

CENTER FOR
arts-inspired learning

The Power of Partnerships



Strategic Plan for FY 2024-2026



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Letter from the Board Chair

As we embark on an exciting new chapter for the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning (CAL), I wanted to take a moment to share and highlight the significance of our strategic plan, “The Power of Partnerships FY2024-2026.”

The strategic plan is a visionary road map that will guide our growth and impact over the next three years. At CAL, we firmly believe in the transformative power of the arts to inspire, educate, and uplift lives. Through “The Power of Partnerships FY2024-2026,” we are dedicated to forging authentic connections with all members of our community – youth, families, schools, artists, civic organizations, and more.



Our objectives revolve around five key areas: Development, Sustainability, Innovation, Collaboration, and Inclusion. Each objective is supported by specific action steps, timelines, and responsible parties, ensuring a clear path to success. We are committed to bridging gaps in arts education, forming impactful partnerships, promoting diversity and inclusion, and optimizing our operational systems to support our programs effectively.

“The Power of Partnerships FY2024-2026” reflects our collective aspirations and commitment to making a positive impact on our community. We aim to provide even more opportunities for young minds to explore their creativity, express themselves, and develop essential skills. By deepening our relationships with local schools, artists, neighborhoods, and regional organizations, we strive to create a vibrant ecosystem of artistic engagement.

We value the expertise and input of community members like you. Your ideas, support, and involvement are crucial in shaping the future of CAL. We invite you to join us on this journey by sharing your insights, participating in our programs, and spreading the word about the opportunities we provide. Together, we can nurture a thriving arts community that celebrates diversity, fosters creativity, and empowers individuals to reach their full potential.

On behalf of CAL’s Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers, I want to extend our sincere gratitude for the invaluable support we received to fund our strategic planning efforts. We are also incredibly grateful to our community for your unwavering support. Your enthusiasm and dedication play a vital role in shaping a brighter future for our community. We are thrilled to collaborate with you, hand in hand, as we build connections, inspire creativity, and enrich lives through the arts. Together, we can make a profound and lasting impact.

Warm regards,

Christopher S. Howse

Christopher S. Howse, Board Chair
Center for Arts-Inspired Learning

Executive Summary

Cleveland's **Center for Arts-Inspired Learning (CAL)** is dedicated to providing innovative arts education programs that bridge educational disparities and empower students. Collaborating with professional teaching artists, CAL offers customizable, curriculum-aligned programs during school, after-school, and out-of-school hours. CAL's strategic plan for FY2024-2026 aims to cultivate a robust Teaching Artist community, ensure financial sustainability, harness technology for exceptional programming, strengthen collaborations, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The strategic planning process began with extensive information gathering, including surveys, interviews, and consultations with key stakeholders such as the Board, Staff, teaching artists, partners, and community members. This inclusive approach ensured that the plan reflects the diverse perspectives and needs of those connected to CAL. The overarching objective of "The Power of Partnerships" is to foster authentic collaborations and deepen engagement with the community. CAL aims to bridge gaps in arts education, expand access and equity, and create lasting partnerships with schools, artists, civic organizations, and funders. By focusing on these connections, CAL seeks to make a meaningful and transformative impact on the lives of youth and the communities it serves. As a result, CAL's mission and vision statements were reworked.

New mission statement: *The Center for Arts-Inspired Learning champions creative learning, drives educational innovation, and transforms lives through collaborative efforts involving teaching artists, students, educators, and communities.*

New vision statement: *To change lives and improve communities as the leader in making the arts a core component of every student's education and development.*

CAL's strategic plan for FY2024-2026 includes the following goals:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Teaching Artist Partnerships - Cultivate a Robust Teaching Artist Community for Sustainable Growth and Community Impact: CAL will support and nurture teaching artists, fostering a vibrant community that contributes to CAL's growth, and creates a positive impact on the community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Donor Partnerships - Operationalize a Sustainable Financial Plan to Adapt to Changing Donor Landscape: CAL will develop and implement a financial plan that ensures long-term sustainability, adapting to the evolving donor landscape, and securing the necessary resources to support its programs.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Innovative Programs - Harness Advanced Technology to Deliver Exceptional Programming: CAL seeks to leverage advanced technology to enhance its programming, creating engaging and impactful experiences for students, educators, and the community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: Collaborative Partnerships - Strengthen Relationships Across Arts and Non-Arts Communities: CAL aims to build strong collaborations and partnerships with diverse organizations and communities, fostering synergy, and maximizing its collective impact.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: Diverse Partnerships - Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Curriculum, Programs, and Operations: CAL is committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of its work, ensuring that its curriculum, programs, and operations reflect and celebrate the richness of the community it serves.

