



# LIVE ARTS STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2023

*Revised & Approved 4/26/21*

## MISSION

Forging theater and community

## PRIORITY COMMUNITIES

- Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)
- LGBTQ+ and allies
- Under-resourced communities

## ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION PRIORITY

**Goal:** Center the values of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in every aspect of Live Arts, beginning in 2021.

**Objectives & Strategies:**

Lower barriers to access and participation, including financial, transportation, and language barriers.

- Reimburse volunteers for parking and childcare, starting in fall 2021 once funding is secured.
- Bring Live Arts productions and programs into underserved neighborhoods rather than holding all events at Live Arts, beginning in the 2021/22 season.

Significantly increase community engagement in and by priority communities.

- Center the work of BIPOC and women playwrights when planning the next seasons.
- Actively participate in the Central Virginia Theatre Alliance, an antiracist coalition of theatre organizations committed to supporting, centering, and amplifying the voices of our community.
- Build partnerships with community organizations serving or representing priority communities, including but not limited to:



- *BIPOC*: NAACP, CHS Black Student Alliance, Charlottesville Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Charlottesville Chapter of The Links, Inc., Black Empowerment Coalition, Black Professional Life in Charlottesville, Central Virginia Clinicians of Color, Ebenezer Baptist Church, UVA Black faculty and staff; Creciendo Juntos, Sin Bareras, UVA Hispanic/Latinx Resources; Indian Association of Charlottesville.
- *LGBTQ+*: Cville Pride, Side by Side, UVA LGBTQ Center, Bridge PAI, New City Arts.
- *Under-resourced Communities*: Boys & Girls Club of Central Virginia, City of Promise, Abundant Life.

Actively support businesses owned or led by members of priority communities.  
Build a diverse talent pool among Live Arts staff, Board, and volunteers.

- Revamp the process for enlisting directors, stage managers, sound and lighting designers, and other designers to make it more accessible and transparent in fall 2021.
- Prioritize BIPOC and LGBTQ+ applicants in job searches, including the artistic director search in spring 2021.

Hold the Board, executive, and artistic leadership accountable for achieving DEI goals set out in this plan.

- Elevate DEI from a Board taskforce to a Board standing committee with representation on the Executive Committee by July 2021.
- Charge all directors and stage managers with upholding DEI values.
- Institute a formal system for reporting and resolving DEI-related complaints by staff and volunteers in spring 2021.

Create a more pluralistic, immersive culture at Live Arts, especially for priority communities.

- Conduct a DEI audit in 2021 to serve as a baseline for measuring progress.
- As part of professional development, design and implement an ongoing inclusiveness training program for all staff and volunteers that clearly addresses issues raised in the audit.
- Seek grant funding on an annual basis to support training and related DEI initiatives.



- Require all volunteers to sign a DEI affirmation statement that sets basic behavior norms at Live Arts and prevents harm to members of prioritized communities, starting fall 2021.
- Examine internal policies and practices through an equity lens with the help of the UVA School of Law Nonprofit Clinic during the 2020-21 academic year.

**Measures:**

- Reported progress in addressing issues identified in the audit
- \$15,000 in DEI-designated grant funding in each fiscal year
- More diverse cast, crews, Board, and leadership team
- Timely, responsive, empathetic resolution of DEI issues
- 100% participation in DEI training and affirmation statement
- Policies and practices that reflect DEI values
- Annual organization survey on DEI progress

**ARTISTIC INTEGRITY PRIORITY**

**Goal:** Produce theatrical experiences for the community that reflect diverse perspectives and voices and are challenging, thought-provoking, and engaging.

**Objectives & Strategies:**

Create productions of high artistic quality that reflect a variety of voices and perspectives.

- Enlist a selection committee representing diverse voices to help inform the design of the season.
- Produce up to seven mainstage plays each season that engage and reflect diverse members of the Charlottesville community, including priority communities.
- Cast without regard to race, gender, or sexuality unless specifically required by the story.
- Provide a platform for new works, experimentation, and risk taking.
- Produce at least four new works per year by local playwrights and guest artists that spotlight diverse, emerging voices.

