

Strategic Plan 2025-2029

Rooted in Purpose, Cultivating Impact

November 2024

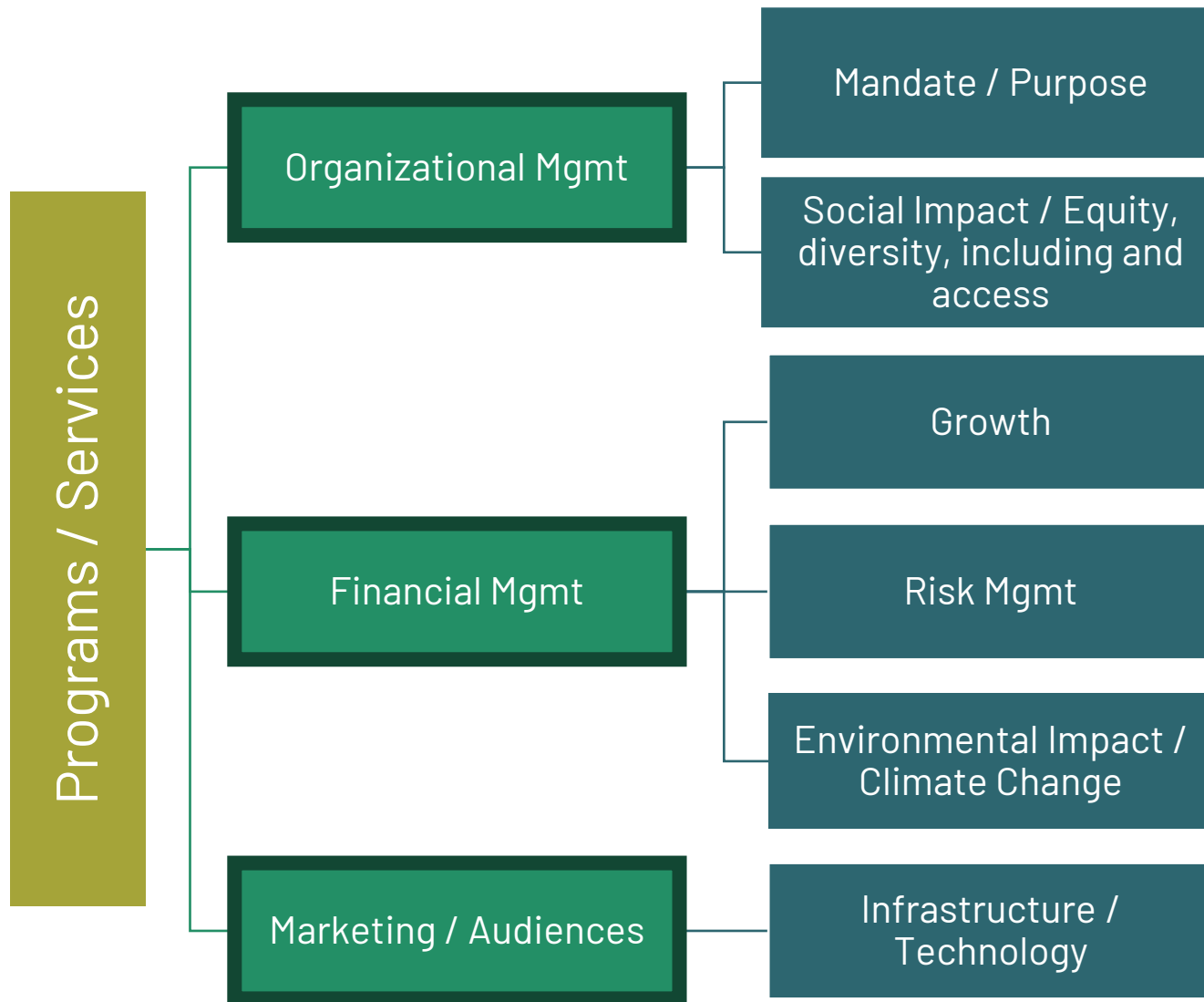


Foreword

This strategic plan is the result of a comprehensive review of the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre's current situation, financial health, governance and organizational capacity. As part of the research process, we assessed the impact of COVID on the organization and its last strategic plan outcomes, and we sought feedback from the community and arts community across the Northwest Territories. We also drew from external sources, such as the most recent Census information and research on audience behaviour in the post-COVID era.