Through the implementation of this strategic plan, CAL will enhance its capacity to create meaningful connections with youth, families, neighborhood groups, artists, schools, civic organizations, funders, and more. This plan reflects CAL's commitment to growth, innovation, and fostering a positive impact in the community, while also strengthening its infrastructure to support these expanded connections effectively.

CAL invites the community, stakeholders, and partners to actively engage in this journey. Collaboration and participation from all sectors are vital in realizing the vision and strategic priorities outlined in the strategic plan. CAL is committed to transparent communication and will keep the community informed about progress, events, and opportunities to be involved.

With “The Power of Partnerships,” CAL is poised to strengthen its impact, deepen community engagement, and create a vibrant ecosystem of arts-inspired learning. Together, we can inspire creativity, foster inclusivity, and empower individuals to thrive through the transformative power of the arts.

CAL extends its gratitude to all who contributed to the strategic planning process and looks forward to an exciting future of growth and connection.



Introduction: About the Organization

Cleveland's **Center for Arts-Inspired Learning** (CAL) is a pioneering force in education, profoundly impacting students, and families in the community. CAL's innovative, hands-on learning experiences aim to bridge educational disparities, foster creative thinking and problem-solving skills, and empower students to excel academically and in their future endeavors.

Collaborating with professional teaching artists, CAL employs the arts as a captivating and imaginative vehicle for promoting deep comprehension of academic subjects, advancing social-emotional learning, and cultivating the essential 21st-century skillset. CAL offers customizable, curriculum-aligned programs during in-school, after-school, and out-of-school hours.

Established in 1953, CAL has experienced remarkable growth and expanded its reach in providing enriching arts education programs and services for children and families in Cleveland and Northeast

Ohio. CAL founded ArtWorks in 2005, an acclaimed arts-based job training and college readiness program for high school students in Northeast Ohio. Students are trained as paid apprentices under master teaching artists who engage them in art forms and skills that are transferable to work or college. CAL is also a founding partner of Play It Forward!® Cleveland, an initiative dedicated to providing free musical instruments and lessons to the youth of Cleveland.

Recognizing the transformative impact of CAL's work, the CAL Executive Committee, under the leadership of Sheffia Randall-Nickerson as President and CEO, embarked on developing a comprehensive road map for CAL's future from FY2024 to 2026. This report details the strategic planning process and out-lines the next steps for CAL.



Center for Arts-Inspired Learning: Into the Future

New Mission: The Center for Arts-Inspired Learning champions creative learning, drives educational innovation, and transforms lives through collaborative efforts involving teaching artists, students, educators, and communities.

To bring the mission statement to life and strengthen CAL's ties with the community, a three-year vision and four goals were created. Over the next three years, CAL aims to bridge the gap in arts education for students who lack access to programs in the school system and other community organizations. CAL seeks to deepen relationships with students, families, and neighborhoods, using the arts as a catalyst for positive change. CAL also plans to enhance its professional development initiatives for teaching artists and educators, both locally and potentially beyond. Clear metrics will be developed to measure the success of all programming.

CAL aims to improve its visibility and reputation within the community, ensuring that students, families, schools, funders, and other organizations are aware of its offerings and inclusive nature. Internally, CAL will focus on improving its administrative systems to better support programmatic work and diversifying its sources of funding. CAL will actively promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, making it a fundamental principle of the organization. Authentic partnerships with individuals and community partners will be key to CAL's success.

CAL understands the need for sustainable funding. In its strategic planning, CAL will diversify funding sources through philanthropy and revenue generation. By improving fund development and exploring capital campaigns, CAL aims to strengthen its financial resources for long-term sustainability. This enables CAL to continue its important work in arts education and community engagement.

CAL has a clear vision for the future. It aims to provide arts programs to underserved students, strengthen community connections, enhance professional development, improve administrative efficiency, ensure sustainable funding, and promote diversity and inclusion.



CAL Reimagined: A Narrative of Transformation

By the end of FY2026, The Center for Arts Inspired Learning (CAL) has undergone a tremendous evolution, emerging as a beacon of creativity, innovation, and community empowerment. It is a place where the transformative power of the arts has reached new heights, inspiring individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

CAL is a hub of artistic exploration, offering a diverse array of programs and experiences that caters to the ever evolving needs and interests of the community. It is no longer confined to a single physical space, but instead has expanded its reach both locally and beyond, harnessing the power of technology to connect with individuals in different corners of the world.

