

LITERARY ARTS

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2019–2022



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Literary Arts' annual Portland Book Festival brings more than 8,000 readers and writers together to celebrate books.

COVER PHOTO: Madison High School students attend a lecture by activist and author DeRay Mckesson through our Students to the Schnitz program.

INTRODUCTION

This is a three-year strategic framework for Literary Arts. Its purpose is to guide our annual goal setting in order to achieve broad, three-year outcomes. It sets the goals, measures, strategies, tactics, and key language for the organization.

We use two fundamental lenses to evaluate and measure our work. The first is our mission—to engage readers, support writers, and inspire the next generation with great literature—and the second is programmatic. We therefore group our constituents into three broad categories: readers, writers, and youth. This forces the organization to look at our work not only through a programmatic lens but also through our engagement with the people we serve. Simply put, it helps us put people, not programs, first. In addition, when we look at our work through the lens of our mission, it allows us to focus on the interconnectedness of our programs and the ways in which they are mutually reinforcing each other to build community. And since, from a functional perspective, the activities, tactics, and strategies for engaging and elevating each group differ, it is logical to sort our constituents this way even though it can feel somewhat artificial.



Activist and author DeRay Mckesson meets local high school students participating in our Students to the Schnitz program, which provides complimentary tickets and transportation to our literary events in the concert hall.

This framework has several components:

KEY LANGUAGE

Defines the mission and purpose of the organization.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Demonstrates the methodology of how we are working to become a more inclusive organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL LOGIC MODEL

Demonstrates how resources are converted into community impact.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Provides a broad summary of the programmatic assessments, accounting for the operating environment, the current platform of the program, and our next evolution as an organization.

STRATEGIC HOUSE

Gathers all the key language, goals, and measures of the organization for the next three years. Features highly compressed language that is only meant to give a snapshot or summary of the next three years, organized by who we serve.

In a separate document, we have provided more detailed assessments of each of our programs, including sections dedicated to finance; human resources; infrastructure; and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

PROCESS TIMELINE FOR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND ASSESSMENT

The process for generating the plan was staff driven and board advised. Some of the components here predate the plan and have been updated (e.g., the logic model and the Strategic Framework for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and some are new (e.g., the Strategic House). The process began in July 2017 and involved work in large and small groups, in both formal and informal settings. Collectively, the staff have spent hundreds of hours on this process over the last year and a half.

From July to October 2018, we invited our community to comment on drafts of the Framework and Assessment. Every committee and council of Literary Arts reviewed the document. Together, over 60 people from diverse backgrounds and with a range of personal or professional investment in the organization met in relatively small groups to give us feedback directly or via a facilitator.

- >> **Staff retreat** (*launch process*) | July 2017
- >> **Board discussion** (*launch process*) | August 2017
- >> **Staff planning exercise** (*vision statement*) | September 2017
- >> **Board planning exercise** (*vision statement*) | December 2017
- >> **Staff planning exercise** (*Strategic House*) | April 2018
- >> **Staff review of Assessment** | April 2018
- >> **Board review of Assessment** | April 2018
- >> **Staff review of Framework** | June 2018
- >> **Board review of Framework** | June 2018
- >> **Community input phase** | July-October 2018
- >> **Board approval** | December 2018
- >> **Framework and Assessment published** | January 2019

It is worth noting here that, while any organizational plan will emphasize the new, Literary Arts currently has rich and valued programming that is already a significant undertaking for the staff and board and that requires considerable effort on a daily, weekly, and annual basis.



Literary Arts staff and board members participate in developing our Strategic Framework.

KEY ORGANIZATIONAL LANGUAGE

Our Story

Literary Arts is a nonprofit literary center located in downtown Portland, with a 35-year history of serving Oregon's readers and writers. In fiscal year 2018–2019, our annual budget was \$2.8 million.



2017/2018 Portland Art & Lectures author and two-time National Book Award winner Jesmyn Ward visits local teachers and students at Benson High School.

The organization began in 1984 as Portland Arts and Lectures. In 1993, it merged with the Oregon Institute for Literary Arts and became simply Literary Arts. A few years later, we launched an education program serving high school youth. In 2011, the organization moved to its first dedicated home. In 2014, we launched our own radio show on OPB, and then in 2014, we acquired a local book festival and re-launched it in 2015.

Today, Literary Arts serves over 20,000 readers and writers each year across Oregon with a variety of programs, including talks, readings, awards, workshops, and seminars. We do so statewide in concert halls, libraries, and schools; in a festival setting; on the radio; and on the web.

Our Programs

READERS

Portland Arts & Lectures brings the world's most celebrated writers, artists, and thinkers to our community to speak in the 2,700-seat Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. The program also connects readers and writers of all ages through classroom visits and workshops.

