



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030



Saskatchewan Arts
Alliance

Strategic Plan 2025-2030

SAA Strategic Plan 2025-2030

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Values

These are the principles we value:

Collective Voice: a collective voice enables artists to create positive change and public support for the arts.

Towards Truth and Reconciliation: a commitment to the values, principles and Calls to Action of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Practicing Decolonization: a commitment to unlearning colonial assumptions and working in ways that honour Indigenous leadership, cultural practices, and community-defined priorities.

Intersectional Diversity: the diverse voices and perspectives in the arts ecosystem are respected, welcomed and supported.

Integrity: artists and arts organizations are free to pursue their artistic vision at arms length and empowered by artists' rights to a living wage.

Pay Equity: a respectful living wage for arts workers and arts administrators, comparable to other industries in Saskatchewan.

Access: citizens have free access to art, and participation in their culture.
Creative Expression: the artist's creativity, and the diversity of the arts, are essential to our social and economic well-being.

An Informed Public: research creates a critical foundation for good policy, and a broader understanding of our arts ecosystem.

Collaboration and Cooperation: leadership in facilitating the sharing of resources and coordinating efforts is important to the arts community.



SAA Strategic Plan Summary

“The SAA acts to ensure the lively existence and continued growth of the arts and cultural industries in Saskatchewan.”

Saskatchewan Arts Alliance Bylaws

Endeavours

Advocacy

Through words, actions, and relationships, we advocate in non-partisan and critical ways. We mobilize members, allies, and the public. Our research supports advocacy, and it supports artistic, accessible, and fun public education based on storytelling. We collaborate with funding agencies, advocating for their work to fund art as a public good.

Membership

We are a collective voice for the arts, and we offer tangible benefits to members, responsive to their needs. We lead by example, and create helpful tools for arts workers, arts organizations. We encourage a positive culture where arts workers and organizations lift each other up.

Ways of Working

We have solid ways for administration and working together, and we continue to deepen these practices, creating a solid foundation for the SAA. We lead by example, hoping to improve working environments for members and the wider community. We take good care of our staff and Board, and the funds that are entrusted to us. We have a clear sense of purpose and defined criteria for critical decision-making.





SAA Strategic Plan 2025-2030

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Endeavours

Advocacy

Our advocacy happens through our words, actions, and relationships. We advocate through partnerships, coalitions, and conversations at the municipal, provincial, and national levels.

We mobilize members, partners and allies to advocate, and we transform our research, skills, and culture into tools to foster collaboration and action.

We make strategic invitations for allies and coalitions to support us in specific conversations, relationships, projects, and research. Our relationships stretch beyond the arts ecology.

We advocate with care, criticism, and awareness. We are not adversarial, but we speak with a clear collective voice on the realities that we are facing on behalf of the arts ecology in our province. We ask for change and disagree with gusto, in non-partisan, collaborative ways.

We collaborate with funding agencies, advocating for their work to fund art as a public good.

Research and advocacy are intertwined. We do meaningful research that supports our advocacy work and creates new coalitions and relationships in Saskatchewan and beyond.



Research gains and shares awareness of realities, and amplifies the voice of Saskatchewan's arts ecology. Our research agenda contributes to tangible benefits for members and evaluates our own activities.


Our research underpins fun, artistic, and accessible public education as part of advocacy. We provide context and help people understand. We story-tell.

We help our members learn advocacy skills and advocate for themselves.

We address emergencies related to pending cuts, losses, and troubles, in support of our members and the arts ecology.

When we look around the arts ecosystem, we will see:

- Other people and groups using our advocacy tools
- People joining us, and they have ways to support our advocacy efforts. Some of these ways will be fun.
- Surveys showing increased public support for the lively existence of arts and cultural industries in Saskatchewan.
- Reciprocal and respectful relationships with agencies, governments, and individual government and agency representatives.
- A new culture of criticism of realities, not people or politicians, accompanied by genuine solutions and ways forward.
- Measurement of our healthy efforts helps give context to our work and helps us understand where our actions are leading. We can and will measure:
 - Contacts with MPs and MLAs, including meetings, conversations, letters and emails
 - Number of people who advocate with and for us
 - Number of downloads of advocacy mobilization tools
 - Number of members mobilized to support

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- Number of members who contact us for help with their own advocacy issues or strategy
 - Number of incoming inquiries for research and/or policy support

Membership

We are a collective voice for the arts and offer tangible benefits for members who belong to the SAA to support their lively existence. We may not be able to control increases in funding, but we can act to reduce burdens for our members through collective action.

