



greater
philadelphia **cultural**
ALLIANCE

CO-CREATING OUR FUTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN
2024



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Bold.

This is the word consistently voiced through the listening sessions that informed our new Strategic Plan.

It was clear from the myriad voices and perspectives we engaged in this process: the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance—and our creative sector at large—require a bold vision to reposition ourselves and serve as an active change-agent. For over 52 years, the Cultural Alliance has been a powerful voice for our sector. We've long championed vital funding, advocated for essential policies, and supported our diverse community through grants, research, and professional development. Our achievements reflect our unwavering commitment to fostering a vibrant cultural ecosystem.

Yet, as we navigate an evolving landscape shaped by shifting audience behaviors, changing philanthropic goals, and the lingering impacts of COVID-19, we recognize the need to adapt and lead with renewed vigor. To propel us into a dynamic future where we serve as catalysts for transformative change, the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance is both honored and excited to share with you our bold, new Strategic Plan: "Co-Creating Our Future."

This plan has been co-created with input from the cultural community and stakeholders around our region to respond to the expansive evolution we've witnessed over the past decade and the opportunities that lie ahead—spurring the Cultural Alliance to focus on a broader and more inclusive cultural ecosystem. Indeed, our efforts are already underway as we work with Creative Philadelphia and other key partners to advocate for a comprehensive city-wide cultural plan and the creation of a dedicated arts fund.

As we move forward, we invite you to join us in this journey. Whether you are a nonprofit organization, an artist, a creative entrepreneur, a cultural consumer, a representative of our allied industries, or another stakeholder, your support and engagement are crucial as we work to drive continued transformation in our sector and impact throughout our region.

Together, let's ignite creativity, inspire change, and affirm arts and culture as vital components of a thriving, healthy Philadelphia.

Adopted by Board of Directors: June 14, 2024



GERALD VEASLEY
Chair, Board of Directors
Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerald Veasley".



PATRICIA WILSON ADEN
President & CEO
Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Wilson Aden".

Photo: Ryan Brandenburg



Photo courtesy of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance

THE CULTURAL ALLIANCE'S work is inextricably tied to the region and the sector we serve. As such, we understood the plan for our organization had to be grounded in our vision for the Philadelphia region's creative sector. Simultaneously, we made the strategic decision to retain and recommit to our 52-year mission as an organization. While we remain committed to our mission statement, our strategic planning process has guided us to a bold new vision for the Cultural Alliance and the region we serve, along with six core strategies we will pursue in the coming years.

Mission

We lead, strengthen and amplify the voices of a cultural community that ignites creativity, inspires people and is essential for a healthy region.

Vision for Philadelphia's Creative Sector

Our region's creative sector is widely recognized as an essential partner in reaching shared civic ambitions for equity, economic vitality, access to creative expression, and the health and well-being of all residents.

Vision for Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance

The Cultural Alliance is an acknowledged representative and convener of the region's creative sector, and serves as an influential thought leader, a source of trusted information, a bold advocate, and a valued change-agent. The Cultural Alliance strengthens and supports the cultural ecosystem's equity and access to resources, and advances its capacity to contribute to the region's creative vitality, economic prosperity, social well-being, and as a defining element of our civic identity.



Arts & Culture's Impact on Greater Philadelphia

Perhaps no other sector generates such powerful economic impact while touching people's souls to the extent of the Philadelphia region's creative sector.

Arts and culture organizations drive economic impact in our region, while also delivering life-changing empowerment and social justice services to individual residents.

We make Center City thrive & our neighborhoods hum.

Photo courtesy of the Academy of Natural Sciences

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

\$3.3 billion

Total economic impact of the region's nonprofit arts and culture industry:

- **\$1.9B** in direct expenditures by organizations and their audiences
- **\$1.4B** in indirect and induced economic impact

\$1.4 billion

The return to our communities as household income from jobs created by the arts & culture industry

\$429 million

Tax revenue generated at the local, state, & federal levels by the arts

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

95% of cultural organizations partner with local communities to...

...address issues including education (66%), access and inclusion (60%), youth development (38%) and mental health and wellness (29%)

13.5 million

People attended in-person cultural sites and events in Greater Philadelphia during fiscal year 2022

89.8% of arts & culture attendees agree...