Portland Book Festival brings writers and readers of all ages together to celebrate a shared passion for books. This daylong celebration features author events, readings, workshops, and an extensive book fair.

We also run a program called **Delve Readers Seminars**, which cultivates community around the shared experience of reading. In addition, many of our readings and presentations are broadcast on our radio show and podcast, *The Archive Project*, reaching tens of thousands of people each year.

WRITERS

Oregon Book Awards & Fellowships supports, promotes, and celebrates Oregon's writers and publishers. In addition to awards and fellowships for emerging and established writers, the program offers writing classes and literary events at our downtown center and produces the Oregon Book Awards Author Tour, which connects writers and readers throughout the state.

YOUTH

Youth Programs inspires public high school students to write, publish, and perform their own creative writing. Writers in the Schools (WITS) residencies bring working writers into classrooms; Students to the Schnitz gives young people access to great books and influential authors; the College Essay Mentoring Project pairs mentors with college applicants; and the annual Verselandia! poetry slam showcases high school spoken word artists.

The Case for Literature

Literature asks a reader to experience what it means to be another human being. It is an immersive art form. The degree to which the reader plays an essential creative role makes literature distinct from all other art forms. It is emphatically an art form of empathy. And it offers the best any art form can: beauty, humor, pathos, entertainment, and revelation. It embraces moral ambiguity and complexity.

Therefore, literature acts as an essential counterweight to the often narrow and polarizing discourse that is corrosive in any society. In this way, literature is essential to the fabric of healthy civic life. Because it is portable and inexpensive, it has the potential to reach communities across socioeconomic or cultural boundaries.

“Literary Arts is the best of the best. Such a deep commitment to individual readers and entire communities is exactly the kind of medicine our divided America desperately needs.”

TRACY K. SMITH, *Author of Life on Mars, Pulitzer Prize Winner, 2017 & 2018 US Poet Laureate*

The Case for Literary Arts

At Literary Arts, our goal is to foster a lifelong love of literature in an intergenerational and diverse audience, as well as to strengthen the communities of artists who make it.

By engaging readers with curated events and seminars, we deepen literary experience, which builds social capital. By bringing professional writers and high schoolers together, we teach and inspire students to become better writers and to embrace a creative life, which increases their chances of success in any career. And by supporting writers — specifically by honoring them publicly and giving them financial support — we contribute to building a stable community of creative professionals who will enhance our education, business, and artistic communities.

We are unique because we are a comprehensive literary center with a diverse and varied suite of programs that offers different types of experiences (events, awards, fellowships, classes, seminars, workshops, mentoring, a radio show, and a festival, to name some) that enable us to bring together readers and writers of all ages and from many walks of life.

Mission

Our mission is to engage readers, support writers, and inspire the next generation with great literature.

Vision

Reading and writing build engaged, inclusive, and strong communities. Literary Arts is a national leader in empowering people to tell their stories and in placing all forms of literature at the center of civic life.

Values

We believe literature is essential to the fabric of healthy civic life. In all of our programs, we strive to be adaptive, collaborative, inclusive, and transparent. We embrace growth and change. The following core values define the work of Literary Arts.

ADAPTATION

Our work is intentional, often involving long-term planning, but is also responsive to the needs of our community. We are committed to constantly improving our programs, which may mean discontinuing some and introducing others.

COLLABORATION

We expect to be continuously learning from local, national, and international artists, arts leaders, and educators. We are committed to supporting this learning with time and money. In turn, we strive to act as leaders and share what we learn with each other and with our community to support artists and the cultural ecosystem.

COMMITMENT

We expect to work hard. We invest in staff through training, professional development, and mentoring. We highly value an open, transparent, and respectful workplace that celebrates differences. We strive to be strong listeners and to be supportive of each other. We expect to reach and sometimes fail, and we recognize that failure is a valuable source of learning.

COMMUNITY

We put our mission and our constituents first. We strive to serve the whole community, including those who have not historically been served by our programs. We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion as set forth in our Strategic Framework for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

EQUITY

Though Literary Arts' commitment to equity is not new, its official place in our public documents is. Although the organization has been engaged in the work for about five years (with significant progress in programming, hiring and other internal practices, and community partnerships), much of this work has been done without a formal statement of intent. We at Literary Arts recognize that publicly committing to equity is crucial to both our own growth and that of the Portland arts and culture ecosystem generally. As such, we have included a lengthier explanation of this organizational value below.

Stories are powerful. The stories that get told define who we are, for ourselves and others. Who has the opportunity to tell their story, and who does not? And who has an audience that listens, reads, and engages with that story?

The history of who can tell their story and who is listening is part of the history of oppression, prejudice, and privilege. At Literary Arts, we acknowledge that, as Oregonians, we have been part of this history.