Use the power of theater to reflect, engage, and inspire the entire Charlottesville community.

- Create community partnerships that connect productions to current issues in Charlottesville. Focus on local organizations that represent BIPOC and marginalized groups. (see DEI Priority above)



- Collaborate with members in the newly revived Central Virginia Theater Alliance to advance its anti-racist mission.

### **Measures:**

- Audience surveys after every production to gauge production quality, impact on the audience, and demographics
- Annual volunteer engagement and satisfaction survey
- Recaps after every production to assess volunteer engagement/participation, areas for growth and celebration, financial outcomes, partner satisfaction, etc.
- Media coverage of the season, including bloggers, influencers, and social media platforms representing diverse viewers/readers
- Season subscription and single ticket sales as an indication of interest
- Number and depth of community partnerships

## **EDUCATION PRIORITY**

**Goal:** Provide year-round learning and growth opportunities in the performing arts for people of all ages and backgrounds in the Charlottesville community.

### **Objectives & Strategies:**

Develop pathways for people from all backgrounds and experiences to develop skills and foster a love for the performing arts.

- Create live and online educational programming that is inspiring, supportive, and inclusive.
- Recruit a diverse team of experienced, capable teaching artists who share our commitment to creating safe spaces to create, dream, and take risks.
- Provide mentor/apprenticeship opportunities for a diverse group of young people to work alongside adult mentors during a production.
- Encourage a diverse group of adults to learn about the performing arts through a robust menu of adult education classes, production-based lectures, and talkbacks.
- Safely convert online youth camps to in-person camps as soon as it is safe to do so.

Foster the growth of future theater audiences and artists.

- Deepen the volunteer talent pool by forging a clear path from classroom to stage.



Expand access and participation among youth in priority communities to summer camps and after-school education programs.

- Offer classes, camps, and production workshops that are of interest to youth in priority communities.
- Actively forge relationships with community organizations, houses of worship, and neighborhood schools.
- Build and expand partnerships with community organizations serving priority communities.

Lower barriers to participation in education programs.

- Develop both onsite and offsite engagement opportunities that reduce transportation barriers to access.
- Offer financial aid to any adult or youth in need to reduce financial barriers to participation.

**Measures:**

- Participant survey after every program to measure satisfaction, impact, and participant demographics. Track number of newcomers.
- Teacher and participant demographics tracked across the entire education program by year.
- \$5,000 in financial aid funded and granted per year
- Report on number and demographics of education participants who participate in productions.
- At least one Mentor/Apprenticeship Program per year.

## **VOLUNTEERS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRIORITY**

**Goal:** Provide an artistic home for volunteers of every background, interest, and ability throughout the year.

**Objectives & Strategies:**

Provide significantly more individual and team volunteer opportunities for creative expression, service, and camaraderie in 2021 and beyond.

- Assess and respond to the interests of current and prospective volunteers.
- Invest in new volunteer engagement software in summer 2021 to better match individual's interests with opportunities.



- Expand awareness of volunteer opportunities within priority communities through targeted outreach and marketing, beginning January 2021.
- Expand artistic and production volunteer opportunities for directors, performers, designers, and crew members; administrative volunteer opportunities to organize fundraising events and donor appeals; hospitality volunteer opportunities for ushers, house managers, and bartenders.

Foster a culture of inclusion at all levels and across every dimension of the organization, especially for newcomers. (see DEI objectives)

- Create a safe space for all volunteers and audience members to engage with Live Arts.

Be a source of connection and inspiration in the Charlottesville community.

- Leverage the role of the arts in bridging divides and giving voice to stories that are relevant to our community and our time.

Strive to make Live Arts fully accessible to volunteers of all abilities within the organization's financial and physical resources (wheelchair accessibility, hearing enhanced, ADA-compliant website, and sensory friendly options).

