



ARTS  ONTARIO

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 - 2025



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ArtsBuild Ontario acknowledges that our office is located in the 44 Gaukel Creative Workspace, which is in a settler facility built on the traditional territory of the Attawonderonk, Anishinaabek, and Haudenosaunee Peoples. 44 Gaukel is located in what is now Kitchener, Ontario, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to Six Nations, Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and includes six miles on each side of the Grand River from the source of its mouth.

We are a settler organization and value respectful collaboration with all the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island who have lived on this land for thousands of years and who continue to be our neighbors, friends, and colleagues. Our work takes place in what is currently Ontario, which includes the traditional and unceded territories of the Anishinaabek, Attawonderonk, Petun, Cree, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, and Métis.

Our mandate is to support arts facilities and creative spaces, but we do not solely define these from a colonial perspective. Arts facilities and creative spaces are not only physical buildings, they are often inclusive of the land itself.

A MESSAGE

From the President and Executive Director

ArtsBuild Ontario (ABO) was formed over 20 years ago by Provincial Arts Service Organizations that identified a need across all artistic disciplines to support the development and maintenance of arts facilities. From ABO's beginnings, the organization has headed research initiatives, developed core programs, and led advocacy efforts to support Ontario's creative spaces.

The concept of creative space has evolved over time. Creative space can be defined in many ways, from a visual arts studio in a former post office to land-based spaces to a multi-million dollar performing arts venue. Arts organizations face unique opportunities and challenges from macro-environmental factors, the most significant being the state of precarity as we navigate post-pandemic recovery. With more questions than answers, many are focusing on operations, maintenance, and survival.

So what do arts organizations in Ontario's diverse communities need today to build, manage, and finance their creative spaces? To answer this, we consulted program participants, partners, and funders on how ABO can support the future of creative spaces in a post-pandemic world. From these consultations, ABO's new strategic plan for 2022-2025 emerged.

The last two years have drastically impacted cultural venues across the province, and ABO has prioritized leading the sector through a post-COVID recovery. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central throughout this plan with emphasis placed on decolonization and accessibility. We will strive to listen, reflect, and deepen our connection with Ontario's diverse communities to improve services as well as cultivate partnerships and programs alongside underrepresented groups. Building on existing successes, ABO will develop future programs and research around new models, including digital infrastructure. Finally, we will establish (and lead by example) a healthy financial position for ABO to propel this vision forward and support its growth and sustainability in the years to come.

Our re-energized mandate, mission, and vision support the strategic directions laid out in this plan. We are both excited by the possibilities for ABO to continue its work and committed to working towards these goals.

We hope you will stay connected with ABO and be a part of the journey forward.

Sincerely,



Kristian Clarke
President



Alex Glass
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Strategic Planning Process

In late 2021, ArtsBuild Ontario (ABO) embarked on an exciting strategic planning journey with the goal to set new directions for the organization's future.

A crucial first step in this process was to understand the needs of ABO's stakeholders by engaging diverse voices from across the sector. Over several months, ABO gathered ideas and perspectives from funders, partners, artists, arts organizations, and advisory committee representatives, while also exploring the trends and opportunities unfolding in the arts and culture sector. Before finalizing the strategic plan, ABO returned to key stakeholders from the arts, Indigenous, and accessibility communities to seek their feedback. This step was essential to ensure the plan accurately represents the needs of the sector.

The insights from the engagement process come to life here in ABO's Strategic Plan for 2022-2025. This Strategic Plan describes the path forward for ABO through a re-energized mandate, mission, and vision, and four strategic directions.



Kristian Clarke, President
Shirley Madill, Vice President
Bill Ralph, Treasurer
Zainub Verjee, Advisory Chair

Thea Kurdi
Bryn Jones
Chris Plunkett
Alex Glass, Executive Director

Strategic Planning consultation, writing, and design provided by Kay Nadalin Design and Facilitation in collaboration with ABO's Board of Directors and Executive Director.

Summary of Strategic Directions

These strategic directions describe ABO's areas of focus for the next three years. They reflect the aspirations and wisdom of ABO's stakeholders, Board of Directors, and staff who were engaged throughout the planning process.

1

**Increase ABO's
relevance and impact
by strengthening its
connections to arts
communities**

2

**Leverage existing
successes and
explore new
approaches for
creative spaces**

3

**Reflect the sector's
diversity to foster
organizational
growth**

4

**Demonstrate a
healthy and
robust financial
position**



WHO WE ARE

What We Do

ABO is a provincial arts service organization that provides small and medium-sized organizations with tools, training, and advice to successfully manage physical and digital creative spaces. ABO works to reimagine the future of creative spaces through dedicated research projects and an engaged network of supportive partners.