2016/2017 Portland Arts & Lectures author Tracy K. Smith visits with local writers at the Literary Arts community space in downtown Portland.

We are committed to a different future, one in which all members of our community have the opportunity to tell their stories, particularly members of our communities of color. Though we acknowledge there are a variety of marginalized and oppressed identities within our community, our emphasis in this work is on race and ethnicity. Facility and comfort with the language of racial oppression can be used to develop empathy and understanding across issues of gender, sexual orientation, and ability. It is our hope that by addressing racial inequity in our community, we will create a space in which readers, writers, and youth of any and all identities feel welcome.

We have begun to make some programmatic progress in this area. For example, we have significantly increased the resources we give to writers of color and expanded our education program into East Multnomah County (where the community is the most diverse)¹ we regularly partner with culturally specific organizations at our downtown event space and highlight writers of color in all our programs; and we have focused staff and board trainings and conversations around equity on a continual basis (see DE&I assessment and individual program assessments for additional examples). We consider this progress a start and are committed to deepening this work.

It should also be noted that Literary Arts strives not just to be reflective of Oregon demographics, but instead to have greater diversity than is indicated by current state demographics in program participation and on the staff, board, and committees and councils. This is an aspirational long-term goal. We know Portland to be a fairly homogeneous city, and though this is changing, it is not enough to simply reflect this fact back to the communities we serve. We hope to set an example through our dedication to and appreciation of marginalized voices by committing to demographic goals above and beyond state census numbers. Though demographics are important, we also acknowledge that diversity alone is not enough. Literary Arts is committed to creating an equitable and inclusive environment for our entire community.

We cannot do this work alone. We will need to work with all our partners as we are only one part of a much larger system that has excluded many people. The history of modern literature has been defined by our educational system, the publishing and bookselling industries, the professions of journalism and criticism, and the way awards and prizes are adjudicated.

¹ The most recent, in-depth analyses of Portland's racial demographics by neighborhood (as opposed to by Portland-metro counties) were conducted in 2010–2011. For our purposes, we have used the city government-sponsored analysis: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/372607>.

We commit ourselves programmatically to:

- Define our mission broadly to include all forms of literature and storytelling
- Support more writers of color and highlight their stories
- Build a diverse, intergenerational audience for literature
- Create equitable access to our programs

We commit ourselves administratively to:

- Create a staff, board, and volunteer base reflective of our community
- Apply the best practices and tools to ensure that the organizational systems are equitable

In all of the above, we strive to work with humility and in collaboration with our community to be adaptable and responsive and to better accomplish these important goals. We recognize the work will be slow and difficult and that we will make mistakes. We are committed to doing this work for the long term. We are excited and energized by a future in which all the stories of our community—in Oregon and from around the world—have an audience of readers who are open and engaged.



Author, spoken word poet, visual artist, and Literary Arts board member Anis Moigani, performs in the Portland Art Museum at the 2018 Portland Book Festival.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Our mission is to engage readers, support writers, and inspire the next generation with great literature.

CORE VALUES

ADAPTATION

COLLABORATION

COMMITMENT

COMMUNITY

EQUITY

ENVIRONMENTAL DRIVERS



BROAD GOALS



STRATEGIES

There are inequities in access to arts programming and resources in Oregon, particularly as it pertains to communities of color

Oregon's demographics are changing and the historical inequity among its diverse communities is at the forefront of civic discourse and requires action

Be responsive and adaptive to the needs of marginalized communities

Include underrepresented communities in our program planning

Increase the diversity of our staff, board, and committees

Increase the diversity of the communities we serve

Be transparent about our actions, initiatives, and organizational beliefs regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion

Build more collaborative relationships and partnerships with diverse communities, especially communities of color

Regularly ask, listen, and adapt our programming to the communities we want to engage and serve

Develop personalized professional development plans so that Literary Arts staff and board can continually increase their cultural responsiveness

Develop culturally specific marketing approaches

Measure our progress each year, and share our process, progress, and learning with our constituents and the public

Apply our equity lens to all recruitment activities for staff, board, committees, contractors, interns, and volunteers

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY AND LOGIC MODEL

Literary Arts stands out nationally as one of the only literary centers in the country with a balance of programs for readers and writers and youth. This is what makes us a comprehensive literary center. Our core strategy is to serve these distinct constituencies together. Thus, Literary Arts is in a unique position to build community around literature.



“Literary Arts is one of the indispensable literary centers in the country.”

SALMAN RUSHDIE

2013/2014 Portland Arts & Lectures author Salman Rushdie meets with local students at Madison High School.

