

ReDefine Arts Strategic Plan (2026–2028)

Signal / Frequency / Resonance

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1. Land Acknowledgement

ReDefine Arts' work begins with gratitude for the lands and peoples who sustain the places where we gather, create, and listen.

ReDefine Arts is based in Toronto, on the traditional territory of the Anishnabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat peoples, covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also work in rural Ontario communities across unceded Indigenous territories, including Omàmiwinini / Algonquin territory.

As we move forward in this strategic plan, we acknowledge that every project, partnership, and gathering is part of a wider field of interconnection—one where Indigenous histories, sovereignties, and creative leadership continue to resonate. We strive to ensure that our work amplifies, rather than interrupts, these signals.

2. Forward — *Signal & Resonance*

In community-engaged arts, the work often begins as a signal—a story, memory, need, or invitation that emerges from community life. When met with care, collaboration, and imagination, these signals create resonance: shared meaning, lasting relationships, and artistic experiences that continue to vibrate long after a project ends.

Across this landscape, ReDefine Arts' work has continued to resonate. Our long-term partnerships, equity-centred practices, and accessible creative methods position us to respond to the moment with clarity and purpose. The next three years will focus on strengthening our signal—what we stand for, what we offer—and deepening our resonance across communities, sectors, and regions.

3. Context

Canada's arts and culture sector is experiencing significant change. Artists and arts organizations face financial pressures, rising costs, and growing inequities, alongside a need to explore new approaches. While public appreciation for the arts remains strong, conditions for creating and presenting work have become more challenging (Langgard, 2024; O'Kane, 2024). Reduced public funding and the uncertainty of long-term support make multiple sources of income and strong partnerships essential for sustainability (Berry, 2024).

Public support is a major asset. Over 80% of Ontarians say the arts improve community life and personal well-being, a strength that organizations can use to advocate for continued investment and deepen community engagement (Ontario Arts Council, 2023). At the same time, many Canadian artists experience financial insecurity and face barriers to participation, particularly artists who are racialized, Deaf, disabled, gender-diverse, younger, or living in rural communities (Hill Strategies, 2024; CCA, 2020). Programs that ensure fair pay, accessibility, and inclusion remain urgently needed.

The sector is also changing how work is developed and shared. Many organizations are moving beyond a sole focus on finished products to prioritize collaboration with artists and communities, address social issues, and create work that engages audiences meaningfully (Maggs, 2021; Palassio, 2024). Rural and small-town artists—about 20% of the professional workforce—continue to have limited access to resources, highlighting geographic inequities that require intentional attention (Hill, 2024). These trends show that the future of the arts depends on resilience, creativity, and inclusion. Organizations that build partnerships, work closely with communities, and make programs accessible are best positioned to remain relevant, create social impact, and support both artists and the communities they serve.

4. Statement of Purpose

We exist to create cultural spaces and experiences where artistic collaboration, equity, and belonging can thrive.

5. Mission

We create and present interdisciplinary and community grounded performance, installations and public artworks that advance disability justice, collaborative processes, and artistic innovation (across urban and rural communities).

6. Mandate

ReDefine Arts creates multidisciplinary art that centres equity, disability justice, and social change. We work across performance, public art, mentorship, storytelling, and sound/media to generate meaningful creative participation.

7. Values

Imagination & Social Change

Harness art to challenge status-quo narratives and to imagine and build more just futures.

Artists & Community Care

Champion artistic freedom and prioritize the dignity, wellbeing, and creative thriving of everyone we work with.

Equity & Accessibility

Ensure inclusion by reducing systemic barriers and valuing all abilities and lived experiences.

Collective Creativity

Create collaboratively, honouring diverse ways of making, sharing, and knowing.

Relational Integrity

Build trust through shared leadership, resource sharing, transparency, and long-term community relationships.

8. Context of Our Work (Internal Scan)

For twenty years, ReDefine Arts has developed a relational practice rooted in equity, access, and community authorship.

What We Heard (2025 Community Survey)

- 100% agree ReDefine Arts reduces barriers to participation and increases creative confidence and belonging
- 100% believe community partnerships have a positive impact
- 96% feel diverse communities are represented in programming
- 92% view ReDefine Arts' collaborations as effective
- Testimonials highlight confidence building, inclusive leadership, and career advancement resulting from mentorship experiences with ReDefine Arts
- Strong demand for Countdown, Epic Choir, and rural projects
- High interest in volunteering, learning, and deeper involvement

Strengths

- High-impact public art and performance
- Trusted relationships with communities across Toronto and rural Ontario
- Cross-sector partnerships and relationships broaden our reach and contribute to a more interconnected cultural ecosystem
- Accessibility-centred and disability justice approaches create multisensory, inclusive art-making environments
- Mentorship pathways—including tailored one-to-one mentorships, community workshops, and collaborative creation opportunities—support artists and strengthen participation across our initiatives.
- 50+ major artworks, thousands of participants, 50+ paid internships

Challenges

- Reliance on project and grant-based funding
- Limited staff capacity and significant administrative demands challenge long-term planning and sustainability
- Insufficient resources to meet accessibility needs beyond short-term/single projects
- Desire for expanded rural engagement outpaces resources for multi-year vision-forward work
- Insufficient resources to respond quickly to artistic experimentation

9. Current Focus & Successes

Countdown Public Art Project

4,000+ participants; 13 monuments across Ontario; 310 stepping stones; deep partnerships addressing gender-based violence

Epic Choir

An ongoing trans, non-binary, gender-diverse & 2-Spirit ensemble redefining choral form

Public Art & Storytelling

Community mosaics and place-based installations across Toronto and Ontario

Collaborative Performance & Sound Work

Including Trace, Drift Seeds, and multiple iterations of May I Take Your Arm?

