



We envision an Acadiana that thrives because people from all walks of life are inspired to participate in a dynamic cultural life where everyone can feel that they belong.



Acadiana Center
for the Arts

Vision 2030

AcA's Strategic Plan for Cultivating a Thriving,
Dynamic, and Inclusive Culture in Acadiana

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Background and Methodology

Founded in 1975, Acadiana Center for the Arts (AcA) is a community-supported nonprofit with a mission to foster arts and culture throughout the Acadiana region. AcA serves as the arts council for an eight-parish region, including Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, and Vermilion parishes. Services of the organization include providing direct support for artists, festivals, and cultural organizations, bringing arts experiences and education into classrooms, advocating and providing resources for artists, and presenting art installations and performances at the James Devin Moncus Theater in downtown Lafayette, the Heymann Performing Arts Center, and venues throughout the community.

Annually, AcA serves over 300,000 people and provides fair compensation to 2,700 artists. This past year through the Arts in Education program, AcA reached over 25,000 public school children in 77 schools across Acadiana. The organization is the backbone of Acadiana's cultural life and, through its numerous programs, is a valuable contributor to preserving arts and culture in the region.

In 2021, the AcA leadership and board saw an opportunity for the organization to seek input from stakeholders, refine the AcA's long-term vision, and build a strategic plan to advance the organization and community towards that vision. The plan needed to be designed to help outside audiences and stakeholders understand AcA's goals, programs, and path forward.

At the request of the AcA, Louisiana-based innovation and strategy firm LaFargue was hired as the lead consultant for this project. LaFargue has deep experience helping arts and cultural organizations plan for the future through community listening and forward-thinking strategy practices.



Above: Board and staff members participate in a one-day strategy retreat with the LaFargue team

A kickoff meeting was held with AcA leadership to determine expectations, strategic needs, and logistics for the planning process. Consultants preceded by:

- Reviewing historical and current organizational documents to understand who AcA is, identify current gaps, and uncover potential areas for growth
- Developing and administering surveys to community, stakeholders, board, and staff
 - Staff – 20 respondents
 - Board – 17 respondents
 - Stakeholders (AcA targeted contacts) – 286 respondents
 - Community (general public through an advertised survey link) – 204 respondents
- Conducting in-depth interviews with six key stakeholders in the community
 - Carlee Alm-LaBar, Executive Director of the William C. Schumacher Family Foundation
 - Paige Krause, former AcA employee
 - Anita Begnaud, CEO, Downtown Development Authority
 - Lynn Clearfield, AcA teaching artist
 - Mandi Mitchell, CEO, Lafayette Economic Development Authority
- Analyzing survey data
- Developing a discovery outcome report to resource retreat participants
- Conducting a day-long retreat with selected board, staff, and one community stakeholder
 - Board members present: Sarah Gauthier, Ronnie Daigle, Lyle Girouard, Aleisha Johnson Cook, Taylor Davis, Kirk Piccione, Chuck Boudreaux, Burnell Lemoine, Ken Douet
 - Staff members present: Iya Tsykot, Corinne Sprague, Jaik Fauk, Bree Sargent, Gwen Richard, Rachel Adams, and Samuel Oliver
 - Community Stakeholder present: Carlee Aim-Labar

The resulting strategic plan will guide the work and activities of AcA leadership and staff over the next 10 years.

Executive Summary

Over the last 50 years, AcA has proven its value to the community as a leader in preserving the rich artistic culture of Acadiana and providing high-quality entertainment and arts education. AcA contributes to the Acadiana region's workforce and economy by drawing thousands of people to the area for concerts and exhibits and providing funding opportunities for arts organizations and teaching artists. AcA now stands at a pivotal intersection for new possibilities and growth for the arts in the region.

The goals and strategies within the focus areas below build a foundation for the coming years. It will be important to determine how the success and planning of one area hinges on the efforts of another area. Open and ongoing communication and commitment between the board and the staff are necessary for the successful implementation of these goals and strategies. The order of these focus areas is based on prioritization by board and staff at the strategic planning retreat.