Core to our strategy for reaching ever larger and more diverse audiences is making our programs mutually reinforcing, bringing together readers, writers, and youth. We want to be an organization for all readers. When we think about growth, we think about the diversity of programmatic experience. This means that, in order to reach a wide and diverse audience, we must build programmatic experiences that are different—from workshops and classes to concert hall lectures and a festival, from small events to online and broadcast experiences. In all of these, it is imperative that we are collaborating wherever possible and thereby building relevant and responsive programs. In the past three years, the growth of shared programming (e.g., @LiteraryArts, Verselandia!) and the use of advisory councils are good examples of working in close collaboration with the communities we hope to serve.

There is much work to be done, and in many ways our strategy has yet to be fully realized. As an organization that seeks to be responsive, we will create new and better ways to engage audiences.

Tactics

We will continue to focus on three key tactics originally identified in the 2014–2017 plan.

HARMONIZATION

Harmonization is used here in the musical sense of the word, in that our programs will continue to be adapted to work together in concert.

PARTICIPATION

Participation refers to the idea that our programs will provide ways for our constituents to directly participate whenever possible.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration refers to our continued work with partner organizations and individuals to adapt our programs to be more responsive and relevant.



2018 Oregon Book Award winner Samiya Bashir reads at the Literary Arts community space during a 2018 Lit Crawl Portland event.

Organizational Logic Model

What follows on page 17 is the Organizational Logic Model, the purpose of which is to show how resources are turned into community impact. This flow chart is designed to describe the “how” of our community-wide impact by breaking the process down into five stages.

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THE LOGIC MODEL

1. Inputs: Resources, including human, financial, or in-kind (labor, goods, services)

2. Programs: The programs of Literary Arts, diagrammed as mutually reinforcing

PA&L: Portland Arts & Lectures

PBF: Portland Book Festival

OBA&F: Oregon Book Awards & Fellowships

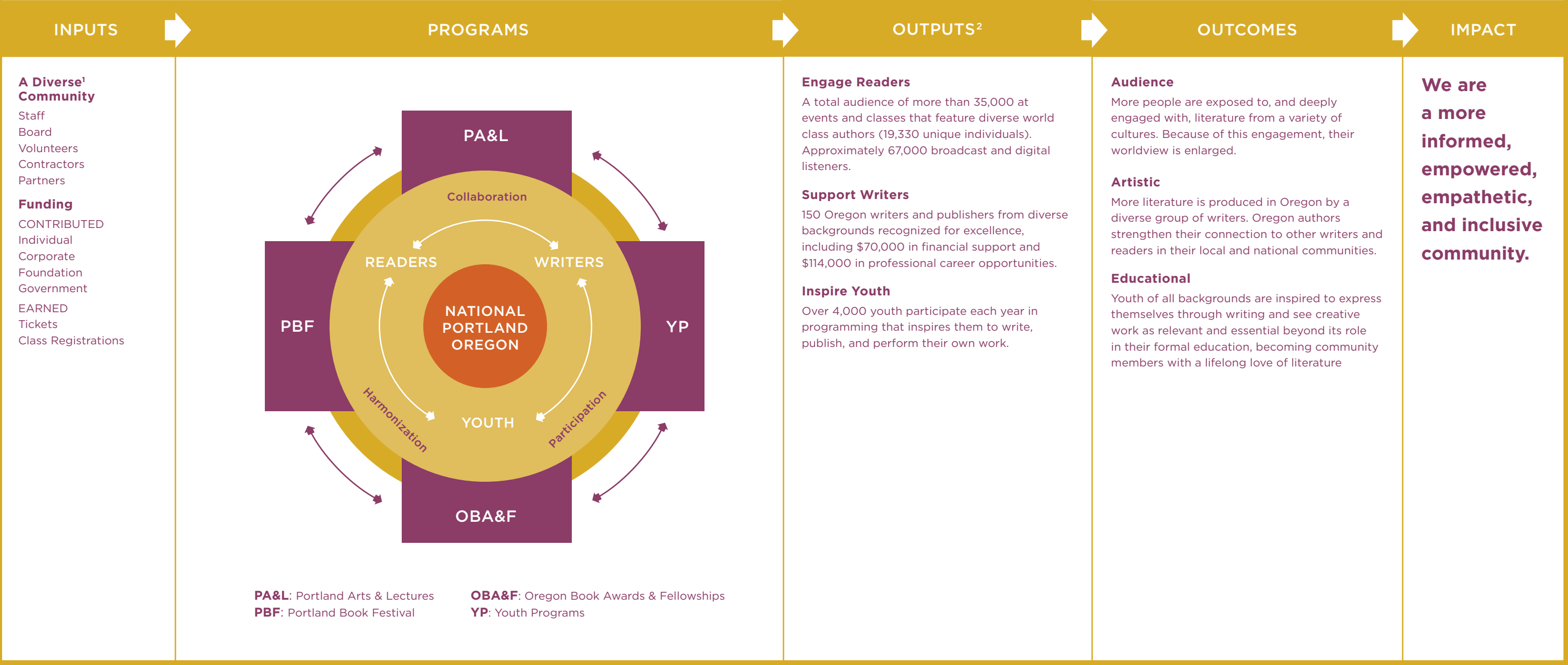
YP: Youth Programs

3. Outputs: The results of programmatic activity, expressed in numbers and organized by the three pillars of our mission statement

