



Strategic Plan

FY25-29

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Executive Summary

In the spring of 2023, ArtPride New Jersey engaged Creative Capacity, LLC to facilitate a strategic planning process. Given the significant impact of the pandemic on the arts and culture field, the organization wanted to assess current needs and develop an adaptive strategy that would allow it to respond effectively.

ArtPride New Jersey gathered feedback and data to inform its planning in a number of ways, including:

- Eight listening sessions for people in the arts community, including both new ArtPride New Jersey members and those with a long history of participation.
- An online survey available to anyone who produces or creates art in the state.
- An organizational retreat in October 2023, attended by Trustees, staff, committee members, and organizational partners.

Feedback received from the field has shaped ArtPride New Jersey's goals for the next five years. It also reinforced the organization's decision to develop an adaptive strategic plan that will allow it to remain responsive to changing needs over time.

Adaptive plans focus on vision, outcomes, and overall strategic direction. The plan also includes broad strategies to illustrate the kind of work that is likely to take place; each strategy is followed by examples of potential projects or action steps that might be pursued. In order to maximize responsiveness to changing community needs and circumstances, this plan does not commit ArtPride New Jersey to specific action steps. Annual planning will determine the best options for pursuing the organization's strategic objectives each year.

Mission

ArtPride New Jersey advances, promotes, and advocates for the arts as essential to the quality of life of every citizen and to the economic vitality of our state.

Our Vision for the Arts in New Jersey

- The arts are acknowledged as a key element of our state's success, driving economic prosperity, enhancing quality of life, and bringing people together.
- Arts sector leaders are diverse, collaborative, and forward-thinking, ready to work together to ensure everyone in New Jersey experiences the arts.
- The arts community is continually removing barriers to participation and making it possible for every person in every community in New Jersey to be engaged in arts experiences that reflect the broad diversity of our state.
- With outstanding, accessible facilities and steady public and private funding support, artists and arts workers can create and thrive.

Our Vision for ArtPride New Jersey

- ArtPride New Jersey brings the state's arts sector together to develop unified advocacy and promotion of the arts, advancing understanding of the field's value to the state's quality of life and economic vitality.
- ArtPride New Jersey is an example to the arts community of the progress that can be made when an organization commits to anti-racism, social justice, and access, demonstrating an intentional, more equitable path forward for the arts sector.
- ArtPride New Jersey's impact is valued and understood across the state's arts sector, and our membership includes arts organizations and arts workers from a wide spectrum of arts disciplines, locations, and budget sizes.

Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice

Using the power of the arts as a means to healing and justice, ArtPride New Jersey is committed to becoming an anti-racist organization. We seek social justice for the historically excluded and oppressed, specifically those that identify as Black, LatinX, Asian Pacific Islander, Indigenous, and/or a Person of Color. ArtPride New Jersey must view its mission through an intersectional framework that also includes the LGBTQ+ community, People with Disabilities, and all historically excluded individuals.

ArtPride New Jersey acknowledges the existence of systemic inequity within the state's arts and cultural community. We will work to promote healing from the damage done by systemic racism through increased public awareness of the value and impact of the arts; grassroots advocacy; and engaging historically excluded artists and arts organizations in all of our efforts. Because of our own history as a predominantly white-led organization, ArtPride commits to transforming our organization to better reflect the diversity of our state's residents.

ArtPride New Jersey seeks equitable access to the arts for all, and believes that creating, sharing, and experiencing art is crucial to the well-being of individuals, communities, and a functioning democracy. ArtPride New Jersey commits to listening to, learning from, and collaborating with arts organizations, creative workers, artists, trustees, volunteers, and patrons in order to help shape a fairer and more just New Jersey.

To further racial justice practices, ArtPride New Jersey must:

- honor the diversity of artistic expression across New Jersey by actively working against conscious and unconscious bias in communications, content, and promotions;
- continually assess and evolve all of our organizational practices to those that will include all historically excluded communities;
- foster a more equitable distribution of power, resources, and wealth and nurture a culture of mutual respect among our staff, board, and volunteers.

