



**C A R F A C**  
A L B E R T A

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# **2021 - 24 Strategic Business Plan**

## **Executive Summary - planned journey for next three years**

This 2021 - 2024 strategic business plan has been developed by the Board and Executive Director of CARFAC Alberta (Visual Arts Alberta Association - legal name) to provide a disciplined approach to the management of CARFAC Alberta for the next three years. The CARFAC Alberta Board approved this plan on February 18, 2021 as a living document.

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2021 – 2024 will be a time of adaptive change (recovery from COVID-19) and moderate growth for CARFAC Alberta. CARFAC Alberta envisions a province where all visual artists thrive: artwork is valued, rights are respected, and creativity is integral to our communities. During the next three years, we will work toward this ultimate goal.

Sustainability and Leadership, along with Advocacy, Education and Engagement are guiding principles for CARFAC Alberta. We will be diligent in working towards diversifying our sources of funding in order to help us better serve all Alberta visual artists.

Over the next three-years, we will continue to increase both the diversity and total number of our members. COVID-19 has proved to be a difficult time financially for both our current and potential members. CARFAC Alberta recognizes the potential and opportunity for improving our financial stability through increasing our membership, and understands that we must be more effective at sharing the value of membership to our current and potential supporters, especially during times of sector-wide instability.

Many potential stakeholders are still unaware of CARFAC Alberta and what we offer to the community. Before the end of 2024, we intend to clarify our role within the Alberta visual arts ecosystem, so that both artists and organizations of all types understand how we can support them. A vital tool in educating the community about CARFAC Alberta will be promoting and establishing the use of Best Practices for our communities. We will use the seven Best Practices documents we published in early 2020 as the basis for developing future resources that can be used by all Alberta visual artists, organizations and engagers in the Alberta arts sector, and the general public.

CARFAC Alberta will continue advocating for meaningful Status of the Artist legislation in Alberta. This is one of the ways we can help ensure that art-making is a sustainable profession in the Province of Alberta, by advocating for all visual artists and the visual arts sector. Further, we will support visual artists' careers by continuing to improve and streamline educational and engagement activities to provide artists with the resources and community they need to succeed in Alberta and beyond.

## **Introduction - who we are**

### **Organizational Profile Summary**

CARFAC Alberta is an organization for visual artists and those that engage with visual artists; we are also the provincial Affiliate office for the National Arts Service Organization CARFAC in the province of Alberta. CARFAC (Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens) has worked for 53 years on the legal and economic issues facing Canadian visual artists.

CARFAC Alberta (Visual Arts Alberta Association - legal name) was formed in 1996 by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts to operate as a Provincial Arts Service Organization (PASO) for the Visual Arts Sector. At that time, the Alberta Government wished to create non-profit organizations that were independent from government, in order to outsource activities and programs previously delivered by Alberta Culture.

As a new PASO, Visual Arts Alberta Association was envisioned as the umbrella organization for four smaller visual arts and crafts-based non-profit organizations: the Alberta Society of Artists (ASA), the Alberta Potters Association (APA), the Handweavers, Spinners and Dyers of Alberta (HWSDA) and the Alberta Community Art Clubs Association (ACACA). The ASA left Visual Arts Alberta Association within two years, and pursued their own course. The Visual Arts Alberta Association (called VAAA) had little impact within the Alberta Visual Arts community for the first 10 years of operation. Little progress could be made toward defining a single set of goals for the organization due to the differing needs of the founding groups. By 2007, there had been several changes to the Board composition, and Visual Arts Alberta Association began meeting with CARFAC to begin the process of becoming an affiliate. By 2009 a formal MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) was in place so that Visual Arts Alberta Association could offer CARFAC memberships to Alberta Artists, in addition to membership in VAAA. By 2012, the three smaller arts organizations that were part of Visual Arts Alberta Association when it was formed had left the organization to become independent entities, which paved the way for VAAA to become Visual Arts Alberta – CARFAC, the affiliate for CARFAC in Alberta. The formalization of the relationship with CARFAC National in late 2012 gave Visual Arts Alberta Association new recognition and value within the Alberta visual arts community. As a natural outgrowth of this evolutionary process, and to further clarify its position in the Alberta arts ecosystem, Visual Arts Alberta-CARFAC rebranded as CARFAC Alberta in 2018.

