



STRATEGIC PLAN: 2021-2024

Situational Analysis

The Delaware Art Museum (DelArt) occupies a unique space in Delaware and the Greater Brandywine Valley. Our collection is both internationally renowned and locally relevant, our location straddles the city and suburbs, and our programs have broad appeal and deep engagement. These attributes provide opportunities for the Museum to strengthen its mission as an accessible community resource that connects people to art.

During our last strategic plan (2017-2021), we made great strides strengthening this identity. We more fully committed to serving our local community with exhibitions, programs, and initiatives that are deeply relevant to local audiences, while securing our place as a national leader, as exemplified by our collection digitization project, community-focused reinstallation, and commitment to diversifying our board and collection. This work enabled DelArt to strengthen alignment within our organization while building stronger community trust.

DelArt's exceptionally committed staff and Board members are now committing to a new vision that builds on these recent successes and expands the Museum's role as a regional anchor. Our new strategic plan envisions a museum that not only attracts large and diverse audiences but develops those audiences into deeply engaged members and supporters. In this new plan, the Museum's financial future is secured by growing revenue streams that include individual donors, the establishments of endowed funds, and increased government and grant support. We will develop and lead bold partnerships that offer opportunities for earned revenue, increase the relevance of the visual arts in our region, and provide citizens with creative tools to create a more equitable future through the lens of the arts. Finally, the Museum's operations will be improved to sustain its future as a welcoming, accessible, user-friendly community resource.

DelArt leadership also understands that achieving our mission to our fullest ability requires us to be a nimble, change-oriented organization—especially in the COVID-19 climate. We plan to continuously update the below plan, which was created by the Board and staff in summer 2021, to ensure we are meeting all objectives to our fullest ability. And throughout it all, we are also committed to pushing the boundaries on what a museum can and should be.

Mission

The Delaware Art Museum connects people to art, offering an inclusive and essential community resource that through its collections, exhibitions, and programs, generates creative energy that sustains, enriches, empowers, and inspires.

Vision Statement

The Delaware Art Museum will boldly lead the region in inclusion, access, and relevance for the visual and creative arts.

Values, Beliefs, and Principles

- **Art Connects Us.** We use art to create community connections, foster empathy, educate and inspire, and make meaning of our world.
- **People.** We authentically listen to each other and our community. We are committed to inclusion and anti-racism.
- **Be Bold.** Our museum will boldly evolve, adapt, and be open to changes that help our community grow and thrive.

Commitment to Inclusion

Founded in 1912, the Delaware Art Museum has existed as an institution of both esteem and power. We acknowledge and do not shy away from our complicity in a legacy of exclusion. We are committed to changing the power structure, silence, and systems that have historically driven that exclusivity.

The Delaware Art Museum is inclusive, equitable, and welcoming. We are nimble and flexible in the face of change, endeavoring to always be of public value, and center community voices.

The Museum staff and board are committed to moving forward with a clear vision and values rooted in equal opportunity, co-creation, and respect in decision making. Our deepest work is to be a community anchor. We lead with empathy, never forgetting our responsibility to listen, learn, and embrace all perspectives.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Drive Deeper Audience Engagement: For the past five years DelArt focused on engaging with its community to become a lively “vital hub,” a place where people come together on equal terms to engage in cultural and civic discourse around art. We successfully attracted many new audience members with this work. We will continue being a vital hub to attract new audiences while transitioning current audiences, whom we call “Likers,” into “Lovers”—individuals who demonstrate their support through repeat attendance, membership, and donations.

Objectives:

1. Strategically attract new audiences:
 - DelArt is committed to centering community voices and perspectives through our programs and our recently completed collection reinstallation. We will continue this approach as we develop new programs and initiatives.
 - Target our “liker” audience personas with custom programming and marketing that meets their unique values and needs.
 - Within audience personas, identify opportunities for engaging LGBTQ audiences, families, and singles.
 - Continue collaborating with community partners who introduce their networks to the Museum.
 - Use the successful model of Happy Hours and cultural festivals to create new layered social events that introduce people to art in a welcoming, comfortable, and familiar atmosphere.
2. Build stronger relationships with current audiences by increasing repeat visitation, membership, and donations:
 - Make building audience relationships a core responsibility for all staff members; provide education and training where needed.
 - Increase personal touches to create stronger bond with members and donors and new audience members.
 - Ensure all programs and outreach activities include requests for donations and memberships (e.g. working the crowd, mc-ing events, developing talking points for frontline staff, membership tables)
 - Increase data capture at all events and programs; use this data for personal follow-up communications with information about getting more involved and supporting the Museum.
 - Develop strategies with lead partners to help us build stronger relationships with the communities they serve.
 - Collaborate with DelArt’s dedicated volunteers to provide visitors with meaningful experiences that inspire deeper Museum engagement.

Key performance indicators: COVID deeply impacted our ability to serve our core mission. Much of the next two years will be about rebuilding visitation, membership, and programs. The below KPI's were developed with this mindset.