We thank the Board and staff for their diligent work to arrive at this plan that o set a strong foundation for the next phase of NACC's evolution, and the evolution of the arts in the Northwest Territories.

NACC's Strategic Framework



In every organization, no matter its size or industry, these ten strategic levers combine in the formulation and implementation of contemporary strategic plans. To begin the exploration of strategic options, it is key to understand which of these strategies are dominant and which take an influencer and which a supporting or enabling role in your organization.

This graphic shows that Programming is the dominant strategy as is the case in all arts organizations. It is NACC's reason to exist.

The key influencer strategies – organizational management, financial management and audiences and market development are key action areas for this strategic plan.

The supporting strategies will help to achieve the goals of this strategic plan.

Our Purpose

The Objectives of NACC are to ...

- Encourage the development of the performing arts in the Northwest Territories from all cultural traditions.
- Manage and operate facilities in the Northwest Territories for community and professionally-produced performances, including (without limitation) any type of musical or theatrical performances.
- Engage in other activities as may, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, further the development of cultural activities and facilities in the NWT.
- Enter into any and all financial or property ownership or use arrangements which may be prudent, expedient and/or beneficial to the Society in carrying out its objects.

NACC's current Artistic Vision is to...

- Provide a safe, supportive venue for professional and amateur performing artists.
- Support the development of dance, theatre, music, and storytelling through professional and amateur production.
- Provide supporting performing arts workshops, mentorships, and intensive development sessions.
- Support all cultural expressions presented through the performing arts.
- Provide a bridge to information and resources in support of the performing arts and their development in remote communities in the NWT.

Five Pillars of NACC's Strategic Plan 2025-2029

strategic moves
THINKING : BUSINESS

Effective Organizational
Governance and Management

Financial
Stability

Re/engage
Audiences

Developing the
Performing Arts
in the Territory

Strong
Community
Relationships

This Strategic Plan's theme "Rooted in Purpose, Cultivating Impact" reflects the commitment to strengthening NACC's catalytic role in the Northwest Territories' arts sector development by deeply connecting to local cultures, communities, and traditions. It emphasizes the importance of purpose-driven actions that honour Indigenous and Northern cultural expressions while fostering meaningful and sustainable impacts on both local artists and broader audiences. With this plan's focus on the foundational building blocks in finance, marketing and organizational management we seek to ensure that NACC continues to be a vital hub for creativity, collaboration, and cultural expression in the Northwest Territories.

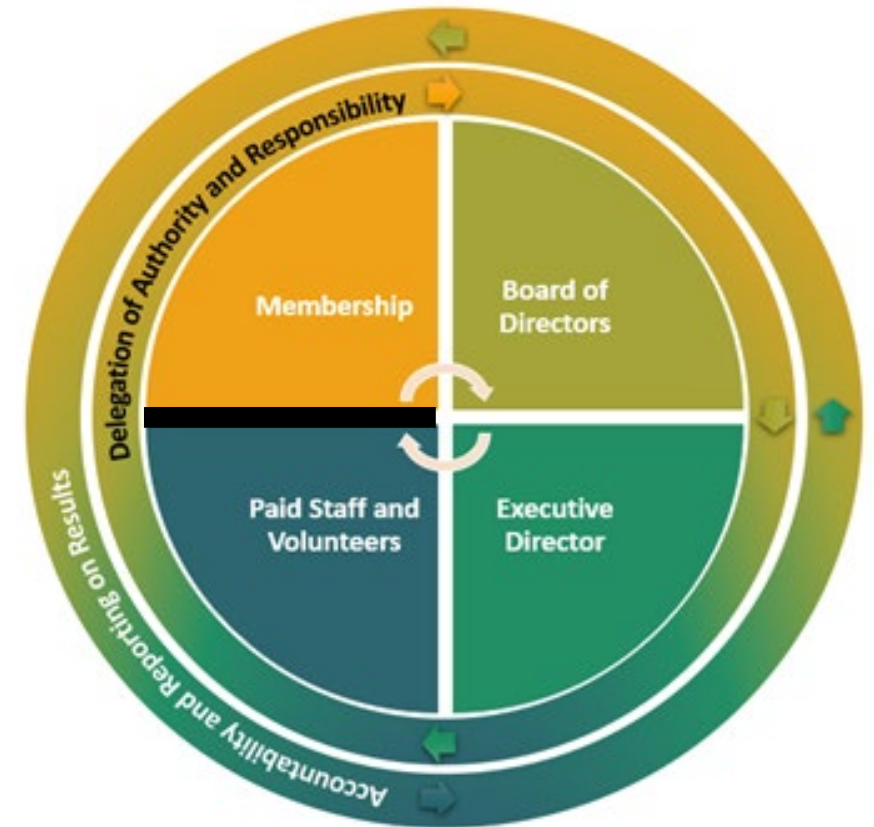
1. Effective organizational governance and management

The Framework

The Board of Directors is charged with the governance of NACC, its organizational policy development and monitoring as well as the supervision and performance management of the Executive Director as its sole direct report.