As a leader in the arts and cultural community, ArtPride New Jersey must:

- listen to arts organizations and artists from historically excluded communities to identify needed resources and help to provide resources to address those needs;
- ensure access to cultural opportunities for all people and organizations through advocacy for equitable and increased funding for arts and culture at local, state, and federal levels;
- collaborate with strategic partners to challenge and dismantle systemic racism and support social justice for historically excluded artists and arts organizations;
- assist historically excluded arts organizations, artists, and supporters to advocate for public policy that addresses systemic inequities effectively.

This strategic plan includes a variety of initiatives designed to advance ArtPride New Jersey's commitments to equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice. In addition to specific projects, we intend to:

- engage more deeply with all communities, especially those that have been historically excluded and underrepresented, so that our work serves their needs;
- lead and participate in conversations to help the field confront and dismantle inequities that have been part of our structures and practices;
- challenge the arts community to act on their own commitments to equity and social justice, and provide resources that support their efforts.

We anticipate that our work in this area will continue to evolve over the five years of this plan in collaboration with our increasingly diverse membership.

Goal #1: Strengthen our statewide advocacy movement to increase support for the arts.

Outcomes:

- Advance a broader advocacy agenda that reflects the needs of New Jersey's entire arts sector, especially arts organizations and arts workers who have not participated in the past.
 - Increase grassroots advocacy across the state from both arts professionals and arts audiences, with particular focus on the needs, voices, and experiences of those who represent historically excluded communities.
 - Successfully advocate for policies, legislation, and funding streams that support the sustainability of the arts sector.
 - Build strong cross-sector collaborations in fields such as tourism, business, history, healthcare, and community and economic development that will generate new support for the arts.
 - Cultivate and maintain strong bipartisan partnerships at every level of government with officials and legislators who support the arts.
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Strategy #1: Build ArtPride New Jersey's infrastructure for advocacy.

- Clarify roles and integrate new staff members.
- Develop strategy for building participation in advocacy over time.
- Strengthen processes for determining advocacy priorities.
- Use our advocacy tools and technology more effectively.

Strategy #2: Involve more members in setting ArtPride New Jersey's advocacy agenda.

- Experiment with strategies to bring more people into advocacy conversations, such as new member outreach, regular surveys to assess advocacy priorities, and regular office hours where members can easily connect with staff.
- Work with people and groups from historically excluded communities to identify their priorities and make them part of the ArtPride New Jersey agenda.
- Craft unified advocacy messages that are rooted in member priorities, and equip and support all participants to promote these messages consistently.
- Translate greater member engagement in setting advocacy priorities into stronger participation in advocacy initiatives.

Strategy #3: Adopt a more local/regional approach to our advocacy work.

- Launch regional teams of volunteer advocates to source information about advocacy priorities from the field and lead regional advocacy initiatives with staff support.
- Redesign the New Jersey Mayors Committee for the Arts to increase its value for local leaders and create more opportunities to advocate for the arts on the municipal level.
- Connect with Destination Marketing Organizations to raise awareness about the value of the arts within the tourism industry in all areas of the state.
- Build advocacy partnerships with community organizations and grassroots groups, both arts related and non-arts related.

Strategy #4: Increase understanding of the arts' value and impact in multiple sectors.

- Build understanding about the value of supporting the arts among private foundations and corporations.
- Raise awareness of the arts' capacity to positively influence outcomes in other sectors, in an effort to demonstrate the arts' value as a partner.
- Identify values-aligned nonprofit and for-profit entities, and develop opportunities to collaborate on mutually beneficial initiatives.
- Advocate for changes in other sectors that will positively impact overall quality of life as well as the arts (examples: public transit, housing, education).

Strategy #5: Actively cultivate next generation arts advocacy leaders.