### **Management**

CARFAC Alberta is a non-profit Provincial Arts Service Organization with an eleven-member Board of Directors from different locations in Alberta. At present we have six directors from the greater Edmonton area, four directors from the greater Calgary area and one director from Grande Prairie.

The Edmonton office is managed by Executive Director Chris W. Carson with the support of two part-time employees. Additionally, CARFAC Alberta employs one part-time employee in Calgary, whose main function is to engage with visual artists and stakeholders and to provide information on CARFAC Alberta programs and resources. In total, there are 1.70 FTE staff positions split between four employees (an Executive Director working 110 hours/month, two employees working 60 - 80 hours per month and one employee working 15 - 30 hours per month).

The Executive Director works closely with the Board of Directors and various Board Committees to develop engagement and expansion strategies for the organization.

## Vision, Mission and Values

CARFAC Alberta held two zoom strategic planning sessions in 2020 to redevelop and refine our Vision and Mission. This collaborative work between Board and Staff is helping advance and clarify our intentions for the next three years and beyond.

### VISION:

CARFAC Alberta envisions a province where all visual artists thrive: artwork is valued, rights are respected, and creativity is integral to our communities.

### MISSION:

CARFAC Alberta advances best practices for all visual artists in Alberta through education, advocacy and engagement.

#### **MANDATE: Summary**

CARFAC Alberta serves visual artists and represents Alberta's visual arts sector. As a non-profit provincial cultural organization, we actively inform artists of sectoral developments, promote artists, and provide professional development opportunities for Albertans, including our members, marginalized artists, and the public.

CARFAC Alberta advocates on behalf of Alberta's visual artists and works to improve the socio-economic conditions of all artists. As the official provincial affiliate for CARFAC in Alberta, we bring the resources of this national organization to the province. CARFAC believes that artists, like professionals in other fields, should be paid for their work, and share equitably in profits from their work. CARFAC defends artists' economic and legal rights, and educates the public on fair dealings with artists, providing a vitally important perspective on issues affecting the making of art, artist's rights, intellectual property rights, and the status of the artist within our society.

CARFAC Alberta actively responds to the changing needs of Alberta visual artists. We provide information, advice and professional development opportunities so that the visual arts sector in Alberta can continue to grow and prosper.

## **MANDATE: What we do**

CARFAC Alberta offers programs for visual artists throughout Alberta. Our goal is to serve the entire province. Our programming consists of educational talks, webinars and workshops; programming for our project space in our Edmonton office; mentorship opportunities; best practices guidelines for the visual arts sector; advocacy; and community-wide engagement.

CARFAC Alberta has a province-wide membership composed of individual members and artist-supporting groups of various types. As a membership-driven non-profit organization, CARFAC Alberta's mission is to serve all Alberta visual artists regardless of location or personal circumstances; while we do provide some benefits exclusively for members, we believe it is necessary to provide access to our programs in ways that serve anyone who seeks them.

The resources CARFAC Alberta offers to visual artists can help them weather the variability of local and provincial economies, and allow them to grow their practice (and their income) here and elsewhere. CARFAC Alberta provides information and resources to individual visual artists and to organizations that deal with visual artists and their work, paying particular attention to respectful and professional dealings between artists and engagers, and the fair payment of artists for their work.

## **MANDATE: Who we serve**

- every visual artist in Alberta - regardless of their membership status
- overlooked + neglected artists
- emerging artists who need guidance in beginning their professional practice
- artists of any age who are interested in moving from a part-time to full-time creative practice
- established artists who need assistance with particular aspects of their career
- artists who are living in smaller centres and feel isolated from larger urban arts communities

CARFAC Alberta also serves:

- galleries of any sort (commercial, public, or artist-run) who want information on appropriate fee structures, best practices, contracts, or similar information for their work with visual artists
- community groups and art organizations in smaller centres who wish to provide professional development opportunities for the artists in their region
- post-secondary institutions who wish to provide professional practice information to their students in the field of visual arts
- government and governmental organizations who want to know how to interact or engage with visual artists

## **OUR VALUES:**

- **Promise and Potential of Visual Art** - We recognize that the visual arts have direct impact on the health, welfare and economic well-being of all Albertans and their communities. Along with education and health, the arts are a necessary pillar of a great society.