The proven benefits of arts in education are numerous. Children who participate in the arts have enhanced motor and language skills, increased social and decision-making skills, higher GPA's and lower school dropout rates. AcA has played an essential role in bringing arts back into schools where art programs no longer exist. AcA board and staff believe that expanding the Arts in Education program to all eight parishes is a priority for the next four years. As AcA approaches its 50th anniversary, this program builds upon the legacy of ensuring the next generation is exposed to Acadiana's rich history of art and culture.

The demographics of AcA audiences and consumers are defined by the look and feel of "sameness." AcA's stated mission is to serve and provide equitable access to the arts in the eight-parish area. AcA must work on being accessible and inclusive to attract more diverse populations.

Strategic communication is critical for the success of most of the key initiatives in the strategic plan. Marketing efforts tell AcA's story of impact, promote programs and services, increase revenue and support, and build a more diverse and knowledgeable audience of people who love and appreciate the arts.

AcA has an annual budget of ~\$3 million. Direct fundraising through grants, sponsorships, memberships, donations, and fundraisers makes up 25% of the budget. Earned revenue makes the other 75% through ticket sales, partnerships with the school system, contracts from the city and state, and through administering grant funds. With the potential for several large initiatives on the horizon and the prospect of expanding programs and services, AcA must consider new donor engagement and development opportunities. An essential component of these new fundraising opportunities is articulating who AcA is, what it does, and its impact on the region. Marketing and communication efforts will be vital in raising new dollars and engaging new and lasting patrons for the arts.

Some of these goals and strategies will depend on funding, marketing efforts, or staff resources. The implementation of one area may hinge on another. Implementing a strategic plan calls for resolve on the part of the board and staff. The adopted goals and initiatives will guide every meeting agenda: where are we in our plan, who is responsible for the next steps, and how are we measuring success?

Goals and strategies are the framework. Action steps will be created, refined, and reimagined continually to accomplish these initiatives. What seems like the right action today may not be in six months or a year. Be nimble with action steps and hold fast to goals and strategic initiatives.

While the key initiatives are listed in priority order by the board and staff, some of these goals and strategies will depend on funding, marketing efforts, or staff resources. The implementation of one area may hinge on another.

Our Mission and Vision

Why

Because the arts bring joy and happiness to people.

Art enriches our lives.

Art makes our region what it is.

Mission

AcA's mission is "Fostering art and culture in Acadiana."

Core Values

- Community
- Culture
- Education
- Inclusion

Guiding Principles

- Sharing a message of belonging and hospitality.
- Building a sustainable cultural ecosystem.
- Ensuring equitable access to the arts.
- Creating elevated arts experiences.

Vision

We envision an Acadiana that thrives because people from all walks of life are inspired to participate in a dynamic cultural life where everyone can feel that they belong thanks to the efforts of the regional arts council.

Where we plan to be in 10 years

In the strategic planning retreat, participants shared thoughts on where AcA should be in five years. The following bullets summarize hopes for what reality will be for AcA and Acadiana come 2027:

1. Acadiana, a region that is recognized nationally for its multicultural artistic heritage and its robust pipeline of diverse artists and musicians.
2. Acadiana, a place where young people have art and culture embedded in their education, serving as a national example of innovation and success.
3. Lafayette, a welcoming beacon and hub for people who care about creativity and culture in the South.
4. Lafayette Arts District, a place that is recognized nationally for providing a vibrant and culturally inclusive experience for visitors.
5. AcA, the right people in the right roles, with the support and resources they need to drive the work we do.

Goals and Strategies

1. ACADIANA, A REGION THAT IS RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY FOR ITS MULTICULTURAL ARTISTIC HERITAGE AND ITS ROBUST PIPELINE OF DIVERSE ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS.

a. INVEST IN ARTISTS

- i. Goal: Grow the AcA's programs that invest in individual artists in order to ensure that these opportunities for artists, musicians, and creatives of all kinds are well known and effectively grow, attract, and retain creative talent in our region.
- ii. Owner: Community Development Committee with support from Executive Director, Community Development Director, Community Development Manager.

b. SERVING BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR COMMUNITIES

- i. Goal: Build the capacity of BIPOC communities to create sustainable and inclusive programming that drives a deeper understanding of Acadiana unique people.
- ii. Owner: Community Development Committee with support from Executive Director, Community Development Director, Community Development Manager.

