



ALLENS LANE ART CENTER

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028

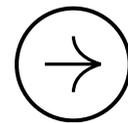


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Introduction



A brief introduction to Allens Lane Art Center

In the heart of the Mt. Airy neighborhood of Northwest Philadelphia, Allens Lane Art Center (ALAC) serves as a vibrant community-centered space guided by a shared vision and commitment to bring people together and foster transformative and joyful experiences through the arts. ALAC has a rich history that began in 1953 with its establishment by visionary community members, who came together through a collective ambition to make Mt. Airy an intentionally welcoming space for all people, challenging rampant systemic racism and discrimination at the time.

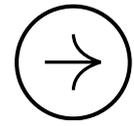
The 2025-2028 Strategic Plan serves to engage community members, residents, and stakeholders to nurture ALAC's inclusive vision of growth, connection, and creativity. The plan outlines our commitment to furthering ALAC's impact and will serve as a roadmap to guide the Center's mission, goals, and initiatives, ensuring that it is aligned with the needs and aspirations of the community at every step.

When ALAC founders first met in 1952 at a meeting of Henry Home and School Association, they envisioned an art center guided by the importance of Living Together in the Community. Inspired as a part of the larger grassroots movement at that time towards intentional integration, including increasing encouragement of African American home buying and opportunity within the Mt. Airy neighborhood, ALAC was granted nonprofit tax exempt status in 1955. The founders saw the arts as a uniting force and recognized the role of artistic experience and expression in enhancing an individual's quality of life. By offering opportunities for all to explore their creative potential in a safe and welcoming environment, they hoped to improve the community's well-being.

Since then, ALAC has evolved and adapted, responding to the evolving needs of its community while striving to stay true to this foundational mission. The original vision of creating a community space where the arts act as a bridge, uniting like-minded individuals from diverse identities, backgrounds, and walks of life to foster a more connected, inclusive community, remains intact and crucial today.

Over the years, ALAC has worked towards significant milestones, including bringing more awareness and creative opportunities to the area and increasing access to ALAC in broader Mt. Airy and surrounding Philadelphia neighborhoods. Today, we are aware that the arts as a uniting force is as relevant as ever. Growing initiatives at ALAC, like the Mt. Airy Arts Festival and Art Forward, demonstrate this pertinent fact. The Strategic Plan will serve as a way to build upon our progress in core areas and also continue to chart a new path forward. Together, we will build upon the present while bridging our storied past and envisioning our future.

Executive Summary



The ALAC 2025-2028 Strategic Plan outlines the Center’s core focus areas for the next 3 years as we work towards our mission of bringing our community together through transformative and joyful experiences in the arts. The Strategic Plan serves as a central document to outline our organization’s goals, objectives, and strategies to align with our programs and initiatives. Several organizational efforts took place to develop the plan, including audience-focused research, data collection, and internal strategy discussions.

Audience Focused Research	In collaboration with Executive Director Vita Litvak and the Board of Directors, ALAC developed an 18-month long research phase to understand more about local community needs and desires in the arts as well as to recognize current barriers to entry at our organization, and how to expand services for more diverse constituents. In support of this decision, throughout 2023, Litvak consulted with Dr. Lisa Jo Epstein, Founder and Principal Consultant and Facilitator of Just Act, to develop Art Forward, a year-long project that would support ALAC’s desired audience-focused research.
Diversity Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Committee	Over the last six months, ALAC’s DEIA committee has been evaluating ALAC’s current operations, facilities, governance, leadership, and hiring practices, as well as the organization’s programming, and extant forms of Community Engagement. The DEIA Committee presented recommendations based on their assessment, which were approved by the Board and incorporated into the Strategic Plan.
Strategic Planning Retreat	On April 6, 2024, the Board of ALAC held a strategic planning retreat to reflect upon ALAC’s growth, organizational strengths, and community issues; collectively revisit the organization’s mission, vision, and values; and develop a fully articulated, three-year strategic plan to support the organization’s future and its role within the local community. Lisa Jo Epstein of Just Act was selected to lead the retreat based on her approach rooted in social justice. This approach is strongly tied into ALAC’s founding mission, which the ALAC Board and Staff seek to revive. A total of ten board members and five staff participated in this initiative.

High-Level Goals

Through this data collection, we have identified three main goals for the Strategic Plan with various strategies to execute these objectives.

GOAL #1

Expand the **DIVERSITY** of our constituents to reflect the community that we serve in NW Philadelphia

Goal #2

Ensure ample **RESOURCES** to support our mission, programs, and partnerships

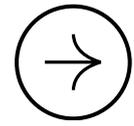
Goal #3

Reestablish and enhance our **COMMUNITY** relations



Mission, Vision, Values

*To be finalized by the DEIA and Strategic Planning Committee.