- **Creative Communities** - CARFAC Alberta is focused on building creative communities by providing information and resources to individual visual artists and to organizations that engage with visual artists and their work.
- **Best Practices / Industry Standards** - Quality research and emerging models inform our efforts to provide visual artists with a fair model for transactions within the visual arts community.
- **Transparency** - We value open communication and understand it is critical to maintaining and growing our communities.
- **Equity** - We recognize that we must reach out to marginalized communities and gear our work to addressing their unique needs and skill sets.

## **External Environment - SWOT Analysis**

A major part of our business plan has been focused on becoming more provincial in scope. Over the past ten years, we have begun to think and operate on a provincial level. While receiving less revenue from our major provincial grant, we started to regularly program professional development (educational) talks and workshops in Calgary in 2012, and continued to expand that programming to other centres in Alberta in subsequent years. We redefined the Board structure to ensure representation from both major cities (currently 4 of an 11-member board live in the Southern part of Alberta). And in 2020, the Board determined that representation from other parts of the province was necessary (new Board members from Grande Prairie and Cansland were recruited to join the Board in October 2020).

Our business plan has evolved from a “provincial organization” that operated primarily in the capital region to one that truly operates throughout Alberta. In 2018, we hired a new part time staff member in Calgary as an Engagement Coordinator to help us reach different communities. Our Engagement Coordinator brings valuable community connections within the City of Calgary to an Edmonton-based staff that have a combined experience of thirty years working for CARFAC Alberta.

Expanding our membership base continues to be a key goal for CARFAC Alberta. We have seen success over the past three years and increased our membership base from 342 to 380 members—until COVID-19 impacted the sector. Our membership suffered considerable economic hardship, as our base lost much of their income for the year, and could not afford to renew their memberships. The COVID-19 pandemic has accounted for a twenty percent drop in our total membership numbers and associated revenue.

Adaptive change continues to be a goal for CARFAC Alberta. With funding levels from grants uncertain at best, CARFAC Alberta has been working over the last several years to redefine our organization, so that we have multiple income streams and the revenue necessary to achieve our goal of serving the needs of visual artists throughout Alberta. In the past few years, our revenue streams have diversified; we have been awarded new project grants, increased programming revenue, and have begun to bring in sponsorships. Much of this was due to the New Pathways for the Arts program that helped us develop strategies to succeed in a changing world. In 2017 – 18, CARFAC Alberta learned how to work with for-profit companies while enrolled in the artVEST program, furthering our knowledge on how to diversify our funding model.

## STRENGTHS

As an organization, one of our major strengths is our capacity for adaptive change. We continue to assess our role, and change our organization in order to better meet needs of our communities. While we are unable to have a physical presence in all parts of the province, we are developing our capacity and expertise to take advantage of new and developing digital tools, to better provide a consistent, accessible presence in all parts of Alberta and throughout the world. In doing so, we are responding to changes in the ways people interact and search out information, and base our decisions on sector-wide current research:

*Two-thirds of Canadians used the internet to access or engage in the arts in 2016, with the most common online activities being to “talk about or find out more about an arts or cultural organization, event or artist through social media (45%); to watch a pre-recorded arts performance (41%); or to improve skills, find lessons, or find groups to join related to the arts (38%)”.*

Arts and Heritage Access and Availability Survey 2016-2017 (25 October 2017) **Issue:** [Arts attendance and participation](#) **Publisher:** [Department of Canadian Heritage](#) **Author:** [EnviroNics Research Group](#) **Article Link:** [http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/canadian\\_heritage/2017/0...](http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/canadian_heritage/2017/0...)

The continued development and refinement of our webinar series over the past five years illustrates how CARFAC Alberta has used the internet to connect with visual artists in all part of Alberta. During the past two years, we have partnered with the Alberta Craft Council, the Art Gallery of Alberta and CARFAC Saskatchewan to increase our reach into new communities. Currently, we are delivering nine to ten professional development webinars annually. In addition to reaching Alberta visual artists, our current webinars are offered to visual artists in all regions of Canada, thus exporting our home-grown talent to a national audience. This educational programming draws directly on the pool of Alberta artists to facilitate the sharing of information; not only does this help create a greater sense of connection between artists across the province, it also provides some income to the artists who provide these services to us. We see these benefits as integral to the programming we provide.