...that the activity or venue where they were surveyed is **"inspiring a sense of pride in this neighborhood or community."**

SOURCES: Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance Research Studies "Arts, Culture & Economic Prosperity: Greater Philadelphia (2024)" and "PA CultureCheck (2023)"

Culture in Context



Oksana Maslova and Arian Molina Soca of Philadelphia Ballet in *Giselle*
Photo: Alexander Iziliaev

SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1972 to coordinate the arts and culture activities for the Bicentennial Celebration, the Cultural Alliance has served the arts and culture industry, as well as the civic community and the public, through:

- Solid, timely research;
- Collaborative marketing and audience engagement programs;
- Professional development programs that increase the skills of the leaders of arts and culture organizations; and
- Advocacy that builds awareness of the sector's important role in our economy and social wellbeing.

These activities have informed and empowered those who comprise the Cultural Alliance's core community: the region's arts and cultural organizations, their CEOs, board members and staff, and arts and culture allies.

Even in the midst of residual financial challenges from the pandemic and other struggles, over 430 organizations have signaled the value of the Cultural Alliance through their membership. Our members range from museums, performing arts, community arts centers, historical sites, and arts education organizations. 23% of the Alliance's membership is located outside of the City of Philadelphia and 78% have budgets under \$1 million (61% have budgets under \$250,000). By providing critical resources for the passionate staff who work in these organizations — resources that they would otherwise not have access to due to limited budgets and capacities — the Cultural Alliance provides essential assistance to maximize their services to their communities.

NOW IS A TRANSFORMATIONAL TIME FOR THE CULTURAL ALLIANCE, the arts and culture industry and the region as a whole. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the social reckoning of 2020, organizations are looking toward the return of audiences and thinking strategically about not just recovery, but growth and sustainability. The upcoming United States Semiquincentennial and FIFA World Cup in 2026™ present significant opportunities to harness the creative power of the cultural industry for unprecedented economic impact.

Yet, fault lines, often demarcated by race and ethnicity, budget size and the lack of access to funding, have brought undeniable challenges to light.

It is in this context that the Cultural Alliance embarked on a thoughtful process to chart its strategic direction for the coming years.

THE CULTURAL ALLIANCE'S new strategic plan is the culmination of more than a year's consultative and iterative work involving its board of directors, Strategic Planning Task Force members, staff, and dozens of diverse community stakeholders and observers including artists, cultural workers, volunteers, civic leaders, and grant- and policymakers.

Details on the methodology and stakeholders who informed the Cultural Alliance's strategic planning project can be found on page 12.

Purpose Statement

As the needs and priorities of the arts and culture community have shifted and evolved in recent years, the Cultural Alliance is determined to recalibrate and assert itself as the thought leader for a broader cultural ecosystem, including for the first time, the interests of individual artists and other creative workers. The cultural community is also responding to a confluence of consequential factors — the lingering impacts of the pandemic, changing audience behaviors, philanthropic objectives, donor giving, demographic shifts and the election of Philadelphia's 100th Mayor in 2023. We share our sector's focus on diversity, equity and belonging and will demonstrate our consistent commitment to those principles by fully integrating them into all aspects of our work.

Concurrent with these external changes, the Cultural Alliance has a new President & CEO in Patricia "Patty" Wilson Aden, who brings decades of experience to her new role through her deep engagement in the cultural community and advocating for its interests. The Cultural Alliance continues to build a Board of Directors that reflects the diverse disciplines and perspectives that characterize the cultural community. Together, the leadership and staff are energized and motivated to pursue a fresh, bold vision. Understanding our financial challenges, we will explore philanthropic and financial opportunities to sustain and grow our service to the sector and our city.



Carpenter's Hall. Photo: J. Fusco for VISIT PHILADELPHIA®



Core Strategies

Partner, convener, and facilitator

Continuously work to earn and strengthen our leadership role as a trusted partner, key organizer, convener, and facilitator of collective action that supports our vision for the region's creative sector

OBJECTIVES

1. Broaden and transform Cultural Alliance membership and affiliations beyond nonprofit cultural organizations
2. Encourage synergy and interconnection among the diverse interests, disciplines, and stakeholders that comprise the cultural sector
3. Articulate and elevate the value of the broad and diverse spectrum of organizations comprising the creative sector, including smaller, community-based cultural organizations
4. Recognize and embrace the essential contributions of individual artists, cultural workers, and creative entrepreneurs
5. Convene creative sector members, civic leaders, and other stakeholders to explore and advance effective arts-based problem-solving approaches

Convening the sector to spur collective action

The Cultural Alliance's "Cultural Dynamics: Co-Creating a Vision for Philadelphia" positioned Philadelphia at the forefront of a national movement to elevate culture as a civic essential. With nearly 500 arts and culture leaders, workers, allies, and other stakeholders participating in person and online, "Cultural Dynamics" was the first in a series of convenings designed to fuel the adoption of a citywide cultural plan.