2. ACADIANA, A PLACE WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE ART AND CULTURE EMBEDDED IN THEIR EDUCATION, SERVING AS A NATIONAL EXAMPLE OF INNOVATION AND SUCCESS.

a. EXPAND THE ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM TO INCLUDE ALL EIGHT PARISHES

- i. Goal: Ensure arts experiences for all students in public schools throughout the eight-parish region through AcA's Arts in Education program.
- ii. Owner: Arts in Education Committee, with support from Executive Director, Education Director, Education Manager

b. DEVELOP A COLLEGE-AFFILIATED TEACHING ARTIST CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

- i. Goal: Create a college-affiliated Teaching Artist Certification Program in Acadiana that builds AcA's workforce and serves as a national model for inclusive development of teaching artists.
- ii. Owner: Arts in Education Committee, with support from Executive Director, Education Director, Education Manager

3. CITY OF LAFAYETTE, A WELCOMING BEACON AND HUB FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT CREATIVITY AND CULTURE IN THE SOUTH.

a. BUILDING PROGRAMS FOR OUR TARGET AUDIENCES

- i. Goal: Expand AcA's audience through intentional programming and outreach efforts in order to build deep connections with diverse populations in the City of Lafayette.
- ii. Owner: Performing Arts Committee & Visual Arts Committee, with support from Performing Arts Director, Visual Arts Director, Marketing Manager, Community Development Manager

b. CONNECT PEOPLE TO OUR MISSION AND PROGRAMS

- i. Goal: Tell powerful stories that excite people to engage with AcA's diverse programs.
- ii. Owner: Program Committee with support from the Marketing Manager and program staff

c. SIGNATURE EVENTS

- i. Goal: Develop AcA's Signature Events around target audiences to drive both fundraising and community awareness.

- ii. Owner: Development Committee, with support from Development Manager, Executive Director, Marketing Manager
- d. ENGAGE PATRONS IN OUR SUCCESS
 - i. Goal: Ensure AcA members and potential members are excited to engage in driving AcA's mission and to enjoy the benefits of their time and support.
 - ii. Owner: Development Committee, Development Manager, Marketing Manager

4. LAFAYETTE ARTS DISTRICT, A PLACE THAT IS RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY FOR PROVIDING A VIBRANT AND CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE FOR VISITORS.

- a. CREATIVE PLACE MAKING IN THE HEART OF LAFAYETTE
 - i. Goal: Expand AcA's impact on the community through new ventures in the built environment, placing the AcA at the center of a vibrant and inclusive "Lafayette Arts District"
 - ii. Owner: Community Development Committee, with support from Community Development Director, Marketing Manager
- b. PRESERVING LOUISIANA'S RICH CULTURE THROUGH MUSIC
 - i. Goal: Build a world-class facility, the Louisiana Music Museum, to solidify AcA's position as the center of Lafayette's arts district, showcasing and preserving Louisiana's contributions to the music industry.
 - ii. Owner: Louisiana Music Museum Committee, with support from Executive Director and Louisiana Music Museum Director (new position) The Finance Committee should take on select new responsibilities related to Operations, particularly facility and operating costs.
- c. ENSURE THE NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER SERVES AS A CATALYTIC CULTURAL ASSET
 - i. Goal: With AcA as the convener and leader, pull together key community stakeholders to determine the future home and operations of a new performing arts center.
 - ii. Owner: Executive Committee with support from Executive Director, Planning Consultant TBD, and key community stakeholders

5. ACA, THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT ROLES, WITH THE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES THEY NEED TO DRIVE THE WORK WE DO.

