



# Strategic Plan

Vicksburg Arts Moving Forward

2025-2028 

VICKSBURG  
ARTS

# Vicksburg Arts

## OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

*We extend our sincerest thanks to everyone who contributed to the development of this strategic plan. From community members who shared their insights in surveys and planning sessions, to those who joined us at the board retreat—your voices shaped this vision!*

*People of all ages and walks of life took the time to speak honestly about what the arts mean to them and what they want to see next. That collective input grounded our priorities and made this plan stronger, more relevant, and more reflective of our community, and the people we serve.*

*Thank you for being part of the process. We're proud to move forward with your ideas in hand.*

# Moving Forward!

As Vicksburg Arts marks its 10th anniversary, we celebrate a decade of creativity, community, and connection. What began as a grassroots effort to bring the arts to South Kalamazoo County has grown into a dynamic, inclusive organization that serves thousands each year through programs, events, and partnerships.

To honor this milestone and shape our path forward, we are proud to present a new strategic plan that reflects both our growth and our aspirations for the next three years.

With the hiring in 2025 of Executive Director Eltine DeYoung - whose rich background in cultural-sector nonprofit management anchors her leadership - we initiated the strategic development. Vicksburg Arts' Board, staff, and community members engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process across three months. Vicksburg Arts has always been driven by a commitment to excellence, innovation, and meaningful impact in its field. As the organization continues to evolve in response to emerging opportunities and challenges, a clear and forward-thinking strategic direction is essential. The outcome of this process is contained within this report.

The resulting strategic plan will be used as the basis for creating Vicksburg Arts' action plan for operations, programming, fund development, financial stability, as well as administrative needs. In addition, the Board will periodically review the organization's progress towards accomplishing its strategic goals.

The Board and staff of Vicksburg Arts are prepared to enthusiastically implement this strategic plan and guide the organization into a new era of accomplishment.

Gina Szpak  
Board President

# Welcome!

As the incoming Executive Director, I step into this role with equal parts respect for the work that's been done and energy for what's possible next.

Vicksburg Arts has built a strong foundation - ten years of programs, partnerships, and creative community-building. Now, it's time to build on that with clear priorities, new initiatives, and a sharp focus on impact.

This strategic plan reflects where we're headed. It's about expanding access to the arts, yes - but also about deepening impact: growing opportunities for skill-building, creating space for personal growth, and making the arts a visible, valued part of everyday life in our region.

We'll invest in placemaking that matters, programs that inspire, and partnerships that last. We're not here to coast, we're here to build.

This work will take collaboration, creativity, and follow-through, and I'm ready for it. I look forward to working alongside our Board, staff, partners, and community to bring this vision to life. The next chapter of Vicksburg Arts starts now, and I'm honored to help lead it.

Eltine DeYoung  
Executive Director

*Vicksburg Arts' mission is to enrich the quality of life by providing cultural and artistic experiences that inspire, engage, and creatively connect our community.*

## Our Goals

1. Inclusive programming reflects the diversity of the South Kalamazoo County region and promotes universal access to the arts
2. Sustainable funding supports organizational growth and long-term financial stability
3. A well-structured and committed workforce of staff, volunteers, and board members to strengthen internal capacity and ensure organizational resilience
4. A strong, consistent, and inclusive brand identity drives regional awareness, engagement, and support
5. Comprehensive operational policies and procedures providing a transparent, consistent, and accountable framework that supports the organization's mission

## Our Vision

Vicksburg Arts is a leading force in a vibrant community where:

- Everyone can experience the joy of the arts
- Creativity is nurtured
- The arts are accessible to all
- Artistic expression connects people in meaningful ways

# Our Strategic Framework

# Our Core Values

*Our core values are the engine behind everything we do. They shape how we create, connect, and lead—fueling a vision of the arts that’s open, alive, and rooted in community. This strategy is more than a plan—it’s a commitment to doing things with heart, imagination, and purpose. Here’s what drives us forward.*



## Enjoyment

We infuse our work with creativity and inspiration because we believe joy fuels connection and artistic exploration.



## Enrichment

We build confidence and spark curiosity by encouraging growth, learning, meaningful experiences and fostering a spirit of connection within our community.



## Innovation

We embrace fresh ideas and forward-thinking, continually evolving our programming to inspire unique perspectives and foster creative growth.



## Inclusivity

We welcome every voice with an open mind, creating spaces where everyone feels valued, respected, and can participate fully.



## Stewardship

We lead with integrity, transparency, and accountability, shaping the way we treat our audiences and stakeholders while managing our resources with respect and responsibility.

# Our Goals & Objectives

## Goal 1: Inclusive programming reflects the diversity of the South Kalamazoo County region and promotes universal access to the arts

Objectives	Target Date	Lead
1. Develop a <b>gap analysis</b> for arts access for all	Nov 2025	Executive Director
2. Develop and implement a <b>diverse and accessible programming plan</b> to increase repeat and future attendance growth	Jan 2026	Program Staff
a. Seek expertise in serving underserved communities and develop a plan		
b. Collaborate with other organizations for accessible programming		
c. Define and utilize inclusive language including income and lived experience,		
d. Define historically underserved populations for the South Kalamazoo County region		
3. Define the implications and benefits of an <b>Arts Guild</b> for Vicksburg Arts and the artistic community	Feb 2027	Executive Director
a. To serve as a structured group of artists, makers, and supporters who contribute to active participation, collaboration, and mutual support. It can function as a <b>membership-based creative community</b> with both programmatic and fundraising benefits.		
4. Evaluate <b>diverse programming</b> to measure its effectiveness, success, and impact	Ongoing	Program Staff