4. Outcomes: The results of programmatic activity, expressed in terms of change on an individual level and organized by the three pillars of our mission statement

5. Impact: The collective impact of our work, or the sum of the outcomes, with our mission statement expressing what we do and our impact statement expressing the result of this work

LOGIC MODEL



1 See page 10 for our statement and information on our diversity, equity, and inclusion work.

2 Output numbers are reported from 2017–2018 fiscal year.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

This is a highly compressed version of the much longer assessments that are organized by program or organizational function. For a deeper look into any of these ideas, please refer to the full assessments.

Operating Environment

PUBLISHING

The publishing and bookselling industries have gone through a difficult time since the last strategic plan. The e-book went mainstream and threatened the bottom line of both publishers and booksellers. As the novelty of this new format has worn off, traditional² e-book sales have dropped considerably, and independent publishers have recovered.³

Far from benefitting from the bankruptcy of the Borders bookstore chain, Barnes & Noble is in contraction and searching for a new strategy.⁴ Independent bookstores are growing again in this vacuum.⁵ Amazon remains super dominant, with control of the majority of the marketplace.⁶

Locally, Powell's Books continues to thrive and remains a cornerstone of our cultural community. Nationally, the culture of reading and writing (and the organizations that support these activities) persists, despite an ever-growing range of electronic distractions and rumors of its demise. It is worth noting that the young adult genre is among the largest and fastest-growing segments for corporate publishers.⁷ While some of this is due to the fact that many adults have taken to reading in this category, it is also because the genre is hugely popular with youth.

The trend of consolidating publishers continues with the Penguin and Random House merger in 2016.

And finally, while greater attention is being paid by the publishing community to writers of color, these writers remain significantly underrepresented.⁸

² For our purposes, "traditional" refers to Amazon's publishing arm as well as the Big Five publishing houses.

³ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamrowe/2018/04/29/traditional-publishing-ebook-sales-dropped-10-in-2017/#21f06a187943>

⁴ <http://fortune.com/2017/11/30/barnes-noble-sales/>

⁵ <http://www.bookweb.org/news/indies-believe-they-are-better-positioned-chains-weather-amazon%E2%80%99s-growth-102255>

⁶ <https://www.idealog.com/blog/changing-book-business-seems-flowing-downhill-amazon/>

⁷ <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/the-young-adult-book-market-2799954>

⁸ <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/69653-why-publishing-is-so-white.html>



“Literary Arts plays an essential role in the thriving literary community in Oregon, and it’s so important that their work continues.”

CHERYL STRAYED, Oregon Literary Fellowship recipient and Oregon Book Award winner for Wild

Oregon Public Broadcasting’s Dave Miller interviews 2013 Oregon Book Award winner Cheryl Strayed in front of a live audience at the Literary Arts community space.

OREGON AND PORTLAND

The challenges and tensions in the state of Oregon mirror many of the challenges facing the nation as a whole. These include growing income inequality, political polarization, significant fiscal challenges in the public sector, and a cultural divide between rural and urban communities. The state’s economy continues to be in transformation from one rooted in natural resources and land to one that is based on light manufacturing, health care, outdoor gear, apparel, technology, food and beverage, and creative industries. This transformation has been devastating for some rural communities. Many of these communities have turned to tourism to survive, which does not offer the same quality of jobs.⁹

The state was founded, in part, as a white supremacist community,¹⁰ on land stolen or otherwise taken from Native Americans. We continue to struggle with this legacy today. Communities of color have been marginalized and oppressed economically, educationally, geographically, and in most other major indicators of health and welfare.¹¹ The racial and ethnic demographics of the state are changing quickly; though it remains majority white, the recent census shows that almost 30 percent of the population identifies as nonwhite.¹²

⁹ <https://www.opb.org/news/article/rural-oregon-county-recovery-great-recession-report/>

¹⁰ <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/07/racist-history-portland/492035/>

¹¹ Beginning in 2008, the Coalition of Communities of Color began profiling minority communities in Multnomah County.