- Design advocacy opportunities for people at all stages of their lives and careers.
- Make a special effort to cultivate arts advocates who are younger and/or early or mid-career arts professionals.
- Develop tools, educational/gathering opportunities, and resources to support arts advocacy leaders of all experience levels to be able to engage in consistent and autonomous advocacy work year-round.
- Consider opportunities for annual social events that celebrate advocacy wins and recognize people who made significant contributions.

Aligning ArtPride New Jersey's Work with Strategic Priorities

These questions can help us to align our work with the strategic plan's priorities.

- How is our advocacy strategy responsive to the varied needs in New Jersey's arts community – including New Jersey State Council on the Arts funding but not limited to it?
- How are we supporting and amplifying the advocacy priorities, messages, and campaigns of historically excluded groups?
- What are we doing that effectively mobilizes people to advocate for the arts?
- How are we making advocacy work fun, exciting, and something people are eager to be a part of?
- What are we doing that makes the arts sector less vulnerable?

Goal #2: Convene the arts sector to develop solutions to our shared challenges.

Outcomes:

- Increase collaboration between ArtPride New Jersey and local and regional arts organizations, especially those from underrepresented communities and/or art forms.
 - Support the development of a constituency of arts leaders who reflect the state's diversity, collaborate effectively, and advocate to advance the arts in New Jersey through unified goals and messages.
 - Encourage arts organizations to adopt principles of equity that will help them to become more diverse and inclusive spaces.
 - Advance new models or ideas that support arts organizations and arts workers in carrying out their work effectively, equitably, and sustainably.
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Strategy #1: Drive innovation that generates solutions and new opportunities for the arts sector.

- Drive collaborations and pilot programs that bring the collective knowledge of the field to developing solutions to pressing challenges.
- Conduct research that can be used to answer shared questions and/or develop new strategies for the field.

Strategy #2: Advance the arts sector's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice (EDISJ).

- Play a leadership role in efforts to increase equity in the field through programs such as the Creating Change Network, New Jersey Arts and Culture Administrators of Color, and Arts Pay NJ.
- Develop and share resources that support organizations in their EDISJ work, such as shared training, peer learning, and cohorts working on EDISJ projects.

Strategy #3: Continue to advance pay equity in the state's arts sector through Arts Pay NJ.

- Collaborate with the state's other arts service organizations to continue the work begun in the initial Arts Pay NJ surveys.
- Develop tools/practical applications of the Arts Pay NJ data that will help the field to achieve equity goals.

Strategy #4: Enhance professional development programs that create opportunities for people at all stages of their careers to connect to the state’s arts community through involvement with ArtPride New Jersey.

- Use regional working groups as a pathway to draw arts and culture workers into a statewide arts community, amplifying our advocacy power and building a greater sense of belonging for all.
- Capitalize on the biannual Thrive Arts conference and other convenings as opportunities to share the research, innovation, and solutions being developed through all the threads of ArtPride New Jersey’s work.
- Invest in the development and support of mid-career arts administrators to prepare them to become leaders of arts organizations.
- Convene arts administration students and early career professionals and connect them to opportunities (for example: internships or fellowships).

Aligning ArtPride New Jersey’s Work with Strategic Priorities

These questions can help us to align our work with the strategic plan’s priorities.

- What are we offering that makes participation in ArtPride New Jersey **essential** for everyone in the arts community?
- What are we doing that is different from other arts service organizations, and providing unique value to the field?
- What are we doing that responds to an expressed need in the field for new information, solutions, or models that will help the arts sector thrive?
- How do we capitalize on our convening role to break down silos between the other threads of our work?
- Is our convening work leading to more members of the arts community becoming active in arts advocacy?

Goal #3: Connect cultural consumers with arts organizations and experiences.

Outcomes:

- Increase the size of the JerseyArts.com database of current and potential cultural consumers, with a particular focus on diversifying the range of ages and racial/ethnic backgrounds represented.
 - Build the audience for Discover Jersey Arts content to include a wider range of cultural consumers in terms of age, race/ethnicity, and past arts attendance habits.
 - Strengthen the capacity of arts organizations to effectively engage with their communities.
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Strategy #1: Generate actionable research that helps the arts sector to build connections to current and potential audiences.