- a. BUILD ANNUAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES
 - i. Goal: Streamline process, schedule, and planning to maximize annual and multi-year giving in support of AcA's core programs.
 - ii. Owner: Development Committee, with support from Executive Director, Development Manager
- b. INSPIRE CATALYTIC INVESTMENTS
 - i. Goal: Develop a comprehensive case for the arts to achieve catalytic investments from capital and planned giving strategies.
 - ii. Owner: Development Committee, with support from Executive Director, Development Manager, Marketing Manager
- c. YEAR-ROUND BOARD DEVELOPMENT
 - i. Goal: Ensure that board members have the training, backgrounds, and knowledge needed to guide the AcA's strategic priorities.
 - ii. Owner: Executive Committee, with support from Executive Director, Executive Assistant, Operations Director
- d. INVEST IN CULTURE OF GROWTH AMONG STAFF

- i. Goal: AcA's diverse professional staff should be highly sought after as future leaders of cultural organizations across Louisiana.
- ii. Owner: Finance Committee, with Executive Director and Operations Director

Appendices

- A. **Retreat Document: Tweets and Headlines from the Future** – board and staff members developed a set of hypothetical tweets and headlines from the future to illustrate what they hoped people would say about AcA five years from now.
- B. **Retreat Document: How Might We....** – strategic planning participants took a deep dive into each focus area, producing a list of questions to guide discussion and shape initiatives.
- C. **Survey Outcomes: Key Themes** – the strategic plan is based on these eight initiatives that emerged from 527 surveys from stakeholders, the community, board, and staff and six stakeholder interviews.

Retreat Documents

TWEETS AND HEADLINES FROM THE FUTURE!

AcA Board and staff members developed a set of hypothetical “Tweets/Headlines from the Future” to illustrate what they hope people will say about AcA five years from now.

TWEETS

“Congratulations and thank you to the thousands of attendees and supporters from across Acadiana who helped celebrate the 5-year anniversary of the La Music Museum – through a month-long series celebrating all of our artistic and cultural heritage.” #cultureistheseecret

–@AcAdirec@AcAdirector

“Lafayette Council Government is pleased to announce that we will fund 75% of AcA programs.” #AcA #artsfunding #louisiana

–@Lafayette.Gov

“Happy to announce the creation of the Yeezy HQ 1 in Lafayette, La. For years this community has shown a relentless pursuit toward fostering the types of creative capital that will undoubtedly inspire the next artist, or group.

“This year, 300 BIPOC artists (1 In 5) received fellowships for their outstanding contributions in the arts, opening possible doors and hopes for future young artists.

HEADLINES

La Music Museum Celebrates 1st Anniversary!

La Music Hall of Fame Celebrates its 5th Anniversary with a \$10 Million Planned Gift from the Stuller Foundation

More Young Artists Remain in Acadiana!

Lafayette, La, Leads Nation in Small Town Growth!

–*Hub City Of Creativity And Culture*

Acadiana Center for the Arts receives an Award for Multiple Performance Centers

State Educational Board Credits AcA for Increase of Reading Skills

Acadiana Battle of The Bands Brings People in Doves!

Innovative District-Wide School Arts Programs Model Across Acadiana

Pace Program is Now in All Acadiana Parishes

Acadiana Center for the Arts Educational Programs Impact Over 100,000 Students in 8 Parish Region!

Acadiana: A Beacon for Progressive Thinking, Led by Artists And Musicians Embedded in the Deep South!

AcA Has Something for Everyone!

Downtown Lafayette Ablaze with Activity this Weekend!

La Music Museum Plays to the World

We All Win with Public Funding of the Arts!

“How MIGHT WE”

The strategic planning participants went through an exercise to take a deeper dive into each focus area. Participants were asked to finish the question “how might we...” for each focus area. Below are responses by focus area.

Focus Area: Lafayette Arts District

Category: La Music Museum

How Might We:

- Identify and target significant donors to ensure we have sufficient funding to create a world-class entity?
- Identify and secure a legacy funder for this endeavor (Music Museum.)
- Have funds to build/renovate, and outfit the museum and staff it?
- Utilize the LA Music Museum to strategically drive diversity, access, and inclusion initiatives and goals?
- Broaden commitment to AcA's investment in the Music Museum?
- Make the LA Music Museum a “must-do” event for anyone visiting Lafayette?
- Put LA Music Museum on a national map without compromising AcA's growth/uniqueness?
- Create a world-class facility without detracting from the one we already have?