Within established bylaws, policies and NACC's strategic plan, the Board delegates day-to-day management and operational decisions to the Executive Director, who in turn can delegate responsibilities and tasks to staff and volunteers.

The delegation of authority and responsibility moves from membership to the elected Board of Directors to the Executive Director and staff. Accountability and reporting on results moves in the opposite direction. The Board is responsible and accountable for the financial oversight of the organization.



1. Effective organizational governance and management

Objectives	Responsible	Consult
1.1 Review and update governance documents		
1.1.1. Update bylaws; review every 3 years	Board & Membership	Exec Dir
1.1.2. Review and update Policy Manual; review every 3 years	Board	Exec Dir
1.1.3. Review and update Human Resources policies and procedures for annual staff performance management framework; review annually	Board Executive and HR Cttee	Exec Dir
1.2. Establish a Board committee structure to support the strategic plan: a) Executive and HR Committee b) Finance Committee c) Fund development / fundraising Committee d) Community Partners and Membership Committee e) Program Advisory Committee f) ATTI Steering Committee g) <i>Ad hoc</i> task forces or committees as needed	Board ATTI Steering Cttee	Exec Dir

1. Effective organizational governance and management

Objectives	Responsible	Consult
1.3 Succession planning for board of directors' officer roles.	Board	
1.3.1 Undertake annual board self-evaluation and identify areas of expertise or skill that would benefit the board's effective governance and oversight roles	Board	Outside consultant if needed
1.3.2. Active annual board recruitment, including through the renewed committee structure of the board	Board	ATTI
1. 4 Establish a tiered membership program, with voting members that have a voice in the organization and non-voting members that receive specific benefits in accordance with the to be developed membership program as part of the new marketing strategy for audience development. Establish and promote a voting membership for arts organizations, with a single delegate as designated voting member. Ensure bylaw update allows for these types of voting, non-voting and organizational membership, with the board responsible to set fees.	Board & Exec Dir	Staff

1. Effective organizational governance and management

Objectives	Responsible	Consult
1.5 .Succession Planning for key staff		
1.5.1 Split the dual role of “Executive and Artistic Director” and into two jobs – one primarily administrative and financially focussed (Executive Director), the other primarily responsible for programs (Programming and Arts Development Manager). Develop specific job descriptions and compensation packages to ensure successful recruitment for these senior positions, including out-of-territory recruitment, if needed. The Executive Director is expected to reside in Yellowknife, NWT, except for exceptional circumstances.	Board and Executive Cttee	Exec Dir ATTI
1.5.2 Over the next 5 years, grow the staff complement from the current 3 full-time and 2 part-time to 4 full-time and 3 part-time, as funding allows. Consider the ideal division of roles and functions based on organizational needs and strategic plan priorities, as well as skill sets of current staff.	Board & Exec Dir	Staff
1.6 Review and update theatre operational and volunteer manual, every two years	Exec Dir	Staff

2. Financial Stability

The Framework

NACC as a professional theatre venue receives substantial core funding from Canadian Heritage's Canada Arts Presentation Fund (CAPF). This funding requires NACC to present professional touring artists. This funding does not support arts development within NWT or presenting its own productions. Importantly, no equivalent funding for a theatre facility is available within the Northwest Territories.

NACC has negotiated a special consideration by CAPF that means it receives a 30% contribution instead of the regular maximum of 25%. That means the \$275,000 of departmental funding requires \$642,000 matching funds from other sources of revenue for its Presentation program.

Recently, NACC succeeded in accessing core funding of \$55,000 for its presents program from the Canada Council for the Arts' Arts Across Canada Program for Arts Presenters. The Government of NWT has a 3-year mandate to help Canada Council for the Arts identify ways to allocate more funding to the NWT's artists and arts organizations. There is an exploration of how to establish a larger funding envelope, using new arts development funding to strengthen artists and arts sector development in the territory, while also supporting the presentation program.