Who We Serve

It is both the honour and duty of ABO to serve Ontario's arts, cultural, and creative communities. This includes communities who are or have been historically marginalized or underrepresented. With a focus on small to medium-sized organizations, ABO supports all those with a desire to build and manage spaces across all arts, creative, and cultural disciplines. ABO proudly works with non-profit, grassroots, and for-profit entities, as well as Indigenous communities and groups, and municipalities. In recent years, ABO has grown its service offerings in partnership with Indigenous and Northern Ontario communities.

ABO's Areas of Expertise

Organizations with healthy facilities, artistic capabilities, and finances are all hallmarks of a thriving arts and culture sector. Supporting cultural infrastructure is key to the vitality of Ontario's arts organizations, artists, and creative communities.

ABO's services and offerings stem from four themes:



Learning

ABO connects arts organizations with ideas and experts from the sector to help strengthen their knowledge on facility-related projects.



Building

ABO provides the tools, resources, and services needed to plan and complete building-related projects.



Managing

ABO's offerings help organizations to find proactive and sustainable solutions for maintaining their creative spaces.



Financing

ABO informs arts organizations about funding opportunities and alternative approaches to financing their building-related projects.



ABO's Services

ABO supports its network by providing core services and undertaking timely research and projects. Currently, this includes:

Projects

Indigenous Creative Spaces

Services

Creative Spaces Mentoring Network
Asset Planner for the Arts

Research

Bricks&Mortar
Mapping Northern Creative Spaces

Rentals

44 Gaukel Creative Workspace

Resources

PLAN IT | BUILD IT
Resource Library

Advocacy

Ongoing advocacy to decision makers at all levels of government for continual investment in sustainable arts facilities



ABO's Impact

For over 20 years, ABO's services have supported arts organizations, artists, and municipalities. ABO exists as an arts service organization with a unique role on the provincial and national stage. There is no other organization in Ontario or Canada dedicated to supporting arts organizations of all disciplines with their cultural infrastructure needs.

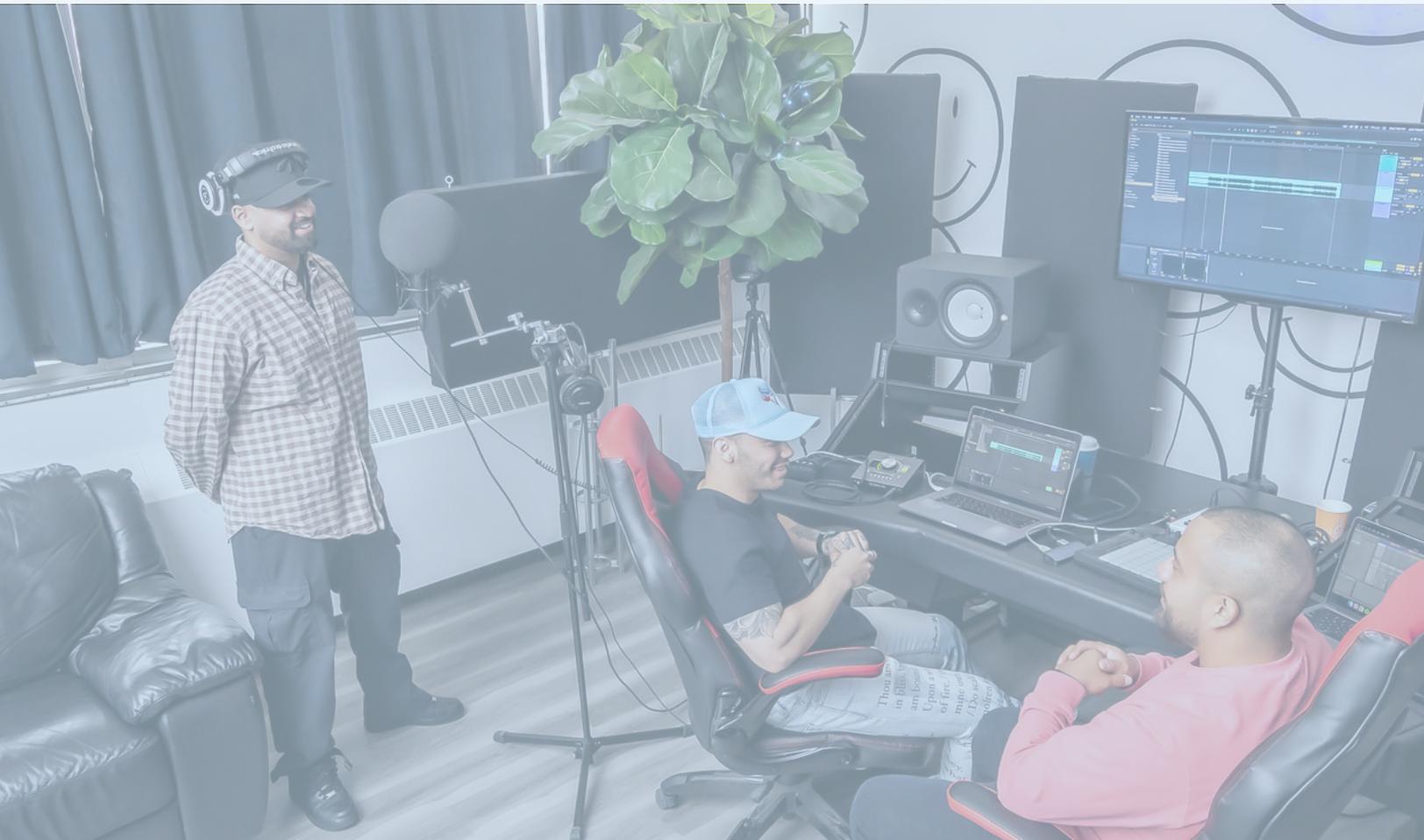
ABO's network is wide-reaching with over 3,000 arts managers from across Ontario and beyond—in fact, over 25% come from outside of the province! With just over a third of its network based in major city centres, ABO takes great pride in supporting arts organizations from communities of all shapes and sizes.