Category: Performing Arts Center

How Might We:

- Influence the performing arts center conversation to a more community values-based dialogue?
- Proceed with inclusivity in mind?
- Get the Heymann performing arts building moved to downtown?
- Most effectively and efficiently use the new building venture to enhance existing AcA programs and goals? We did it once before; how can we do it better?
- Position AcA to be the operator of the new Heymann center?
- Own and operate the Heymann/new Heymann and not lose AcA's identity?
- Expand our engagement with new ventures but keep our core values and priorities of artist?
- Services and community engagement central to our mission?
- Use these new building ventures to advance our mission?

Focus Area: Marketing

Category: Clarify Messaging

How Might We:

- Unify our messaging to build arts and culture in the region while providing clear paths to entry for potential patrons and supporters?
- Design our messaging outreach such that it isn't a one size fits all approach, instead giving pathways to content based upon the unique interests of the stakeholders?
- Create a better and more precise explanation of what we do and why it is important so that we can explain it better to everyone? (we make lots of assumptions)
- Communicate effectively with our patrons without overwhelming them with information?
- Simplify our messaging to engage more patrons and artists with the work of the AcA?
- Take into consideration that less is more?

Category: Targeted Messaging

How Might We:

- Successfully find a way to communicate our purpose and services to areas with limited affiliation with the arts?

- Enhance communication to the next younger generation of AcA supporters?
- Effectively market to a diverse group of people?
- Reach new people within our 8-parish region?
- Increase awareness of AcA's offerings?

Category: Telling Our Story

How Might We:

- Slow down and tell our story succinctly with thoughtfulness and care?
- Provide equitable marketing efforts for all AcA programs?
- Use marketing to impact fundraising, coordinate efforts to increase memberships, and detail it with programs, education, performances, etc?
- Expand our relationships with our media partners to tell our story?
- Beef up this department with more personnel?

Category: Miscellaneous

How Might We:

- Give our staff the bandwidth and skills to advocate for public support of the arts in our region?
- Structure marketing expenses as part of the future revenue?
- Balance our investment in programs with the marketing/pr needed to make them sustainable and successful?
- Look to a thriving arts org and borrow from their game plan to fit the needs of
- AcA's common goals?

Focus Area: Fundraising

Category: Donor Engagement

How Might We:

- Make patronage of the arts a social norm in Acadiana?
- Ever obtain sustainability from significant fundraising efforts?
- Make fundraisers be perceived as the "must attend/must not be missed" event?
- Tell the story of AcA so that high \$ donors are compelled to donate lots of money for many years?
- Better explain the things AcA does in order to help make connections for potential funders more easily and obviously?
- Increase the perception of the value of donating to aca?
- Make the case for supporting the arts, not just a clear need but an exciting, positive one?

Category: Donor Development

- Use the upcoming capital campaign to bring new donors to the table? (some donors like capital operations)
- Attract out-of-state donors?
- Identify and target potential donors capable of significant contributions?
- Find that one big-time donor that will anchor our endowment for years to come?

Category: Miscellaneous

- Create various pathways for funding based on the individual needs/goals of the donor?
- Simplify and stabilize fundraising?
- Diversify our funding sources for maximum profitability?
- Implement a strategic plan to diversify donors/sponsors?
- Increase planned giving, legacy giving?

Focus Area: Education

Category: Expansion

How Might We:

- Integrate even more of our pace programming into our body of work?
- Make pace more accessible in rural areas?
- Expand arts in education into rural areas with limited access to the arts?
- Extend our outreach to homeschool/charter school students?
- Expand pace to all grades in the schools we currently serve?
- Increase our involvement in all schools in Lafayette parish?
- Increase expansion to all 8 parishes?
- Grow with no loss in quality?
- Grow and sustain?
- Take on more of an administrative role in programming in order to reach more children with a larger variety of the arts?
- Design a training certification program to train artists to be teaching artists?