The organization cultivates a vibrant community of artists, educators, and enthusiasts who work together to nurture talent and inspire artistic growth. CAL has become a sought-after destination for teaching artists, drawn by the collaborative spirit, the resources at their disposal, and the unparalleled opportunities to connect with students and ignite their passion for the arts.

CAL is an incubator of creativity and innovation, constantly pushing the boundaries of what is possible. The organization embraces emerging technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence to enhance artistic experiences and create immersive learning environments. Students are able to step into virtual galleries, collaborate with artists from different cultures, and explore art forms they have never encountered before. It is a place where traditional arts blend harmoniously with cutting-edge digital expressions.

CAL is also a catalyst for social change and community development. Recognizing the power of the arts to address social issues, the organization actively engages with local communities, partnering with grassroots organizations, schools, and civic leaders

to create initiatives that promote equity, inclusivity, and social justice. They use art as a powerful medium to spark dialogue, bridge divides, and amplify marginalized voices.

One of the most remarkable aspects of CAL is its innovation and commitment to sustainability. The organization implements eco-friendly practices, utilizes renewable energy sources, minimizes waste, and incorporates sustainable materials into their artistic endeavors. CAL also establishes partnerships with environmental organizations, leveraging the arts to raise awareness about pressing environmental challenges and inspire action for a more sustainable world.

As CAL flourishes, its impact extends far beyond individual lives and into the fabric of the community. It is a catalyst for economic growth, attracting visitors from everywhere to experience its vibrant arts scene. Businesses flourish, neighborhoods thrive, and a renewed sense of pride and unity envelopes the region.

CAL is a place where everyone has a voice. It is a haven where creativity is nurtured, talents are honed, and dreams are realized. CAL is synonymous with inspiration, empowerment, artistic excellence and constant evolution and adaptability.

CAL is an organization that has dared to dream big, embracing innovation, and has an unwavering commitment to making the arts accessible to all.

CAL is a testament to the incredible possibilities that arise when art and imagination converge to shape a better world.



CAL's The Power of Partnerships: Strategic Plan (FY2024-2026)

Vision:

To change lives and improve communities as the leader in making the arts a core component of every student's education and development.

Mission:

The Center for Arts-Inspired Learning champions creative learning, drives educational innovation, and transforms lives through collaborative efforts involving teaching artists, students, educators, and communities.

Values:

The Center for arts inspired learning is committed to making a meaningful difference in the lives of students by demonstrating:

- **Equity and Access** - Children of all socioeconomic backgrounds have opportunities for creative self-expression.
- **Academic Alignment** - Creative learning experiences and instructional approaches are designed to increase academic success, social-emotional learning, and family and community engagement. They are customized to address core curricular needs.
- **Artistic Excellence** - Compelling, high quality artistry is demonstrated by all teaching artists through a diversity of authentic engaging residencies, workshops, and performances.
- **Innovation** - We pioneer new approaches, take risks, and use research to inform best practices.
- **Collaboration** - We achieve greater results by fostering connections among our ever-expanding networks of arts professionals, teachers, school leaders, nonprofit, business, and philanthropic partners.
- **Accountability** - We adhere to highest standards of integrity and responsibility while delivering results.

Strategic Priorities Overview

The five strategic priorities are outlined below. All five are interdependent and focus on key quality and growth areas. Following each strategic priority are descriptive action steps, timelines and those departments or individuals responsible for completion. The Board and Staff will develop implementation plans with accountability indicators by which progress, and success will be measured.

Each strategic priority stems directly from the input of stakeholders, the board, and the strategic planning committee.

CAL Strategic Plan FY2024-2026 Strategic Priorities

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:** Teaching Artist Partnerships - Cultivate a Robust Teaching Artist Community for Sustainable Growth and Community Impact
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:** Donor Partnerships - Operationalize a Sustainable Financial Plan to Adapt to Changing Donor Landscape
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:** Innovative Programs - Harness Advanced Technology to Deliver Exceptional Programming
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:** Collaborative Partnerships - Strengthen Relationships Across Arts and Non-Arts Communities
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5:** Diverse Partnerships - Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Curriculum



Programs and Operations

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Teaching Artist Partnerships - Cultivate a Robust Teaching Artist Community for Sustainable Growth and Community Impact: CAL will support and nurture teaching artists, fostering a vibrant community that contributes to CAL's growth and creates a positive impact on the community.