Further, NACC has a highly diversified revenue base including municipal and territorial funding (both GNWT and City of Yellowknife have significantly reduced their support over the last decade), corporate sponsorships and in-kind donations as well as individual donations and fundraising activities. It also rents its facilities to other arts organizations to present their own productions and receives revenue from concessions, commission payments and ticketing fees.

2. Financial Stability

Objectives	Responsible	Consult
2.1 Undertake a national fundraising campaign to help establish a broader, national donor database and an annual giving campaign for the benefit of NACC and its mandate.	Exec Dir	Board
2.2. Consider establishing an endowment fund, ideally in partnership with a qualified Foundation that is eligible for matching funds from the federal Endowment Incentive Program to help finance the development of the performing arts in NWT and their presentation.	Board's Executive & Finance Cttees, Exec Dir	ATTI
2.3. Grow the NACC Reserve Fund to 3 months operating, or \$400,000, and develop an investment policy to grow this fund.	Exec Dir	Board's Finance Cttee
2.4. Work with the Government of NWT and Canada Council for the Arts to establish new and larger funding envelopes for NACC, its presentation program and for the development and professionalization of the arts in NWT.	Exec Dir	Board Executive Cttee, Program Mgr, ATTI

2. Financial Stability

Objectives	Responsible	Consult
2.5. Continue to make the case for public (municipal, territorial and federal) funding for NACC and its full range of programming, from presentation to arts and artist development.	Board, Exec Dir	Program Mgr & ATTI
2.6. Increase earned revenue from ticket sales for NACC presented shows by selling more tickets – targeting 85% capacity sold on average – and by raising ticket prices while establishing mechanisms that balance higher prices with access to the arts programs.	Program Mgr & Marketing	Board Cttee

3. Strengthen Community Relationships

The Framework

NACC's mandate is two-fold: to support the development for the performing arts in NWT and to operate a theatre venue for presentation of touring shows and rentals for local arts groups. With the reduction of municipal and territorial funding the federal funding available to NACC is predicated on presenting touring works, usually from outside NWT. This funding is critically important to the sustainability of NACC.

As part of its mandate, NACC has been touring to five communities outside of Yellowknife on a regular basis. It also provides school shows as well as workshops for artists and the community whenever possible. ATTI! Indigenous Artist Collective is a major initiative incubated by NACC that can deliver significant advancement of Indigenous artists including their ability to access public funding.

Nonetheless, some in the Yellowknife arts community have been concerned about the recently increased costs of renting NACC for their own shows, as well as the technical capacity within the venue. There is a sense that improving communications between NACC and the arts community should be a priority. Making time to meet and discuss the needs and wants of individual organizations, as well as the performing arts sector at large, and helping them find ways to access increased funding for their activities would go some way toward helping to develop the arts sector and help ensure it grows.

3. Strengthen Community Relationships

Objectives	Responsible	Consult
3.1. Continue to support development and capacity building of ATTI, as a self-determining Indigenous project supported by NACC, including acting as incubator and fiduciary as long as that is useful, providing organizational mentorship for arts development and programs for Indigenous artists and communities through ATTI	Program Mgr ATTI Steering Cttee	Board's Community Partnerships and Membership Cttee, Staff
3.2. Set up a bi-annual NACC - Arts Community Roundtable where board and staff listen to ideas, concerns, challenges, opportunities of local artists and organization in an open, facilitated forum	Board, Program Mgr	Exec Dir and staff
3.2.1. Improve ongoing communications with community arts and Indigenous organizations	Exec Dir	Program Mgr, Board Cttee
3.2.2. Foster strong, reciprocal partnerships with community arts organizations, rental clients and NWT artists at every level of practice	Program Mgr	Exec Dir, Board Cttee
3.2.3. Provide some web-based social marketing support to community arts organizations as part of NACC's overall marketing strategy	Marketing	Exec Dir & Program Mgr

3. Strengthen Community Relationships

Objectives	Responsible	Consult
3.3. Establish a partnership with the new NWT Visual Arts Centre in development to aid in strengthening the NWT visual arts community	Exec Dir	Board Cttee, Program Mgr
3.4. Collaborate with Government of NWT and community arts organizations and rental clients to help them understand how to become eligible for Canada Council funding.	Exec Dir	Board Cttee, Staff
3.4.1. Establish a grant review process to aid community arts organization, music bands or arts groups develop and professionalize to enable access to Canada Council and other funding.	Exec Dir	Board's Finance Cttee, Program Mgr

4. A New Marketing Strategy to Grow Audience Attendance

The Framework

There are essentially two groups of people: those who already participate and attend performances at NACC or in the communities and those who do not. While the NWT population has been stagnant in terms of numbers, there is also a great deal of turnover of population. There is a continual need to introduce NACC to new potential audiences as the territory's premier entertainment and arts venue.