## Goal 2: Sustainable funding supports organizational growth and long-term financial stability

Objectives	Target Date	Lead
1. Create a <b>fund development plan</b> to increase unearned revenue	Oct 2025	Executive Director
a. Identify and pursue locally sourced funds		
b. Build a donor base / donor management		
c. Build up funding from foundations		
d. Determine potential funding sources		
e. Create an investment fund to ensure future financial sustainability		
2. Create an <b>earned revenue plan</b>	Nov 2025	Executive Director
a. Programs and events must generate revenue or be at least revenue neutral		
b. Create a merchandising plan to generate revenue		
3. Create a <b>capital asset action plan</b> to inventory physical assets and schedule their maintenance and replacement	Jan 2026	Treasurer
4. Publish an <b>annual report</b>	Jan 2026	Executive Director
5. Create an <b>endowment</b>	May 2027	Board Chair
6. Obtain a <b>physical location</b> for programming and events	Nov 2027	Executive Director

Goal 3: A well-structured and committed workforce of staff, volunteers, and board members to strengthen internal capacity and ensure organizational resilience

Objectives	Target Date	Lead
1. Hire or contract with a <b>fund development expert</b>	Aug 2025	Executive Director
2. Create an <b>accountability chart</b> showing responsibilities for each position	Sep 2025	Treasurer
3. Create a <b>board recruitment, onboarding, and development plan</b>	Sep 2025	Executive Director
a. Create a board skills and diversity plan		
b. Recruit regional board members outside of Vicksburg		
c. Create board member job descriptions		
4. Create a <b>volunteer recruitment and management plan</b>	Dec 2025	Board Chair
a. Collaborate with high school clubs and service organizations		
b. Establish a youth advisory board		
c. Develop capacity to manage volunteers		
5. Create an <b>artist recruitment and management plan</b>	Dec 2025	Executive Director
6. Develop a <b>staff recruitment and retention plan</b>	Feb 2026	Executive Director
a. Retain staff and build a strong team		
b. Provide benefits for staff retention purposes		
7. Hire or contract with a <b>marketing expert</b>	Feb 2026	Executive Director

Goal 4: A strong, consistent, and inclusive brand identity drives regional awareness, engagement, and support

Objectives	Target Date	Lead
1. Develop and implement a <b>visual identity and brand awareness plan</b>	Oct 2025	Executive Director
a. Timely calendar of events		
2. Develop and implement an <b>annual marketing and communications plan</b>	Feb 2026	Marketing Consultant
a. Ramp up social media outreach		
b. Create a media contact list		
3. Establish clear <b>partnerships and affiliations</b> with other organizations with complementary missions	Ongoing	Executive Director
a. Community calendar on a monthly basis		

Goal 5: Comprehensive operational policies and procedures providing a transparent, consistent, and accountable framework that supports the organization’s mission

Objectives	Target Date	Lead
1. Create a <b>safety policy</b> for all events	Sep 2025	Executive Director
2. Create a <b>dashboard</b> with key operational and programmatic performance indicators	Nov 2025	Executive Director
3. Develop an <b>emergency preparedness plan</b>	Jan 2026	Treasurer
4. Draft <b>operational policies and procedures</b> for each section of the VA organization	Mar 2026	Treasurer
a. Obtain a cloud-based file management system		
b. Put in place a detailed purchasing procedure with approval process, etc.		

# Implementation Schedule

This schedule may be adjusted based on emerging priorities and budget amendments.

<b>Strategic Objectives (sorted by target completion date)</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>Leads</b>
3.1. Hire or contract with a fund development expert	Aug 25			Executive Director
3.2. Create an accountability chart showing responsibilities for each position	Sep 25			Treasurer
3.3. Create a board recruitment, onboarding, and development plan	Sep 25			Executive Director
5.1. Create a safety policy for all events	Sep 25			Executive Director
2.1. Create a fund development plan to increase unearned revenue	Oct 25			Executive Director
4.1. Develop and implement a visual identity and brand awareness plan	Oct 25			Executive Director
1.1. Develop a gap analysis for arts access for all	Nov 25			Executive Director
2.2. Create an earned revenue plan	Nov 25			Executive Director
5.2. Create a dashboard with key operational and programmatic performance indicators	Nov 25			Executive Director
3.4. Create a volunteer recruitment and management plan	Dec 25			Board Chair
3.5. Create an artist recruitment and management plan	Dec 25			Executive Director
1.2. Develop and implement a diverse and accessible programming plan to increase repeat and future attendance growth		Jan 26		Program Staff
2.3. Create a capital asset action plan to inventory physical assets and schedule their maintenance and replacement		Jan 26		Treasurer
2.4. Publish an annual report		Jan 26		Executive Director
5.3. Develop an emergency preparedness plan		Jan 26		Treasurer
3.6. Develop a staff recruitment and retention plan		Feb 26		Executive Director
3.7. Hire or contract with a marketing expert		Feb 26		Executive Director

<b>Strategic Objectives (sorted by target completion date)</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>Leads</b>
4.2. Develop and implement an annual marketing and communications plan		Feb 26		Marketing Consultant
5.4. Draft operational policies and procedures for each section of the VA organization		Mar 26		Treasurer
1.3. Define the implications and benefits of an Arts Guild for Vicksburg Arts and the artistic community			Feb 27	Executive Director
2.5. Create an endowment			May 27	Board Chair
2.6. Obtain a physical location for programming and events			Nov 27	Executive Director

### Ongoing Objectives

1.4. Evaluate diverse programming to measure its effectiveness, success, and impact	Program Staff
4.3. Establish clear partnerships and affiliations with other organizations with complementary missions	Executive Director

## Contact Information



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**Vicksburg Arts** Moving Forward

JUMPING DOG DESIGN