This link provides access to each of those profiles: <http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/multco-unsettling-profiles>

¹² <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/portlandcityoregon/PST045216>

The city of Portland is at once thriving and deeply challenged. The city's tech, apparel, urban development, and other creative or technical sectors are in a boom cycle. The city is growing rapidly, with just under 70,000 new residents arriving last year.¹³ With job creation in the white-collar sector of the economy, middle-class jobs are in much shorter supply. Income stagnation and a lack of affordable housing have created a housing crisis, which has been further exacerbated by a tight and expensive housing market. The writers and artists we serve are deeply affected by this crisis, which threatens this part of our creative community. This crisis also impacts many of the students we serve.



2017/2018 Portland Art & Lectures author and award-winning poet Claudia Rankine visits with a student at Franklin High School.

Portland has a rich cultural landscape that is also in transformation. Equity work is becoming a priority for many institutions, large and small, with progress being made in some areas and none at all in others. In response, new culturally specific organizations (some incorporated, others informal) are springing up and taking root. The many newcomers to the city are bringing new perspectives, talents, and networks.

¹³ http://www.oregonlive.com/trending/2017/01/oregon_2_atlas_moving_vans.html

EDUCATION

Oregon has one of the most underperforming school systems in the nation, with high student-to-faculty ratios, a short calendar year, and a low graduation rate.¹⁴ It is widely believed that the destabilization of Oregon school funding began in 1990, when Measure 5 was passed. As a result of Measure 5, property taxes dedicated for school funding were capped at \$15 per \$1,000 of real market value per year, and gradually lowered to \$5. Property taxes for other purposes were capped at \$10 per \$1,000 per year. The measure transferred the responsibility for school funding from local government to the state to equalize funding.

The recessions and financial crises of the early 2000s intensified inadequate and unstable school funding and have had many unfortunate consequences, including schools cutting arts classes, which have been shown to positively contribute to student achievement and attachment to school. Oregon has been slow to recover from these crises, but as the recovery progresses, Portland leads the way as an economic engine.

For 2017–2019, the state narrowly passed a budget of \$8.2 billion for public schools, an 11 percent increase from 2015–2017. While this was greater than the amount proposed by the governor, many stakeholders agree that this amount does not meet the actual or predicted needs of the schools, which have suffered years of cutbacks. In addition, the costs of employee pensions have outpaced the rate of budget increases, meaning that Portland Public Schools, for example, has continued to cut teachers and staff.

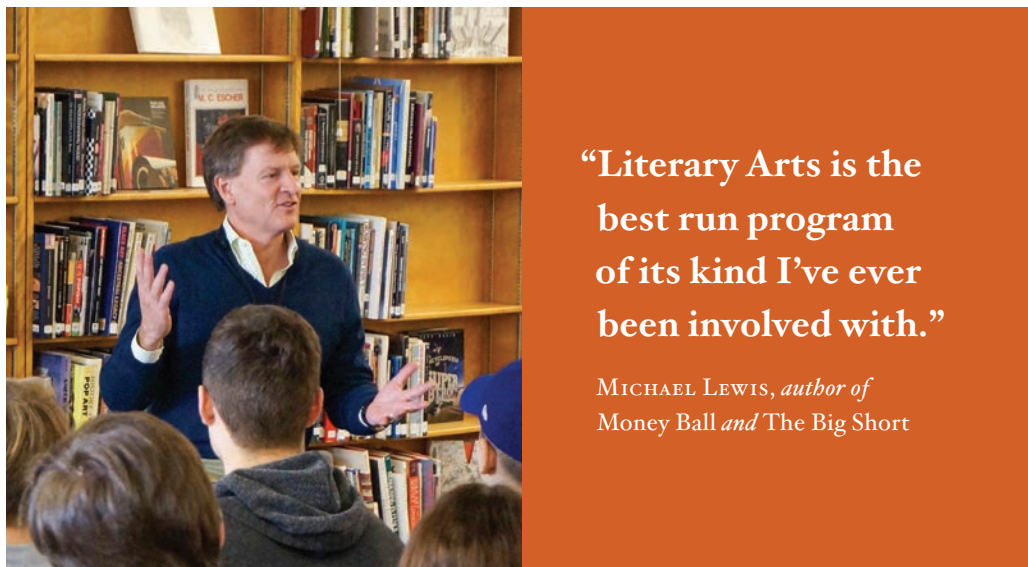
PHILANTHROPY

The recovery from the 2009 collapse of the banking industry has been uneven, with rural communities and communities of color still not benefitting from the improved economy.

As of 2018, the U.S. stock market has been growing for over eight years, and there is broad consensus that we are likely to experience a correction soon. If this is a dramatic correction, as it was 2008 and 2009, all of our funders—institutional and individual—will be impacted.

