RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026 - 2028

VISION



Riverside Arts Center is where Ypsilanti comes alive as a creative force.

A place where theater, dance, music, visual arts, fiber arts, spoken word, and more collide with the full diversity of our community. Here, all voices are welcomed and celebrated, access is real, not aspirational, and art is an essential part of daily life. You feel it before you enter – music drifting from a rehearsal, laughter from a classroom, the low hum of conversation in the gallery. The theater lights are up, the studios are active, and somewhere inside, someone is trying something new for the first time.

Inside, the work on the walls and on stage reflects the lives of each visitor. A kid takes their first drawing class. An elder performs in front of an audience for the first time. Young artists build confidence while adults reconnect with a creativity they thought they'd lost. Community members are not just attending – they are participating, shaping, and leading.

This is Riverside Arts Center. A place people return to, again and again, because the creative energy here doesn't stay inside these walls. It strengthens Ypsilanti in ways felt by the whole community.

MISSION

Riverside Arts Center offers, promotes, and nurtures dynamic arts and cultural programs in Ypsilanti and beyond.



VALUES

- **Creativity at every level, including all forms of artistic expression**
- **Diversity in the ways we think, the artists we promote, and the people we serve**
- **Support for a healthy cultural and artistic community**
- **Collaboration with our community members to better serve the people of Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, and the surrounding areas**
- **Integrity in our interactions with artists, audiences, partners, supporters, and the community**
- **Thoughtful innovation that enables us to serve as a leader**
- **Accessibility, both physically and economically, that encourages creative engagement and connection**

We are committed to creating an environment that supports, represents, embraces, and engages members of diverse groups and identities. We shall not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity and/or expression.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES





GOAL ONE



Riverside Arts Center is a hub of creativity.

GOAL ONE: RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER IS A HUB OF CREATIVITY.

OBJECTIVE ONE
Riverside Arts Center (RAC) offers diverse educational and experiential programming for all ages that reflects the interests and needs of Ypsilanti and beyond.

STRATEGIES

- Assess and expand the current lineup of classes and workshops in the visual and fine arts.
- Explore, develop, and implement performing arts classes and workshops.
- Offer programs specifically designed for seniors.
- Develop solo exhibitions for 2D artists in the Off Center's Eight Walls Gallery program.
- Offer traveling exhibits and performances.
- Develop varied exhibitions, including a mix of community partnerships, juried open calls, and individually curated shows in the North Gallery program.
- Facilitate an annual public forum for the community to provide feedback and share interest in future programming.

GOAL ONE: RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER IS A HUB OF CREATIVITY.

OBJECTIVE TWO
RAC supports the development of emerging and youth artists.

STRATEGIES

- Create and offer accessible, grant-funded youth summer camps.
- Develop and align educational opportunities for select gallery program exhibitions.
- Support the strategic growth and sustainability of the Ypsi Fine Arts Club.
- Evaluate the feasibility and structure of a youth advisory council.

GOAL ONE: RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER IS A HUB OF CREATIVITY.

OBJECTIVE THREE
RAC provides accessible space and promotion for artists and community partners.

STRATEGIES

- Provide space rentals at or below fair market value for individual artists, arts organizations, and other local nonprofits.

- Promote the work of community partners through regular email and social media marketing.



GOAL TWO



Riverside Arts Center engages and connects with the community.

GOAL TWO: RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER ENGAGES AND CONNECTS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

OBJECTIVE ONE
RAC builds strategic partnerships that expand programming and reach.

STRATEGIES

- Co-sponsor art exhibits and performances with mission-oriented organizations.
- Increase advanced classes/workshops through partnerships with higher-education institutions.



GOAL TWO: RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER ENGAGES AND CONNECTS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

OBJECTIVE TWO
RAC increases arts outreach in surrounding communities.

STRATEGIES

- Develop digital galleries for both gallery programs to increase accessibility and exposure.
- Provide an informational table and programming at community events in strategic surrounding communities.



GOAL TWO: RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER ENGAGES AND CONNECTS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

OBJECTIVE THREE
RAC uses data to continuously improve community connection and impact.

STRATEGIES

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of RAC's current marketing efforts.
- Ensure marketing stays current with marketing and social media trends.
- Collect and assess programs and facility usage data to understand RAC's impact, evaluate effectiveness, and identify areas for growth or adjustment.
- Assess and streamline data collection methods.

GOAL THREE



Riverside Arts Center strengthens long-term sustainability and growth to ensure lasting community impact.

GOAL THREE: RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER STRENGTHENS LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH TO ENSURE LASTING COMMUNITY IMPACT.

OBJECTIVE ONE
RAC strengthens donor connection and diversifies revenue streams.

STRATEGIES

- Expand donor cultivation efforts through targeted outreach, events, and personalized stewardship.
- Determine and implement next steps with updated messaging and donor engagement strategies.
- Develop the annual fund through a multi-year fundraising plan that includes fundraising goals, individual giving, grants, sponsorships, and earned income.
- Develop and send donors an annual report that shares RAC's success and vision for the future.

GOAL THREE: RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER STRENGTHENS LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH TO ENSURE LASTING COMMUNITY IMPACT.

OBJECTIVE TWO
RAC strengthens staff professional growth and support.

STRATEGIES

- Expand access to training in fundraising, leadership, and other core competencies.
- Establish a volunteer human resources advisory group to guide staff development and policies.
- Regularly assess and align compensation and benefits with roles and experience.



GOAL THREE: RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER STRENGTHENS LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH TO ENSURE LASTING COMMUNITY IMPACT.

OBJECTIVE THREE
RAC maintains and invests in its facility.

STRATEGIES

- Create a proactive maintenance and capital improvement plan, including timelines and budget forecasts.
- Establish a reserve fund for long-term building upkeep and emergency repairs.

GOAL THREE: RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER STRENGTHENS LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH TO ENSURE LASTING COMMUNITY IMPACT.

OBJECTIVE FOUR
RAC operates with environmental sustainability in mind.

STRATEGIES

- Develop and implement a sustainability plan.
- Reduce the environmental footprint of the facility through responsible use of materials and consistent recycling.
- Explore additional energy-saving and automation opportunities based on real-time use of the facilities.





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