Acknowledgments

ArtsBuild Ontario recognizes, respects, and actively supports people from all backgrounds, particularly Indigenous, Black, racialized, francophone, 2SLGBTQ+, disability-identified, and other marginalized artists and arts organizations. ArtsBuild Ontario does not discriminate and does not tolerate discrimination against anyone based on their race, country of origin, sexual identity, gender identity, mental and/or physical ability, language, or age. ArtsBuild Ontario commits to making our programs and initiatives, as well as our physical space at 44 Gaukel Creative Workspace, safe and accessible for all.

Commitment to Accessibility

ArtsBuild Ontario is committed to providing its resources, tools and services in a welcoming and supportive way for all. We will identify, prevent, and remove barriers to participation on an ongoing basis by working to meet (and where possible, exceed) the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The staff of ArtsBuild Ontario will provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to promote inclusion and access.



ABO's Mandate, Mission & Vision

Mandate, Mission, and Vision statements are integral to any organization. They provide guidance and clarity while serving as the foundation for an organization's activities and goals.

ABO's Mandate provides an overview of its commitments to stakeholders and the sector. ABO's Mission describes its reason for existing and how it fulfills its purpose. ABO's Vision looks to the future with aspiration by articulating the long-term difference ABO seeks to make.

Mandate

ArtsBuild Ontario provides the leadership and expertise needed to operate small to medium-sized arts and creative spaces in Ontario, by:

Building capacity:

Providing tools, training, and advice to support arts managers in achieving their infrastructure goals.

Exploring new models:

Engaging in innovative research and projects to reimagine arts, cultural, and creative spaces—including physical and digital.

Fostering sector connections:

Sharing knowledge, supporting advocacy efforts, and removing barriers to success across the sector's diverse communities.

Mission

ArtsBuild Ontario supports small to medium-sized organizations across Ontario to build, manage, and finance their arts and creative spaces.

Vision

ArtsBuild Ontario strives for a thriving cultural sector with vibrant arts and creative spaces that are accessible to everyone in Ontario.



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

2022 – 2025

ABO's strategic directions tell the story of the organization for the next three years. They shine a light on where ABO will focus. They articulate the priorities of the organization and how it will impact the sector. They provide guidance while remaining flexible to the changes of our rapidly evolving world.



Increase ABO's relevance and impact by strengthening its connections to arts communities

To best serve the sector, ABO must first know and be known by the province's many arts communities. Guided by its re-energized focus, ABO is poised to strengthen its connections to the sector's diverse communities. Through a deepened understanding of the sector, ABO can ensure it is delivering value to the arts communities who need it most.

