a leader in Seattle's dynamic creative sector.

PRIORITY GOALS

18

2.1 Strengthen interdepartmental relationships to build stronger, more effective partnerships and more fully integrate arts and culture into citywide policies and practices.

ARTS's leadership in the creative sector extends beyond our own initiatives—it is about influencing and integrating arts and culture into all aspects of city life. By strengthening relationships with other City departments, we will ensure that arts and culture are deeply embedded in Seattle's policies, decisions, and practices. These cross-departmental collaborations allow us to apply our expertise in public art, grant-making, arts education, creative youth programming, technical support, and the creative economy. They will enhance our credibility and ensure that our expertise informs and elevates citywide priorities.

Expected Outcome: Increased credibility for ARTS as a trusted partner across the City, with more meaningful involvement in decision-making processes and a clearer role in shaping policy related to arts, culture, and community development.

2.4 Support greater transparency and knowledge-sharing to increase connections across partnerships and among bodies of work at ARTS.

Transparency and open communication are essential for building trust and fostering effective collaboration. By supporting knowledge sharing and transparency within ARTS and between external partners, we can drive civic and artistic conversations, contributing to a more informed and engaged creative ecosystem.

Expected Outcome: More seamless coordination between ARTS and external partners, greater understanding of ARTS's work, and increased opportunities for collaboration—all of which will help prevent duplication of efforts and encourage innovative solutions to shared challenges.

2.6 Improve coordination and collaboration with partners to increase equitable access to resources for the creative sector.

By improving coordination between ARTS, City departments (such as the Seattle Center, Office of Economic Development, and Office of Planning and Community Development), and other stakeholders in the creative sector, we will better understand each other's work, priorities, strengths, and initiatives, ultimately reducing duplication, streamline efforts, and ensure creatives have access to resources and opportunities they need. Strengthening collaboration and breaking down silos will provide clearer, more accessible support for the creative workforce, especially those in non-traditional roles. This alignment will help achieve State and City creative economy goals while benefiting artist entrepreneurs and creative organizations.

Expected Outcome: Stronger collaboration between ARTS and other City departments will lead to more efficient, targeted support for the creative sector. This will provide artists and creative organizations better access to resources, create new joint programs (like workshops and grants), and offer clearer pathways for engagement with City initiatives. Ultimately, it will foster a more integrated and supportive environment for the creative community.

VISION #3

ARTS is a trusted partner with artists and communities

As a key player in the local creative ecosystem, ARTS must ensure that it is seen not only as a funding source but as a reliable partner in advancing the artistic and cultural well-being of the city. This includes being transparent.

PRIORITY GOALS

3.1 Seek feedback to ensure artists and creative communities see ARTS as a trusted partner.

When artists and communities perceive ARTS as a trusted partner, they are more likely to engage, contribute, and thrive within the broader creative ecosystem. By building and maintaining strong, collaborative relationships with artists and creative communities, we position ARTS as a reliable and supportive entity. This fosters an environment where trust, communication, and mutual respect are central to ARTS's operations.

Expected Outcome: Increased trust and satisfaction among artists and creative communities, as measured through surveys and qualitative feedback. A stronger reputation for ARTS as a reliable and responsive partner in the creative ecosystem.

3.3 Ensure community needs are centered in all ARTS program processes and make application and selection processes user-friendly and accessible for applicants, program participants, and staff.

ARTS programs must be reflective of, and responsive to, the diverse needs of the communities they serve. We can accomplish this by engaging with community members and ensuring their needs are considered in every stage of the program development cycle. A user-friendly, accessible application process and ongoing community involvement are also essential.

Expected Outcome: Increased participation in ARTS programs by historically underrepresented communities. A more inclusive, equitable process that enhances community trust and program relevance.

3.8 Clarify the roles and contributions of ARTS's partners and collaborators.

Clear communication about ARTS's partnerships is essential to ensuring that both internal and external stakeholders understand the scope and nature of these relationships. By articulating the roles and contributions of each partner, ARTS can create a more cohesive and transparent approach to community-based projects.

Expected Outcome: Greater clarity and transparency around ARTS's collaborations, resulting in stronger, more aligned partnerships. Increased collaboration between ARTS and community organizations, leading to more impactful and coordinated initiatives.

3.10 Support the effectiveness of the Seattle Arts Commission.

The effectiveness of the Seattle Arts Commission (SAC) is crucial to the success of ARTS's initiatives. Ensuring that Commissioners have the tools, knowledge, and resources they need will empower them to effectively advocate for arts and culture in the city and contribute to achieving ARTS's strategic goals.

Expected Outcome: Stronger, more coordinated advocacy efforts between ARTS and SAC, leading to greater visibility and impact. Clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities, improving SAC's effectiveness in supporting ARTS's mission.

