

PARTNERS

IN ART



ARTS COUNCIL OF GBR
STRATEGIC PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

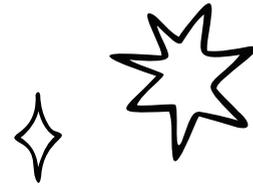
This report represents a culmination of the key findings and recommendations generated during a multi-year process of the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, as it looked at five decades of work in the Baton Rouge area and Capital Region with a focus on the organization's future. The plan is distilled from the work of our Board of Directors, Artist Advisory Board, Staff and ongoing Community Conversations with stakeholders from across the 11-parish region. **The goal of this strategic planning process is to develop a robust but flexible framework that will set a meaningful direction for the organization and the advancement of impactful arts-based initiatives that recognize and address evolving needs.**

A variety of methods were used to obtain information from the population served by the Arts Council including but not limited to past leadership, founders, stakeholders, educators, artists and arts

organizations. Initiatives included in these conversations, convenings, and surveys included:

1. The vital role of arts and culture in an inclusive regional economy.
2. Increased prioritization of funding for the arts in the region.
3. Facilitation of comprehensive arts education opportunities for schools and neighborhoods.
4. Building neighborhoods and communities with the arts for greater livability and civic pride.

Other considerations important to this process include focused implementation of these goals throughout operations and programming over the next three years, with measures on impact and progress.



STRATEGIC GOALS

1. PROMOTE

the vital role arts and culture play in an inclusive economy.

2. EMPOWER

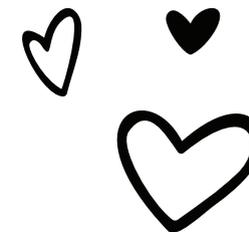
and strengthen the region's artists and arts organizations.

3. FACILITATE

comprehensive arts education opportunities in schools and communities.

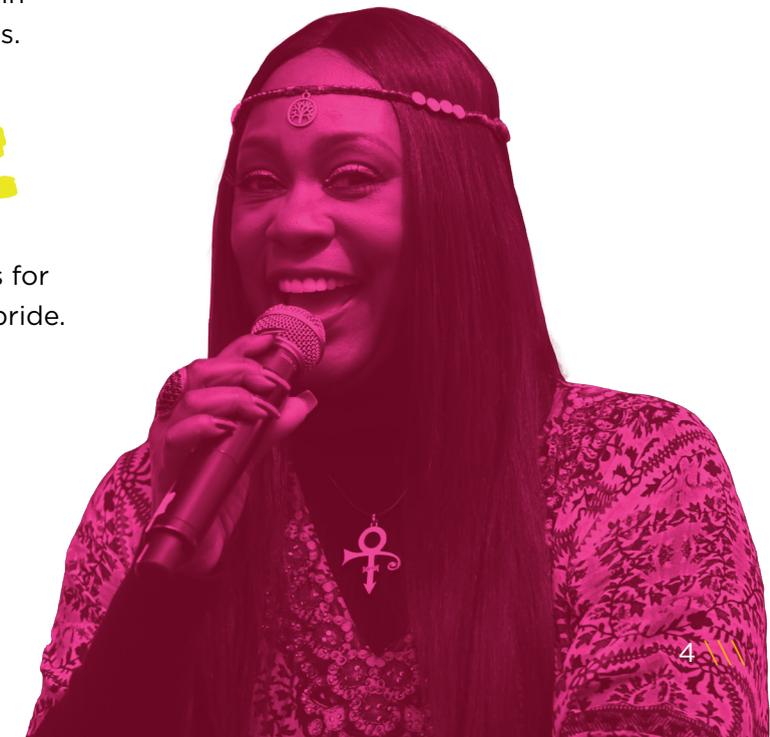
4. BUILD

neighborhoods and communities with the arts for greater livability and civic pride.



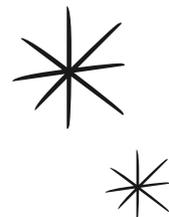
These four goals, having equal weight, work interconnectedly to achieve an overall objective of improving life through the arts.

Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, aspiring to brand the Capital Region as the best place to create, inspire, live, and work will lead the arts sector through collaboration, partnership, and support.





ARTS & CULTURE IN AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY



Promote the vital role arts and culture play in an inclusive economy.

Connect artist entrepreneurs and arts organizations with key business planning, development, and management services to advance art as a profession, business, and service.

Increase prioritization of funding arts initiatives at the local, regional and state levels.

Communicate and celebrate the excellence, innovation, and power of the arts in our region.

Engage local, regional and state organizations to collectively document, reveal, share, and promote evidence and data demonstrating the value and impact of arts across the region.



EMPOWER REGIONAL ARTISTS

Champion alliances among arts councils, arts organizations, and key partners across the state to enable regional and statewide arts advocacy.

Address the needs of arts businesses, organizations, and individuals through offerings and continued communication channels.