Mentorship, Peer Exchange & Leadership Pathways

KIMI (Knowledge Incubator and Mentorship Initiative), Community Crisscross, disability arts and accessibility knowledge-sharing

10. Our Strategic Planning Process (2024–2025)

A multi-phase, arts-informed process that included:

- Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC)
- Community Survey & interviews
- Focus groups with artists, partners, and participants
- Internal organizational review
- Equity & accessibility lens across all processes

11. Our Strategic Priorities (2026–2028)

11.1. Tune the Signal: Deepen Artistic Practice & Accessibility

ReDefine Arts' "signal" is our core creative offering – community-engaged, and rooted in accessibility. Over the next three years, we will refine and strengthen this signal so it remains clear, responsive, and connected to community experience.

- Sustain and evolve artistic practices using multisensory informed approaches.
- Deepen core programs (Countdown, Epic Choir) while expanding intergenerational and cross-sector collaboration.

11.2 Strengthen the Frequency: Prepare Artists as Carriers & Leaders

ReDefine Arts' frequency is embodied in artists, facilitators, and cultural workers. This priority shifts from organizational retention toward **capacity transfer**—supporting artists to carry forward practices independently and collectively.

- Expand mentorship, professional development, and leadership pathways for equity-seeking, Deaf, disabled, queer/trans, racialized, and rural artists, with an emphasis on autonomy and sustainability.
- Support artists to develop facilitation, governance, and partnership skills that enable them to steward arts projects/programs independently.
- Foster peer networks and intergenerational exchange models that strengthen artist autonomy and sustainable practice.

11.3 Support the Transmission Network: Ethical Sustainability

Rather than long-term institutional expansion, ReDefine Arts' will focus on ethical sustainability, ensuring financial responsibility, transparent governance, and intentional partnership transition.

- Stabilize operations to support high-quality delivery through 2028.
- Cultivate mission-aligned partnerships that can receive, adapt, or steward specific programs, tools, or practices where appropriate.
- Strengthen organizational capacity through diversified revenue such as donor pathways and select fee-for-service/ticketed events, where appropriate.

11.4 Amplify the Resonance: Legacy, Knowledge Sharing & Sector Contribution

This priority emphasizes lasting impact over growth, ensuring that what ReDefine Arts has learned is shared widely and meaningfully.

- Increase visibility through intentional storytelling that documents process, learning, and community impact—not just outcomes.
- Share knowledge through evaluations, publications, toolkits, workshops, and convenings that support the broader cultural ecosystem.
- Position ReDefine Arts' as a significant contributor to arts and culture sector-wide learning about collaborative artistic practices.

12. Advancing Our Strategic Priorities (2026–2028)

This implementation plan prioritizes depth over growth, capacity transfer over expansion, and ethical readiness over permanence.

12.1 Tune the Signal: Deepen Artistic Practice & Accessibility

Key Actions (2026–2028)

- Refine multisensory and multi-access standards across core programs (e.g., *Countdown*, *Epic Choir*), informed by artist and participant feedback
- Integrate learnings into clear, documented practice guidelines and accessible methodologies

- Embed refined practices into ongoing programming and internal documentation

Indicators of Success

- Sustained or increased participation
- Core programs articulate their values, methods, and ethical conditions
- Consistent accessibility measures (e.g., ASL, captioning, multisensory design)
- Positive participant and artist feedback

12.2 Strengthen the Frequency: Artist Development & Leadership

Key Actions (2026–2028)

- Map artist pathways and identify gaps in mentorship, leadership, and care-based supports
- Expand mentorship, peer exchange, and/or leadership pathways with an emphasis on autonomy and sustainability
- Formalize leadership pathways and alumni engagement; integrate wellbeing and care practices

Indicators of success

- Increased artist participation in leadership roles
- Equitable representation across programs and opportunities
- Artist-reported growth, wellbeing, and access to opportunity

12.3 Support the Transmission Network: Sustainability & Collaboration

Key Actions (2026–2028)

- Diversify revenue in alignment with mission and organizational capacity
- Build cross-sector partnerships, including collaborative funding approaches
- Align program scope, staffing, and operations with available resources to support resilience

Indicators of success

- Operations are aligned with organizational capacity and mission
- Revenue sources are more diversified and balanced
- Partnerships demonstrate shared value and durability
- Staff capacity and sustainability are strengthened

12.4 Amplify the Resonance: Visibility & Shared Learning

Key Actions (2026–2028)

- Refresh accessible communications and storytelling frameworks
- Publish impact stories and evaluations; host or join cross-regional dialogues

- Position ReDefine Arts as a leader in accessible, community-engaged practice through intentional knowledge sharing

Indicators of success

- Increased reach and visibility
- Clear, accessible communications
- Evidence of influence on sector practices

13. Credits and Thanks

Credits

Strategic Planning – Design & Writing
Anna Camilleri

Strategic Planning Committee
Erin Lee, Tariq Sami, Zena Lord, Anna Camilleri, Tristan R. Whiston, Megan Wilk

Board of Directors Strategic Planning Contributors
AQ Hui, Emma Munro, Erin Lee, Jo Brooks, Junia Mason, Tariq Sami, Titus Androgynous, Wy Joung Kou, Zena Lord

Graphic Design
Tariq Sami

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