

2020-2022 Addendum to SDAC Strategic Plan

In March 2020, as the COVID19 pandemic began sweeping the United States, we came to the realization we would not be able to carry out our usual strategic planning events and strategies at the South Dakota Arts Council. Our normal process would include road trip across the state to engage constituents in regional meetings, a statewide conference where we would gather more input from the arts field, and a direct partnership with our state advocacy agency, Arts South Dakota, to carry out this work.

Aside from the inability to connect with constituents for public input and planning sessions, we also realized that pressing forward with virtual meetings and surveys would also be the wrong approach. It just wasn't the right time for this work. The pandemic is at the forefront of everyone's minds, and though our planning and process should include disaster preparedness and resiliency going forward, it also must be comprehensive, long-term, and progressive.

In order to appropriately reform our strategic planning process, we have decided to continue our current strategic plan through 2022 with refocused efforts to directly respond to the challenges of the pandemic. This will allow us to continue important work that aligns with our mission and goals while we employ creative, new ways to gather input and ideas for our future work.

Our planning process will include a variety of new methods:

- We launched a new approach in 2021 to help us gather input regionally through an [artist-engaged strategic planning process](#) and hired a team creative problem-solvers, who were deployed in their area of the state to gather input from arts constituents and help us understand and organize the information in meaningful ways.
- In October 2021, in partnership with Arts South Dakota, we held a virtual statewide arts conference. Originally scheduled in May, we postponed this event with the hope we could gather our arts community in person this fall but decided in mid-summer to take the event fully virtual. During the conference we worked to have Arts Council staff and advisors present at each session to take notes that can help convey the needs of the arts field to us. This method of observation may be useful in gathering information that often goes unspoken during conversations with agency staff and board.
- A statewide survey was circulated in 2021 asking for detailed feedback on our current strategic plan to help us reprioritize and understand the public perception of our work throughout the past few years. Though we generally deploy a survey asking for feedback on our programming and service, this is the first time we've specifically asked for constituents to dig into our current plan to help us better communicate our work moving forward.
- We also held two virtual meeting to gather input from constituents, stakeholders, and the entire statewide arts community. These meetings were tailored for two different groups: representatives of arts/nonprofit organizations and individual artists/persons. The meetings allowed for a general forum for feedback and then multiple breakout sessions by interest area, all of which were determined from theming feedback gathered by late 2021.

We have carried out the first several steps in the planning process, and we continue to use additional methods including meetings with specific communities as well as Council/board and staff review of feedback and evaluations of special programs designed to assist the arts field during the pandemic, such as our [Residencies for Recovery grants](#) and our [Roster Artist Educational Video Series](#). Our intention is to leave space in our new planning process to fill gaps by whatever means will work best. We have built

enough time into this process to adapt to the need as we learn from our constituents and uncover new information.

South Dakota Arts Council 2018-2022 Strategic Plan updates: *A new focus in response to the COVID19 pandemic*

Overarching Goal: Striving for Equity

We maintain this goal and reinforce the statements included in it. The pandemic has made engaging in the arts less accessible to under-served communities, and our work through 2021 will focus on addressing disparities caused by this public health crisis.

Learn:

K-12 Arts Education has been deeply affected by the pandemic. Throughout the next year, we will prioritize ways to provide arts education opportunities to K-12 students across South Dakota at no cost.

We have begun this work by implementing the [Roster Artist Educational Video Series](#), which also benefits artists who are endorsed for our teaching artist and touring arts roster programs by paying them to create video lessons, which we host on our Youtube channel. These videos are free and are being shared with K-12 teachers and publicly on our social media platforms.

We also recently launched the new [Governor's Student Art Competition](#), which is a free art contest for students in grades K-12. This new program, in partnership with South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, was announced during National Arts in Education Week and will feature student artwork in an exhibition at the State Capitol during our Legislative Session.

Adapting our [Poetry Out Loud](#) program to a virtual experience for students and teachers is another priority to better serve students through the current school year. We are working to design online poetry units taught by teachers from across the state, which can then be used by any school to implement the program. This will be a great way to engage teachers who have had interest in the program in the past but haven't found the time to make it happen.

Our Artists in Schools & Communities residency program and Touring Arts program are the two biggest arts education programs, and we are working with artists and sponsor organizations to continue this work wherever possible. We have made both of these programs more flexible in light of the challenges of the pandemic allowing residencies and events to be conducted virtually, relaxing match requirements, reducing the number of required teaching hours, and inviting other solutions for consideration on a case-by-case basis.

Connect:

Cooperation and flexibility are high priorities for our agency as we work to adequately assist the arts field in an ever-changing situation. Throughout the pandemic and beyond, we will work with existing partners and develop new partnerships whenever it is advantageous to artists, arts organizations, and students.

Our goal is to be nimble enough to be able to accept opportunities for assistance and collaboration that will benefit our constituents. We will also be open to trying new approaches and relaxing policies when we are able, so we can help our state through the pandemic as much as possible.

Progress:

The Essential Arts is a goal we simply can't afford to relax at this pivotal time in our nation's history. We will work to deepen and expand all of our work related to this goal throughout 2022 to support a resilient and sustainable arts future for South Dakota.