VISION #4

ARTS demonstrates the value of its work as an accountable steward of public resources

We are committed to ensuring that our programs are equitable, transparent, and accountable, demonstrating the tangible value of the arts to the broader community. We embrace a culture of continuous improvement regularly evaluating and refining our processes to ensure equity and transparency in all aspects of our work. In so doing, our goal is to increase public trust in ARTS's stewardship, with clear evidence of our impact on the social and economic vitality of the city.

PRIORITY GOALS

20

4.1 Ensure the equitable distribution of funding and resources.

ARTS commits to managing resources and funding under our stewardship and in a way that promotes fairness and accessibility for all communities.

Expected Outcome: An equitable distribution of resources and funding, with a balanced and representative selection process.

Expected Outcome: A robust, sustainable network of Cultural Districts that contribute to both cultural and economic equity in our city.

4.2 Improve ARTS's data stance so that we can more easily respond to information requests, report on outputs and outcomes, and be accountable for our use of resources.

ARTS will gather and manage data in a way that demonstrates accountability and the value of our programs. We will implement standardized data collection practices to ensure accuracy and reliability across all programs. By maintaining consistent and transparent data management, we will demonstrate accountability and clearly showcase the value and impact of our work. This will allow us to effectively track program outcomes and better communicate our contributions to the community's cultural and economic health.

Expected Outcome: Reliable data that clearly demonstrates the impact of ARTS programs, allowing us to track who is being served and how we contribute to the community's cultural and economic health.

4.7 Develop and employ measurable benchmarks for all programs and activities and assess programs for the public benefit to ensure all communities have access to relevant arts and cultural experiences.

ARTS will define and track measurable outcomes for all programs to demonstrate their public benefit.

Expected Outcome: Clear evidence of ARTS's impact on the community, with data that informs future programming and policy decisions.

4.12 Support thriving creative communities by strategically aligning ARTS's programming, facilities, and capacity with City priorities and initiatives.

ARTS will ensure its programming, facilities, and capacity align with City initiatives to support sustainable, vibrant communities.

Expected Outcome: A cohesive approach that strengthens support for artists and communities, contributing to their long-term vitality and success.

4.6 Support Cultural Districts as partners in equitable economic development and the development of anti-displacement policies.

ARTS will actively engage with Cultural Districts to promote anti-displacement policies and equitable development.

VISION #5

ARTS stewards spaces under its care by centering community

Part of our mission is to transform the facilities under ARTS's management into vibrant, accessible hubs that reflect and serve the diverse cultural needs of the communities they are part of. We will prioritize creating spaces where community engagement is at the core, ensuring that both artists and visitors feel welcome, supported, and valued. ARTS is dedicated to fostering a deeper connection between our facilities and the neighborhoods they serve, ensuring these spaces contribute meaningfully to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the city.

PRIORITY GOALS

5.1 Define and promote the unique narrative of each ARTS facility, promoting ARTS at King Street Station (KSS) as a cultural hub for BIPOC artists and Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (LHPAI) as a center for African American arts and culture.

Clear, distinct narratives for KSS and LHPAI will highlight their individual missions, histories, and cultural significance. This will involve working closely with local BIPOC artists and African American cultural leaders to ensure that the narrative accurately reflects the communities they serve. Additionally, marketing and outreach strategies will be designed to emphasize the distinct roles each facility plays in advancing the representation and visibility of underrepresented arts and cultures.

Expected Outcome: Increased recognition of KSS and LHPAI as key cultural institutions, with a stronger sense of identity and purpose within the community.

5.2 Define the best use for cultural facilities under ARTS's management and clarify ARTS's management relationship to each facility.

Each ARTS-managed facility should be used effectively and to its fullest potential, with a clear understanding of ARTS's role in programming, operations, and community engagement. This is essential to maximizing the potential of each space.

Expected Outcome: A clear, strategic plan for each facility, optimizing usage and ensuring facilities are managed effectively and responsibly.

5.6 Increase community awareness of ARTS facilities and programs through cohesive communications, branding, and wayfinding.

Communication has a major impact on how the public perceives and accesses ARTS's facilities and programs. By creating clear, consistent messaging through effective communications, branding, and signage, ARTS will make it easier for the community to learn about and engage with our offerings. The aim is to ensure that ARTS's resources are visible, well-understood, and accessible to all, driving greater participation and support.

Expected Outcome: Higher visibility of ARTS programs and facilities, with increased community participation and awareness.

5.7 Ensure ARTS's facilities have the capacity to be a safe spaces for workers and visitors.

All ARTS-managed facilities need resources and support to provide a secure and welcoming environment where everyone—staff, visitors, and artists—feels physically and emotionally safe. This includes maintaining safety protocols, addressing potential hazards, and fostering a culture of respect and support. In doing this, we contribute to a positive, productive atmosphere for all.

