

BR AVO
GREATER DES MOINES



Ballet Des Moines



Greater Des Moines Music Coalition
Photo: Hannah Wright



Mainframe Studios



Des Moines Playhouse

STRATEGIC PLAN
FISCAL YEAR 2023 - 2025



BRAVO STRATEGIC PLAN FY23–FY25

For nearly two decades, Bravo Greater Des Moines has been a critical partner in strengthening the role of arts, culture, and heritage in central Iowa. Through strategic leadership and bold investments of hotel/motel taxes allocated by 17 local government partners, Bravo has contributed to robust growth in cultural organizations, public art, and creative programming that drive Greater Des Moines' reputation as a thriving, vibrant region.

For this momentum to continue – for Bravo and the community - there is an urgent need to continue strengthening a resilient and connected cultural sector. Beyond economic impact and quality of life, arts and culture must be seen as essential to achieving all regional priorities.

Bravo already plays a leadership role in this work and this plan firmly commits to Bravo's evolution into a true regional arts council. Bravo will maintain a primary focus on non-profit organizations and grantmaking will remain Bravo's core and primary function. But for Bravo to remain nimble, responsive, and relevant to the future vitality of arts, culture and heritage in Greater Des Moines, Bravo will intentionally focus on a broader scope of services. While Bravo will remain committed to only undertaking work it is uniquely positioned to execute with excellence, the organization is well-positioned to become much more than a grant maker evolving towards also being recognized as a convener, connector, and cultivator.

Authentically embedding diversity, equity, inclusion and access into each decision and action will be prioritized. Bravo also recognizes that civic, cultural and community partners are essential allies in this work. Continued collaboration and clear communication will be required to increase collective impact.

ABOUT BRAVO

MISSION

Bravo Greater Des Moines leverages community resources to maximize impact of arts, culture, and heritage to advance regional priorities.

VISION

Arts, culture, and heritage elevate and enrich a vibrant Greater Des Moines.

CORE VALUES

Collaborative

Bravo collaborates with all community partners to define and achieve long-term success for arts, culture, and heritage.

Inclusive

Bravo values diversity, and we promote a culture of equity and inclusion.

Accountable

Bravo acts with integrity and transparency, allocating resources responsibly and as good stewards of public funds.

Regional

Bravo is engaged where we can have the most impact on regional priorities.

Opportunistic

Bravo consistently delivers on core functions while remaining nimble enough to respond strategically to regional priorities.

Passionate

Bravo stakeholders are passionate about arts, culture, and heritage and the benefits Bravo brings to Greater Des Moines.

/ SUPPORT /

INVEST STRATEGICALLY IN ORGANIZATIONS, PROGRAMS, AND PROJECTS THAT ADVANCE REGIONAL CULTURAL PRIORITIES.

Grantmaking and funding to arts, culture, and heritage organizations will remain fundamental to how Bravo serves the community. However, more complete definition around investment priorities and more thoughtful communication about the public value of Bravo's investments on behalf of our local government partners are required. Expanded funding opportunities for non-profits beyond those that are arts, culture and heritage-centric will also be added to support a wider range of organizations that add breadth and depth to the cultural landscape.

OBJECTIVE: Strategically distribute funds through grant programs that meet the diverse needs of arts, culture and heritage organizations across the region.

- Regularly review and modify existing programs to maintain relevancy and effectiveness.
- Ensure community investment strategies and practices are accessible, diverse, equitable and inclusive.
- Define internal and external KPIs for investments and improve data collection to ensure information is available and relevant.
- Prioritize culture and heritage investments along with arts.

OBJECTIVE: Expand pathways to support organizations outside the cultural sector that are uniquely advancing regional cultural priorities.

- Develop and deploy pilot investment programs that invite and encourage new partners to apply for support.
- Evaluate impact of investments.

OBJECTIVE: Broaden awareness of Bravo's investments and impact.