This includes unique responsive programs and research that responds to needs; access to education and services; financial benefits and administrative supports; tools to mobilize members and arts workers to be effective advocates; and, of course, listening and sharing a collective voice.

We conduct research on request for member organizations to reduce their costs and to build knowledge about the arts community and the needs of our membership.

We are transparent in how we work, hoping to lead by example and provide practical tools to benefit organizations, practices, and culture in the larger arts ecology.

We provide arts worker education and encourage a culture where we don't pit arts organizations or artists against each other. We are interconnected. We lift each other up.

When we look around the arts ecosystem, we will see:

- None of this will feel like more work for our members. Our tangible benefits are clear, understandable, and meaningful. Our membership and beyond know who we are and how to reach us. We have less pressure to react to requests.



- We will see a robust membership, founded on arts organizations; arts workers enjoying financial benefits; and a better-equipped arts ecology to advocate, change culture, and enjoy their work. More engaged members and better served members.
- A positive shift in culture and attitude, towards mutual support based on respect and reciprocity.
- A shift in tone in our gatherings. Our members will have learned new skills, acquired new tools and outlooks.
- An environment welcoming to intersectionality among artists and the arts ecology.
- Arts and cultural industries are welcomed at the table as active contributors to the business and entrepreneurial landscape.
- There is a more obvious inter-dependency of arts organizations and arts workers. Arts organizations are involved in other parts of the arts ecology, outside of their discipline, and between organizations of different sizes and funding, and levels of experience. We show up for each other.
- Arts organizations can access support and tools for succession, administrative and funding challenges, and even palliative care.

Good Ways of Working

Before 2025, we established new ways of administering and working together, and we continue to deepen these practices, creating a solid foundation for the SAA. We lead by example, hoping to improve working environments for members and the wider community.

We're popping off with energy, resilience and confidence. We listen. We share. We respond. We do work that no one else is doing, or can do. We do less and more meaningful work. We use plain language.



Money matters. We manage it well, through conscious decision-making, and its use reflects the value we place on artists and art and the coalition relationship with funding agencies. We are financially sound and sustainable from public and other sources. We have developed and implemented clear and coherent plans for what to do in the case of a crisis related to money or people.

We have a Board that is fully engaged in their role, well-supported with training and tools, and enjoying the experience of protecting and promoting the SAA and fulfilling the bylaws. Board members are part of SAA's contribution to our healthy arts ecology, are mobilized to advocate, and are ready to help the SAA face challenges and crises. We hear each other.

We have a staff team with a clear sense of purpose, working in collaboration, well-supported with training, tools and other people. Everyone's contribution to the aims and objectives, as best as we can manage, suits their skills and talents. No one feels overwhelmed or alone, and their creative and community practices are celebrated. We have taken action to make sure that we have the people, skills, and resources we need to fulfill our aims and objectives, no matter what happens.

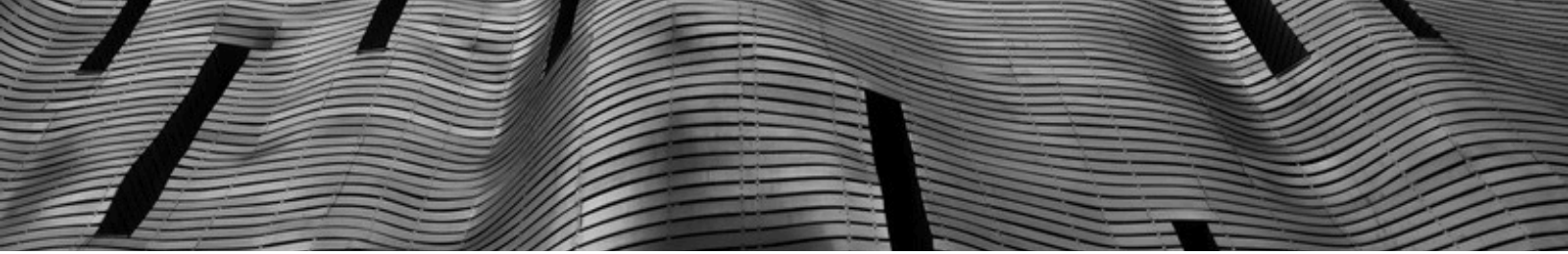
We grow through funded projects, allowing staff to hold responsibility for specific initiatives.

