



# Cul-TÚ-Art

## **PERFORMING ARTS STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **BACKGROUND**

Since 2017, the Department of Arts & Culture has been developing components of its Cul-TÚ-Art Cultural Plan, a coordinated planning document to guide investments in the arts to provide equitable opportunities that encourage San Antonio's arts community, residents and visitors to thrive in a culturally inclusive environment. During the City's FY2020 budget process, the Department of Arts & Culture determined that Performing Arts, a critical piece of San Antonio's arts community needed its own focus within the multidisciplinary Cul-TÚ-Art plan. This Performing Arts Plan follows the Cul-TÚ-Art Vision and Guiding Principles.

Though the Performing Arts community is a large piece of the San Antonio arts landscape, representing \$924 million of the \$4.8 billion total creative economy<sup>1</sup>, feedback received from the Performing Arts community, combined with the unfortunate and abrupt closures of several performing arts entities, confirmed the importance for the development of a strategic plan to sustain and grow the Performing Arts community.

In the FY2020 budget process, as well as during a City Council B Session in September 2019, City Council expressed an interest in developing a strategic plan related to increasing sustainability for San Antonio Performing Arts.

### **PROCESS**

In August 2019, the Department of Arts & Culture began a multifaceted strategic planning process including the surveying of residents, art patrons and visitors, peer cities best practices and venue research as well as several community and stakeholder strategic planning sessions.

#### **Community and Visitor Survey**

In 2017, the department contracted with *ResearchNow* to develop an arts and culture survey among three different segments: residents, visitors to San Antonio in the last 12 months and art patrons. As a part of the Cul-TÚ-Art plan, the department planned to replicate the survey every 2 years. In fall of 2019, the department enlisted *Dynata, LLC.* (*ResearchNow had been acquired by Dynata in 2018*) to

<sup>1</sup> 2019 San Antonio Creative Industry Growth & Prosperity Report

replicate the 2017 survey, but added questions related to Performing Arts and Venues in anticipation of the Performing Arts Strategic Plan. The survey, distributed between August 20 and September 16, 2019, used a representative sample of residents and visitors and was also distributed by 45 local arts non-profit agencies to their patrons (a segment called “Arts Patrons” through online and paper surveys).

### *Research Objectives*

- Understand the engagement and participation levels among the different segments;
- Measure attitudes and perceptions of the various arts and cultural attractions in the city;
- Identify opportunities to enhance arts and cultural offerings;
- Understand the various segments’ purchase intent / participation intent for attractions;
- Understand what programs will be successful and sustainable over time;
- Identify any barriers to engagement or participation for any of the arts and cultural attractions;
- Identify which arts and cultural attractions are underserved, but growing in appeal or those currently not available in the city; and
- Measure levels of awareness of various venues, events and programs offered by the city

### *Methodology*

In order to obtain statistically significant data that is projectable to the surveyed populations as a whole, a quantitative survey methodology was used.

Residents and Visitors were balanced so that the demographics of these two segments mirrored the population of San Antonio Residents and Visitors to San Antonio.

- A total of 2,919 surveys were completed: 1,035 Residents, 420 Visitors and 1,464 Arts Patrons.
- The survey was available online and in paper format, in both English and Spanish.
- In 2017, 25 agencies participated in distributing the survey. In 2019, 45 agencies participated, an 80% increase in agency engagement.

Key findings of the survey related to the performing arts include:

### *Awareness, Participation and Interest:*

- Regardless of segment, those surveyed are highly involved and supportive of arts and culture in San Antonio – with most attending art events in San Antonio once a year or more.
- Those surveyed feel strongly about how art should impact San Antonio, making the city more competitive amongst peers, stimulating the economy, aesthetically improving public facilities and open spaces, being accessible to the public and connecting neighborhoods while serving a placemaking/placekeeping role to help define the city.
- Performance arts, such as music performances and theatre performances, had the greatest participation.
- Music performances, public art and theatre performances generated high interest from respondents.

### *Programming:*

- Culturally-specific programming is important to many surveyed. Similar to 2017 findings, more than two-thirds of all survey participants are interested in programming and events that celebrate three specific cultures: Indigenous/Native American (69%), Mexican/Latino (69%), and women (65%).
- Visitor respondents are interested in more family friendly venues and content.
- Surveyed residents cite uninteresting topics and venues as a barrier to attending events.

### *Obstacles for Attendance:*

- Survey respondents indicated the cost of events and activities, especially for families, inhibits attendance to arts and culture events.
- The survey results also showed those surveyed find it difficult to attend events due to inconvenient scheduling, with too many overlapping events at different venues and activities happening during the weekday not accessible to those who work full-time.
- Access to locations was also identified as a barrier, with lack of public transportation options and heavy traffic during weekday evenings impacting attendance – especially events held in the downtown area. There was also a desire to see events outside of downtown.