In April of 2020, COVID-19 necessitated that we develop new ways to reach our communities during the lockdown and times of limited access to in-person programming. We developed twice monthly Zoom Engagement Sessions, offering visual artists an informal social outlet to combat isolation and talk with other visual artists, and to learn from and support each other. While these Zoom Engagement Sessions *started* due to COVID-19, we intend to continue this programming even after the pandemic subsides, since these sessions have the ability to connect visual artists that – for any number of reasons – would not otherwise be able to meet one another and share community. We have discovered that these sessions provide an important service to the visual artists of Alberta, and they have the added benefit of allowing us to reach into new communities that we have not been able to access previously.

One of our greatest successes during the last three years was rebranding the organization to be simply known as CARFAC Alberta. This change alleviated much confusion in the community regarding our role and purpose; previous to the common name change, many stakeholders thought of us as two *separate* organizations. The second major success during the past three years was the publishing of the Best Practices for Craft, Media and Visual Artists in Alberta in May 2020. This project took over two years to complete, and involved hundreds of volunteer hours from community members and stakeholders. CARFAC Alberta partnered with the Alberta Craft Council and the Alberta Media Arts Alliance Society to develop and refine these best practices specifically for Alberta, and designed them

so that they can work for practitioners of craft, media and the visual arts, and all those that engage with them. In the twenty-four-year history of Visual Arts Alberta Association, these seven documents are our greatest and most tangible achievement in providing useful educational material to our stakeholders.

## WEAKNESSES

While we have managed to begin to transform our organization from one that both lacked direction and failed to serve the whole province, we realize that we continue to face financial constraints that prevent us from providing all that we would like to. Consequently, CARFAC Alberta continues to focus on finding ways to achieve financial sustainability and diversify our income streams. Fundraising plans developed by our Fund Development Committee were not executed in 2020, in large part due to the financial impact COVID-19 had on the arts sector and the broader economy of the province.

In developing this strategic business plan, we noted that listing goals would not help us achieve all we could if we failed to list the markers by which we could determine our progress and/or success. To that end, this strategic plan outlines not only WHAT will be done - our goals for the next three years - but HOW will we know we have been successful, WHAT is the result we want to see, and WHEN will the goal be completed. This is the first time our strategic planning has been geared toward being truly able to determine if we are meeting our goals. By setting performance criteria for the organization, we will be able to evaluate how well we are working and how successful we are at meeting our new mission and vision.

As CARFAC Alberta matures as a non-profit organization, we are moving from reactive to proactive thinking and planning. Developing metrics for our current strategic goals will keep us on target for the next three years, and help us build a performance-measurement culture.

## OPPORTUNITIES

With COVID-19 and the downturn of the oil sector, Alberta will clearly be a vastly different province post COVID-19. For an organization that provides services for visual artists and those that may be considering a career in the visual arts, our services will be required by more people as the economy is re-imagined and re-invented. Without high paying jobs available in Alberta, more people will choose to pursue self employment, whether full time or as a “side hustle.” CARFAC Alberta mentors visual artists in how to transform their passion for the arts into a paying career. We educate, advocate and engage, advancing best practices for all visual artists.

Pre-COVID, the arts and culture industry contributed \$5.3 billion to Alberta’s economy and employed nearly 60,000 workers (the Alberta Foundation for the Arts 2017-18 Annual Report). Post-COVID, we anticipate an increased demand for our services, as a new economy emerges in Alberta and artists seek opportunities to continue their creative practices in this new context.

As an organization, we are developing more resources to help new people enter the visual arts sector in Alberta. Presently, we are developing a major new digital resource, titled *BECOMING: A Visual Artist*, that is geared toward supporting and guiding new artists (including Newcomers to Canada and Indigenous artists) on their path to a thriving practice.

CARFAC Alberta recognizes that we will all be facing new challenges in a post-COVID reality, and that



the services we offer will be even more essential to those Albertans wishing to develop successful careers in the visual arts sector.

