



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
**DEPARTMENT OF
ARTS & CULTURE**

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**Comments on the plan will be received until Monday,
December 2, 2019 at 5:00 pm. Please send email written
comments to the Department of Arts & Culture at
ArtFunding@sanantonio.gov**

Cul-TÚ-Art PERFORMING ARTS STRATEGIC PLAN – DRAFT FOR COMMENT –

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 economy¹, 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.

¹ 2019 San Antonio Creative Industry Growth & Prosperity Report

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 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 four of the seven cities provided support for Performing Arts separate from their regular arts agency funding Program. San Deigo, 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 Deigo provide 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 four cities that have programs collects key metrics to determine to success as a result of funding through DataArts software (which the Department of Arts & Culture also uses).

Community/Stakeholder Strategic Planning Sessions

Two community strategic planning sessions were held in October 2019 and facilitated by San Antonio-based Mary Flanagan with the 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 honing in on challenges for success and key strategies to overcome them.

Feedback from the two half-day 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 both 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.

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
 - Construct Performing Arts Marketing Plan that addresses both local and global audiences
 - Build an accessible and dynamic information resource of performing arts organizations and activities
 - Highlight performing arts created by San Antonio artists
 - Craft messaging around the economic, collateral and anecdotal impact of performing arts for San Antonio residents and local and state government audiences
- **Strategy #2:** Build Partnerships and Opportunities for Cross Promotion
 - Hold marketing workshops to further develop performing arts organizations' marketing strategies and tactics
 - Encourage cross promotion between performing arts organizations, including between large and small organizations
 - Create an accessible resource of marketing outlets available to performing arts organizations as well as available audience data to reach new and diverse markets
 - Partner with organizations with 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
 - Research opportunities to assist with venue/back-of-house fees
 - Investigate capital improvement funds for performing arts organizations that own or hold a long-term lease for their venue
 - Examine performing arts venue support in development incentives
 - Provide access and fee waivers for the use of the City's Mobile stage and mylar dance floor
- **Strategy #2:** Connect Performing Arts Organizations with Venues
 - Expand existing venue database to include performing arts venues
 - Encourage all venues to develop non-profit rates

Goal #3: Increase and Diversity Performing Arts Revenues

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

- Encourage and facilitate creation of creative and cross-organization ticketing packages and bundles
- Investigate a mechanism for ticket buyers to donate to the performing arts
- Seek opportunities for funding outside of the Hotel Occupancy Tax
- **Strategy #2: Ingrain Performing Arts In San Antonio Community**
 - Develop a platform for the business community to be informed of and connected with performing arts organizations and events
 - 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**
 - Research opportunities to connect performing arts organizations through technology or in-person collaboration meetings
 - Investigate a method for calendar sharing to ensure events are offered at different days and times
 - Encourage open, community-wide dialogue among performing arts organizations
- **Strategy #2: Increase Performing Arts Presence Throughout San Antonio**
 - Foster cross-disciplinary events to enhance arts programming and increase awareness for organizations with audiences
 - Open up dialogue with schools regarding opportunities for the next generation of performing arts professionals
 - Ensure intentionality around free events to bring awareness to the high-quality of performing arts offered in San Antonio

12-MONTH ACTION PLAN

1. Provide access and fee waivers for the use of the City's Mobile stage and mylar dance floor
2. Expand venue database to connect performing arts organizations with venues
3. Build an accessible and dynamic information resource of performing arts organizations and activities
4. Hold marketing workshop to assist performing arts organizations
5. Research opportunities for funding outside of the Hotel Occupancy Tax to assist with venue/back-of-house costs
6. Investigate capital improvement funds for performing arts organizations that own or hold long-term venue lease