- a) Establish a thriving community of professional teaching artists capable of mentoring and nurturing young individuals as they pursue their artistic careers.
- b) Expand the pool of talented teaching artists and enhance their skills, facilitating the development of a stronger ecosystem of successful and innovative professionals.
- c) Provide comprehensive training and mentorship to teaching artists, empowering them to excel in their craft and contribute to the growth of the artistic community.

Plan of Action:

Establish a robust recruitment process: Develop partnerships with local colleges and institutions such as CSU, Baldwin Wallace, MOCA, CIA, CIM, Case Western Reserve, etc., to identify and attract talented individuals interested in becoming teaching artists. Assign responsibility to the Human Resources team.

Develop a mentor-ship program: Create a structured mentor-ship program where experienced teaching artists can guide and support emerging artists. Assign responsibility to a designated mentor-ship coordinator.

Provide continuous Professional Development: Design and implement ongoing training programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of teaching artists. Offer workshops, seminars, and networking opportunities to foster growth. Assign responsibility to the Professional Development department.

Timeline:

Establish partnerships with colleges: Q3 FY2024
Launch mentorship program: Q4 FY2024
Implement continuous professional development:
Ongoing throughout FY2024-2026

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Donor Partnerships - Operationalize a Sustainable Financial Plan to Adapt to Changing Donor Landscape: CAL will develop and implement a financial plan that ensures long-term sustainability, adapting to the evolving donor landscape and securing the necessary resources to support its programs.

- a) Expand fundraising programs and diversify income sources, reducing dependency on earned income.
- b) Conduct financial analysis to identify opportunities for optimizing income and expense levers and gain a deeper understanding of the funding landscape.
- c) Streamline billing and payment processes and evaluate funding mechanisms to ensure long-term financial stability.
- d) Invest additional dollars into marketing to address name recognition in our region.

Plan of Action:

Review and revise the sustainability plan: Incorporate insights from the financial assessment to update and enhance the existing sustainability plan. Assign responsibility to the Strategic Planning committee.

Conduct a comprehensive financial assessment: Evaluate the current financial status, identify gaps, and uncover opportunities for improvement. Assign responsibility to the Finance department.

Expand fundraising efforts: Develop targeted fundraising programs, engage with individual donors, explore corporate sponsorships, and strengthen relationships with foundations and community organizations. Assign responsibility to the Development department.

Implement efficient billing and payment processes: Streamline billing and payment systems to ensure timely and accurate financial transactions. Utilize technology to simplify processes. Assign responsibility to the Finance and Operations teams.

Timeline:

Conduct financial assessment: Q1 FY2024

Revise sustainability plan: Q2 FY2024

Implement streamlined billing processes: Q3 FY2024

Expand fundraising efforts: Ongoing throughout FY2024-2026

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Innovative Programs - Harness Advanced Technology to Deliver Exceptional Programming: CAL seeks to leverage advanced technology to enhance its programming, creating engaging and impactful experiences for students, educators, and the community.

- a) Integrate current technology trends, such as virtual and augmented reality, and artificial intelligence, to elevate program quality and reach.
- b) Increase the utilization of technology to enhance program effectiveness and innovation.
- c) Stay at the forefront of technological integration in programming and leverage technology to inform strategic decision-making.

Plan of Action:

Develop a technology roadmap: Identify key technological milestones and prioritize integration of virtual and augmented reality, and artificial intelligence solutions into program delivery. Assign responsibility to the Technology and Program Development teams.

Evaluate and invest in back-office infrastructure: Assess the technological needs of the organization and make necessary investments in hardware, software, and systems. Assign responsibility to the Technology department.

Collaborate with strategic partners: Engage with technology experts and organizations to explore innovative solutions, share best practices, and stay informed about emerging trends. Assign responsibility to the Partnerships and Technology departments.

Create digital deliverables: Develop and implement virtual programming options to expand the reach of CAL's programs beyond existing counties and Northeast Ohio. Assign responsibility to the Program Development and Marketing teams.

Timeline:

Evaluate and invest in back-office infrastructure: Q2 FY2024

Develop technology roadmap: Q3 FY 2024-2026

Create digital deliverables: Q4 FY2024

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: Collaborative Partnerships - Strengthen Relationships Across Arts and Non-Arts Communities: CAL aims to build strong collaborations and partnerships with diverse organizations and communities, fostering synergy and maximizing its collective impact.