- Increase arts organization participation in the Audience Insights Manager (AIM) community patron database.
- Conduct research on the nearly two million households of New Jersey cultural consumers in AIM to better understand audience behaviors.
- Collaborate with arts organizations to develop new strategies and models that respond to learnings from AIM research and help arts organizations to authentically connect with their communities.
- Identify barriers to arts participation, and work collaboratively with the field to develop solutions to remove them.

Strategy #2: Use the Discover Jersey Arts platform to communicate the value of arts participation to individuals, families, and communities.

- Balance Discover Jersey Arts messaging and content between promoting arts events and communicating the value of the arts.
- Enthusiastically encourage people to get out and enjoy the arts.
- Convene audiences at events designed to expand and deepen their engagement with the arts and arts organizations.
- Continue to work with Destination Marketing Organizations and the NJ Division of Travel and Tourism to promote arts tourism.
- Ensure that Discover Jersey Arts content reaches and resonates with the state's diverse audiences by featuring diverse artists and arts experiences and inclusive storytelling.
- Bridge ArtPride New Jersey's business-to-business and business-to-consumer content to engage cultural consumers more effectively and make arts participation more accessible.

- Strengthen partnerships with local and regional organizations, such as chambers of commerce and community development corporations, to reach underrepresented audiences
- Plan for a large-scale campaign that communicates excitement about New Jersey’s arts scene to existing and potential cultural consumers.

Strategy #3: Support staff and volunteers who are promoting the arts and engaging with their communities.

- Help people with all levels of knowledge/experience/abilities to improve their community engagement and arts promotion skills.
- Convene people to co-learn and develop solutions that will broaden and diversify audiences for arts programming.
- Explore new initiatives that support the capacity of individual organizations to promote themselves to larger, more diverse audiences.
- Experiment with developing partnerships between arts organizations, artists, and small for-profit businesses to further promote the arts locally within communities.

Strategy #4: Strengthen ArtPride New Jersey’s arts marketing and promotion infrastructure.

- Increase site visits to the updated Jerseyarts.com.
- Continue to grow our database of cultural consumers.
- Improve and expand JerseyArts.com arts journalism (including the Jersey Arts Podcast and Jersey Arts TV YouTube channel).
- Further develop and enliven the ArtPride New Jersey brand, both visually and in voice.
- Make strategic investments in marketing as needed to increase participation.

Aligning ArtPride New Jersey’s Work with Strategic Priorities

These questions can help us to align our work with the strategic plan’s priorities.

- What are we doing that invites more people to engage with the arts?
- What are we doing to support the diversification of New Jersey’s cultural consumer base?
- What are we doing that supports arts organizations in developing authentic connections to their communities?
- Are we maximizing opportunities to influence audience members to become arts advocates?

Goal #4: Enhance ArtPride New Jersey's capacity and infrastructure.

Outcomes:

- Ensure that ArtPride New Jersey will have stable funding and an effective staff structure that supports operations and the implementation of strategic initiatives.
 - Expand ArtPride New Jersey's membership to include people and organizations from all facets of the state's arts community.
 - Strengthen the arts community's recognition of ArtPride New Jersey as a trusted source of information and resources.
 - Increase understanding of the urgent need to make equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice central to how arts organizations approach their work, using ArtPride New Jersey's own experience as an example of the value of this commitment.
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Strategy #1: Update our membership structure and benefits to reflect our intention to have all facets of the arts community involved in ArtPride New Jersey.

- Determine how to best measure the variety of entities within our membership, and begin tracking these metrics.
- Develop strategies for reaching new members and deepening engagement with all members over time, thereby diversifying our membership and increasing our capacity to serve the field.
- Evaluate how tools such as introductory memberships, sponsored memberships for smaller organizations, tiered memberships, and varying member benefits can make ArtPride New Jersey membership accessible and valuable for organizations of all sizes.

