



SOUTH DAKOTA ARTS COUNCIL  
**Strategic Plan**

2024-2029

The South Dakota Arts Council helps artists and communities achieve their work through grantmaking, policymaking, partnership, and advising.

Photo courtesy Travel South Dakota.



The Brookings, SD Summer Arts Festival features 175 artists from across the nation, representing 15 disciplines of art. Photo courtesy Travel South Dakota.



Master artist Bryan Akipa is a Dakota flautist, flute maker, champion traditional dancer, and visual artist. Photo courtesy Joshua Chrysler.

## **A NEW APPROACH**

In the wake of the Covid 19 crisis, our agency embarked on an exciting journey of exploration with a cohort of 10 artist researchers who helped us reach constituents across our state to gather input about the work of our agency, their experiences with the arts, and a better arts future for South Dakotans. Employing this artist cohort to hold conversations with their friends and colleagues removed a barrier for many people who are unable or unwilling to attend a public gathering and share their thoughts. These personal and focused conversations resulted in more honest feedback, an exchange of ideas, and aspirations for what the arts sector could do in our state.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Making Meaningful Change

South Dakota's arts and culture sector has changed dramatically during the last 10 years, and it's our responsibility to adapt and guide the field. Our communities are facing pressing issues:

- **Disparities:** Rural people have to do more with less. Rural America gets less than 7% of philanthropic dollars (Native under 1%) and 10% of small business loans. SDAC funding is no longer serving our constituency in the best way. The disparities are clear and have been recently compounded by social and pandemic upheaval.
- **Demographic Shifts:** Diversity in rural South Dakota is increasing, bringing new cultures and neighbors to small communities. Additionally, an aging population of the Baby Boomer generation may need more support and opportunity to access the arts.
- **Transitions:** Changes to industry and perspective in rural communities and Tribal Nations create new opportunities, but that can be difficult to navigate.

### Realigning for Access and Impact

Armed with input and information from our strategic planning process, we will realign our grant programs to both address current rural challenges and meet our vision. We've identified the areas where we can have the MOST impact.

- **Investing in Communities:** Bolstering the arts, culture, natural resources, creativity, business, and opportunities in efforts that help us feel connected, invested, and proud of where we live
- **Investing in Artists:** Funding resources, skill building, networking, and entrepreneurship to help artists grow and thrive at all levels of their career
- **Investing in Arts Education:** Building the bases of knowledge, participation, appreciation, and interest at all life stages



Touring Artist Phil Baker travels throughout the state enhancing the lives of young people through music and movement. Photo courtesy SDAC.



We fund programs that add quality of life to South Dakota communities. Photo courtesy Fallout Creative, Aberdeen, SD.

## OUR MISSION

We advance South Dakota's artistic and cultural vitality through funding, connection, and resources.

## OUR VALUES

*We believe:*

- Access to the arts is essential in daily life across South Dakota.
- The arts connect communities, cultures, and generations.
- The arts are a vital component of South Dakota's economy.
- A vibrant arts ecosystem attracts, sustains, and advances a diverse population of professionals across all sectors.

## OUR CULTURE

We are dedicated members of South Dakota's arts sector who share a passion for our state and the inspiring art making happening within it. Our team strives for excellence in creative solutions, attentive service to our creative community, and investing in art that advances the field and our state. **Meet our team:** <https://artscouncil.sd.gov/>

## OUR COMMITMENTS

The South Dakota Arts Council is committed to serving all South Dakotans through the arts. We have centered this set of values around **Access** and **Inclusion** as guiding principles for our work. We plan to evaluate and make annual commitments related to these values each year going forward.

- We are committed to **eliminating barriers to funding from our agency and revealing pathways to access and invitation**, among the broad arts sector including education, arts in rural communities, and support for arts businesses.
- We are committed to **responsive listening** and transparency so that not only are we sharing our **best practices** but our challenges and questions as well.
- We are committed to **advocating for professional wages, employment benefits and fair working conditions** for arts practitioners' quality and standard of living.



The Levitt amphitheater in Sioux Falls draws tens of thousands to performing arts shows all summer long. Photo courtesy Levitt Sioux Falls.



## OUR VISION

South Dakota is an expansive arts community where people connect, build strong relationships, share, and develop ideas.

### What does this vision look like for SDAC?

- We provide broad access to the arts with as few barriers as possible to all South Dakotans and visitors.
- We support and serve a knowledgeable and engaged field of artists, educators, presenters, and volunteers and continuously adapt to changes and shifts in the field.
- We promote diversity of thought, expression, and culture that is reflected in our state, while encouraging and supporting our colleagues at every stage of their career.

The 2023 Poetry Out Loud state winner Grace Powell competed in Washington, D.C., representing South Dakota. Photo courtesy Poetry Out Loud.

## OUR STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

### 1. Be curious and responsive

- Invite, explore, and embrace input from constituents, staff, and the broader arts and culture sector
  - Try new things
  - Make meaningful change and re-evaluate that change with constituents
- Success = improved grants and programs that better support artists and organizations**

### 2. Explore and enhance opportunities

- Investigate existing systems to find ways to weave access to the arts throughout schools and communities
- Grow partnerships, capacity, and funding
- Expand public awareness
- Deepen community connection

**Success = more South Dakotans engaged in and supporting the arts**

### 3. Prepare for a future of discovery, change, and growth

- Anticipate shifts in the field – technology, policy, changing populations
  - Design response systems for future emergencies
  - Consider temporary measures to aid recovery, strengthen infrastructure, boost opportunity, and take advantage of trends when change is thrust upon us
- Success = a prepared and agile state arts agency ready to guide the field**



Immersive art experiences are showcased at the South Dakota Art Museum in Brookings, SD. Photo courtesy Travel South Dakota.

On the cover is a photo of The Arc of Dreams, a monumental stainless-steel and stone sculpture spanning the Big Sioux River in downtown Sioux Falls.

The piece was installed in 2019 and was created by South Dakota Artist Laureate Dale Claude Lamphere and is nearly the length of a football field. The overall sweep of the sculpture was inspired by a blade of prairie grass. The structure reflects the time-tested growth pattern that allows grass to move with the wind and not fail. These grass-like arcs are then wrapped in a double helix: the carrier of all the genetic ancestry now uniquely expressed in each of us.

“My hope is that this sculpture will inspire future dreamers to face the challenge and trust in the promise of their own dreams.”

- Dale Claude Lamphere



Performing artist and SDAC grantee Katie Dwyer teaches students in a ukulele workshop. Photo courtesy Grand River Arts Council.