Initiate a publicly accessible information hub linking together arts patrons, artists, arts organizations, events, programs, services, and resources across the region.

Facilitate mutually beneficial, inclusive connections among arts, education, civic, public and business sectors.



FACILITATE ARTS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

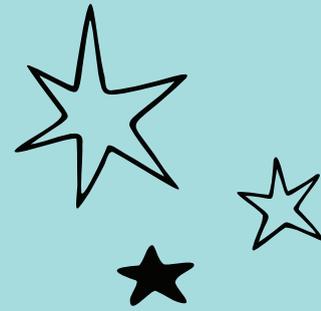
Continue to fill gaps in birth through graduation arts programming in schools

throughout the region following the core belief that every student, whether attending school virtually or in person, should have access to an arts education, especially in Title I schools.

Provide technical training in the creative fields in partnership with other businesses and organizations to build an ecosystem for arts related fields such as music industry, film, and television.

Provide camps, workshops, and classes which foster art-making, socialization, and cultural exchange while also providing a platform for artists and arts educators to share, work, and collaborate.

Advance impactful art-based initiatives that recognize and address evolving needs.



BUILDING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Utilize the Cary Saurage Community Arts Center as a catalyst for collaboration, partnership, and support of artists and the community at large.

Participate as a Thought Leader in social, civic, community, and economic development initiatives across the region.

Enhance awareness of cultural identity, community ties, and natural resources for regional resiliency and sustainability.

Incorporate ARTS I.D.E.A.S. (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Sustainability) into all aspects of the organization, its governance, programs, offerings, and communications.





OUR REALITIES



COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE

The Capital Region is a changing community experiencing evolving population density, shifting demographics, and cultural evolutions. **Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge aims to be a responsive reflection of these changes and is committed to working closely with the community** to ensure we remain an accessible and relevant resource.

PERCEIVED VALUE OF THE ARTS

As an arts organization, we are consistently engaged in communicating the value of our sector. Traditional definitions weigh heavily on quantitative data and are quick to undervalue qualitative data. **While we know the arts add significant quantitative benefit to Baton Rouge and the surrounding region, we recognize the greatest value of our sector is also ephemeral.** The need to articulate and defend the value of the arts to fit traditional quantitative-centric frameworks poses problematic challenges that ignore the underlying intrinsic value of the arts.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The strategic planning process has afforded us the opportunity to critically explore our role in the community, implement action steps relevant to that role, assess the impact of our work, and plan for the future of the organization with that context.

GEOGRAPHIC LIMITATIONS

As the official arts agency for the city of Baton Rouge and state-designated Regional Arts Council, we have focused geographic boundaries. **In some instances, these geographic boundaries prioritize the way we execute our work,** engage in partnerships, and address conversations happening around the country, state, nation, and world. Additionally, the location of the Cary Saurage Community Arts Center in downtown Baton Rouge may be challenging for some members of the community to access our facility. Awareness of these challenges raises awareness of the distribution of our resources, services, and programming. At the same time, availability and access to unique programs and offerings which are appealing and helpful to communities outside of the area of focus are important and deserving of consideration for implementation.



OUR REALITIES

SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING

As both the official arts agency and a regional arts council, it is a key part of our role to support and foster the local artists community through our work. As a result, **it is imperative that the work we do is in service to our constituents and that we are providing maximum benefit to the community.** This perpetually fuels an internal organizational dialogue about who we are and what we do that can come in conflict with who we have been for the past 50 plus years. Many of the programs we have offered and continue to offer are beloved in the community, but as we and our community evolve some programs begin to be less relevant. While this balance will always be a challenge, it is once we feel is vitally important to our role in the region and the benefit we provide.



FUNDING

While our fiscal health over the last three years has improved, our organization has not yet reached a sustainable funding level. We currently receive funding through a combination of sources including non-departmental municipal funding, grants, sponsorships, donations, and program revenue, but **it is important that we further diversify and strengthen our funding streams.** Like many arts organizations and other nonprofit entities, the majority of our funding is tied directly to specific programming, projects, or outcomes, and cannot be easily transitioned from one





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge in its 50th year, is enjoying a new home, expanded offerings, and a greater presence in the Capital Region. We are grateful for the civic leaders and community members who had the vision to form an arts council for the Capital City. The leaders through those five decades selflessly shaped the organization, built support for arts organizations and for artists, advocated for arts education, and worked with municipalities to create a more beautiful place to live and work.

This strategic planning was facilitated by Kay Irby in Phase I and then by Rebecca Burdette in Phase II. Our diversity, equity, and inclusion conversations were facilitated by Dima Ghawi. They along with our Board of Directors and MESH Creative Agency, from 2020 - 2023 shaped and enlightened our staff, and informed this strategic plan along with meaningful implementation objectives.

We are grateful to the people who live, work, and play in our State and Region, with whom we have the privilege to partner, collaborate, support and serve. Most importantly, we are grateful to our artists, culture bearers, and arts organizations who inspire all of us.