## THREATS

The most sustained and continued threat to the execution of CARFAC Alberta's mission and vision is the lack of secure financial resources necessary to do our work. Financial security for arts organizations such as ours has become even more tenuous; the closures and lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic cut off most of our revenue streams, either directly or through loss of income for our supporters.

Arts organizations identified the most critical factors for success in both the remainder of 2020 and then 2021. In both cases, the only factors that received more than 50% of comments were the need for community support and engagement, followed by grant funding.

*COVID-19 Impact Survey, Calgary Arts Development* <https://calgaryartsdevelopment.com/wpcontent/uploads/2020/09/COVID19ImpactSurvey-2020ArtsCultureCreativeIndustries.pdf>

CARFAC Alberta has enjoyed relatively low rent for its office and project space in Edmonton for the last several years. However, as costs continue to increase and the grant-based funding model for PASOs evolves, we are giving some thought to the future of this space, and how to use it to best effect, both as a vital point of contact and as a source of revenue. Additionally, while it is very important that we maintain a physical 'bricks and mortar' space, ideally our location would be universally accessible and at street level, both to allow people with mobility issues easy in-person access to our resources and staff and to substantially improve our visibility and profile in the community. A move to such a space is currently beyond our financial means if we need to pay current commercial lease rates.

Further, we must continue to extend our reach across the province, but do so in the most cost-effective methods possible, as travel can have a serious impact on the organization's limited finances. Likewise, CARFAC Alberta would like to continue to develop resource materials and advocacy tools tailored specifically for Alberta, rather than ordering materials as needed from CARFAC National and other affiliates; this is a natural progression from the success we saw in developing the Best Practices documents we published in 2020. Having our own resource materials could provide a revenue-generating stream for the organization in the long-run, but in order to create these documents, we will need the funds to bankroll their development and publication.

## **Strategic Goals 2021 -24**

### 1. MAJOR GOALS

Our goals and mandate evolve as we grow as an organization, and the needs of our communities change. During the next three years, CARFAC Alberta is focusing on engagement and sustainability, while continuing and advancing our work in advocacy, education and leadership.