Expected Outcome: A heightened sense of safety and well-being for both employees and visitors, fostering a positive and productive atmosphere.

VISION #6

ARTS is an adaptive organization that responds to the needs of the creative ecosystem

ARTS is committed to being responsive and flexible in how we support the creative ecosystem, continuously evolving to meet the changing needs of artists, organizations, and communities. We aim to be proactive in navigating shifts in the political, economic, and social landscape to ensure that our investments benefit the broader creative ecosystem and the community at large.

PRIORITY GOALS

22

6.1 Support a healthy, thriving arts ecosystem by staying informed about changing political and economic circumstances and keeping community benefit at the core of our investments.

To be a forward-thinking leader that shapes the future of the arts, ARTS must adapt to changes in funding, policy, and the broader political and economic environment. By centering community needs and public benefit in our investment strategies, ARTS will lead efforts to create a resilient and dynamic arts ecosystem that responds to both current and future challenges.

Expected Outcome: ARTS will be recognized as a leader in advocating for a thriving arts ecosystem, with investments that reflect the evolving needs of the community and creative sector.

6.3 Regularly assess the resources and capacity for and impact of work with cultural spaces and districts.

Evaluating ARTS's current work in cultural spaces and districts will ensure that it aligns with Department priorities, available resources, and staffing capacity. The assessment will inform future planning and ensure that ARTS's efforts in these areas are sustainable and effective.

Expected Outcome: A clearer understanding of ARTS's current impact and capacity, leading to more informed decisions about future investments in cultural spaces and districts.

6.4 Utilize research, evaluations, and process improvements to inform and innovate ARTS's work.

ARTS must continuously improve its practices by integrating research findings, evaluation outcomes, and process improvements into our current and future work. By using data and feedback from both internal and external sources, ARTS will drive innovation and improve the effectiveness of its programs and initiatives—now and in the future.

Expected Outcome: Improved programmatic outcomes, greater efficiency, and innovation in ARTS's work, informed by evidence-based insights and continuous feedback.



VISION #7

ARTS is a collaborative workplace where everyone is valued

Fostering a supportive, inclusive, and collaborative environment helps every employee feel recognized and empowered. ARTS strives to create a workplace that encourages open communication, professional growth, and mutual respect, ensuring that all staff are engaged, motivated, and valued for their contributions.

PRIORITY GOALS

7.1 Develop and maintain a positive work culture.

ARTS will foster a workplace culture that promotes trust, respect, and mutual support, creating an environment where staff feel valued and motivated. This will contribute to a sense of belonging and collective success.

Expected Outcome: A more engaged and satisfied workforce, with improved morale, stronger collaboration, and a sense of ownership in the organization's success.

7.2 Create an organizational chart that reflects role reclassifications, job adjustments, and clear reporting structures.

ARTS's internal structure must be clearly defined and transparent. By creating an updated organizational chart, staff will have a better understanding of their roles, reporting lines, and the pathways for career advancement within the organization.

Expected Outcome: Clearer organizational transparency, with staff having a better understanding of roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for professional development.



VISION #8

ARTS staff have the training, tools, and processes they need to be effective

We will make sure that ARTS staff are well-equipped and supported through training, resources, and streamlined processes. By providing the necessary tools and professional development, ARTS fosters a culture of efficiency, enabling staff to perform at their best and effectively contribute to the organization's goals.

PRIORITY GOALS

24

8.1 Develop and maintain an efficient work culture by standardizing business and operational processes.

ARTS will create a more efficient and effective work culture by clearly defining and streamlining both business and operational processes. Distinguishing between business processes (strategic, cross-departmental workflows) and operational processes (daily tasks and procedures) will ensure that ARTS functions smoothly and resources are used effectively.

Expected Outcome: Improved efficiency and clarity in daily operations, with clear, well-structured processes that enable staff to work more effectively and focus on high-priority tasks.

8.5 Ensure ARTS's staffing and resources meet the capacity needs of its programs and initiatives.

ARTS will support appropriate staffing levels, resources, and training for its programs and initiatives. This support includes hiring, skill development, and accurate project scoping to match staff capacity with program demands.

Expected Outcome: Well-staffed and resourced divisions capable of effectively managing and executing ARTS's programs and initiatives.

8.4 Regularly assess application systems to align them with community needs, creating consistency and efficiency whenever possible.

ARTS's application systems will be regularly evaluated to ensure they meet the evolving needs of both the Department and the community. The focus is on selecting systems that best fit ARTS's operational needs, while building consistency and streamlining processes for users.

Expected Outcome: Improved application processes that are more efficient and better aligned with the needs of the community and ARTS staff.



