



INNER-CITY ARTS
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028

INNER-CITY ARTS CORNERSTONES

As cornerstones of any organization, Inner-City Arts' values, vision, impact and mission are critical to informing the development of effective strategy and outcomes. In reviewing intake results and assessing familiarity with values, vision, and mission, we found Inner-City Arts' mission and vision to be strongly aligned across groups. Because Inner-City Arts' values and impact had not undergone a process of consensus, significant time was spent here to inform and align the group.

MISSION

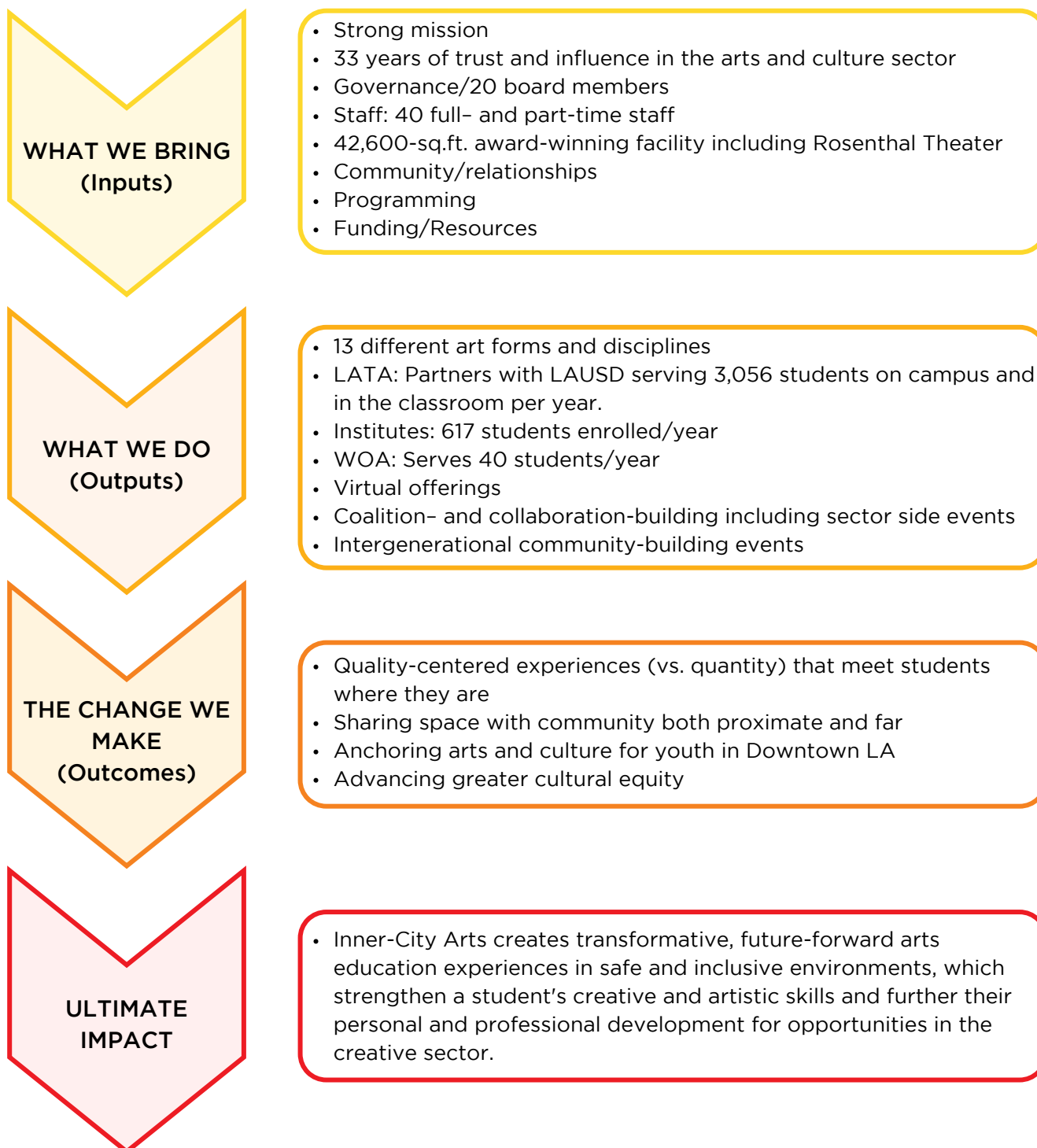
Inner-City Arts' mission and vision were strongly aligned across groups. Inner-City Arts' mission is a direct response to issues of injustice and inequitable access to arts education: To engage young people in the creative process in order to shape a society of creative, confident and collaborative individuals. Inner-City Arts addresses that injustice by:

- Removing all financial barriers to its arts programs
- Reaching all grade levels, including recent high school graduates
- Tailoring art making and wellness support to meet each student's unique needs
- Equipping educators with tools to integrate arts learning into classrooms.

INNER-CITY ARTS' IMPACT AND THEORY OF CHANGE

Impact drives funding and strategy and is a key component to identifying how the work of an organization is measured within broader systemic change efforts (e.g., arts programs for incarcerated youth).

Impact is achieved when an organization's investments (inputs) lead to services (outputs) and together lead to desired results (outcomes). That totality results in broader systemic change (impact). The graphic below lays out what we heard from the series of interviews, focus groups, retreat activities, and general analysis. It is meant to serve as a first step for further consideration.



STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Inner-City Arts' Strategic Plan Summary is designed to be flexible and to encourage agility and growth as the work moves along. The plan should serve as a basis for board and staff annual goals and planning, while leaving room for new challenges and opportunities.

GOAL 1 - CLOSE THE ARTS ACCESS GAP TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS

SUMMARY: If Inner-City Arts is working toward the change it wants to see, namely that every student in LA County receives consistent and high-quality arts education, it will need to scale its successful on-campus Learning and Achieving through the Arts (LATA) program. The K-8 learner-centered, research-based visual and performing arts instruction is a partnership with LA schools and takes place during the school day. Key to this scaling will be additional investment in the program's offerings of school-site activities as well as identifying baselines and metrics both within the program and within the arts and culture field to measure whether it is working toward that change.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Commission business plan to scale LATA school-site offerings to identify need and capitalization for scaling and increased revenue stream.
- Measure student skill achieved at each proficiency level across programs towards matriculation or certification. Find the through line across programs.
- Meet the needs of our students and partners by revisiting the curriculum to ensure distinct quality offerings and alignment with arts integration needs.
- Sustain the quality of on-campus experiences by structuring volume for depth and focus centering quality vs. quantity.

GOAL 2 - PEOPLE, PLACE, AND CULTURE: BUILD INNER-CITY ARTS' FUTURE THROUGH OUR PEOPLE

SUMMARY: Continuing and growing a culture of learning is critical at all levels of Inner-City Arts, including the board level. According to the Aspen Institute, research found that companies that excelled in their field were nearly five times more likely to have learning cultures. In addition to stronger business and development results, organizations cite many other benefits gained from establishing and growing learning cultures.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Nurture a culture of learning to understand the issues impacting arts education and the arts and culture field that inform strategy and decision making
- Continue to grow our valued board leadership.
- Prioritize meeting LA County requirements for at least two teaching artists per classroom/session/activity.
- Deepen understanding of communities, stakeholders, partners, and neighbors proximate to our location.
- Engage and reactivate volunteer program.
- Invest in greater connection with our alumni.
- Operationalize the value of centering students by creating and supporting a leadership/advisory body.



