



Alliance for Arts and Culture

A Path Forward
Strategic Plan 2014-2016

Introduction

This document summarizes the outcomes of a review of the strategic goals and priorities of the Alliance for Arts and Culture (“the Alliance”).

The Alliance was established in 1986 as the Vancouver Cultural Alliance and later broadened its mandate beyond the city limits and changed its official name to the Greater Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture Society. The Alliance has a current membership of approximately 350 organizations and individuals, and serves the arts and culture sector through a broad range of local, regional, and provincial initiatives.

The strategic planning process encompassed the following elements:

- Revisiting the strategic planning work done by the Alliance in 2011
- Assessing and re-focusing the mission, vision, and values of the Alliance
- Evaluating the Alliance’s priorities and their alignment to the mission
- Establishing new strategic goals for the next three years

As background for this phase of planning, the Alliance recognized that the previous strategic plan was developed in an environment of uncertainty in the arts and culture sector, with a certain volatility threatening the organization’s own sustainability. More recently, a more predictable environment has increased the sense of stability and allowed the Alliance to be more ambitious about its goals for the future, beyond mere survival.

The following conclusions and observations should be noted:

- The strategic plan for the organization is generally consistent with the previous plan, and represents an updating of the organization’s priorities and directions, rather than a substantive re-think for the organization.
- The updated plan reflects a new environment, but the Alliance’s dedication to its core priorities has shifted only slightly, as detailed below.
 - The Alliance’s attention to advocacy has evolved into a more prominent ongoing strategic priority with a more proactive approach and more integration with our work in other areas.
 - Financial sustainability is now seen to be an essential condition for all of the Alliance’s work, rather than a strategic priority on its own. The remaining strategic priorities stand as three pillars on a foundation of financial sustainability.
- This particular document should be considered an adaptive strategic plan, to be reviewed annually and revised as necessary to reflect emerging issues in a changing environment.

The planning initiative, taking place over the last year, was driven by board president Paul Gravett and coordinated by executive director Rob Gloor. The process included feedback from members, analysis by staff, and input from volunteer board members who represent diverse perspectives from the arts and culture sector. The following executive summary provides the key points of many background documents, discussions and decisions. The Alliance is grateful to all who contributed.

Values, Mission, Vision

Our Guiding Statements of Values and Principles

Inclusivity and Connection:

- The Alliance is accessible to all emerging and established community and professional artists and organizations, and representative of the diversity of cultural practice and artistic expression.

Leadership:

- The Alliance is proactive and forward-looking in leading and advocating for arts and culture as part of a vibrant, healthy society.

Visibility and Appreciation:

- The Alliance aims to increase the visibility and appreciation of the arts and artists in our communities.

Accountability:

- The Alliance is accountable to its membership through open and honest communication, fiscal responsibility, and clear decision-making, and is responsive to the ever-changing needs of the cultural sector.

Our Mission

The Alliance for Arts and Culture:

- Leads to ensure our arts and culture sector flourishes;
- Strengthens the collective voice to support artists in their creativity;
- Facilitates engagement and integration to ensure arts and culture are valued by our society;
- Builds capacity within the arts and culture sector.

Our Vision

Arts and Culture: Vital and Dynamic

Strategic Priorities - Three Pillars

Advocacy

- Support and conduct **research** on matters affecting the arts and culture sector;
- Provide **information** on cultural research findings from various sources;
- Promote public **engagement** on the benefits of a healthy arts and culture sector;
- Lead the effort to develop **public policy** supporting arts and culture.

Membership & Services

- Provide strong, inclusive **representation** of a diverse and growing membership;
- Develop opportunities for **training** and skills development;
- Deliver comprehensive package of **benefits** for both organizational and individual members;
- Provide practical **resources** and tools to build capacity in the arts and culture sector.

Networking & Connecting

- Support channels of **communication** within the sector, including improved internal tools;
- Foster **collaboration** among groups within the arts and culture sector;
- Provide information and toolkits which promote **cohesion** in the expression of common goals;
- Plan events which allow for **celebration** and social connection within and beyond our sector.

Strategic Foundation

Financial Sustainability

- Perform annual **review** of organizational performance and plan for continuous improvement;
- Improve infrastructure and capacity through strategic **investment** when funds permit;
- Focus on key **assets** and use them well to support internal programs and contracted services;
- Plan for incremental **growth**, steady results, and gradual improvement of financial position.

Strategic Initiatives and Service Goals 2014-2016

Advocacy

	2014	2015	2016	Achievements By 2016 we will:
Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene annual cultural policy summit 2. Issue advocacy alerts through web and e-news 3. Promote new research findings 4. Support BC Culture Days 5. Participate in federal and provincial arts coalitions 6. Contribute to research partnerships 			<p>Celebrate the publication of a cultural policy document for British Columbia.</p> <p>Devote one full-time position to coordination of research projects.</p> <p>Be valued as a leading resource for arts and culture advocacy.</p>
New	<p>Facilitate round-tables on BC cultural policy framework.</p> <p>Introduce new section of tools and resources on website.</p>	<p>Establish secure online registry of artists and arts organizations.</p> <p>Coordinate arts sector contribution to government policy drafts.</p>	<p>Initiate annual survey to measure health of BC arts and culture sector.</p> <p>Facilitate public input on final drafts of cultural policy.</p>	

Membership & Services

	2014	2015	2016	Achievements By 2016 we will:
Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workshops and professional development events 2. Online job board 3. Boardroom and on-site resource centre 4. Media relations services 5. Group health plan and group RRSP 6. Member Advantage Program (MAP) 			<p>Grow to over 400 members through connection to diverse arts and culture community.</p> <p>Deliver broad suite of services through digital platforms.</p> <p>Gather data from members toward both advocacy and membership goals.</p>
New	<p>Renovate meeting rooms to improve local services.</p> <p>Introduce digital workshops to improve service to regions.</p>	<p>Introduce new package of media relations services.</p> <p>Add cluster of MAP partners accessible across the province.</p>	<p>Develop a members-only supplement to accompany new annual survey of arts and culture sector.</p>	

Networking & Connecting

	2014	2015	2016	Achievements By 2016 we will:
Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alliance blog and e-newsletter 2. Member News 3. Networking events and receptions 4. Mayor's Arts Awards 5. Arts Coalition BC 6. Representing culture in non-profit sector initiatives 			Establish stronger connections within our sector, linking diverse viewpoints and increasing dialogue.
New	Improve internal resources through new database and website.	Re-launch the Marketing Council and add other fields of interest.	Introduce networking groups in key regions.	Improve cohesive expression of the sector's common goals.

Financial Sustainability

	2014	2015	2016	Achievements By 2016 we will:
Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monthly financial review 2. Annual assessment 3. Conservative future planning 4. Research and evaluate new revenue opportunities 			Operate in the black with a modest reserve fund.
New	Assess potential of boardroom as a videoconference space for social enterprise.	Explore new ways of working with Bridge Society to develop revenue.	Launch United Arts Fund adapting from model in Seattle.	