Goals & Objectives

A complete and comprehensive list for all of ARTS

Performance at LHPAI

VISION #1 // GUIDING PRINCIPLE

ARTS is a values-driven organization that centers racial equity in all policies and programs

25

1.1 Review and workshop existing vision, mission, and value statements.

- L&P** 1.1.1. Assess whether ARTS' vision, mission, and values align with its current goals. If revisions are needed, develop a clear process for updating them to reflect the department's strategic direction.

1.2 Ensure that racial and social equity are embedded into all aspects of internal and external policies.

- L&P** 1.2.1. Develop staff capacity to conduct equity analyses of ARTS's internal and external policies, and make improvements to those policies based on the findings of the analyses.
- PA** 1.2.2. Consider and develop policies and procedures through an RSJ, environmental and community impact lens in order to prioritize our work.

1.3 Communicate in ways that contribute to a healthy, socially just arts and culture ecosystem.

- COM** 1.3.1. Ensure that all internal and external communications reflect our commitments to racial and social equity.

1.4 Center the design of cultural district and space programs, and related policies, on racial equity, accessibility, and clear public benefit.

- CS** 1.4.1. Create a clear definition of public benefit for programs so that partners understand their community obligations when they accept funding, and standardize reporting of quantifiable activities that fulfill those obligations.
- 1.4.2. Ensure that public benefit is clearly incorporated into relevant programs, contracts, and reports.

ARTS provides leadership for Seattle's creative sector

2.1 Strengthen interdepartmental relationships to build stronger, more effective partnerships and more fully integrate arts and culture into citywide policies and practices.

- PEG 2.1.1. Strengthen arts education and creative youth development programming in ARTS and with our partners.
- 2.1.2. Leverage community relationships and grantmaking data to inform our investment strategies and policies.
- PA 2.1.3. Collaborate with city staff and community organizations to present culturally significant exhibits reflective of community interest in Seattle Municipal Tower and City Hall gallery spaces.
- 2.1.4. Use our public art expertise and experience to grow interdepartmental partnerships and fully integrate art into citywide policies and decisions.
- 2.1.5. Continue to develop Public Art's relationships with City department liaisons in order to connect and align with other ARTS initiatives.
- L&P 2.1.6. Leverage ARTS' expertise to strengthen partnerships across City departments and integrate arts and culture into citywide policies and practices.

2.2 Strengthen relationships with other City departments, offering leadership and policy direction for the City's arts and culture investments as well as citywide initiatives and economic planning efforts.

- L&P 2.2.1. Enhance collaboration with City departments by offering strategic leadership in arts and culture policy, and ensure a proactive role in shaping citywide initiatives and economic planning.

26

2.3 Offer other City departments a clear pathway for connection to ARTS leadership and staff.

- COM 2.3.1. Increase our interdepartmental partnerships.

2.4 Support greater transparency and knowledge-sharing to increase connections across partnerships and among bodies of work at ARTS.

- L&P 2.4.1. Create more interaction and touchpoints between ARTS staff, leadership, and partner organizations.

2.5 Use King Street Station to support knowledge sharing, convene transparent and collaborative community dialogue, and drive civic and artistic conversation in the city.

- KSS 2.5.1. Foster a thriving arts community by convening exchange and dialogue that are responsive to community needs.

2.6 Improve coordination and collaboration with partners to increase equitable access to resources for the creative sector.

- PEG 2.6.1. Review and establish creative economy priorities and programming to ensure collaboration with other departments and agencies, so that together we are increasing equity and vibrancy in the creative sector.
- L&P 2.6.2. Foster collaboration between ARTS's City departments that work with the creative sector, and other creative sector stakeholders.
- 2.6.3. Strengthen ARTS's understanding of other departments' work and identify potential opportunities for cross-sector collaboration.
- 2.6.4. Identify opportunities for creatives and creative organizations to contribute to community engagement, neighborhood planning, and site activations, and assess ARTS's potential role in supporting these initiatives.
- 2.6.5. Clarify ARTS's role in supporting and leveraging the Cultural Space Agency to enhance creative sector resources and opportunities.

ARTS is a trusted partner with artists and communities

3.1 Seek feedback to ensure artists and creative communities see ARTS as a trusted partner.

- L&P** 3.1.1. Build and maintain strong, transparent relationships with artists and creative communities, ensuring that ARTS processes are trusted and the department is seen as a supportive partner.

3.2 Help grantees and partners demonstrate their value to the creative ecosystem by providing evaluation and technical assistance.

- L&P** 3.2.1. Increase the evaluation and administrative capacity of grantees and partner organizations by providing training and resources.

3.3 Ensure community needs are centered in all ARTS program processes and make application and selection processes user-friendly and accessible for applicants, program participants, and staff.