Strategy #2: Set new priorities for ArtPride New Jersey's organizational equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice work.

- Update ArtPride New Jersey's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice plan to reflect progress and new priorities (secure outside consulting support as needed).
- Emphasize the importance of access to the arts for all communities in the next phase of our work.
- Set goals and priorities for and with the Independent Advisory Committee so that it continues to play an important role in providing a variety of perspectives to ArtPride New Jersey's work.
- Continue to revise the composition and practices of our Board of Trustees so that it effectively represents many facets of the state's arts community.
- Create structures and processes to evaluate and communicate our progress to stakeholders and the community with honesty and transparency.

Strategy #3: Drive involvement in ArtPride New Jersey by increasing the value we provide for members.

- Build ongoing feedback loops with our members and the field at large to remain connected to the issues that are most critical to our constituents.
- Ensure that new members from underrepresented communities receive the value they need from membership to remain involved.
- Develop an ArtPride New Jersey Research and Resource Center to share research, tools, templates, and sample policies among members.
- Engage more arts organizations in Discover Jersey Arts resources and programs.
- Develop methods of making ArtPride New Jersey's data easily available to members to help them achieve their own goals around local advocacy, audience engagement, etc.

Strategy #4: Review ArtPride New Jersey's brands and core messaging.

- Assess the current mission statement and determine if revising it would be valuable.
- Examine the benefits and risks of changing ArtPride New Jersey's name and brand.
- Actively communicate ArtPride New Jersey's status as an independent nonprofit to the arts community, reducing misunderstandings about our relationship with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and managing expectations about what we can influence.
- Actively communicate that Discover Jersey Arts is a program of ArtPride New Jersey.
- Invest in messaging to help a wider constituency understand the value of ArtPride New Jersey.

Strategy #5: Strengthen ArtPride New Jersey's core infrastructure.

- Grow organizational resources through increased public and private support.
- Continue to strengthen collaborative processes between board and staff, to ensure effective board participation in key initiatives.
- Grow staff to allow for greater engagement around the state, with the understanding that ArtPride New Jersey's capacity is tied directly to the size of its professional team.
- Enhance technology, operations, and processes to better support ArtPride New Jersey's goals.
- Engage with a consultant to develop a simplified and efficient institutional tech stack adopted across the entire organization that serves the goals of each department and enables staff to do their jobs efficiently and well.
- Develop annual processes that articulate key objectives and support collaboration (for example, an annual staff retreat).

Aligning ArtPride New Jersey's Work with Strategic Priorities

These questions can help us to align our work with the strategic plan's priorities.

- Are we acting as an example to the field of the value of equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice?
- What are we doing to share the value of ArtPride New Jersey with more people and organizations?
- What are we doing to secure new resources that support ArtPride's stability and capacity?
- How well does data support our decisions?
- What are we doing to make it easy for staff to do their jobs?
- How are we staying up to date on new technologies and opportunities to enable staff to do their jobs better and more efficiently?

Implementing an Adaptive Plan

This adaptive strategic plan is designed to support the flexibility ArtPride New Jersey will need to respond to changing conditions over the next five years. Each year, the organization will identify its key priorities for implementation and develop benchmarks to measure success. This annual implementation planning should coincide with budget and development planning for each coming fiscal year.

Annual Strategic Plan Implementation Calendar

December/January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess mid-year progress towards current strategic plan outcomes; adjust work as needed.
February/March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify key strategic plan outcomes and priorities for the coming fiscal year.• Integrate strategic plan priorities into the upcoming budget.• Identify longer-term priorities that may require initial work in the coming fiscal year to put implementation resources in place so they can be pursued in future years (i.e., fundraising, partnership building, etc.).
June/July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an annual dashboard that summarizes this year's strategic plan priorities.
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assign responsibility for driving progress on each strategic plan priority to a staff member or committee.