Major improvements to marketing had been made before the pandemic; these gains have to be re-established and further advanced now. Marketing has to be used strategically to connect with and build audiences for shows in Yellowknife and across the territory. Messaging around shows should be easy to understand and conjure a sense of invitation, a sense of familiarity, rather than having to know a lot about the arts or a performer before deciding to attend.

Earned revenue from ticket sales is an essential requirement to access public funding from the Canada Arts Presentation Fund. With the slow post-COVID recovery, ticket sales have been lagging behind sales from the pre-COVID period. There is also a strategic opportunity to establish a new approach to audience loyalty that meets organizational as well as marketing goals: a tiered membership program.

4.New Marketing Strategy to Grow Audiences

Objectives	Responsible	Consult
4.1. Develop a comprehensive, new marketing strategy and plan to achieve an average of 85% sold for all shows; reach new audiences and increase frequency of exposure to compelling, engaging messaging to current audiences	Marketing	Exec Dir, Program Mgr
4.1.1. Balance brand marketing and event-based marketing approaches to ensure high efficiency of advertising and marketing spend in Yellowknife and the communities	Marketing	Exec Dir
4.1.2. Lead audiences to shows or artists they aren't familiar with yet through increasing marketing touch points and easy to understand messaging.	Marketing	Exec Dir
4.1.3. Tell the stories of NACC's work and impact on arts and artist development in the NWT historically, currently and in the future	Marketing	Exec Dir Program Mgr

4. New Marketing Strategy to Grow Audiences

Objectives	Responsible	Consult
4.2. Develop a tiered membership program designed to foster greater audience loyalty. These non-voting members pay a substantial annual fee to receive high value benefits, from front-of- line access to tickets for both Presents and rentals, to savings on Presents tickets, access to discounts at local restaurants and retailers and other elements to be researched.	Exec Dir and Marketing	Board's Community Partners and Membership Cttee
4.2.1. Develop web page and online sales for memberships, including the option to have a recurring monthly or annual payment that continues until a patron cancels.	Marketing	Exec Dir, Board Cttee
4.3. Actively support an annual donor giving campaign with cohesive and compelling messaging and materials.	Marketing	Exec Dir, Board's Fund Development Cttee

5. Developing the performing arts in NWT and telling our stories of impact

The Framework

Arts development in the NWT is part of the dual mandate of NACC. Presently there is no information readily available about NACC's past arts and artist development activities. There is no information on the website; social media and e-news do not feature any past activities or successes past participants have enjoyed.

As part of the exploration with Government of NWT and Canada Council for the Arts, there may be an opportunity to shift to a core funding program that is primarily designed to develop artistic practice and cultural expression within NWT (Engage and Sustain programs), while moving back to project funding within the Arts Across Canada programs which in part can support the presentation of touring acts. To ensure matching funding requirements can be fulfilled, it is recommended to split salaries and other costs between administration of the organization and program delivery whether that is as part of artistic planning, the presentation program, rentals or arts development activities.

5. Developing the performing arts in NWT and telling our stories of impact

Objectives	Responsible	Consult
5.1 Develop a website section on key projects of the last decade and their impact, such as the Artist Mentorship Program, Listen Up, Touring to communities, local artists as opening acts for touring acts, development of ATTI	Marketing	Program Mgr, ATTI
5.2. Assess the needs in the music, theatre and dance communities across NWT and re-establish / establish a programmatic approaches to artists and arts sector development in NWT	Program Mgr ATTI	Exec Dir Board
5.3. Secure multi-year funding for arts development activities from Canada Council for the Arts and the territorial government.	Program Mgr ATTI	Exec Dir Board
5.4. Closely collaborate with Government of NWT and other partners on artist and arts development initiatives.	Program Mgr ATTI	Exec Dir Board