Category: Impact

How Might We:

- Engrain that PACE is an AcA project, and by default, AcA is influencing 25,00 students a year?
- Better educate people on the PACE and arts In Education programs?
- Tell the PACE story through marketing?

Focus Area: Governance

Category: Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities

How Might We:

- Ensure our board members have clear and helpful tasks that drive our strategic growth?
- Provide more professional development opportunities to enhance and support our board and clarify their governing roles?
- Abide by the bylaws in the removal of board members who are not contributing and participating?
- Police ourselves to reach out to Sam to help him and the staff?
- Ensure that the board is nimble enough yet has the authority to act?

Category: Increase Engagement

How Might We:

- Ensure that we our board is fully engaged in something that interests them so they can bring an informed but external view to the organization?
- Develop better committee structures and deliverables?
- Create standards within the board and committees with clearly defined roles, goals, and expectations?
- Motivate our board members to be more engaged?
- Keep our board engaged and knowledgeable in quality growth of the organization?
- Create a culture of 100% board support and participation?
- Improve board engagement?
- Put policies and procedures in place that will support the shift to a more active and enjoyable board?
- Attract younger board members?
- Be better support for the AcA staff?

Focus Area: Membership

Category: Perks

How Might We:

- Offer tangible and categorical benefits to aca members?
- Measure/increase membership engagement?
- Make our members feel like the most included of all locals?
- Celebrate members at our programming?
- Create levels to make membership accessible to more people while being financially viable?
- Ensure people understand the benefits of membership?

Category: Engagement/Communication

How Might We:

- Make membership irresistible to the public?
- Cultivate our member engagement?
- Keep our members better informed without overwhelming them with information and within our budget?
- How might we do a better job of ensuring effective communication with existing members?
- Increase awareness of membership to the general public?

Category: Renewal

How Might We:

- Remind existing members that they are expiring in the best way for them?
- Improve the membership renewal process?

Category: Increased Membership

How Might We:

- Make AcA membership widespread throughout the Acadiana Parishes?
 - Membership drives, parish oriented, linked by multifactorial marketing
- Increase membership?
- Increase the number of memberships and the average amount?

Category: Miscellaneous

How Might We:

- Have enough staff to significantly expand our membership efforts enough to make a difference diversely?

Focus Area: DEAI

Category: Increase Community Outreach to more Diverse Communities

How Might We:

- Create a more hub-spoke model of the offerings throughout the region rather than have everything flow through the venue in Lafayette?
- Identify and engage the BIPOC community and the younger potential members?
- Bring our product to a more diverse community, geographically, ethnically and by age?
- Engage in neighborhood programming to introduce people to aca?

Category: Change the Way we Engage

How Might We:

- Direct/improve communication and dialogue between AcA and underserved communities in acadiana?
- Meet our community members where they are and make them feel like tAcA is a resource/space for them?
- Identify and work on our cultural deficits?
- Find out who is not in the room and why?
- Soften the AcA facility to make entering more likely and accessible?
- Understand the barriers to AcA?
- Serve as catalyst for acadiana institutions and people to incorporate and embrace welcoming and belonging fora? Attract a more diverse audience and make the perception of AcA to be accessible and relatable?

Category: Diversify Offerings

How Might We:

- Diversify the programming to cover all genres and incorporate that into our education component? (not just in schools)
- Identify people's needs and wants while being all-inclusive?
- Diversify programs and offerings to attract a more diverse audience?
- Increase our efforts to diversify offerings continuously and not just during special events on times such as "black history month"?

Miscellaneous

How Might We:

- Encourage artists to be lifelong supporters and cheerleaders of AcA – attend events – visit galleries – work with education, share talent?
- Build and promote AcA to follow artists in and out of Acadiana?
- Effectively define DEAI to ensure we accomplish goals we set for this very important initiative?
- Diversify our staff and audience?
- Make the case for additional funds to invest in ime/advocacy and people to grow this impact?