¹⁴ http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2017/12/oregons_graduation_rate_remain.html

Broadly speaking, Oregon and Portland have relatively few foundations, and those are generally smaller than in other areas of the country. In addition, we have only a handful of corporate head offices, restricting giving in this category. These two factors combined mean that individual donors will be the most important group of funders in the short and long term. The good news is that with the retiring of the baby boom generation, one of the largest intergenerational transfers of wealth in the history of the United States is occurring, and a significant amount of this wealth will be donated to the nonprofit sector.¹⁵



**“Literary Arts is the
best run program
of its kind I’ve ever
been involved with.”**

MICHAEL LEWIS, *author of
Money Ball and The Big Short*

Journalist and award-winning author Michael Lewis visits students at Franklin High School.

CURRENT PLATFORM

Generally speaking, the organization is well regarded and viewed as ascendant. Since 2009, Literary Arts has nearly tripled in size, growing from a budget of about \$900,000 to \$2,800,000 in FY 2018–2019. This has more than doubled the number of people we serve. A few accomplishments in these years include: moving into our own dedicated home for the first time, launching a radio show, and acquiring another organization. Literary Arts remains in very strong financial health, and most of its programs are sold out or otherwise near capacity, proving relevance to the community that we serve.

In 2014, the organization began an organized and concerted effort to make diversity, equity, and inclusion a part of every aspect of the organization. While progress has been uneven, this work has moved forward in all programs and internally, with our

¹⁵ https://ssir.org/articles/entry/philanthropys_missing_trillions

programs making the most improvement. Change has been slow, and a great deal more work remains. (*See individual program assessments and the DE&I assessment.*)

NEXT EVOLUTION

As noted in the Operating Environment section (above), the city and the state are facing enormous social challenges even as a new, dynamic, and exclusive economy flourishes. We believe that literature can play a central role in building a stronger, more inclusive society. Long-form literature offers deep understanding into every subject imaginable and an immersive experience that promotes empathy. In addition, the artistic use of language has the power to reframe issues, both personal and public, allowing communities to see challenges and opportunities with fresh eyes. This is the power of literature and what makes it so important to our current moment.

Literary Arts has significant momentum, support, and credibility in our community, so we should not be afraid to be ambitious. We will continue to follow similar strategies that have created this success—namely, to bring together readers, writers, and youth so that we might build broad community around literature. We do this by making our programs mutually reinforcing and by building responsive programs that are designed and implemented in collaboration with the communities we serve. Practically speaking, we have an advantage in that we have very low overhead. Our programs are not capital intensive and do not have large production teams; we do not own land or buildings that could restrict our ability to adapt. In addition, we are not mission-bound to a genre or time period in terms of the literature we can present, foster, or teach.

Our next phase of work is to deepen our efforts to become a more inclusive organization. This will mean reengineering, in some cases, how and what we do to be more relevant to our communities, and it will mean doing so in collaboration with these various communities. We will need to be more public about this work, and we will need to strengthen the administrative process that creates progress in this area. This will mean adopting new methodologies, codifying practices, and being transparent in our efforts regardless of success.

Our work programmatically will need to continue to deepen, and we must remain open to changing how we do our work in order to stay relevant. We emphatically wish to reach large audiences, because we want to push literature to the center of

public life. We must support our writers and give them the time and space they need to create work of the highest quality. We want to inspire youth to love literature and empower them to speak their truth and embrace a creative life. And above all, we want all of these individuals to inspire each other as a single community, invested in the knowledge, beauty, and empathy that can come from literature.

