

ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action 2.0

2026-2035

arts
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2026-2035 Blueprint for Collective Action

Vision: A more vibrant regional economy and connected community for all.

Overview

By investing in a wide variety of art forms and providing strategic leadership for the arts sector in the broader community, ArtsWave creates an environment where the growing impact of the arts is felt and embraced by the entire community. The 2026-2035 Blueprint for Collective Action confirms a bold vision for the region's future with the arts playing a vital, connected role in its growth.

The Blueprint is designed to do three things:

- Align with broader community objectives;
- Provide clarity and specificity around the kinds of activities and outcomes ArtsWave believes will advance these objectives; and
- Leverage more support from the community by demonstrating ever-greater relevance to the community.

Focus Areas

Arts Put Cincinnati on the Map:

To increase the region's competitive advantage in attracting talent, new business and cultural tourism by offering arts that are perceived as extraordinary and innovative.

Arts Deepen Roots:

To deepen feelings of engagement and connection to the community by widening participation in arts experiences, especially those that resonate with adults age 40 and under.

Arts Bridge Divides:

To increase understanding and appreciation of differences among us, contributing to our region's identity as welcoming and inclusive.

Arts Strengthen Neighborhoods:

To build vibrancy and well-being in neighborhoods, particularly those that are under-resourced or revitalizing, by increasing the availability and accessibility of arts organizations and opportunities.

Arts Fuel Creativity and Learning:

To unlock imagination and foster future-ready skills by ensuring that all youth in the region have access to multiple arts opportunities.

ARTS PUT CINCINNATI ON THE MAP

The Cincinnati Region's dynamic and innovative arts scene attracts employees, visitors, and businesses to the region, generating economic value and positive public perception.

GOAL: To increase the region's competitive advantage in the attraction of talent, new business and cultural tourism by offering arts that are perceived as extraordinary and innovative.

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To design new or unexpected artistic collaborations
- To engage or employ artists at the forefront of their field
- To create arts experiences that are active, immersive, and social; and that stretch the boundaries of the art form
- To improve and employ digital capabilities and use of social media to reach and engage digitally oriented or remote audiences
- To act as laboratories, critics, conveners, and guardians in the evolution of AI
- To develop and share stories that distinguish the region through its arts
- To participate in collaborative efforts to increase earned media and leverage paid media/marketing opportunities
- To participate in collaborative efforts to share resources and decrease duplicative costs throughout the sector

ARTS DEEPEN ROOTS IN THE REGION

Residents who are engaged in the arts – whether as volunteers, artists, or audience members – are more likely to stay in the region because they have a stronger and more positive connection to the community.

GOAL: To deepen feelings of engagement and connection to the community by widening participation in arts experiences, especially those that resonate with adults age 40 and under

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To create arts experiences that are participatory, social, recurring, promote well-being, and/or encourage personal investment in the organization and/or community.
- To engage young adults, including teens, college students, early career professionals and young families in arts experiences that inspire memories and future involvement.

- To engage newcomers to the region in arts programs that are welcoming and inclusive.

ARTS BRIDGE DIVIDES

When the arts reflect and celebrate the diversity of our community, residents build a greater understanding and appreciation of cultural differences.

GOAL: To increase understanding and appreciation of differences among us, contributing to our region's identity as welcoming and inclusive.

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To present works of art created by artists of all races and ethnicities
- To create arts experiences that include artists of all races and ethnicities
- To create and/or present art that tells the story(ies) of all races and ethnicities
- To create shared arts experiences for people of all races and ethnicities
- To identify and establish partnerships and collaborations that support equitable access to arts experiences for people of all races and ethnicities
- To involve at all levels of organizational decision-making people who reflect the broadest possible racial and ethnic diversity as well as other demographic differences
- To develop cross-cultural artistic partnerships and collaborations

ARTS STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOODS

Arts organizations and cultural facilities serve as vital hubs for neighborhood activity that supports local business, builds civic pride and cultivates personal and community health and well-being.

GOAL: To build vibrancy and well-being in neighborhoods, particularly those that are under-resourced or revitalizing, by increasing the availability and accessibility of arts organizations and opportunities.

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To establish partnerships and collaborations within the neighborhood in which the organization is physically located
- To create an environment where all members of the organization's surrounding neighborhood feel welcome
- To increase the variety and frequency of arts experiences embedded in or accessible to neighborhoods throughout the region

- To improve the aesthetics of the region's neighborhoods
- To enliven indoor and outdoor public spaces with arts experiences
- To optimize the use of existing community resources to support equitable access to arts experiences
- To improve and employ digital capabilities and use of social media to reach and engage neighborhoods
- To maintain and enhance cultural facilities

ARTS FUEL CREATIVITY AND LEARNING

The arts have the power to transform education and outcomes for youth both by improving learning of core curriculum and teaching skills like creativity, collaboration, compassion, critical thinking and problem-solving.

GOAL: To unlock imagination and foster future-ready skills by ensuring that all youth in the region have access to multiple arts opportunities.