STRATEGIC GOALS	METRICS	METHOD FOR KNOWING	MEASURABLE OUTCOME	YEAR TO BE COMPLETED
Values specifically related to what we want for our stakeholders. The areas we need to focus on to achieve our goals.	WHAT What will be done?	HOW How will we know we have been successful? What are the qualitative and quantitative tools?	WHY What is the result we want to see?	WHEN
The results of our work, for whom, and why?  Can we describe it in one word?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could have multiple for each priority</li> <li>• Could have a metric that relates to multiple priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could include multiple measurement tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could include multiple outcomes</li> </ul>	
<p><b>ADVOCACY</b></p> <p>CARFAC Alberta advocates for the visual arts on behalf of Albertans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports Provincial and National initiatives that further the art profession/Works on initiatives that support the work of CARFAC National and other affiliates</li> <li>• CARFAC Alberta advocates for Artist at the Provincial and municipal levels</li> <li>• Creates awareness of the arts and of the importance of the Visual Arts in Alberta through social media campaigns and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stats Can statistics</li> <li>• Increase in instances of Art issues in elected official posts and news stories / governmental policy changes that reflect the rights of artists</li> <li>• GOA Survey of Albertans indicates 90% or more say arts are important to quality of life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artists thrive in Alberta and are on par with other Canadian artists</li> <li>• To make sure artists' rights are respected and championed by elected officials</li> <li>• People see the arts as integral to our community and enhances quality of life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• December 2023</li> <li>• October 2021 first deadline municipal election</li> <li>• October 2022</li> </ul>
<p><b>EDUCATION</b></p> <p>CARFAC Alberta educates how artists and artwork is valued and rights are respected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completes educational campaigns that support the work of the sector</li> <li>• Educates marginalized artists</li> <li>• Provides learning that helps artist professionalize their careers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event survey indicates (on a scale) that artists see increase viability</li> <li>• Event survey / attendance statistics</li> <li>• Event survey indicates (on a scale) that artists see increased professionalization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artists understand how to increase viability of career choice</li> <li>• To ensure access to educational resources for all artists</li> <li>• Artists understand how to professionalize career</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2022- subject to grant</li> <li>• July 2022 BECOMING project</li> <li>• December 2023</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>ENGAGEMENT</u></b></p> <p>CARFAC Alberta connects artists and engagers for the arts to thrive in Alberta.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Diversity targeted at new members</li> <li>• Creating Virtual outreach opportunities</li> <li>• Increased communications through postcard campaign, social media and web presence</li> <li>• Develop a membership campaign</li> <li>• Develop policies for activating the Project Space with opportunities for members and possible internships for visual arts students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership categories will indicate diversity increases</li> <li>• Registration at events</li> <li>• Increased membership and program registration</li> <li>• Increased membership will indicate success</li> <li>• Increased audience at Project Space events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To diversify the membership</li> <li>• Increased recognition for CARFAC Alberta and connectivity for members</li> <li>• Reaching all Alberta artists</li> <li>• To build a greater community of practitioners</li> <li>• Reaching new artists and audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2022</li> <li>• October 2022 or 23 subject to grant funding</li> <li>• October 2021</li> <li>• October 2021</li> <li>• March 2022</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>SUSTAINABILITY</u></b></p> <p>CARFAC Alberta supports and encourages sustainability for artists and art organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial sustainability for CARFAC Alberta</li> <li>• Develop a performance-based culture at CARFAC Alberta</li> <li>• Diversification of revenue streams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When we are able to increase programming and services throughout Alberta by x%?</li> <li>• Metrics, policies, and other organizational tools are in place and are used</li> <li>• Our budget will reflect this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So we can fulfill our mission and vision</li> <li>• Professionalize our organization so we can adapt to change</li> <li>• To have many sources of revenue so we can adapt to change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 2021</li> <li>• March 2021</li> <li>• October 2023</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>LEADERSHIP</u></b></p> <p>CARFAC Alberta is a leader for the visual arts in Alberta.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CARFAC Alberta models Best Practices for Alberta art organizations</li> <li>• Participates in drafting Status of the Artist Legislation</li> <li>• Supports provincial and national initiatives around Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta visual arts funding organizations see increased applications</li> <li>• There is legislation</li> <li>• Stats Can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased professionalization</li> <li>• To support and protect artists in Alberta so they thrive</li> <li>• CARFAC Alberta supports <i>all artists</i> and is seen as an arts leader in Canada.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• December 2021</li> <li>• December 2022 (the next election is spring 2023)</li> <li>• December 2023</li> </ul>

## Resources

For an Art Service Organization, knowledge of the arts sector is one of our most valuable resources. In order for CARFAC Alberta to help visual artists and other stakeholders, we rely on the 53 years of collective institutional knowledge about how visual artists earn a living provided by CARFAC National. This knowledge comes from artists' involvement in the organization from across Canada, and from the experience of the staff in the areas of copyright, advocacy, government relations, and tax law. In addition to this collective knowledge, CARFAC Alberta has four part time staff members who have a combined total of over 33 years of experience working for CARFAC Alberta (Visual Arts Alberta Association). In addition to our staff, CARFAC Alberta has an eleven member Board that brings a wide range of relevant skills to help us serve our communities; we have Board members with extensive experience in public galleries and museums, accountancy, non-profit arts administration, artist-run culture and small business. Other sources of knowledge that we benefit from include our fellow organizations in Alberta Partners for Arts and Culture (APAC); Alberta Foundation for the Arts; Calgary Arts Development; Edmonton Arts Council; Public, Artist-run, and private galleries; and art organizations and institutions where visual art and professional practice is taught.

Since our job is to advocate, educate, and engage, being able to draw on this knowledge base helps us do a better job for our communities. With a firm knowledge base, CARFAC Alberta has been able to successfully adapt to changing conditions.

In terms of financial resources, CARFAC Alberta has recruited a CPA to act as our Treasurer and has our books reviewed annually by a large accounting firm. We benefit from the most current and pertinent advice from experts in handling our revenue and expenditures, and from the advice of our Treasurer regarding streamlining financial processes to make the most efficient use of staff hours.

One of our 2020-21 grants (for just under \$10,000) was to purchase three 16" Macbooks for our employees. Having new, state of the art equipment that can be used in the office or remotely will increase CARFAC Alberta's efficiency and flexibility in the coming years and has greatly enhanced our physical resources.