Photo courtesy of The Wilma Theater. Photo: Cat Bohnenberger

Trusted resource for data and research

Develop and deliver timely data and fact-based analyses to enhance sector operations, advance philanthropic support, engage government partners, and support sector advocacy

OBJECTIVES

1. Grow partnerships with allied organizations and institutions to undertake an expanded role in research that serves and supports the creative sector
2. Invest in communications capacity to publicize and amplify research findings and analyses in reports, forums, the press and other channels to reach both targeted and broad audiences
3. Develop and implement a participatory process to create a shared, prioritized research agenda for the cultural sector in the region

Delivering trusted data to inform and strengthen the sector

The Cultural Alliance's annual PA CultureCheck survey in partnership with PA Humanities provides a compelling portrait of the state of Pennsylvania's cultural sector, with results that showcase the creative community's resilience, adaptability, and innovation, as well as its vulnerability. With data exposing deeply embedded inequities and confirming the lingering impacts of the pandemic, PA CultureCheck and other research results have informed local and statewide advocacy efforts and educated grantmakers.

Connector of communities and sectors

Strengthen the sector's capacities to serve diverse communities, and support the sector's response to — and engagement with — broader civic interests

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide tangible assistance to smaller, neighborhood-based and BIPOC-serving organizations by building on our role as the regional grant administrator for the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts
2. Support youth engagement and the development of a diverse workforce in Philadelphia to introduce young people to jobs in the creative sector
3. Position the creative sector as a contributor to small/diverse business development
4. Redefine programming to ensure alignment with the current needs of the sector

Providing tangible resources to build the capacity of diverse communities

As the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' (PCA) regional partner, the Cultural Alliance distributes over \$500,000 annually in grants to small, community-based organizations and creative entrepreneurs throughout southeastern Pennsylvania. Since 2021, the Cultural Alliance has fueled the aspirations of the region's creative entrepreneurs through PCA's Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program (CEA), providing over \$400,000 in grants and consulting services to over 200 recipients. Over 60% of CEA grantees identify as BIPOC.

Advocate for policy change

Organize and coordinate energetic advocacy efforts — from grassroots to treetops — focusing on the City of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and aligned national efforts

OBJECTIVES

1. Continue active advocacy for policies that benefit Philadelphia's entire creative sector, including a comprehensive cultural plan and a dedicated arts fund
2. Serve the interests of artists and the cultural workforce by advocating for innovative City and state policies
3. Advocate for beneficial state legislation to serve both urban and suburban cultural organizations
4. Focus local advocacy on Philadelphia and the surrounding region

Leading energetic advocacy campaigns

From spirited rallies at Philadelphia's City Hall, to crowded forums in El Centro de Oro, and data-rich presentations to the Arts & Culture Caucus in Harrisburg, the Cultural Alliance is an energetic and effective arts advocate. Cultural Alliance advocacy campaigns have generated impactful outreach, with over 1,500 letters to Philadelphia's City Council in a single campaign encouraging greater funding for the arts.

Powerful thought leader

Build our communications capacity to serve as a primary resource of information within the creative sector, and as a trusted source of information about the creative sector to all relevant audiences

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop and implement:
 - a. A robust digital communications strategy that regularly and reliably informs and engages the creative sector and its stakeholders
 - b. An external communications strategy to create a compelling, optimistic narrative about the arts and culture sector
2. Invest in the redesign of the Cultural Alliance's website as a useful tool that reflects the priorities and needs of the organization and the sector and that communicates our organization's new vision

Informing the sector, culture workers, and our allies

The Cultural Alliance's digital communications are an essential resource, serving and informing the cultural community and other stakeholders. With over 60,000 views per month, the web-based Job Bank is the region's foremost listing of job opportunities for the artists, arts administrators, program managers, and other creative workers who are the lifeblood of Philadelphia's robust creative economy. Distributed to over 5,000 subscribers, the Cultural Alliance's monthly e-newsletter, CultureWire, highlights local and national trends in the arts, notable policy developments, and significant milestones.