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To provide meaningful arts education experiences, opportunities and arts-based content for youth at all grade levels, prioritizing gaps and underserved populations
- To provide professional development and enrichment opportunities for arts educators
- To develop curricula, materials, and training to support arts integration in all subjects and at all grade levels

Impact Glossary

Activity

Actions taken, or work performed by your organization (Activities should be broad, but meaningful. For example, if you are a performing arts organization and your educational programming consists of student matinees twice a week and a 3-day in-school workshop, those would be two separate activities rather than one. But you would not list your Tuesday and Thursday matinees as separate activities.)

Arts Experiences

The full spectrum of offerings by arts organizations available to the general public.

Arts Integration

An approach to teaching in which students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets learning objectives in both (integrating the arts into a math class would be an example of arts integration).

Arts Enrichment

The arts are used as a device or strategy to support learning. In the simplest terms, this is arts education that is arts for art's sake (inviting a school to attend a play would be arts enrichment).

Community

Communities can mean many things, but for our purposes, we are interested in geographic communities. For consistency, please communicate your communities served by zip codes. If you are measuring geographic communities in another way, please let us know.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement in the arts is a variety of programming, performances, events, and activities which leverage art to engage community members in cultural, social, and economic development. These activities will most likely occur outside of your location, recognizing there may be some exceptions. For an event or activity to be considered community engagement within your space, it must be purposeful and beyond your normal programming. Community engagement activities must be low-cost (under \$10 per person) or free to attend. Do not include activities that took place outside of the region or with people from outside of the region.

Cross Cultural Understanding

Knowledge and appreciation of the characteristics, values, beliefs, and behaviors of other cultures

Early Career Professionals

People in the workforce under the age of 40.

Economy

Refers to conditions of prosperity which contribute to a thriving quality of life, rather than traditional economic impact indicators

Equitable Access

Additional services are provided, and/or actual or potential barriers are removed so that all individuals have equal opportunity to take full advantage of available arts opportunities

Extraordinary

Experiences in the arts that are out of the ordinary, could not necessarily be found in other places, or that are otherwise seen as fresh and innovative – helping to differentiate our region through the arts

Future-Ready Skills

A broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed — by educators, school reformers, college professors, employers, and others — to be critically important to success in today's world, particularly in collegiate programs and contemporary careers and workplaces. These include social emotional skills, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making, and soft skills, such as creativity, collaboration, compassion, critical thinking and problem-solving.

Inclusive Arts Opportunities

Arts experiences, events, and activities that primarily feature artists and/or serve audiences that include all differences among people, including race, gender, age, sexual orientation, geography and more.

Low-Cost Arts Opportunity

Arts events, experiences, or activities that cost less than \$10 per person.

Meaningful Arts Education Opportunities

Varied arts learning experiences for youth provided both inside and outside of the school environment, including learning and creating art with teaching artists, experiencing art created or presented by professional artists, and integrating the arts into the learning of other subjects

New Applicant

An organization that has never received funding through ArtsWave

Other Arts Education

Arts Education activities that take place outside of the school day (after school, before school, weekend) OR that are coordinated by someone other than a school (summer camp, boy/girl scouts, etc...). Arts education activities that do not fit the definition of School-Based Arts Education (see definition) would be included in Other Arts Education.

Outcomes

Answer the questions: "What difference did the activity make?" and "What does success look like for this activity?"; can be qualitative or quantitative

Patrons

All people reached. Paid audience members AND non-paid audience members. DO include participation numbers from community engagement activities. DO NOT include arts education activities. For ArtsWave's purposes, patrons do not mean donors.

Region

As defined by the United States Census, the 15 counties in Southwestern Ohio, Northern Kentucky, and Southeastern Indiana that comprise the Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN Metropolitan Statistical Area, including Brown, Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren Counties in Ohio; Boone, Bracken, Campbell, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, and Pendleton Counties in Kentucky; and Dearborn, Ohio and Union Counties in Indiana

Relevance

Arts, arts education, and community engagement programming that is connected and appropriate for the overall region and sector without repetition.

School-Based Arts Education

School-Based Arts Education must be coordinated by a school AND occur during the school day. The activity can take place either at the school, your location, or another location in the community. Do not include activities with schools outside the region.

Teaching Artist

A teaching artist is a practicing professional artist with the complementary skills and sensibilities of an educator, who engages people in learning experiences in, through and about the arts. For ArtsWave's reporting purposes, teaching artists can be paid contractors, paid employees, or volunteers.

Under-resourced

Those individuals and groups who by virtue of prioritization, interest, geography, economics, or other barriers have disproportionately less access to arts opportunities than others

Volunteers

People that did any type of volunteer services, both full-time and/or part-time, for your organization during the reporting year, including volunteer members of the organization's governing body. Organizations that don't keep track of this information in their books and records or report this information elsewhere (such as in annual reports or grant proposals) can provide a reasonable estimate, and can use any reasonable basis for determining this estimate.

Youth

Persons aged 0-18 years