

Marketing and Public Relations Work Group

Result: Increased public awareness, political will, and support for Milwaukee's diverse arts and culture sector.

We will **measure the effectiveness** of this work by:

- (b) Improved public perception of the value of arts and culture in Milwaukee increases via public surveys;
- (c) Increased audiences and markets for local artists and arts groups; and
- (d) Increase in diverse public participation in arts and culture.

Our 2021 focus will be driven by the guiding words: **survive, revive, thrive**. We will seek to create campaigns, products, and systems that support our city's artists and arts and culture organizations to weather the continued effects of COVID-19 and reemerge stronger.

Strategies:

1. Develop a brief, compelling, data-driven case about the social and economic impacts of arts and culture, and the opportunity costs of doing nothing;
 - *Target 2021 Project(s): TBD*
2. Market our message to our combined databases and through paid and earned media to shape public narrative about the importance of arts and culture to Milwaukee region;
 - *Target 2021 Projects(s):*
 - *Cross-sector campaign with restaurants, BIDs, etc. promoting safe return to public life*
3. Create, partner with, or transform a media channel in Milwaukee that will provide a critical and curated platform to promote and discuss arts and culture in Milwaukee;
 - *Target 2021 Project(s):*
 - *Development of Milwaukee arts calendar / "front page" in partnership with BookLive*
 - *Partner with existing statewide conversations around creating a critical arts channel*
4. Promote the buying of local art and help patrons and audiences more easily access local arts
 - *Target 2021 Project(s):*
 - *Sector-wide campaign around coming back to the arts first, when returning to public life is safe*
 - *Partner with Support for Artists on Marketing/PR tool building opportunities for artists*
5. Promote Milwaukee's art scene regionally and nationally
 - *Target 2021 Project(s):*
 - *Sector-wide campaign around coming back to the arts first, when returning to public life is safe*
 - *Development of arts and culture story bank / press pipeline to new arts and culture stories*

6. Campaign for increased public support of the arts through a grass tops (board members and patrons) and grass roots (combined audiences) advocacy effort (in partnership with the Public Policy Strategy Group);
 - *Target 2021 Project(s):*
 - *Collaborate with Public Policy WG on cross-sector campaign for continued public relief funding*

Historical Background on Strategy Development

The Marketing and Public Relations planning group believed that an essential goal for Imagine MKE – and one that supports its other goals – is to increase public awareness, political will, and support for Milwaukee’s diverse arts and culture sector.

Imagine MKE’s vision is an inclusive, engaged, and inspired Milwaukee that is recognized as a world-class city for creating and experiencing arts and culture. For our arts and culture sector to thrive, people in Milwaukee need to be aware of, value, and participate in arts and culture, and people outside Milwaukee need to perceive Milwaukee as a distinctive arts and culture destination.

Milwaukee receives a dearth of public funds for arts when compared to similar cities, and Wisconsin ranks 48th of 50 states in public support for arts. There is a need for local government leaders, civic and business leaders, and the public to prioritize investing more in Milwaukee’s arts and culture. Such investments will have huge cultural, social, and economic impacts. It is also important that any funding mechanisms are equitable and benefit diverse artists and groups. Imagine MKE will have to develop messages and partner with our members to promote those messages that develop public will and support.

The Support for Artists planning group said that artists are looking for more opportunities to practice, rehearse, perform, show, and sell their work in Milwaukee. This includes the need for physical spaces, networks, support for building entrepreneurial capacities, and accessing markets of potential audience members and buyers. Based on a survey of more than 170 diverse Milwaukee artists and 7 artists networks, they shared the need for new tools and tactics that other cities have used, including an online portal, smartphone app with maps of galleries and events, a calendar of performing and visual arts events, new showcases for patrons who enjoy the hunt for new artistic talent (e.g., a fringe festival), a re-invented gallery night, centralized ticketing, and audience education (many gallery visitors, for example, don’t know they can negotiate price and even payment installments with artists). They aim to partner with the Marketing and Public Relations Strategy Group to use their expertise and experience to help them build audiences and markets for their work.

There is concern that the absence of mass media art critics needs to be addressed so there are independent media curators and critics that help contextualize and educate the public to build audiences for innovative work. The planning group believed that Imagine MKE can work together to support an existing or new media channel to provide this needed public service.

To create strategies, the group gathered data on the economics of arts and culture in Milwaukee and public support for arts versus other cities. We also looked at past narratives about support for arts in Milwaukee and best practices from other cities.