Where We Will Focus

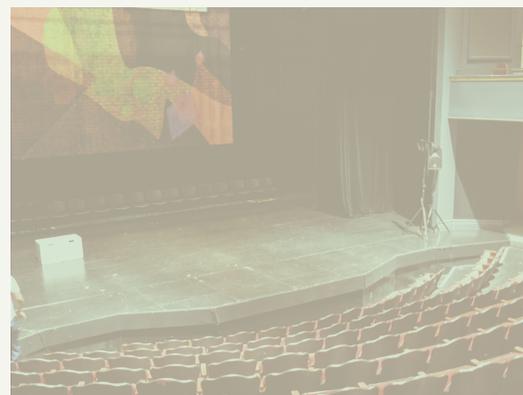
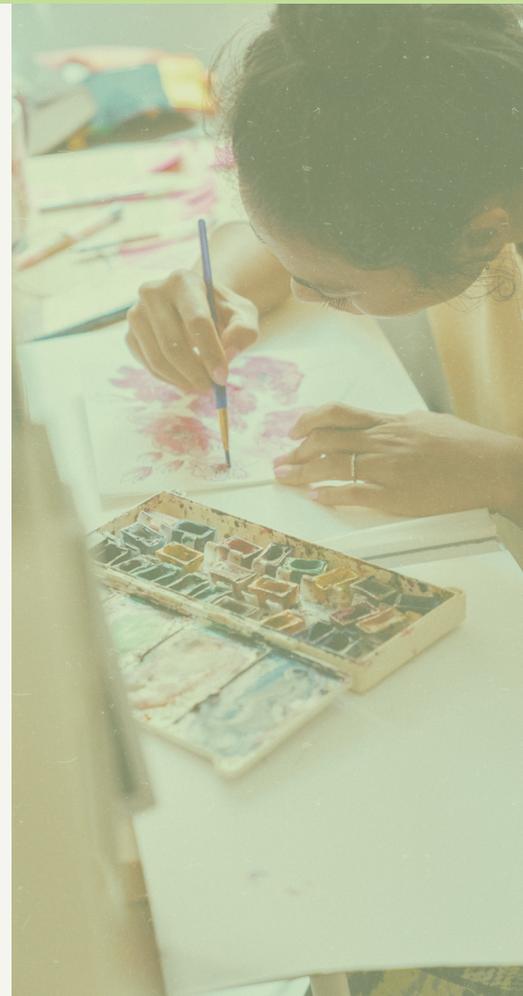
Share the value of ABO to the sector

Create and improve services to meet the needs of arts communities

Prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and decolonization within ABO programming

Engage in ongoing dialogue and reflection with arts communities

Ensure prolonged impact of ABO's offerings



Leverage existing successes and explore new approaches for creative spaces

As a leader in the arts and culture sector, ABO plays an important role as the go-to expert on creative spaces. Fuelled by insights from its vast network, ABO is uniquely positioned to guide how creative spaces take shape and flourish. By amplifying better practices and exploring new approaches, ABO can help organizations achieve their creative space goals—both now and in the future.

