Strategic Framework

23-26

Image: New Wave - Urban Uber, Naoko Morisawa, Handcrafted, oli-stained, wood and paper mosaic, acrylic, washi on board, 30" x 24", 2022, Traver Gallery Seattle.
Introduction

We are excited to introduce Artist Trust’s Strategic Framework! This Framework will guide our work through 2026. It was designed to be responsive, forward-thinking, flexible, and grounded in our values. It called for us to revisit our mission statement and create our first-ever vision statement - We envision a Washington State that values artists as leaders essential to creating healthy communities where they have the resources, knowledge, and support they need to thrive - and encourages us to build the relationships, resources, culture, and infrastructure necessary to make this happen.

This comes at a critical time for Washington State artists and Artist Trust. After more than three years of compounded crises, we believe that artists are essential to building communities rooted in equity, well-being, and joy. Yet, for society to truly benefit from the difference that artists can make, life as an artist must become more sustainable and equitable. With this Framework as a guide, together with your partnership, Artist Trust will increase equitable outcomes for Washington State artists. A brighter future depends on it.

Process

The Framework is the result of the collective work of hundreds of members of the Artist Trust community, including artists, partners, staff, committee members, and our Board of Trustees. Foundational to this process was a racial equity audit by AV Consulting and an artist-led process to create new organizational values completed in 2021. Our planning process was developed by a work group of board and staff, with three strategic areas defined during an organization-wide retreat held at Seattle Art Museum in September 2022. Feedback was collected through focus groups, conversations, program evaluation, and surveys, and drafts were fine-tuned in collaboration with artists and community members. The resulting Framework was finalized and approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2023, with a revised mission and vision approved at our annual organizational retreat in Tieton, Washington in September 2023.
Who We Are

Artist Trust is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to helping Washington State artists thrive. Recognized as a model for direct funding and professional development for working artists, we have invested over $15 million in individual artists since our founding in 1986. We view our mission through a lens of racial and geographic equity and are actively working to become an anti-racist organization. We fuel our funding and other programs for artists through fundraising, partnership, and community engagement. All team members help shape our strategy and culture in an environment that values collaboration, trust, accountability, and care. We prioritize shared decision-making, power-sharing, and the inclusion of artists at every level of our organization.

Mission

Artist Trust supports the livelihoods of artists working in all disciplines to create a more vibrant and equitable Washington State.

Vision

We envision a Washington State that values artists as leaders essential to creating healthy communities where they have the resources, knowledge, and support they need to thrive.

Values

We Are a Community
We See Artists as Leaders
We Share Power & Resources
We Earn Trust
We Engage in Continued Learning

Learn more about our organizational values at artisttrust.org/about.
2023-2026 Strategic Framework

Strategy One: Build a supportive community for artists

Support artists statewide

- Provide artist-informed funding opportunities and in-person and virtual programming
- Share resources that help artists sustain healthy livelihoods
- Plan for statewide program delivery centering geographic and racial equity
- Connect artists to economic opportunities
- Activate Artist Trust’s Seattle headquarters as a community hub

Foster authentic relationships

- Invite artists to inform programming and policies centering racial and geographic equity
- Pursue values-aligned program and funding partnerships
- Use gatherings and events as opportunities for community-building and connection between artists, donors, and community
Strategy Two: Position artists as essential leaders

Amplify storytelling

- Give artists a platform to tell stories that highlight the role of artists within Washington State communities

- Promote Artist Trust’s role in creating a healthy and equitable statewide arts ecosystem

- Invite artists to share stories about the impact of our work at events and outreach opportunities statewide

Actively engage in arts advocacy

- Share and participate in opportunities to advocate for more equitable systems and support for artists and their livelihoods

- Stay informed of the shifting local, state, and national policy landscape as it relates to artist needs and support for artists and arts organizations
Strategy Three: Act with intention and care as an organization

Invest in infrastructure and continued learning

- Implement and evaluate decision-making processes, HR policies, and practices rooted in power-sharing and racial equity
- Invest in continued learning opportunities for staff and board
- Modernize internal systems to increase organizational capacity to better fulfill our mission and live our values

Plan long-term sustainable revenue models

- Explore strategies for long-term financial stability and growth
- Sustain grants and programs and plan for strategic investments in artists and Artist Trust
Thank You

Our Strategic Framework was made possible thanks to the support and partnership of our community, a few of whom are recognized here. We are grateful that we get to learn and grow with you by our side. To support this work, visit artisttrust.org/donate.


Image: Maura Garcia, Photo by Graham Carrol.