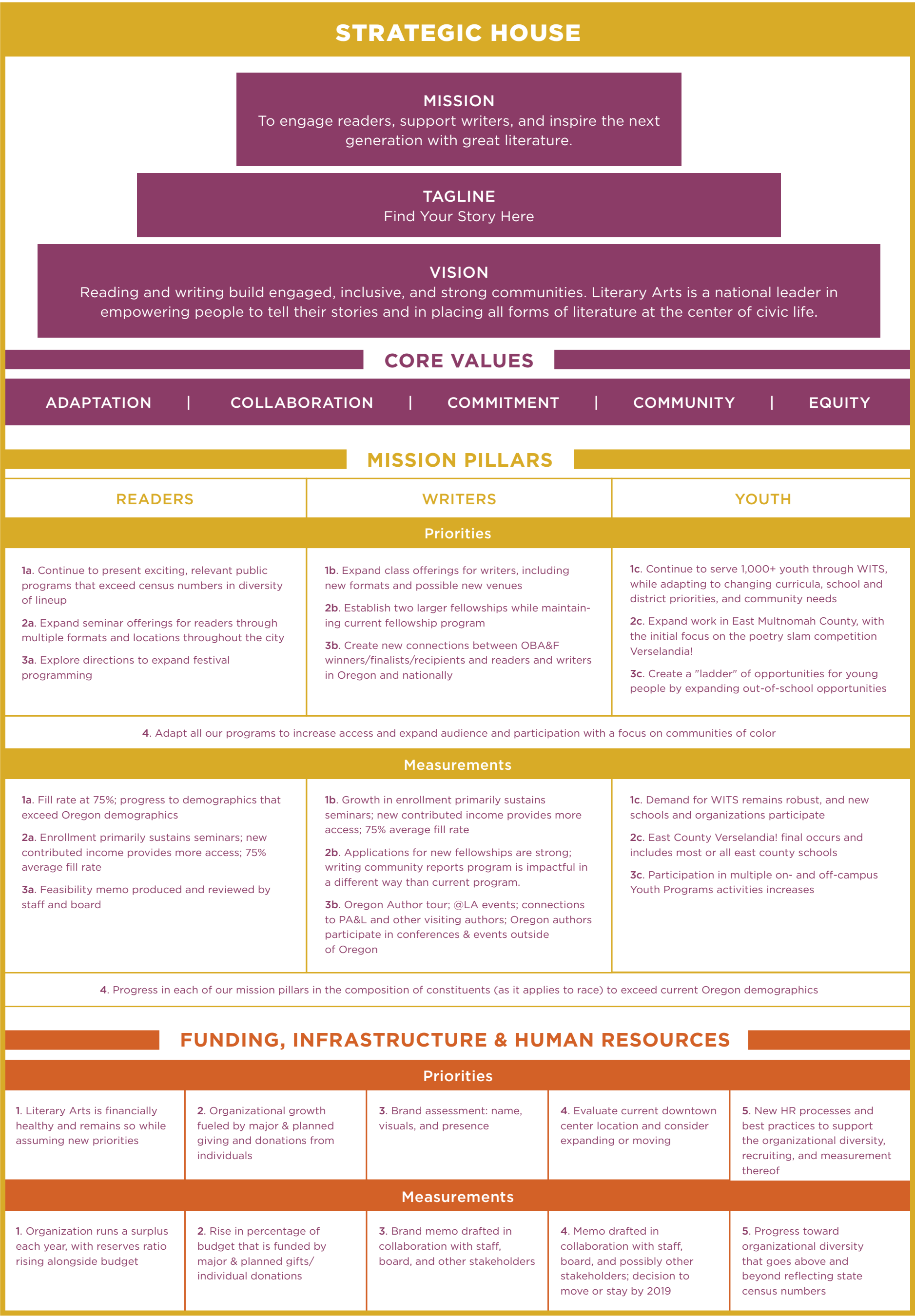
Our aspirations are national,¹⁶ in that we believe we are making a new kind of organization with programmatic activity of the highest quality. We aspire to take a national leadership role in creating a dynamic and responsive organization that is engaged with our community. In this way, we aspire to be something more than an arts organization.

To put it simply, and to reiterate our vision: Reading and writing build engaged, inclusive, and strong communities. Literary Arts is a national leader in empowering people to tell their stories and in placing all forms of literature at the center of civic life.



2018 Verselandia! finalist Jolly Wrapper from Jefferson High School performs his original slam poetry at Literary Arts' annual fundraiser.

¹⁶ The use of the term "national" in this context is not to imply we wish to somehow franchise the organization or otherwise expand our services to other states. Rather we mean that our work will live up to, or be higher than, national standards, that we will involve the national community in our work, and that the organizational reputation will be one that is national.



WHO WE ARE

Literary Arts Staff

Andrew Proctor,
Executive Director

Maggie Allen
Amanda Bullock
Alex Dang
Lydah DeBin
Alanna Faelan
Megan Gex
Jennifer Gurney
India Hamilton
Hunt Holman
Olivia Jones-Hall
Ramiza Koya
Allegra Lopez
Jessica Meza-Torres
Susan Moore
Liz Olufson
Emily Prado
Chelsea Querner
Valeria I. Ramirez
Joanna Rose

Literary Arts Board of Directors

Thomas Wood, *Chair*
Jill Aberle
Amy Carlsen Kohnstamm
Ginnie Cooper
Alice Cuprill-Comas
Amy Donohue
Theo Downes-Le Guin
Marie Eckert
Ann Edlen
Susan Hammer
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Jonathan Hill
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2017/2018 Portland Arts & Lectures author Jesmyn Ward visits with members of the Portland community after her concert hall event.

“Literary Arts is an amazing organization doing necessary, vital work in the community. They reach across boundaries and bring so many different people together around books. In doing so, they create community.”

*JESMYN WARD, 2017/2018 Portland Art & Lectures author
and two-time National Book Award winner*