GOAL 3 – SUSTAIN FINANCIAL STRENGTH AND BALANCE CAPITALIZATION STRATEGY

SUMMARY: Inner-City Arts is a mission-driven organization that serves youth in LA County. How is Inner-City Arts maximizing its resources to meet the arts education needs of the youth and communities served? Three strategies to consider include: Revisiting its capitalization strategy, building a culture of philanthropy and preparing for the possibility of a recession. The full strategic plan will present budget scenarios in response to the needs of the plan, as well as intersecting considerations including a potential recession and the overall economic context of local and state arts funding.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Sustain annual revenue performance while adjusting for challenges (events) and opportunities (national funding).
- Seek to balance its capitalization triangle including fixed assets, capacity, and mission-driven investments.¹
- Prepare and project for recession by identifying necessary changes to assets and annual budgets.
- Develop business plan for growth of LATA and off-campus residency model.
- Invest in areas that need immediate growth and/or scaling such as staff, Institutes programming, etc.
- Increase donor personalization.
- Identify infrastructure needs and investment in preparation for the Olympics

GOAL 4 – SHAPE OUR STORIES TO SHARE OUR IMPACT

SUMMARY: If Inner-City Arts is committed to being a data-driven and storytelling organization, investment in these areas is needed. For any organization working to close the arts education gap, data is critical. For any organization wanting to share its impact storytelling must be the primary communication tool. The following are related objectives to this goal.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Use existing customer relationship management (CRM) tools to integrate data collection across functional areas: Programs, Development, Finance, Data and Evaluation, Marketing and Comms.
- Produce data that is timely and accurate to support Inner-City Arts' impact and role in the field.
- Sharing survey results with all staff twice a year.
- Use data to tell our story. Seek professional data and evaluation specialists to advise on framework.
- Center storytelling as a through line in everything Inner-City Arts does.
- Position students to create impact-centered stories about experiences at Inner-City Arts.
- Let others tell our story by engaging in an independent study of Inner-City Arts.

See Appendix A of the full Strategic Plan 2023-28 for Detailed Action Plan.

¹ <https://nff.org/blog/capitalization-planning>



ASSESSING PROGRESS TOWARD OUR DESTINATION 2028

Inner City Arts' Strategic Plan works toward the following:

- Shared clarity and stories of Inner-City Arts' impact on arts access and education, allowing more risk-taking and national presence
- Storytelling that:
 - Supports our impact
 - Focuses on a strategy for increased presence in schools
 - Positions Inner-City Arts as a leader/model in the field of arts access and education
- Balanced capitalization structure that focuses on capacity and program investment and diversification of revenue streams
- Preparation and connection for 2028 Olympics opportunities through infrastructure expansion and programmatic spaciousness
- Continuing a culture of equity and inclusion internally/externally, including iterative pauses, reflections, and reengagement in the work.

Executing its plan will be Inner-City Arts' greatest challenge, as many nonprofit organizations have experienced. Inner-City Arts' board and staff must understand and align their work to its plan requiring ongoing collaboration and coordination. Measures and indicators for assessing progress are included in the Detailed Action Plan Appendix A and should be further refined, assessed, revised, and aligned in accordance with any existing key performance indicators. Toward these ends, it is recommended that Inner-City Arts:

- Align the work: From meetings to evaluations, the board should align its work to strategic goals to ensure the right things are getting done.
- Aim for continuous improvement: Keep the board growing and improving by knowing who you are, where you are now, where you want to go, and how you'll get there.
- Manage efficiently: From planning and meetings to policies and evaluations, board management software can help you keep your governance team running smoothly.

Through this process, one message was clear across areas, Inner-City Arts is committed to a data-driven approach, and this demonstrated across goals and actions in this plan. This evaluation and learning will be key to Inner-City Arts' success.

If evaluation aligned with the world we want to see, those reflections would be shared across the community and throughout whole fields of work — learnings from one food bank shared with all food banks everywhere, for example. Because humans learn through stories, learning and evaluation would center stories of the relationships that created the change, seeing quantitative data as just one way to illustrate those stories. That learning would therefore be a powerful, open-source, shared effort, funded commensurate with its importance.

- Nonprofit Quarterly



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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General Limiting Conditions

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