## Finances

Our Financial Statement for the year ending March 31st, 2020 (presented at the Annual General Meeting of CARFAC Alberta on October 1st, 2020) notes our current economic dependence on grant income. The statement notes that the "Association would likely be unable to continue operating to the extent that it currently does, without this funding and is therefore economically dependent on these Provincial and Municipal art funding organizations."

That noted, at present our financial situation is stable. Over the past ten years, CARFAC Alberta has substantially improved its financial governance, moving from a deficit position to an organization that has *two* designated reserves. We receive annual funding through grants (operating and project) and through earned revenue (casinos, memberships, program revenue). Membership fees account for about 10% of our annual revenue. Since March 2020, our membership has been down approximately 20%, since our artist members have suffered financially due to COVID-19. Additionally, pandemic restrictions have closed casinos for many months, so our future casino revenue is uncertain. As a result, though CARFAC Alberta anticipates remaining financially secure for the next few years, it is increasingly important that we re-imagine and develop how we will finance our organization, particularly with respect to the uncertainty surrounding both casino and grant funding levels in the future.

## **Risks**

The impact of COVID-19 on our organization and our membership cannot be understated. The pandemic's impact on economic activity in Alberta coupled with other uncertainties in the economy poses a significant risk. As noted in our latest Financial Statement: the "Association or its clients, employees, contractors, suppliers, and other partners may be unable to conduct regular business activities for an indefinite period of time. While it is not possible at this time to estimate the impact that COVID-19 could have on the Association's business, the continued spread of COVID-19 and the measures taken by the federal, provincial and municipal governments to contain its impact could adversely impact the Association's business, financial condition or results of operations. Specifically, a decrease in funding and donations received. The extent to which the COVID-19 outbreak impacts the Association's results will depend on future developments that are highly uncertain and cannot be predicted, including new information that may emerge concerning the spread of the virus and government actions."

It is clear to all that COVID-19 poses new and unknown risks to all organizations, but the arts sector has been particularly hard hit. As Statistics Canada notes, employment

"in information, culture and recreation declined for the second straight month, down by 19,000 (-2.7%) in December, as some provinces tightened public health measures at gyms, theaters and other businesses where it is difficult to maintain social distance."

[WWW150.STATCAN.GC.CA](http://WWW150.STATCAN.GC.CA)

To mitigate the impact of COVID-19 health risks, CARFAC Alberta moved to all-online models for delivery of programs. This movement to online-only programming was relatively smooth, since we had been moving towards online delivery of programming for several years before COVID-19.

Further, CARFAC Alberta recognizes that online program delivery is problematic for some marginalized communities: not everyone has access to high speed internet, or the electronic devices necessary to connect, and this is an important consideration for us in the equitable delivery of our programs in the future. Nonetheless, we recognize that online programming allows us to reach more people in more locations in the province, and to reach new communities that we were not able to engage in person pre-COVID. We consider our move to online programming as a way of enhancing our reputation as an organization; we come to the people who need and want our programming, rather than being an organization that requires additional effort (such as travel) to access what we offer. We do not consider online programming to be inferior to in-person programming – just different – and we will continue to improve our online resources in the coming years.

As previously mentioned, one of CARFAC Alberta's strengths is adaptive change. We expect that the next three years will be full of surprises, some good and some that we will have to meet head on and overcome. We choose to see these uncertain circumstances as opportunities to improve all that we do in the service of Alberta's artists.

## **Monitoring and Evaluating**

In this strategic business plan we have outlined our strategic goals for the next three years, answering the questions of WHAT will be done, HOW will we know we have been successful, WHAT is the result we want to see and WHEN will the goal be completed. This is the first time we will be truly able to determine if we are meeting our goals. By setting up performance criteria, we will be able to evaluate how we are working and how successful we are at meeting our new mission and vision.

The CARFAC Board struck a Metrics Committee to create a proactive framework for aligning our new goals to our mission and vision. The Metrics Committee will continue to meet during the next three years to determine what is working for us (success) as an organization and what we need to do differently (where we have not been successful). By building a framework for our goals, we will be able to grow and mature as an organization and create a performance measurement culture.