Staff decisions are based on our aims and objectives, and this plan's endeavours, and the goals of our job descriptions, specific projects and areas of focus. We have clear roles, and we trust each other to meet our responsibilities.

Before starting any new initiative, we ask ourselves:

- Is anyone else doing this? (If yes, then it's not ours to do)
- Which of our aims and objectives does this meet?
- Does this lift up our staff and Board, and members?
- Does this layer up a few of our aims, objectives and endeavours? (Does this meet a few needs at once?)



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- Is this a good use of our money, and peoples' skills and time?
 - Does this increase relationship?
 - Would this influence someone who might make a difference?
 - Does this share SAA's way of being (values, administration, culture)?
 - Would this put more money, or equivalent tangible benefits, in the hands of members and/or arts workers?

When we look around, we will see in our ecosystem:

- Engaged staff, Board, collaborators and members, with no one feeling overwhelmed.
- Sustained funding for the SAA.
- Other organizations are adapting and embedding SAA's ways of working.
- New staff hired, trained, and contributing to an overall healthy arts ecology.
- Ongoing decolonization of leadership and management, with work being done in trust and accountability.
- Decisions are made in critical, rigorous, and respectful ways.
- Work being done in coalition and consensus, based on respectful and reciprocal relationship.
- Staff and Board receiving consistent and meaningful training.
- Succession planning in place, with procedures documented and new people being prepared for leadership for both Board and staff.
- Yearly check-ins with both Board and staff, through confidential surveys, and making changes where needed.



Evaluation Questions

- Are we fulfilling our bylaws? Are we meeting our aims and objectives?
- Are we acting in accordance with our values?
- Do we have sufficient plans and policies for our financial stability and succession?
- How's our endeavouring going?
- Have we seen the changes in the ecosystem as a result of our three endeavours?
- In our endeavours, and in the changes we observe, what did we learn?
- Have we become a one-person show, or are we genuinely working in collaboration?
- Where it's possible, have we measured the effectiveness of our actions?
- How did we do? How effective have we been?
- Are we still relevant to Saskatchewan and Canada?
- Has anything changed so dramatically in the landscape that we are no longer needed? If so, how do we wrap up our operations respectfully and ensure that everyone involved continues to contribute to the arts and cultural industries?
- Is our staff team a functional place where people want to contribute?
- Did we let anyone on our staff team get overwhelmed or lonely?
- What do we need to do now to lift each other up?
- Is our Board a functional place?
- Do Board members want to contribute and participate?

- Do Board members feel free to disagree?
- Are our members happy? What do they need from us now?
- What's next in the world of advocacy?
- What do we need to prepare for what's next?

At the end of the five years, these questions may help us to evaluate our endeavours and to recognize who we have become. Like rolling on buffalo robes, action can lead to transformation. Then we get to decide what comes after that.

These questions can be asked annually, biannually, or before beginning the next strategic planning process in 2029.

Influences for this Strategic Planning Process

Elder Guidance

Elder Joseph Naytowhow agreed to help guide this strategic planning process. He offered a buffalo practice with Cheryl L'Hirondelle at the Board Retreat.

Buffalo have a unique role in the ecosystem: they wallow and roll. As they do that work, new plants grow and the landscape is enlivened. This plan is based on the SAA following that natural pattern.

Buffalo also teach us to move through the storm, knowing that there are long spring prairie grasses awaiting us at the end of the snow. There are winds against us: unhelpful values, attitudes, and trauma. We lower our shaggy heads and keep walking.





Other Voices

The SAA's Arts For Change conference was part of this process. It involved interventions by artists, and these voices influenced this strategic plan:

- Be who you were created to be. We have a solid set of aims and objectives to fulfil.
- We aren't starving artists. While we as a collective do not yet have what we need to thrive, we have our art, our collective voice and a positive culture of coalition-building. We act on the firm belief that art is an essential human practice and part of our public good. We act with confidence and resilience.

We have our freedom to speak critically about realities, kindly about people, and to lead by example. We find our freedom in the security of plans for succession, and finances, and delegating.

We do not have to rush frantically anywhere. Advocacy is challenging and takes a long time to come to fruition.

Not everything works the way we plan, and dancing without music has a precious beauty. Advocacy outcomes are largely out of our control; we recognize this and value our work in other ways. We can reassess and shift when needed.

We are immensely grateful to be supported by our members.