- PEG** 3.3.1. Ensure that all internal and external communications reflect our commitments to racial and social equity.
 3.3.2. Reinforce external, community-focused practices to increase ease, accessibility, and agency for community members, applicants, and program participants.
F&O 3.3.3. Continue to improve Fluxx applicant user experience and build out Fluxx functionality for ARTS.

3.4 Ensure and advocate for community access to culturally relevant experiences and spaces by building strong relationships with arts, cultural, and community organizations throughout the city.

- CS** 3.4.1. Maintain an inventory of public and private cultural spaces that includes information about the cultural communities in and around these spaces.
 3.4.2. Review recommendations and programs to identify opportunities for broader community access to cultural spaces (public and private) that support connection to culturally relevant experiences as well as safety, community activation, and the overall livability of neighborhoods.

3.5 Improve communications between ARTS, artists, and partner organizations to increase learning, coordination and awareness of artwork, events, and opportunities.

- FAC** 3.5.1. Improve internal and external communications related to ARTS's facilities.
COM 3.5.2. Continuously collaborate with Facilities, Public Art, KSS Gallery Lead, and PEG Team staff to ensure awareness, activation, and accessibility of ARTS's facilities, programs, and grant and roster resources.
PA 3.5.3. Develop Public Art communications strategies to build and sustain community connections.

3.6 Increase the visibility of ARTS's grantmaking.

- PEG** 3.6.1. Increase the local and national visibility of ARTS's grantmaking work and share what we've learned with other funders and partner organizations.

3.7 Maintain an accessible, thorough, and up-to-date Department website.

- COM** 3.7.1. Bring website fully up to date.

3.8 Clarify the roles and contributions of ARTS's partners and collaborators.

- L&P** 3.8.1. Define and communicate with the community ARTS's roles, collaborations, and partnerships to ensure transparency in all relationships and initiatives.

3.9 Improve communications with the Seattle Arts Commission (SAC) and develop clear roles for action in support of mutual advocacy opportunities.

L&P 3.9.1. Ensure that SAC has a clear understanding of roles and opportunities for action related to the City budget timeline.

3.10 Support the effectiveness of the Seattle Arts Commission (SAC).

L&P 3.10.1. Ensure a collaborative, clear, and transparent internal process for filling SAC and subcommittee vacancies.
3.10.2. Build a central webpage for SAC where all relevant information and archival data can be accessed by SAC and ARTS.



ARTS demonstrates the value of its work as an accountable steward of public resources

4.1 Ensure the equitable distribution of funding and resources.

- F&O**
- 4.1.1. Develop, launch, and manage a standardized and equitable panel process across the Department.
 - 4.1.2. Develop, launch, and manage a standardized and equitable open panelist recruitment process.
 - 4.1.3. Facilitate strategic conversation with key stakeholders around equitable distribution of resources, and issue recommendations focused on activities outside of panel processes.

4.2 Improve ARTS's data stance so that we can more easily respond to information requests, report on outputs and outcomes, and be accountable for our use of resources.

- L&P**
- 4.2.1. Create standardization and consistency in data collected, analyzed, and reviewed across the Department.

4.3 Deploy strong ARTS narratives that build awareness of arts and cultural assets and ARTS program outcomes by increasing our use of spatial data resources such as GIS.

- L&P**
- 4.3.1. Collect, analyze, share, and act on spatial data.

4.4 Review and evolve Cultural Space programs to fill equity gaps in service.

- CS**
- 4.4.1. Review and improve design of the Cultural Facilities Fund to meet community needs and streamline processes for better support administrative efficiency.

29

4.5 Create a clear narrative about Cultural Space and Cultural Districts and their role within ARTS's Creative Economy work.

- CS**
- 4.5.1. Work with leadership and staff whose programs connect with the Creative Economy (and possibly OED) to determine ARTS's focus.

4.6 Support Cultural Districts as partners in equitable economic development and the development of anti-displacement policies.

- CS**
- 4.6.1. Develop an evidence-based plan to improve the processes for creating and supporting Cultural Districts.
 - 4.6.2. Review current process documents for new cultural districts as well as the historical support (including funding and technical assistance) they've received.
 - 4.6.3. Research and compare Cultural District programs in other parts of the state and nation to adopt best practices, create alignment where possible, and reduce duplication.
 - 4.6.4. Use research to design and implement a plan for program improvements—both in the creation of Cultural Districts in their ongoing technical and monetary support.

4.7 Develop and employ measurable benchmarks for all programs and activities and assess programs for the public benefit to ensure all communities have access to relevant arts and cultural experiences.