- Return visitation and membership to pre-COVID levels, then focus on growth:
 - DelArt served 74,275 individuals in 2019. Return to this figure by the end of 2022 and achieve 85,000 individuals served by December 2023
 - Membership was at a 10-year high in Dec. 2019 (1,650 households). Goal is to return to that number by Dec. 2023 and grow to an additional 5%-10% by Dec. 2024
 - Membership retention rate in 2019 was over 80%, a figure that is 15% higher than field-wide average. Return to that percentage by 2023
 - Increase mid-level donors by 10-15%. (mid-level defined as \$1,000-\$5,000)
- Grow repeat visitation (2+ visits in the past year):
 - 53% of surveyed visitors to special exhibitions in 2019 reported visiting two or more times in the past year. Increase this figure by 20%, to 64% of visitors by 2023
- Make the Museum more diverse and accessible: Reaching numbers of people is important, but reaching our full community is of equal importance. Over the next three years we strive to achieve the following inclusion objectives:
 - Continue diversifying Board and staff to reflect our community. As of fall 2021 our Board was 26% people of color and staff was 28% people of color.
 - Conduct post-pandemic baseline assessment of audience demographics; increase diverse audience members by 20% (10% increase by 2023 and an additional 10% by 2024)
 - Improve physical and online access for diverse audiences, including the visually impaired, Spanish speaking audiences, and youth with Autism.
 - Fund and launch Museum Educator pilot program and Museum Ambassadors (which will replace traditional security guards) by 2022 to ensure the visitor experience is more reflective of our community; evaluate outcomes and scale up programs by 2023.

Achieve Financial sustainability: DelArt has made substantial progress over the past few years. We raised funds for an endowment campaign, tackled costly deferred maintenance, created a capital expense fund, and endowed an art conservation fund. But there is much work left to be done to financially secure DelArt so it can continue serving its mission. This work is about raising funds, but it is also about transforming the mindsets of key internal and external stakeholders to come together with a shared understanding of how to support the Museum.

Objectives

- Establish and nurture open and honest donor relationships.

- Increase endowment with consortium of individual donors.
- Place value on staff expertise, time, and facility usage in grants, partnership agreements, and contracts.
- Seek new endowed and restricted funds that support critical needs and take pressure off operating budget, such as capital expense fund and 2021 endowed conservation fund.
- Communicate and implement our established 2–3-year plan to reduce operating deficit.
- Develop a comprehensive fund development plan.
- Increase operating support with unrestricted and program gifts.
- Pursue donors outside region with affinity for collections and/or geographic connection to Wilmington/Delaware.
- Increase government support.
- Pursue new partnerships that will lead to earned and contributed revenue.

Key performance indicators*:

- Increase government grant revenue by 5-10%
- Increase the general operating portion of the endowment by 5-10% with donations and market growth
- Increase individual contributions by 10%
- Start Rehoboth, NYC, and Philadelphia affinity groups by 2022, with goals for each group

Develop and lead Anchor partnerships: We are an anchor institution in our city, state, and region. We will use our influence to develop and lead bold partnerships that provide citizens with creative tools to create a more equitable future through the lens of the arts. Simultaneously, these partnerships will result in audience growth, revenue generation, and mission impact.

Objectives

- Strategically seek anchor partners that are aligned with DelArt’s values and meet criteria for mission impact and mutually beneficial growth.
- Develop and implement anchor pilot partnerships with clear business plans (operating proformas) that include funding strategies, audience and revenue growth targets, and marketing/PR opportunities.
- Focus partnership content on issues of defined critical need in our communities—such as equity, empathy, creative economy growth, robust civic participation, mental health, etc.
- Evaluate outcomes and determine path for continued involvement or improvement.
- Reinforce DelArt’s position as anchor and innovator in the arts and culture sectors of the city, state, and region.

Key performance indicators:

- Develop, fund, and implement three pilot partnerships by fall 2023.
- Measure established pilot outcomes by 2024.

- Achieve goals outlined in business plans for individual partnerships by determined deadlines.
- Increase leadership in Delaware and the Greater Brandywine Valley, as measured by inclusion in public-private partnerships and initiatives.
- Increase prestige through higher education and peer museum partnerships, as measured by innovative programs, press coverage, and donations.
- Meet community impact objectives, as outlined in each partnership plan.

Create Resilient & User-Friendly Operations: The Museum strives to be welcoming, accessible, and user-friendly to external audiences. To achieve this work, it will improve systems and operations that are efficient, resilient, collaborative, and secure.

Objectives

- Make the Museum's services and facility more user friendly:
 - Launch Museum Ambassador program
 - Improve website accessibility
 - Evaluate demand for bilingual services
 - Lobby for closer DART bus stop
 - Develop accessible navigation/interpretive tools for people with disabilities
- Develop and implement a comprehensive Marketing and Communications Plan in alignment with the strategic plan and target audiences.
- Institute processes for data collection/evaluation.
- Improve workflow and communication between departments through online tools and technology, revised policies and procedures, and regular training.
- Update Finance/HR procedures to improve efficiency and security.

Key performance indicators:

- Replace traditional security guards with Museum Ambassador program by 2022.
- Improve website accessibility for audiences with disabilities by end of 2023.
- Conduct community focus groups and create plan for bilingual Museum services by early 2023; seek funding for plan and begin phased implementation in 2024.
- Conduct visitor satisfaction baseline survey in 2022; measure improved satisfaction each year with a goal of 10-15% increase annually in visitor enjoyment and satisfaction
- Begin conversations with neighborhood and DART to make bus route more accessible for DelArt visitors in 2022.
- Create phased plan to improve data collection and evaluation in 2022; begin implementation in late 2022.
- Improve 20 internal systems by 2023 to make Museum more efficient and user-friendly, as outlined in separate work plan (e.g. program registration systems).