### **Best Practices Research**

In October 2019, the department engaged WHY Group, LLC of San Antonio to benchmark other cities to identify best practices in supporting the performing arts. The following cities were selected for comparison: Austin, Houston, Oklahoma City, San Diego, Phoenix, Chicago and Seattle.

This research found that three of the seven cities provided support for the local performing arts separate from their regular arts agency funding Program. San Diego, Phoenix and Seattle provided support specifically focused on venues, with Phoenix providing lease assistance for performing arts organizations holding a minimum of 15 performances in a space, San Diego providing rent waivers for in their city facilities, and Seattle offering three grant awards of 40 hours in a City owned venue to organizations using a minimum of 40 hours between rehearsals the final performance.

Seattle provides an additional venue support program through a Cultural Facilities Fund, which moves beyond City owned properties and provides capital improvement funds to performing arts non-profit organizations who have control of their facilities with either ownership for a lease with a minimum of five years.

Each of the three cities that have programs use the same DataArts software that the Department of Arts & Culture uses to collect key metrics to determine to success as a result of funding..

## **Community/Stakeholder Strategic Planning Sessions**

Three community strategic planning sessions were held in October and November 2019 and facilitated by San Antonio-based Mary Flanagan with Strategy & Leadership LLC. The first session asked attendees to identify where they believe the San Antonio Performing Arts community should be in five years as a result of a Strategic Plan and what methods need to be implemented in order to get there, with the second session focusing on challenges for success and key strategies to overcome them.

Feedback from the 3 work sessions focused on five key areas that must be achieved over the next five years to ensure San Antonio advances the performing arts industry and positively impacts the City's economy.

1. Strong performing arts image.
2. San Antonians embrace and participate in our performing arts.
3. Accessible, affordable and diverse venues available across the city.
4. New innovative and sustaining sources for equitable and diverse funding.
5. San Antonio is a place where all performing artists thrive and prosper.

Most importantly, work session participants agreed that the plan should be guided by the overarching principle of challenging entitlement and ensuring equity. The strategic plan meeting attendees committed to assist in the development of key strategies and action steps to achieve the vision.

**This plan follows the adopted Statement on Cultural Equity:** *To support a full creative life for all, the San Antonio Arts Commission and Department of Arts & Culture commit to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that empower a **just, inclusive, equitable** city.*

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Combining community feedback from all planning sessions and key findings from the survey and best practices research, the Department of Arts & Culture drafted this Performing Arts Strategic Plan to lead initiatives for creating a strong and sustainable performing arts community. This is intended to be a 5 year plan of action.

**VISION:** San Antonio is a place where Performing Arts thrive.

### **Goal #1: Create and Promote a Strong Performing Arts Image**

- **Strategy #1:** Develop the Performing Arts Story
  - A. Build an accessible and dynamic information resource of performing arts organizations and activities.
  - B. Highlight performing arts created by San Antonio artists.

- C. Craft messaging around the economic, collateral and anecdotal impact of performing arts for San Antonio residents and local and state government audiences.
  - D. Construct Performing Arts Marketing Plan that addresses both local and global audiences.
- **Strategy #2: Build Partnerships and Opportunities for Cross Promotion**
    - A. Hold marketing workshops to further develop performing arts organizations' marketing strategies and tactics.
    - B. Encourage cross promotion between performing arts organizations, including between large and small organizations.
    - C. Create an accessible resource of marketing outlets available to performing arts organizations as well as available audience data to reach new and diverse markets.
    - D. Partner with organizations that have marketing functions (i.e. Visit San Antonio, Economic Development Foundation) to enhance marketing of the performing arts.

**Goal #2: Develop Opportunities for Accessible, Affordable & Diverse Venues**

- **Strategy #1: Assist Performing Arts Organizations with Venues**
  - A. Provide access and fee waivers for the use of the City's Mobile stage and Marley dance floor.
  - B. Develop a program to assist with venue/back-of-house fees.
  - C. Invest capital improvement funds for performing arts organizations that own or hold a long-term lease for their venue.
  - D. Encourage performing arts venues to apply for City economic and business development incentives.
- **Strategy #2: Connect Performing Arts Organizations with Venues**
  - A. Create a performing arts venue database.
  - B. Identify gaps in venue needs.
  - C. Create a database of performing artists and professionals in the field.
  - D. Encourage all venues to develop non-profit rates.

**Goal #3: Increase and Diversify Performing Arts Revenues**

- **Strategy #1: Implement New Ticket Models**
  - A. Seek opportunities for funding outside of the Hotel Occupancy Tax.
  - B. Investigate a mechanism for ticket buyers to donate to the performing arts.
  - C. Encourage and facilitate creation of creative and cross-organization ticketing packages and bundles including partnerships with restaurants and other businesses.
  - D. Explore ways to sell tickets at other locations besides online and box office such as community grocery stores and visitor centers.