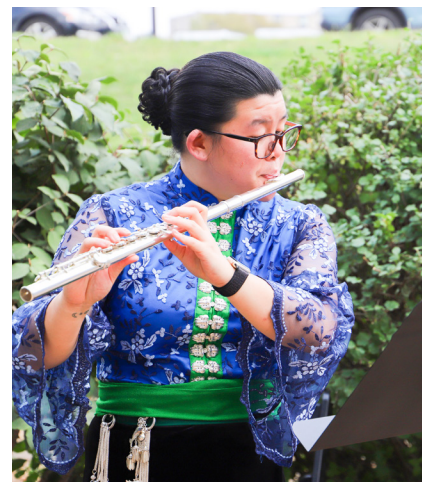
- Collect quantitative and qualitative data from investment partners about impact of Bravo funding.
- Create and implement a communications plan that articulates to cultural, corporate, civic and community partners that Bravo funding is helping to build a sustainable and resilient regional cultural ecosystem.
- Focus messaging on what Bravo makes possible more than what Bravo does.



Downtown Events Group



Living History Farms



Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden

/ CONNECT /

FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS THAT BUILD CAPACITY AND INVITE COLLABORATION.

Collective thriving requires more than funding from Bravo; it demands the development and continued strengthening of trusted relationships. Bravo's credibility as a convener and facilitator is well-established and valued. Intentionally leveraging more opportunities to break down silos and build capacity will create greater connectivity and sustainability both within the arts, culture, and heritage sector and between it and the wider community. This will increase the sector's impact and provide richer experiences that reach broader audiences.

OBJECTIVE: Facilitate capacity building for arts, culture and heritage organizations, leaders and community partners.

- Develop and deploy strategies to assess and understand professional and skill development needs within the sector.
- Make connections to existing training programs and community partners providing relevant capacity building opportunities.
- Work with cultural and community partners to create a portfolio of learning opportunities that will help support regional cultural goals.

OBJECTIVE: Enhance connections and collaborations among organizations working in arts, culture and heritage.

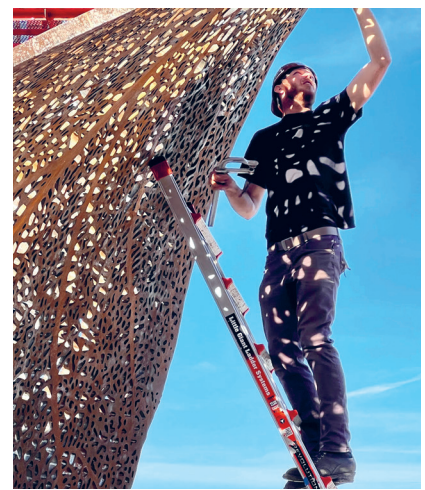
- Offer formal and informal opportunities to convene, build relationships and explore relevant topics.
- Provide assistance for organizations seeking to partner with others to create efficiencies, streamline operations, share resources and enhance effectiveness.
- Deepen relationships and partnerships with leaders and communities not currently seeing themselves or their cultures represented in Bravo's network.

OBJECTIVE: Strengthen relationships between the cultural sector and the broader community.

- Create opportunities for cultural organizations to showcase programs, offerings and impact in new and impactful ways.
- Develop strategic engagement initiatives to ensure that arts, culture and heritage are recognized by community stakeholders as essential drivers of regional priorities.



Greater Des Moines Music Coalition
Photo: Sam Golbuff



Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation
Photo: Juanjo Novella



Ankeny Community Chorus

/ AMPLIFY /

BE A CENTRAL VOICE FOR ARTS, CULTURE, AND HERITAGE ACROSS THE REGION.

There is growing appreciation for the role of arts and culture to advance civic vitality, but this progress cannot be taken for granted. More intentional effort to reinforce the direct link between arts and economic and social impact is needed and a collective voice promoting the message is necessary. Bravo is already seen as an advocate and resource about the regional arts, culture and heritage landscape. Collecting and centralizing more information about the sector's assets and challenges will bring more opportunities to further integrate arts, culture, and heritage into regional decision-making.

OBJECTIVE: Champion the role of arts, culture and heritage in delivering broader economic, civic and social impact.

- Build and strengthen relationships within and outside the cultural sector.
- Seek out and participate in regional conversations, efforts and initiatives that can be strengthened by adding an arts, culture and heritage perspective.
- Create strategic opportunities for business, civic and community leaders to learn about and support the cultural sector.
- Develop clear and consistent advocacy messages that can be used by all takeholders.