- L&P**
- 4.7.1. Develop and employ measurable goals and benchmarks for all ARTS programs and activities.
 - 4.7.2. Clarify data roles and identify who is responsible for each step of data processes, including collection, storage, management, pulling regular and ad hoc reports, analysis, interpretation, reporting, security, policies, etc.
 - 4.7.3. Ensure data processes are executed and documented consistently.
 - 4.7.4. Continually ensure ARTS's demographic data policy is up-to-date, inclusive, and consistent.
 - 4.7.5. Conduct a robust, comprehensive program evaluation at both the selection point and the conclusion of each program cycle to inform future cycles and decisions.

- CS** 4.7.6. Gather and assess public benefit data to inform future programs and policies, demonstrate the cultural sector's contributions to the community, and ensure community access to relevant arts and cultural experiences.
- 4.7.7. Use assessment to develop recommendations and to make and implement decisions regarding retention, closeout and/or transfer of projects, programs, and contracts.

4.8 Develop capacity to respond efficiently to requests for information.

- L&P** 4.8.1. Fully staff Communications and Operations Divisions and ensure staff have the training they need to be effective.

4.9 Share the value of ARTS's work with the wider community by strengthening relationships with local and national media outlets.

- COM** 4.9.1. Foster relationships with local and national media outlets.
- 4.9.2. Draw on shared knowledge and resources to create, shape, and amplify unified narratives about ARTS's work and its value.
- PA** 4.9.3. Build trust with the arts and culture community to regain legitimacy and agency in the sector.
- 4.9.4. Develop Public Art communications strategies to build and sustain community connections.

4.10 Ensure the transparency of ARTS's work through the regular sharing of program outcomes through City channels.

- L&P** 4.10.1. Increase accessibility to ARTS's work by publishing data and reports across multiple channels.

30

4.11 Ensure ARTS is in compliance with City policies and procedures regarding data security and records retention.

- L&P** 4.11.1. Align internal ARTS practices with City policies on records retention.
- 4.11.2. Align internal ARTS practices with City policies on data security.

4.12 Support thriving creative communities by strategically aligning ARTS's programming, facilities, and capacity with City priorities and initiatives.

- L&P** 4.12.1. Develop and strengthen partnerships with communities and community organizations to co-create strategies for implementing sustainable infrastructure that supports free public arts experiences.



Young visitor at yəhaw' grand opening at ARTS at King Street Station. Photo by Sunny Martini

ARTS stewards spaces under its care by centering community

5.1 Define and promote the unique narrative of each ARTS facility, promoting ARTS at King Street Station (KSS) as a cultural hub for BIPOC artists and Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (LHPAI) as a center for African American arts and culture.

KSS 5.1.1. In communications and panel processes, clearly state that ARTS at King Street Station is a BIPOC artists cultural hub.

FAC 5.1.2. Elevate the profile of Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute.

5.2 Define the best use for cultural facilities under ARTS's management and make clear ARTS's management relationship to each facility.

L&P 5.2.1. Conduct a needs assessment and stakeholder consultation, evaluate the current usage and functionality of each facility, and define the optimal purpose and use for each facility.

5.3 Foster increased potential uses and revenues where relevant for ARTS facilities by modernizing technology, improving gallery space, and programming underutilized or unused space to better serve community access and programming needs.

KSS 5.3.1. Expand and upgrade KSS gallery technology.

5.3.2. Develop and implement innovative programming at KSS to activate underutilized spaces.

FAC 5.3.3. Improve usability of LHPAI for community and ARTS in order to achieve mission.

5.3.4. Improve usability of KSS Gallery for community and ARTS in order to achieve mission.

31

5.4 Establish sustainable program offerings and stabilize curator capacity at ARTS facilities through partnerships and community-driven programming.

KSS 5.4.1. Increase KSS offerings and capacity, and increase opportunities to highlight ARTS's work and collaborations with City partners.

5.5 Ensure accessibility at all ARTS facilities and make them welcoming to all.

FAC 5.5.1. Make ARTS facilities accessible to all.

5.6 Increase community awareness of ARTS facilities and programs through cohesive communications, branding, and wayfinding.

COM 5.6.1. Increase promotion of ARTS's work and programming at its facilities by supporting the Public Art, Facilities, and Cultural Space divisions with improvements to workflows and policies.

FAC 5.6.2. Improve wayfinding for LHPAI.

KSS 5.6.3. Develop communication strategies to build and sustain community connections.

5.7 Ensure ARTS's facilities have the capacity to be a safe space for workers and visitors.

FAC 5.7.1. Create human-centric policies and procedures that elevate the mission of ARTS.

5.8 Foster greater community access to space at ARTS facilities.

FAC 5.8.1. Seek opportunities to generate revenue through facility rentals.

5.8.2. Activate the Denny Substation in alignment with ARTS's and Seattle City Light's shared vision for creative public benefit.

KSS 5.8.3. Collaborate with artists and community groups to increase use the space for community gatherings, workshops, and educational opportunities.