Resilient, dynamic organization

Sustain a well-governed and professionally managed organization that is fully resourced to realize its vision for the creative sector and fulfill its organizational ambitions, while also providing an equitable organizational culture that attracts and retains high-performing staff

OBJECTIVES

1. Model excellence in nonprofit governance through policy development, financial oversight, and active board engagement
2. Recruit and maintain a board that represents the diversity of the creative sector and includes influential allies and other stakeholders
3. Update the Cultural Alliance's business model in alignment with new strategic priorities
4. Identify new revenue sources and pursue funding to grow Cultural Alliance operations and support key strategic objectives
5. Ensure equitable and competitive compensation for employees
6. Prepare succession plans for all key positions

Modeling our values

The Cultural Alliance's commitment to diversity stands as an exemplar to organizations within the cultural sector and beyond. The board of directors embodies Greater Philadelphia's demographic diversity, with board members of various races, genders, ages, and sexual orientations. As importantly, the board represents the wide-ranging diversity of the cultural sector, with members sharing the perspectives of many disciplines — performing arts, visual arts, heritage and horticultural sites, and beyond — from locations across the region with a wide range of operating budgets. This purposeful and long-standing commitment to diversity ensures that the Cultural Alliance's strategic direction and priority objectives reflect the varied interests that comprise the cultural sector.

Key Strategic Shifts

The Cultural Alliance provides programs and services that help nonprofit cultural organizations do their work more effectively and efficiently.



The Cultural Alliance builds connections across the entire cultural ecosystem, including individual artists, creative workers, organizations of all sizes and disciplines, cultural consumers, allied industries and other stakeholders to create and uplift a shared vision, identify shared opportunities and obstacles, and create shared approaches and solutions.

Cultural organizations need more money to do their work.



Public investment in the arts improves the health and wellbeing of all citizens.

By joining the Cultural Alliance, you will receive access to services and programs.



The Cultural Alliance brings us together to accomplish what no one organization or person can do alone. By joining, you join the cause, working toward our shared goals.



Process

Photo courtesy of The Wilma Theater. Photo: Johanna Austin

Research Methodology

Following a Request for Proposal (RFP) selection process, the Cultural Alliance engaged consulting firm 8 Bridges Workshop to guide its strategic direction and help create a roadmap to determine the organization's audacious vision for the future with goals and actions required to achieve success. Based in Minnesota while working with a national clientele, the 8 Bridges team lent a deep knowledge of Philadelphia's philanthropic and cultural sector to the Cultural Alliance's strategic planning process, along with perspectives gained by working with other arts service organizations.

The Cultural Alliance and 8 Bridges Workshop set out to conduct an in-depth, consultative, and participatory process for strategic planning. The process had three phases: Discovery and Engagement, Ideation and Formulation, Implementation and Communication.

Strategic Planning Process

STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE

The Cultural Alliance engaged a Task Force of experienced leaders and creatives representing a cross-section of the arts and culture sector organizational leaders, activists and thought leaders. Members were thoughtfully selected to include diverse perspectives, disciplines, organizational budget size and geographic representation, as well as diversity in age, gender and race.

CO-CHAIRS

Stanford Thompson,
Goldsmith Strategies

Elizabeth Warshawer,
EBW Consulting, LLC

MEMBERS

David Acosta, Artistic Director, Casa de Duende

Vanessa Briggs, Woods System

Julia Durkin, Chief Financial Officer and Director
of Human Resources, ArtistYear

Valerie Gay, Executive Director,
Creative Philadelphia, City of Philadelphia

Priscilla Luce, President, The Albert M.
Greenfield Foundation

Matthew Rader, President, The Pennsylvania
Horticultural Society

Jason Schupbach, Dean, Westphal College of
Media Arts and Design, Drexel University

Jennifer Turnbull, Co-Executive Director, Spiral Q

Gerald Veasley, President, Jazz Philadelphia

DISCOVERY AND ENGAGEMENT PHASE

With the Strategic Planning Task Force's energetic engagement, 8 Bridges completed an extensive discovery and engagement phase, incorporating a review of relevant past and current policy documents; program information; financial documentation; research reports; and organizational history.

To gather community feedback, consultants conducted one-on-one interviews with Cultural Alliance board, staff, members, stakeholders, and observers; held listening sessions with community representatives; and researched comparator organizations with similar missions based in other parts of the United States. Staff engagement included regular updates, and opportunities for participation. Staff contributed to an organizational SWOT analysis, helped shape the plan's implementation phases and tactics, and led the discussion that renewed the organization's values.