- **Strategy #2:** Ingrain Performing Arts In San Antonio Community
  - A. Develop a policy requiring all City Departments to pay of performing artists when contracted for work by the City.
  - B. Develop a platform for the business community to be informed of and connected with performing arts organizations and events.
  - C. Encourage the inclusion of performing arts in business meetings and events, including incoming conventions and meetings.

**Goal #4: Engage in Performing Arts Collaborations**

- **Strategy #1:** Develop Platforms for Dialogue
  - A. Research opportunities to connect performing arts organizations through technology or in-person collaboration meetings.
  - B. Investigate a method for calendar sharing to ensure events are offered at different days and times.
  - C. Encourage open, community-wide dialogue among performing arts organizations.
- **Strategy #2:** Increase Performing Arts Presence Throughout San Antonio
  - A. Review venue availability throughout the city and promote development of new venues outside of downtown.
  - B. Foster cross-disciplinary opportunities to enhance arts programming and increase awareness for organizations with audiences.
  - C. Open up dialogue with schools regarding opportunities for the next generation of performing arts professionals.
  - D. Ensure intentionality around free events to bring awareness to the high-quality of performing arts offered in San Antonio.

**12-24 Month Action Plan**

**Goal #1: Create and Promote a Strong Performing Arts Image**

**Strategy #1: Develop the Performing Arts Story**

- A. Build an accessible and dynamic information resource of performing arts organizations and activities.

**Proposed Action:**

Department of Arts & Culture’s Marketing Division will enhance an existing online performing arts organization listing to bring more awareness of the organizations, their mission and how residents, patrons and visitors can experience their offerings. This listing will include key information about the organizations including, but not limited to:



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SANANTONIO.GOV/ARTS

- Organization Name
- Organization Description
- Website
- Address
- Phone Number
- Hours
- Photos
- Upcoming Events

**Goal #1: Create and Promote a Strong Performing Arts Image**

**Strategy #2: Build Partnerships and Opportunities for Cross Promotion**

A. Hold marketing workshop to assist performing arts organizations.

**Proposed Action:**

Department of Arts & Culture’s Marketing Division will provide a workshop and may contract with experts as needed for the workshop.

**Goal #2 Develop Opportunities for Accessible, Affordable & Diverse Venues**

**Strategy #1: Assist Performing Arts Organizations with Venues**

A. Provide access and fee waivers for the use of the City’s mobile stage and marley dance floor

**Proposed Action:**

Department of Arts & Culture purchased both a mobile stage and a marley dance floor covering that can be loaned to performing artists and non-profit arts organizations free of charge. The mobile stage is managed by the Parks & Recreation Department and the marley dance floor is stored in the Carver Theater.

This program requires an application to be submitted to the Department of Arts & Culture at least 30 days in advance of the event and is subject to availability of the stage/dance floor. In addition, the Department will set aside funding from the new sources (Goal #3) to offset the cost of transport for the stage/dance floor to ensure that this community equipment is available with no real out of pocket costs to the user. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to availability of funds.

B. Develop a program to assist with venue/back-of-house fees.

**Proposed Action: Create Performing Arts Production Costs Grants Program**

Department of Arts & Culture will develop grants awarded from new funding sources outlined in Goal #3, subject to availability of funds.

*Timeline:* Open Call to be issued annually

<sup>1</sup> 2019 San Antonio Creative Industry Growth & Prosperity Report

*Eligibility:* Individual Artists and Non-Profit Agencies whose mission and at least half of their programming includes performing arts are eligible. Organizations that do not produce their own work, rather, present out-of-town artists or hire artist companies to perform either as resident companies or as contracted companies are not eligible.

*Restrictions:* Grants are for specific performances and must be documented that 70% of the artistic performers are from the San Antonio area.

*Use of funding:* Equipment rental specific to the production, security costs and back of house labor fees paid at established Union Labor Rates.

*Evaluation:* Applications must score over 70% on a review of artistic excellence which will examine artistic skills and techniques, professional approaches to process and presentation, and communication of a unique vision or perspective. Artistic excellence is evaluated based on the material and work samples submitted with the application. Applicants should show a record of excellence over the past three years.

B. Investigate capital improvement funds for performing arts organizations that own or hold a long-term lease for their venue.

**Proposed Action:**

Department of Arts & Culture will support performing arts organizations seeking capital improvement funds through two avenues:

***Capital Improvements over \$100,000 - General Obligation Bond Program/Capital Improvement Funds***

In the past, the City has provided funding assistance through its General Obligation (GO) Bond Program Process which is managed on a 5 year term. The next GO Bond election is anticipated to be held in May 2022. The Department of Arts & Culture will invite non-profit and city-owned performing arts venues to provide a list of capital needs for consideration in the community bond program process and will work with the appropriate City Department to provide information on the capital needs of Performing Arts Venues. The Department of Arts & Culture will act as a liaison and advocate for the non-profit and city-owned performing arts venues with capital needs, however, bonds are subject to their own eligibility requirements, outcome of community process, voter approval and funding availability.