ARTS is an adaptive organization that responds to the needs of the creative ecosystem

6.1 Support a healthy, thriving arts ecosystem by staying informed about changing political and economic circumstances and keeping community benefit at the core of our investments.

- L&P** 6.1.1. Develop and adapt our programming to address community needs and respond to political and economic changes.
- PEG** 6.1.2. Taking into account changes to the landscape of resources in our local ecosystem (such as Doors Open), make and implement recommendations for ways ARTS should adapt its grantmaking and investments to complement other funding.
- CS** 6.1.3. Review and evaluate CAP report recommendations and work with partners to determine the feasibility and approach for implementing those recommendations.

6.2 Adapt Public Art systems and processes to meet the evolving needs of internal and external partners.

- PA** 6.2.1. Define and evaluate Public Art systems to work efficiently with internal and external partners.

6.3 Regularly assess the resources and capacity for and impact of work with cultural spaces and districts.

- CS** 6.3.1. Create a framework for the assessment of existing programs, projects, and contracts.

6.4 Utilize research, evaluations, and process improvements to inform and innovate ARTS's work.

- L&P** 6.4.1. Use qualitative and quantitative data to set expectations and streamline processes.



ARTS is a collaborative workplace where everyone is valued

7.1 Develop and maintain a positive work culture.

- COM** 7.1.1. Support the Leadership & Policy division's efforts to promote a positive work culture by advising on officewide initiatives for communication, collaboration, and connection.
- L&P** 7.1.2. Foster a workplace where staff feel heard, actively share feedback, engage productively with one another, and take ownership of their work.

7.2 Create an organizational chart that reflects role reclassifications, job adjustments, and clear reporting structures.

- F&O** 7.2.1. Create an organizational chart and formalize reporting structures that capture work (unique as well as collaborative) in Finance, Operations, and other adjacent staff structures.
- CS** 7.2.2. Clarify the portfolio of work and priorities held by the Cultural Space division, ensure it aligns with ARTS's overall goals and capacity, and ensure the Department's structure supports its success.
- COM** 7.2.3. Clarify roles, duties, and pathways for professional development of Comms staff.
- L&P** 7.2.4. Ensure that department structure provides clear expectations of roles, responsibilities, and reporting.

7.3 Develop a system for sharing knowledge, providing Department updates, celebrating achievements, and working through challenges in regularly scheduled staff sessions.

- COM** 7.3.1. Build greater transparency among staff that also reflects our good work back to us and fosters a connected culture internally.



ARTS staff have the training, tools, and processes they need to be effective

8.1 Develop and maintain an efficient work culture by business and operational processes.

- L&P** 8.1.1. Improve, standardize, and implement consistent business processes and ensure all staff are appropriately trained to properly implement them.
- 8.1.2. Develop a centralized file organization system in which ARTS policies, standard operating procedures, and program- and division-specific info can be efficiently located and shared.
- F&O** 8.1.3. Standardize contracting processes and templates.
- 8.1.4. Create budget reports that allow each division to monitor its budget.
- 8.1.5. Automate tracking of received W9s to increase contracting accuracy.
- 8.1.6. Standardize the process for submitting invoices for payment.
- 8.1.7. Standardize the granting business procedures for operational efficiency.
- 8.1.8. Standardize payroll processes and adhere to established deadlines.
- 8.1.9. Create documentation for Submittable routine processes, data, and reporting.
- 8.1.10. Create and maintain a clean standard set of Fluxx reports to meet all current and expected data needs at ARTS.
- FAC** 8.1.11. Define, update, and document Facilities policies and procedures.
- PEG** 8.1.12. Establish new internal operational practices to increase ease, accessibility, and agency for applicants and awardees.

8.2 Support efficiencies by ensure that institutional knowledge of programs is included in department-wide SOPs.

- CS** 8.2.1. Align administrative processes for Cultural Space and Cultural Districts with ARTS's department-wide procedures to support efficiencies as well as institutional knowledge of programs/contracts.

8.3 Ensure ARTS's Communications staff is properly resourced to message ARTS's narratives and initiatives.

- COM** 8.3.1. Conduct a comprehensive audit of communications channels, resources, opportunities, and challenges.

8.4 Regularly assess application systems to align them with community needs, creating consistency and efficiency whenever possible.

- F&O** 8.4.1. Regularly review current grant systems and tools to identify efficiencies, staffing, and usage.

8.5 Ensure ARTS's staffing and resources meet the capacity needs of its programs and initiatives.

- F&O** 8.5.1. Determine division needs, and then hire an operations manager to meet them.
- 8.5.2. Assess tech support needs for Fluxx, Submittable, and Asana, and delegate tasks to staff and hire contractors to meet those needs.
- 8.5.3. Create documentation and standard onboarding practices for Fluxx at ARTS.
- 8.5.4. Learn and adopt best practices through involvement in citywide Fluxx user group.
- 8.5.5. Use Fluxx as CRM.
- COM** 8.5.6. Expand and deepen Comms' capacity by planning communications work more strategically and working less reactively.
- L&P** 8.5.7. Work with division Directors and Supervisors to assess and understand the staffing and training needs of their respective divisions.
- PEG** 8.5.8. Continue building PEG staff capacity, skills, and support resources.