- a) Continue to strengthen existing collaborations and partnerships with Cleveland Metropolitan School District (Dr. Warren Morgan, CEO) and Inner-Ring Suburban Schools such as Warrensville Heights School District (Superintendent Donald J. Jolly, II)
- b) Expand collaborations and cross-disciplinary work with art organizations and non-art entities such as the City of Cleveland's Art Czar, Rhonda K. Brown and others.
- c) Foster relationships with community partners, establishing a pipeline into institutions such as the Cleveland Institute of Art, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Orchestra and others.
- d) Clearly articulate and showcase CAL's value proposition, emphasizing the benefits of collaboration and engagement with the organization.

Plan of Action:

Identify key collaborative partners: Conduct research and identify art organizations and non-art entities that align with CAL's mission and goals. Establish initial contact and explore potential areas of collaboration. Assign responsibility to the Partnerships department.

Build and nurture relationships: Foster meaningful relationships with identified partners through regular communication, joint projects, and shared initiatives. Assign responsibility to the Partnerships and Community Engagement teams.

Showcase CAL's value proposition: Develop a compelling narrative highlighting the unique benefits of collaborating with CAL. Utilize various communication channels to showcase successful collaborations and their impact on the community. Assign responsibility to the Marketing and Communications teams.

Execute programs with the collaborative partners: Shared goals, programs, outcomes are established that will mutually benefit all parties involved.

Timeline:

Identify collaborative partners: Q2 FY2024

Build and nurture relationships: Ongoing throughout FY2024-2026

Showcase CAL's value proposition: Q4 FY2024

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: Diverse Partnerships - Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Curriculum, Programs, and Operations:

CAL is committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of its work, ensuring that its curriculum, programs, and operations reflect and celebrate the richness of the community it serves.

a) Implement a comprehensive action plan to ensure CAL fully embodies a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization.

b) Strengthen curriculum and programs based on principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion through partnerships with The Diversity Center and subject matter experts.



c) Provide DEI training for staff and board members, incorporating best practices into all aspects of the organization's operations.

Plan of Action:

Develop a DEI action plan: Establish a comprehensive plan that outlines specific actions and initiatives to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout CAL's operations. Assign responsibility to the DEI committee.

Partner with The Diversity Center and subject matter experts:

Collaborate with The Diversity Center and experts to enhance the curriculum and ensure it reflects DEI principles. Incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences. Assign responsibility to the Program Development and Partnerships teams.

Conduct staff and board DEI training:

Provide training sessions and workshops to educate staff and board members on DEI best practices. Foster a culture of inclusivity and ensure alignment with DEI principles across all levels of the organization. Assign responsibility to the Human Resources and DEI committee.

Timeline:

Develop DEI action plan: Q3 FY2024

Partner with diversity centers and subject matter experts: Ongoing throughout FY2024-2026

Conduct staff and board DEI training: Q4 FY2024

Note: The timeline provided is a general guideline and can be adjusted based on the specific circumstances and resources available to CAL.

Conclusion

In conclusion, CAL has proven to be a resilient and adaptable organization, overcoming challenges and transitions with grace. The strategic plan, **“The Power of Partnerships: CAL’s Plan for FY2024 - 2026,”** will serve as a roadmap for CAL’s growth and meaningful service to the community. By establishing and strengthening authentic connections with various stakeholders, CAL aims to create a vibrant arts community that empowers and inspires.

The plan emphasizes the importance of nurturing teaching artists and providing exceptional arts education to young individuals from all backgrounds. Through expanded programs and mentor-ship opportunities, CAL seeks to foster talent and ignite a lifelong passion for the arts.

Operational sustainability is a priority for CAL, with a focus on enhancing systems and diversifying funding sources. By optimizing financial processes and developing robust fundraising initiatives, CAL aims to secure the resources necessary to continue their transformative work.

CAL recognizes the power of technology and the need to embrace innovation. By leveraging advanced tools and partnerships, they aim to enhance program reach and impact, ensuring that their offerings remain at the forefront of artistic expression.

Collaborations and partnerships with art and non-art organizations are seen as crucial in creating a thriving arts ecosystem. CAL’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity is reflected in their curriculum and programs, as they strive to address social justice and contemporary issues through the arts.

Through the implementation of this strategic plan, CAL envisions a future where every young person has access to exceptional arts education and mentor-ship. They are grateful for the support of their donors and advocates, as together they illuminate a brighter future for the community through the transformative power of the arts. CAL’s commitment to “The Power of Partnerships” and fostering artistic growth will continue to shape lives and inspire generations to come.





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