Mission: *To build understanding and unity amongst Northwest Philadelphia communities through accessible, enriching, and transformative art education and experiences.*

Vision: *We envision a world where we are all interconnected through consistent, deep, and meaningful engagement with the arts and the power of creativity.*

Core Values

Art is a uniting force, bringing people together and building communities.	Art is a human right and should be accessible to all people.	Art and creativity transform our lives.
Art brings to life abstract ideas and emotions that help us understand and relate to each other deeply. Through our shared experiences of engaging with creativity, we build relationships and grow important ties.	Art and creativity is an essential part of a flourishing and nurturing existence that we must work to make accessible and equitable - financially, culturally, physically, and psychologically.	Art fosters creative thinking and wellbeing, allowing us to access our joy, spontaneity and intuition, and helping us better understand ourselves and each other.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following three goals and supporting objectives were developed to support the priorities identified during the strategic planning session. Clearly identifiable outcomes, results, and measurable indicators will demonstrate the progress toward reaching our goals. Detailed tactical and implementation plans, with financial projections, will support the major goals and strategies of the strategic plan. When we accomplish our goals, it will lead to meaningful changes and benefits such as stronger community connections, increased engagement and a more inclusive environment. Our programs and partnerships will have a greater impact and will improve the quality of life for those we serve, fostering a more cohesive and empowering community.



Goals and Objectives



Goal #1 Expand the DIVERSITY of our constituents to reflect the community that we serve in NW Philadelphia



Objective 1

Our arts programs and events are financially accessible to all communities in NW Philadelphia

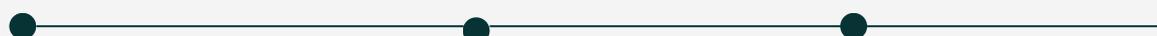
Objective 2

ALAC offers programs and events that reflect the cultural and socioeconomic distinctiveness of our neighborhood.

Objective 3

The visibility and benefits of Allens Lane are clearly established and felt throughout the NW community.

Goal #2 Ensure ample RESOURCES to support our mission, programs, and partnerships



Objective 1

ALAC has strong and diversified contributed revenue streams that support our mission and programs.

Objective 2

ALAC has expansive, well-maintained facilities to accommodate current and future growth.

Objective 3

ALAC offers opportunities and benefits that support and enhance staff.

Goal #3 Reestablish and enhance our COMMUNITY relations



Objective 1

Rebranding and marketing tactics have established the center as a valuable community resource throughout the NW.

Objective 2

Expanded community engagement and educational programs allow us to connect and serve diverse communities in NW Philadelphia.

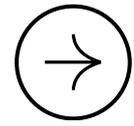
Objective 3

New and expanded partnerships with other arts, culture, and civic organizations in NW Philadelphia have helped to grow and strengthen our community reach.

Timeline

<p>2025-2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft a belief statement to be approved by the board and shared publicly. • Create a community engagement plan to help maintain relationships with community partners and new audiences. • Expand existing partnerships with local community organizations. • Engage a marketing consultant to create a plan focused on raising awareness of ALAC locally. • Steward and improve the Allens Lane Park grounds and ALAC facilities. • Review and implement improvements to ALAC board and staff policies and procedures.
<p>2026-2027</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Geographic Accessibility Assessment and Plan. • Create a budget and identify funding opportunities for a rebrand. • Roll out a membership program. • Raise \$25,000 for Ceramics and Theater improvements. • Create a program plan based on Art Forward evaluation results. • Roll out new education based Theater Program.
<p>2027-2028</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase participation in programs by 30%. • Increase individual contributed income by 40%. • Increase foundation support by 30%. • Refurbish and improve the Ceramics studio and Theater. • Reveal new brand identity based on findings from Art Forward. • Create a new Community Engagement Department to provide programs off-site. • Increase the diversity of our audiences to reflect the demographics of 19119 and 19144 zip codes

Acknowledgments



April 6th Board and Staff Retreat



We are grateful for the dedication and support of the whole ALAC Board and Staff in developing the 2025-28 Strategic Plan. Special thanks to Lisa Jo Epstein of Just Act for her innovative facilitation of our retreat and kick-starting the process.

Thank you to the Board President, Susan Matyas, and Executive Director, Vita Litvak for their work with the Strategic Planning Committee to steer the planning and writing process.

Our heartfelt gratitude to the Strategic Planning Committee which included board members Debbie Lerman, Laurence Liss, Lindsey Norward, Susan Richards, and Trudi Williams.