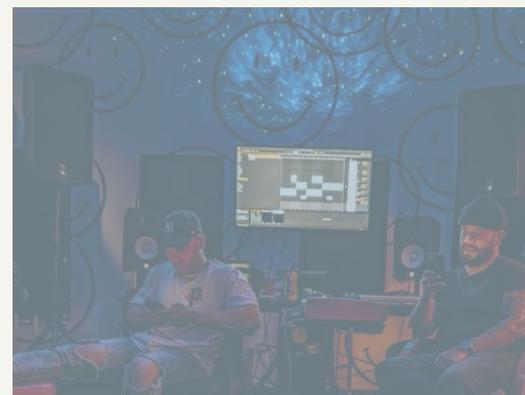
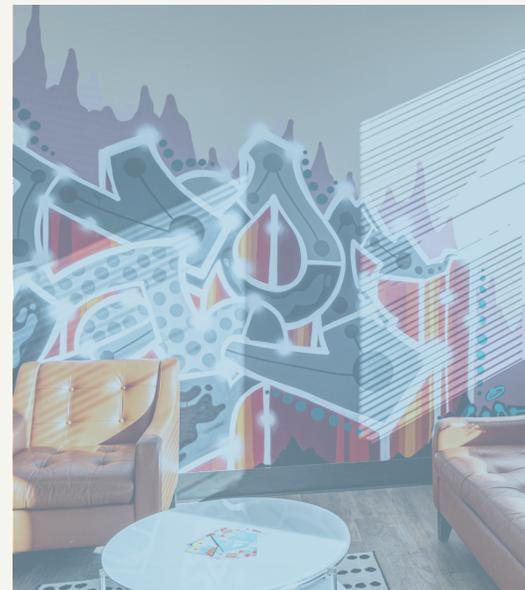
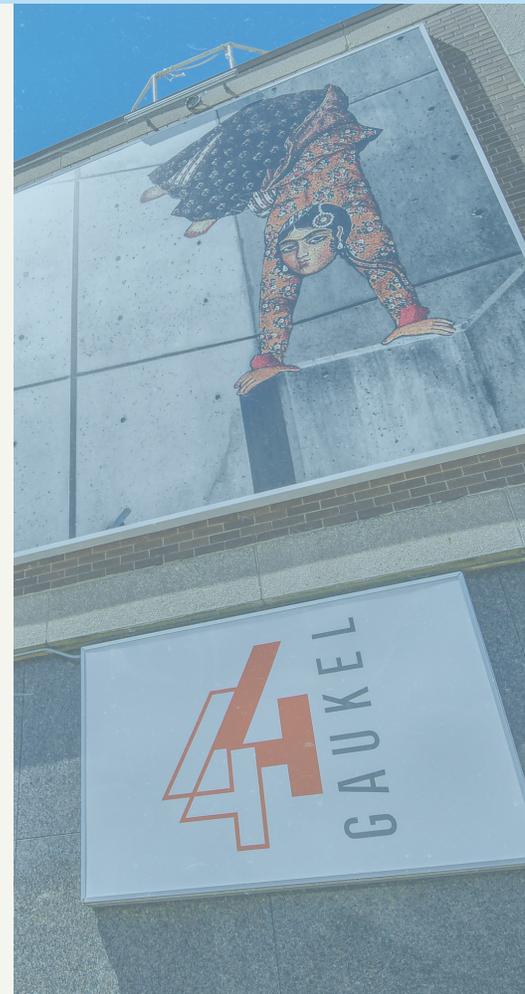
Where We Will Focus

Revitalize 44 Gaukel with a long-term vision for Kitchener-Waterloo's arts community

Amplify best practices and proven strategies for success

Provide sector leadership for post-COVID recovery

Explore new and accessible models for creative spaces —including digital infrastructure



Reflect the sector's diversity to foster organizational growth

As ABO continues to grow, it is critical to centre the diversity of Ontario's arts and culture sector. Through intentional design of its programs, services, and experiences, ABO can expand how it partners with and engages underrepresented and marginalized groups. By actively reflecting as an organization to guide its actions in prioritizing diversity, ABO can strengthen its credibility and relevance with all stakeholders across the province. This is key for ABO to deepen its commitment to decolonized and equitable creative spaces as informed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Actions and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

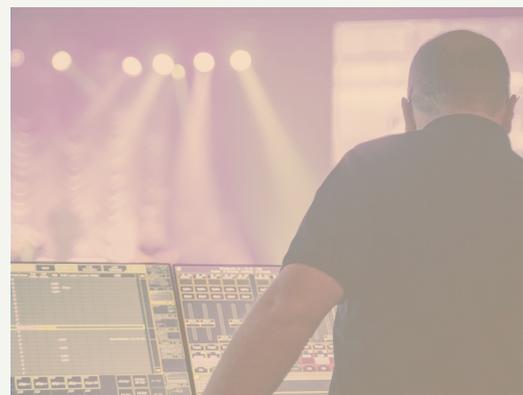
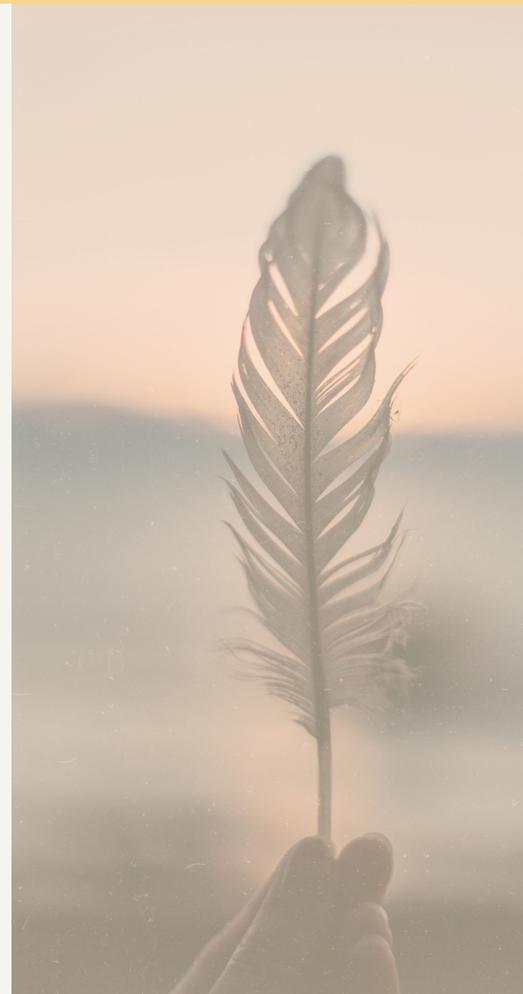
Where We Will Focus