***Capital Improvements under \$100,000 – Performing Arts Venues Facility Improvement Program***

The Department of Arts & Culture will utilize funding from new sources outlined in Goal #3 to provide grants to Performing Arts Producing Organizations that own or hold a long-term lease of their venue. These grants are limited to agencies that receive operational grants funding from the Department of Arts & Culture and will be limited in use to improving a Performing Arts Facility or purchase equipment up to \$25,000 per grant up to available funding. Applicants will need to submit actual cost estimates and a plan for use of funding with a timeline for completion within one fiscal year.

## **Goal #2 Develop Opportunities for Accessible, Affordable & Diverse Venues**

### **Strategy #: 2 Connect Performing Arts Organizations with Venues**

- A. Create a performing arts venue database.
- B. Identify gaps in venue needs.
- C. Create a database of performing arts professionals.

#### **Proposed Action:**

Department of Arts & Culture will utilize its Film & Music database platform system to develop a database of performing arts venues and other resources such as artists and other professionals. Venue database will be utilized to identify needs for new venues of different locations, sizes and configurations.

## **Goal #3: Increase and Diversify Performing Arts Revenues**

### **Strategy #1: Implement New Ticket Models**

- A. Seek opportunities for funding outside of the Hotel Occupancy Tax.

#### **Proposed Action:**

Department of Arts & Culture will advocate for performing arts organizations in applying for other sources of funding through the City such as General Obligation Bonds for capital improvements, Tax incentives and reinvestments and will provide letters of support for other grantors, as applicable and appropriate. Additionally, Department will work to create a clearinghouse of local funder organizations interested in providing grants to the performing arts

In October 2019, City's Convention, Sports Facilities Department (CSF) entered into a 5 year ticketing agreement with Ticketmaster which included Ticketmaster making a \$50,000 contribution to a new city fund called the "Arts & Entertainment Fund" annually. Additionally, CSF has agreed to provide 10% of the Ticketmaster Commissions annually to the "Arts & Entertainment Fund". The estimated annual revenues for the CSF portion of the fees is \$200,000, however, revenues from CSF may vary. Revenues in the "Arts & Entertainment Fund" will be managed by the Department of Arts & Culture and utilized to support action items in this Performing Arts Strategic plan and fund grant programs listed under Goal #2 Develop Opportunities for Accessible, Affordable & Diverse Venues. The Departments will also reach out to other San Antonio area venues requesting they create a similar program to create revenues for the new "Arts & Entertainment Fund" dedicated to help fund items in the Performing Arts Plan.

## **Goal #3: Increase and Diversity Performing Arts Revenues**

### **Strategy #1: Implement New Ticket Models**

- B. Investigate a mechanism for ticket buyers to donate to the performing arts

The Department of Arts & Culture has researched a program offered through Ticketmaster which allows ticket buyers to voluntarily donate to the arts. The Department will partner with the City's Convention, Sports Facilities Department (CSF) to develop a pilot program for its venues. Revenues received through "Donate to the Arts" will be deposited in the "Arts & Entertainment Fund", managed by the Department of Arts & Culture and utilized to support action items in this Performing Arts Strategic plan including to fund grant programs listed under Goal #2 Develop Opportunities for Accessible, Affordable & Diverse Venues. The Departments will also reach out to other San Antonio area venues requesting they create a similar program to create revenues for the new "Arts & Entertainment Fund" dedicated to help fund items in the Performing Arts Plan.

**Goal #4: Engage in Performing Arts Collaborations**

**Strategy #2: Increase Performing Arts Presence Throughout San Antonio**

A. Review venue availability throughout the city and promote development of new venues outside of downtown.

The Department of Arts & Culture Venue database, once created, will be utilized to identify needs for new venues of different locations, sizes and configurations. The Department of Arts & Culture will advocate for city-wide performing arts venues to be included in the 2022 General Obligation Bond Program, however, bonds are subject to their own eligibility requirements, outcome of community process, voter approval and funding availability.

**Goal #4: Engage in Performing Arts Collaborations**

**Strategy #2: Increase Performing Arts Presence Throughout San Antonio**

B. Foster cross-disciplinary opportunities to enhance arts programming and increase awareness for organizations with audiences.

The Department of Art & Culture will utilize its local film contest in FY20 to ask filmmakers to create short films showcasing performing arts organizations or performing artists. These films will be screened locally and made available to the city and the organizations/artists to help with marketing and awareness.