Focus Area: Staff

Category: Expand Staff

How Might We:

- Double the staff and by when?
- Who/where is our operations manager – will take a special individual?
- Attract and retain the talent needed to execute the vision and potential of the organization?
- Expand staff to reach all eight parishes – membership, education?

Category: Determine Operational Needs

How Might We:

- As a staff create an experience reflective of our organizational values?
- Improve internal communication with growing staff members?
- Do everything that we want to do with a staff that is the right size, efficient and collaborative?
- Strengthen our IT systems to increase staff efficiency and lessen staff IT discomfort?
- Ensure staff has the resources and support to be successful in their roles?
- Invest in our staff?
- Make an open and fair way to invest appropriately in staff to ensure continuity and growth?
- Lead by example in art career compensation?
- Keep our staff and the operations of our facility functioning at high gear productivity without burnout?
- Grow and develop staff (new and existing) so that we can be smart about expansion while still moving quickly enough to capture forward momentum?
- Support and train current staff in order to keep them?
- Analyze/benchmark the current AcA benefits and salary offerings?
- Retain talent within AcA?

Survey Outcomes: Key Themes

A comprehensive research report was developed based on the 527 surveys and six stakeholder interviews and delivered separately to AcA. During analysis, key themes emerged as needs and opportunities for AcA to address over the coming 3-5 years. These findings were used to determine the following eight focus areas of the strategic plan:

BUILDING EXPANSION

A new state-of-the-art facility in Downtown Lafayette adjacent to AcA's home, the Louisiana Music Museum will be a world-class facility to draw tourism to the region. It will serve as a landmark, preserving Louisiana's rich musical heritage. In addition, AcA leadership aims to reconvene a group of key stakeholders in the community to determine the fate and future location of the current Heymann Center, along with a plan for facility management, and ways to maximize its potential for greater impact on the region.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

An underlying component of almost every area of the strategic plan is to create clarity, articulate AcA's impact, and increase AcA's reach to audiences and patrons throughout the region. Critical to these efforts will be for the marketing and communications staff to develop new strategies that break down the challenges to the complexity and breadth of AcA offerings.

ARTS IN EDUCATION

One of AcA's greatest assets is the PACE program that it brings to local schools. AcA's impact on 77 schools and 25,000 children is one of AcA's "best kept secrets." Building stakeholder support and resources, opening doors in more school systems for expansion, and identifying local artists in each region will be critical to AcA's success in expanding to all eight parishes.

FUNDRAISING

If AcA is to expand programs and services, retain and recruit new staff, and build new facilities, it must stabilize and diversify funding sources for the future. Initiating a planned giving program and a capital campaign while maintaining current fundraising efforts to run the day-to-day operations of AcA will be a challenge. Board support in identifying new donors and opening doors to funding opportunities will be crucial to a solid financial future.

BOARD GOVERNANCE

AcA seeks to create a more engaged and active board. Clearly defined policies and procedures, the creation of a functional committee structure, and ongoing education of board roles and responsibilities are necessary to increase leadership skills and involvement for the coming 3-5 years.

MEMBERSHIP

AcA seeks to grow membership by 50% over the next 5 years. This will require assessing the current membership program and outreach efforts. Additionally, there is work to be done in retaining current members and rethinking processes for membership renewal.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESS, AND INCLUSION (DEAI)

Arts and culture bring people together from all walks of life. Appealing to people from various backgrounds, cultures, and demographic characteristics requires AcA to become more creative and open to the potential of reaching more diverse audiences. Over the next five years, AcA staff will identify opportunities to create sustainable, diverse, and inclusive programs in outlying communities and overcome barriers to making AcA more inclusive.

STAFF

The backbone of AcA programs and services is the staff. Expanding to meet the growing needs of AcA requires evaluating current internal operations for efficiency and effectiveness, evaluating staff benefits and structure, and determining the need for new hires. Investing in the people and processes that make AcA successful will be a focus for the board and executive leadership as AcA expands its programs and offerings to the community.