Support a decolonized future for creative spaces

Assess the organization and take action to uphold diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and decolonization

Ensure representation throughout ABO at all levels

Centre diversity in programming to enhance relevance and impact



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4

Demonstrate a healthy and robust financial position

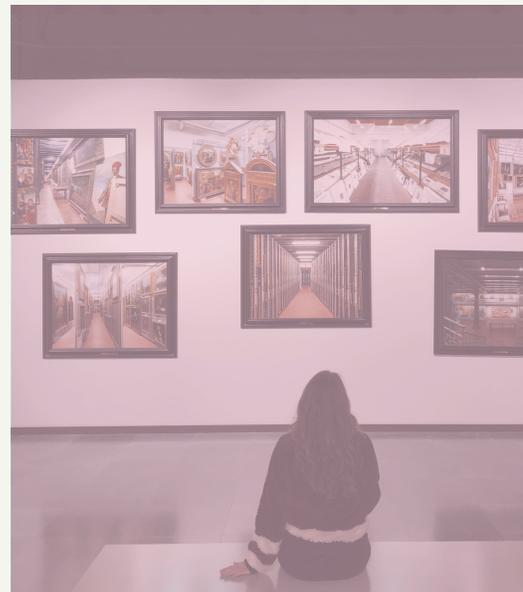
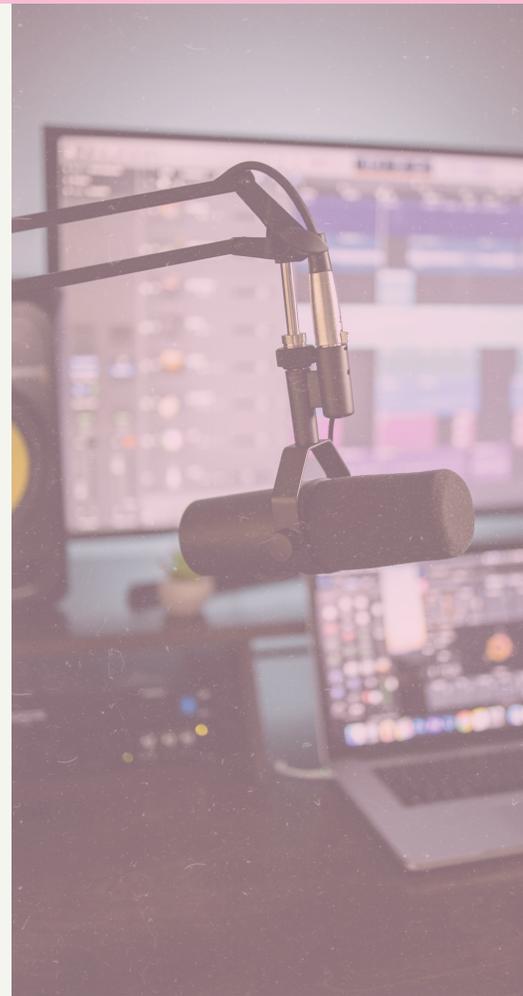
Enhancing and maintaining long-term financial viability is essential for ABO's future. A healthy and robust financial position allows ABO to provide high-quality offerings today while laying its foundation for tomorrow. This is an opportunity for ABO to demonstrate what it looks like for an organization in the arts and culture sector to be financially vibrant.

Where We Will Focus

Assess and grow revenue-generating core offerings

Monitor and manage financial risks

Expand philanthropic and public funding support for ABO





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