8.6 Ensure staff are equipped to deliver timely and consistent messaging on behalf of the Department in various forms of communication, including a shared narrative for ARTS.

- COM** 8.6.1. Train staff in effective, accessible, consistent, and timely communication protocols.
- 8.6.2. Make ARTS staff more present in community spaces—both to represent ARTS and to collect data.

How To Use This Document

This document should be used as a reference to understand the broader vision, mission, and specific goals of our Department, as well as the actions required to achieve them. It should be used by staff, leadership, and stakeholders to ensure everyone is working towards the same objectives, tracking progress, and adapting

strategies when necessary. ARTS staff should regularly refer to this document to ensure alignment and adjust efforts based on outcomes and new insights. Below is a description of how to develop a cadence of implementation using the plan as a basis for action.

Plan, Scan, Do: A living document for adapting to changing contexts

The *Plan, Scan, Do* framework highlights the iterative and adaptive nature of a strategic plan. A plan is not a static set of instructions, but a dynamic document that needs to evolve in response to changes in the external environment and internal realities.

35

#1 Plan

Begin by setting clear visions, goals and objectives. This phase involves gathering information, aligning resources, and defining success. However, it's important to recognize that our plans are based on current assumptions, which may shift over time.

#3 Do

Implement the strategies laid out in the plan while remaining flexible and open to adjustments. As the plan is executed, staff should be prepared to make data-driven decisions that reflect new information or circumstances uncovered during the scanning phase. This may involve refining goals, adjusting tactics, or modifying priorities to stay relevant and effective.

#2 Scan

Continuously monitor and assess the external and internal landscape, including creative economy trends, community needs, funding opportunities, political or economic shifts and program evaluations. Scanning involves gathering data and feedback and ensures that ARTS is aware of changing environmental circumstances that may require adjustments to the plan. This step provides the flexibility needed to pivot or recalibrate efforts as conditions evolve. Scanning can also be done during quarterly staff assemblies or gatherings.



By adopting this *Plan, Scan, Do* approach, ARTS will ensure that our strategic plan is a living document—responsive and adaptable to both opportunities and challenges. The ongoing feedback loop keeps the plan relevant and ensures that ARTS remains agile and prepared to thrive in an ever-changing environment.



Looking Ahead

Cultural Planning in 2025-2026

*Festival CentroAmericano.
Photo by Jenny Crooks*

36

Cultural planning is a comprehensive process that focuses on how arts and cultural initiatives intersect with broader community development goals, such as health and wellbeing, education, safety, economic and space development. It involves assessing and enhancing the cultural assets of a community, and integrating them into economic development strategies, such as land use planning (including zoning), and workforce development.

Community-based arts and cultural planning ensures that cultural activities and organizations are directly responsive to “place-keeping” the unique needs, identities, and aspirations of the local population. By involving artists, cultural organizations, and community members in the cultural planning process, we ensure that arts and culture ecosystem reflects the diverse voices and priorities of the people who call Seattle home.

In addition to cultural engagement, cultural planning is deeply tied to economic development by supporting vibrant cultural districts, supporting creative industries, and creating economic opportunities through arts-driven initiatives. Zoning and land use planning play a critical role in this process by identifying spaces that can be used to support cultural venues, public art installations, and artist

studios. As affordability and cost of living in Seattle is an increasingly critical issue for the creative workforce, zoning decisions can help protect existing cultural spaces, create new hubs for creativity, and ensure that development projects complement and enhance the cultural fabric of a community.

Furthermore, workforce studies are integrated into cultural planning to ensure that a definition is created of the local creative labor force and that it is equipped with the skills needed to support the creative economy. This includes identifying training needs for arts workers, supporting job creation within the arts and culture sector, and providing pathways for artists and cultural workers to thrive.

By aligning cultural planning with economic development, zoning, and workforce studies, Seattle can create sustainable, vibrant cultural ecosystems that drive both cultural vitality and economic prosperity.

ARTS plans to undertake a cultural planning process in 2025–2026, the results of which will also guide subsequent updates to this strategic plan.



Her Body exhibition by Molly Vaughan.
Photo by Jo Cosme



Wing Luke's Lunar New Year.
Photo by Truong Nguyen Photography



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Photo by Jenny Crooks



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Back Cover Image: Adé A Connère wearing a garment by Jordan Christianson. Photo by Debora Spencer



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