**Measures:**

- Volunteer tracking of hours, roles, and demographics on a quarterly basis.
- Volunteer satisfaction, interests, and inclusion survey on annual basis
- Broader, deeper, more diverse engagement with production, administrative and hospitality volunteers
- New ADA-compliant website in spring 2021
- Define "safe space" at Live Arts

**BOARD & STAFF PRIORITY**

**Goal:** Create a diverse and inspiring workplace that fosters innovation, growth, and collaboration among staff and Board members

**Objectives & Strategies:**

Recruit and retain a diverse Board of Directors that is representative of the greater Charlottesville community and provides effective governance, resource development, and leadership in times of constant change.

- Update and streamline the Board manual in 2021 with advice from UVA law students enrolled in the 2020-21 Nonprofit Clinic.



- Update other governing documents in fall 2021 to reflect best practices, current laws and a DEI lens.
- Revise the Board recruitment, onboarding, training, and evaluation process in 2022 to reflect best practices and DEI values.
- Invest in ongoing equity training for Board members.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities between Board and staff to reflect best practices in nonprofit governance.
- Rebid directors and officers (D&O) insurance every two years in response to changing needs and risks.

Recruit, retain, develop, and reward a staff that is skilled, creative, productive, and collaborative.

- Update staff position descriptions to reflect changing roles during the pandemic.
- Provide opportunities for professional development, including ongoing equity training.
- Revamp the annual performance evaluation process to include SMART goals by May 2021, in time for annual reviews.
- Conduct a market salary comparison every two years to ensure that staff are compensated equitably.
- Update and distribute the employee handbook to every full and part-time staff in summer 2021.
- Provide a confidential employee/volunteer complaint hotline in 2021 to more quickly identify and address microaggressions and potential misconduct.

**Measures:**

- At least one third of Board membership is BIPOC
- Updated documents by the target deadlines.
- Active anti-racist culture at Live Arts
- Annual Board engagement survey
- Staff and Board retention

**RESOURCES PRIORITY**

**Goal:** Shift the revenue and staffing model to reflect a greater reliance on contributed income in 2021-2023 as the world recovers from the pandemic.

**Objectives & Strategies:**

Expand our fundraising capacity to be able to provide more than half of revenues through 2023.



- Hire an experienced development director in spring 2021.
- Build a robust and sustainable major donor engagement plan, starting in spring 2021.
- Double the number of recurring donors by 2022.
- Launch a major gifts program in 2021.
- Preserve and grow the Board Reserve Fund after the pandemic.
- Launch a \$1M endowment campaign in 2025.
- Successfully conduct a \$250,000 technology capital campaign in 2023-2024.

Prepare for a strong reopening with in-person programming in fall 2021.

- Hire a new artistic director in spring 2021.
- Restore part-time staff to full-time status and refill vacant posts as resources allow.
- Upgrade the sound system in both theaters in summer 2021 with grant support.
- Make cosmetic improvements to the building in spring and summer 2021.

**Measures:**

- Organization-wide culture of philanthropy
- 55% of funding from contributed income
- Funding goals in budget achieved
- Less reliance on fundraising events
- Flow of earned income, beginning fall 2021





## ADDENDUM OF TERMS

**Priority Communities:** Groups or subgroups of people in the community that are our highest priority

**Equity Lens:** The purpose of an equity lens is to be deliberately inclusive as an organization makes decisions. It introduces a set of questions into the decision that help the decision makers focus on equity in both their process and outcomes.

**DEI:** Diversity, Equity, Inclusion. Also EDI, IDEA (including Access), JEDI (including Justice)

**Diversity:** Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals; including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles. Source: Ebony Walden

**Equity:** The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations. Source: Ebony Walden

**Inclusion:** The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate and bring their full, authentic selves to work. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in the words/actions/thoughts of all people. Source: Ebony Walden