Maintaining Strategic Direction

This plan provides two tools to help the organization align its ongoing work with its strategic priorities:

- A strategy screen, which can be used to assess how well potential initiatives/actions will support ArtPride New Jersey's strategy and outcomes.
- Checkpoint questions related to each of the plan's goals, which can be used to consider how ongoing work is supporting the plan's strategic priorities and intentions.

Tracking Progress

ArtPride New Jersey will experiment with methods for ensuring that it is tracking progress on an ongoing basis. Possible strategies for this include:

- Structure staff meeting agendas to encourage cross-departmental collaboration on strategic plan goals.
- Dedicate time at each board meeting to discuss the progress of one of the four plan goals.
- Convene the Strategic Planning Committee once or twice per year to assess progress, identify obstacles, and refine strategy.
- Dedicate time at the annual organizational retreat to discussion of ArtPride New Jersey's overall strategy and results, and make refinements as needed.
- Review progress at the annual meeting so that members understand the results of strategic plan initiatives.

Strategy Screen

While this plan identifies likely strategies, changing conditions and unexpected opportunities will influence plan implementation. This strategy screen can help to assess how well a given program, partnership, opportunity, or action aligns with our strategic direction.

The questions in the strategy screen are drawn from the planning process and can be adjusted over time as we learn about which factors are most critical to our success.

Strategy screens are not absolute – an idea that scores poorly on the screen might still be pursued, and an idea that scores well might be dismissed. The screening process is meant to inform discussion around decisions. Each participant in the discussion should score the opportunity individually. Then the group can compare scores, discuss their reasoning, and decide how to proceed.

Using this tool:

1. Identify an idea (project, opportunity, etc.) that needs to be evaluated for its potential to support ArtPride New Jersey's strategic priorities.
2. Gather a group of people who understand those strategic priorities.
3. Articulate how a final decision about the idea under discussion will be made. In most cases, strategy screen discussions are just one element of how a decision to proceed or not will be made.
4. Explain what we know and what we don't know about the idea under discussion.
5. Each participant should score the idea individually using the chart on the following page.
6. The group shares their individual scores and looks for areas of agreement and disagreement.
7. Discuss areas of disagreement to understand varying perspectives.
8. Decision makers can use what they have learned from the strategy screen discussion to inform their process.

ArtPride New Jersey’s Strategy Screen

Be sure to review the instructions for using this screen on the preceding page.

- Scoring:
- 3 = Yes, absolutely
 - 2 = Somewhat
 - 1 = Not very well
 - 0 = Not at all/actively works against the priority

Strategy Alignment Questions	Score
1. Will this directly support our mission?	
2. Will this idea make participating in ArtPride New Jersey feel essential to more people and groups?	
3. Is this idea directly responsive to a need in the field (and how do we know that)?	
4. Will this idea move us closer to one of our strategic outcomes? <i>(Provide a higher score for ideas connected to more than one outcome.)</i>	
5. Will this idea mobilize more people to advocate for the arts? OR Will this idea lead to greater participation in the arts? <i>(Give this line double points if an idea supports both priorities.)</i>	
6. Will this idea make NJ’s arts sector less vulnerable to our challenging environment?	
7. Will this idea address a need or priority that is particularly important to underrepresented or historically excluded groups?	
8. Will this idea demonstrate the value of equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice to building healthy arts organizations and/or a healthy arts sector?	
9. Do we have the capacity to carry out this idea (or can we secure it before the project needs to begin)?	
10. Will this idea strengthen our organizational capacity in the long-term?	

- Scoring:
- 25-30 This idea has great alignment with our strategic priorities.
 - 20-24 This idea has potential. Do the pros outweigh the cons?
 - 17-19 This idea has some challenges to overcome before we can decide.
 - 14-16 This idea has limited impact on many of our priorities. Is its potential impact worth the resources we will have to invest?
 - 0-13 This idea has very limited impact on our priorities. We need to assess the return on investment and the opportunity cost very carefully.