IDEATION AND FORMULATION PHASE

As elements of the plan began to take shape, the leadership team, Strategic Planning Task Force Co-chairs, and the Task Force itself helped to establish and refine the key strategic shifts necessary to achieve the plan's vision. Multiple versions of these shifts were shared and strengthened through consultation across the organization.

A full-day board retreat helped shape the plan's vision and strategies. Planning discussions at regular quarterly board meetings led up to the retreat, providing an opportunity for board members to contribute to emerging ideas and respond to findings.

The day's conversations led to a firming up of the plan's vision and strategies and empowered the Task Force and leadership team to move forward with further refinement and implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION PHASE

Based on the work detailed above, the Task Force refined the plan's strategies and helped inform its key objectives, working hand in hand with the leadership team. The implementation plan and accompanying budget projections were then developed. The implementation plan was created by the Cultural Alliance leadership team, with input from 8 Bridges and wide discussion across the organization.

Subsequently both the Finance and Executive Committees contributed to this process, to ensure that the Board of Directors would be ready to approve the plan at its June 2024 meeting.

During this phase, members of the 8 Bridges team helped lead a full staff retreat. Staff were engaged as partners in the development of the implementation plan, reviewing all of its tactics and noting where new efforts would be required in their respective roles. The staff session also addressed the re-statement of organizational values for the Cultural Alliance, which are now incorporated into the strategic plan.



Photo courtesy of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance



Longwood Gardens. Photo by J. Fusco for VISIT PHILADELPHIA®

THE CULTURAL ALLIANCE has embraced its strategic plan as a living document, understanding that its strategies and objectives can only achieve their potential impact through adherence to a strong implementation plan with clear tactics and timelines.

Spurred by the urgency of this moment, the Cultural Alliance is already at work on many of the plan's objectives. The Cultural Alliance Board of Directors will monitor progress in achieving the plan's key objectives on an ongoing basis.

Change Capital Campaign

The multi-year transformation of the Cultural Alliance under this new Strategic Plan will require significant investments. The plan, along with the trends and realities identified through the organization's financial oversight, have made it clear that an infusion of additional funding will be necessary to change, grow, and innovate.

A Change Capital fundraising campaign will be launched in early 2025, inviting individuals, foundations and other sources to invest in the realization of the Cultural Alliance's key objectives through the infusion of substantial, flexible, multi-year capital.

Acknowledgements

“Co-Creating our Future” is in both name and spirit a collaborative process. We thank all those in the cultural community who have answered the call to help shape our vision and strategy.

The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance’s Strategic Plan was made possible by the generous support of the William Penn Foundation, PECO, and Comcast.

GREATER PHILADELPHIA CULTURAL ALLIANCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(as of September 2024)

Chair | Gerald Veasley, Jazz Philadelphia

Immediate Past Chair | Priscilla M. Luce,
The Albert M. Greenfield Foundation

Vice Chair | Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance
for Greater Philadelphia

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Secretary | Jamie J. Brunson, First Person Arts

David Acosta, Casa de Duende

Julia Durkin, ArtistYear

Leigh Goldenberg, Wilma Theater

Dominique Goss, M&T Bank’s Charitable Foundation

Hugh McStravick, PNC

Ross Mitchell, Glen Foerd

Stephen P. Mullin, Econsult Solutions, Inc.

Michael Norris, The Carpenters’ Company

Eric Pryor, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts

Matt Rader, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Donyale Reavis, Goldman Sachs

Paul B. Redman, Longwood Gardens

Maitreyi Roy, Bartram’s Garden

Jason Schupbach, Westphal College of Media Arts and
Design at Drexel University

Zabeth Teelucksingh, Global Philadelphia Association

Leslie Walker, Sixers Youth Foundation

Cathy Young, Moore College of Art & Design

Rachel Zimmerman, InLiquid

GREATER PHILADELPHIA CULTURAL ALLIANCE STAFF

(as of September 2024)

Patricia Wilson Aden

Madeline Avarese

Chad Beegle

Kate Buskirk

Bethany Chisholm

Sarah Christy

Rosa Doherty

Paris Gramann

Derek Holland

Stephanie Lerner

Abigayle Renk

Kristen Vinh

A.B. Wren

CONSULTANT

8 Bridges Workshop

Sarah Lutman, Founder and
Managing Director

Enrique Olivarez, Principal

Patty Johnson, Associate



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