OBJECTIVE: Lead advancement of regional cultural priorities.

- Collect and share data about sector impact and opportunities.
- Administer economic impact studies.
- Conduct audience development research.

OBJECTIVE: Centralize access to information about regional cultural assets and their significance.

- Redesign Bravo website to enhance relevancy to broader audience.
- Leverage Bravo Awards Gala and other public events to enhance understanding of not only Bravo but also the breadth and depth of the cultural sector.



Ballet Des Moines



State Historical Museum of Iowa



SEEDS

/ CULTIVATE /

SEED AND LEAD INITIATIVES THAT BUILD MOMENTUM FOR FUTURE SUCCESS.

Building the artists, audiences, and cultural advocates of tomorrow must begin today. Places and spaces to access artistic and cultural experiences must evolve rapidly to meet dynamic emerging needs. Culture and heritage must be elevated alongside the arts to ensure a rich cultural tapestry that welcomes future generations to call Greater Des Moines “home.” Bravo can thoughtfully catalyze experimentation in significant programs, projects, and partnerships that will encourage and sustain a resilient and competitive creative ecosystem for decades to come.

OBJECTIVE: Lead regional visioning on future needs that position arts, culture, and heritage to thrive.

- Bring attention to key cultural community assets, infrastructure, and issues.
- Determine gaps and opportunities and envision new possibilities to advance growth.
- Create pathways for the development of new arts and culture leaders.

OBJECTIVE: Identify and prioritize opportunities where Bravo can play a unique, collaborative and additive role in cultivating a resilient and competitive creative culture.

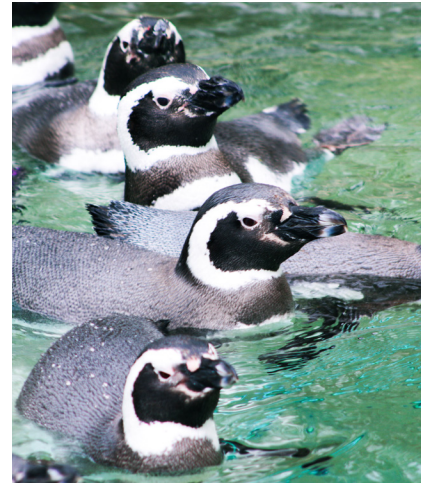
- Define success metrics.
- Take calculated risks to learn and evolve quickly.
- Expand definition of arts, culture and heritage beyond places you go.

OBJECTIVE: Establish arts, culture, and heritage as a priority driver of regional identity.

- Encourage creative placemaking strategies to drive community engagement and development to make Greater Des Moines more inclusive and economically vibrant.
- Empower community members to design and build structures and programs that reflect their rich heritage and communicate a sense of belonging.

OBJECTIVE: Build Bravo’s agility to identify and respond to emerging opportunities.

- Apply for local, regional and federal funding for projects Bravo is uniquely suited to implement.
- Manage only programs that benefit the region and cannot be led by any other partner.



Blank Park Zoo



City Voices



Des Moines Playhouse



Des Moines Metro Opera

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Inspired by guidelines from Americans for the Arts, Bravo Greater Des Moines engaged in a considerable research effort in preparation for this strategic plan. These efforts included a review of eight peer organizations in other metro areas, ten focus groups with a wide variety of regional stakeholders, two online surveys with educators and community members, and interviews with organizational leaders across the metro region.

Some prominent themes in arts, culture, and heritage (AC&H) that emerged from these conversations included:

- Strong appreciation for and momentum in AC&H organizations and programs across Central Iowa.
- Leaders in the AC&H sector crave more connections, resources, and support within and beyond the sector.
- Demand for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility throughout the community.
- Concern about the coordination for the development of future infrastructure for both artistic production and performance spaces.
- A need to focus on building a sustainable and resilient, regional cultural economy.

The strategic priorities of this FY23 – FY25 plan aim to attend to some of these needs as well as to seed and lead conversations about major regional initiatives to prepare for future needs. Sincere thanks again to everyone who provided important insights and input into the future of arts, culture, and heritage in Greater Des Moines.



GREATER DES MOINES

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