



DC COMMISSION^{ON THE} ARTS & HUMANITIES

Strategic Plan Framework for Approval *August Commission Meeting*

August 17, 2026

Strategic Planning Process

Facilitated by CAH's strategic planning partner, Opportunity Consulting

Phases	Milestones
Needs Assessment (Jan–March) <i>Look back</i>	- Established public website - Interview, focus groups, surveys, document review - Included outreach to current and recent grant applicants, recipients, and panelists; arts/humanities professionals; residents and community members, and; agency and organizational partners Needs Assessment Findings
Strategic Plan Design (Apr–Aug) <i>Look forward</i>	- Commission & Staff Visioning Workshops - Community, Grantee, Partner Engagement Sessions Draft Plan - Public Comment Period (July 21 – 31): virtual, in-person, email, form Summary of Public Feedback

Today: Present final FY2027–30 Strategic Plan for Commissioner approval

Final Strategic Plan Framework for Approval



Strategic Plan **Context**

About the Strategic Plan

- Serves as a consistent north star for the agency's work
- Covers the 2026 - 2030 period
- Plan includes:
 - Mission
 - Vision
 - Guiding Principles
 - Goals
 - Strategies
 - Key Performance Indicators

Looking Ahead

- Producing and dissemination of a formal strategic plan publication
- Implementation Phase led by CAH staff
 - Annual Implementation Plans
 - Organizing the work around the Plan's goals
 - Regular reporting about progress and outcomes

CAH's Mission and Vision

Mission

Our mission is to serve and advance the diverse cultural interests of the residents and workers of the District of Columbia. We believe in the power of the arts, humanities and the entire creative sector of the economy to enliven and strengthen our communities. We focus our efforts on the nonprofits arts community, individual artists and creative entrepreneurs, the humanities field, and decision-makers. We provide support through funding, programs that address gaps, and educational opportunities and we provide leadership through policy, innovation initiatives, knowledge and connections.

Vision

The Commission enhances the quality of life and economic well being of DC residents by nurturing DC's artists and cultural institutions and by fostering the conditions where creative enterprises can prosper.

CAH's Roles and Grantmaking Philosophy

CAH's primary role (per DC Code §39–204) is a grantmaking agency.

Funder
CAH provides financial resources to support artists, organizations, and initiatives, enabling creative work to be produced, sustained, and expanded.

CAH serves important additional community leadership roles that support its grantmaking function and expand its impact.

Capacity Builder	Broker/ Connector	Convenor	Champion	Curator
CAH strengthens skills, infrastructure, and community among art /humanities professionals and organizations through training, strategic support, and community-building opportunities.	CAH facilitates purposeful relationships between artists and opportunity holders to help work reach new contexts and audiences.	CAH leads cross-sector dialogue and collective problem-solving to address systemic challenges in the arts and humanities.	CAH advocates for the creative ecosystem, the value of arts and humanities, and the needs of art/humanities professionals – elevating visibility, influencing policy, and mobilizing support for the field.	CAH elevates, presents, and stewards artistic work through its public art and art bank.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles serve as the **throughline** across the strategic plan, ensuring goals, strategies, and actions reflect a common set of values and expectations.

These guiding principles are in alignment with those from the Mayor's Office of Racial Equity and CAH's existing REAP plan to apply a racial equity lens across its operations.



Goals



GOAL 1 **Awareness**

Increase understanding of the essential role arts and humanities play in Washington, DC's social, civic, cultural, educational, and economic vitality.

GOAL 2 **Impact**

Invest strategically in artists, organizations, and communities through equitable, transparent, and outcomes-driven grantmaking that maximizes public impact.

GOAL 3 **Leader-Convenor**

Bolster DC's creative ecosystem by serving as a trusted convener and connector for collaboration, innovation, and collective impact.

GOAL 4 **Excellence**

Strengthen the people, systems, governance, and culture needed to deliver exceptional public service and maximize CAH's impact.

Strategies

GOAL 1 Awareness	GOAL 2 Impact	GOAL 3 Leader-Convenor	GOAL 4 Excellence
1A Build public awareness of DC's arts and humanities ecosystem 1B Increase visibility of artists, organizations, and arts opportunities 1C Elevate stories of artistic excellence and community impact	2A Establish, communicate, and consistently apply a clear, outcome-driven grantmaking framework. 2B Improve the accessibility, transparency, and effectiveness of the grantmaking process for applicants, grantees, and staff. 2C Strengthen grantmaking data, measurement, and accountability.	3A Support opportunities to build the capacity of art/humanities professionals to build relationships and share resources. 3B Strengthen collaboration among community organizations, agencies, and community partners around shared priorities 3C Expand local, national, and international partnerships that amplify DC's creative reputation and CAH's impact.	4A Strengthen planning, performance management, and data use. 4B Enhance operational systems, processes, and organizational effectiveness 4C Support a positive, inclusive workplace that enables staff to succeed, grow, and stay 4D Equip Commissioners with timely and updated tools, information, and training needed to lead effectively.

Key Performance Indicators

GOAL 1 Awareness	GOAL 2 Impact	GOAL 3 Leader-Convenor	GOAL 4 Excellence
#/% of DC residents reached through CAH-supported arts and humanities activities. # of strategic community partnerships that expand awareness, access, and engagement. # of community leaders engaged as ambassadors, advisors, panelists, speakers, collaborators, or other public-facing leadership roles. # of unique individuals reached and engaged through CAH communications channels.	% of grant funding invested in priority populations* % of grant awards made within published timelines* % of applicants satisfied with the grant process % of funded projects achieving intended outcomes	# of individuals participating in workshops or convenings % of participants reporting increased knowledge or professional connections. # of cross-sector partnerships maintained. % of partners reporting strengthened collaboration # of collaborative initiatives addressing ecosystem priorities Improvement on community-level indicators of sustainability	% of annual strategic plan milestones achieved on schedule % of employees and Commissioners reporting favorable engagement, inclusion, and organizational culture % of employees retained annually (voluntary retention rate) % of applicants, grantees, artists, and partners satisfied with CAH customer service and responsiveness % grant funds awarded and disbursed as planned

Strategic Planning Process: **What's Next**

Between August 18 – September 30, 2026:

- Final Strategic Plan report (in accessible WCAG formats)
- Opportunity Consulting provides implementation recommendations

Implementation Phase

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Each year, CAH leadership will facilitate the documentation of an action plan for the year that includes the agency's key work and the priority activities in the strategic plan. This will define actions, responsible teams, relevant Committees, milestones, and timelines.

PROGRESS MONITORING

Leadership and staff will engage in regular internal routines to review progress, address challenges, and adjust implementation.

REPORTING

Progress will be shared with the public in multiple ways, including (but not limited to)

- ★ web-based dashboard of Strategic Plan activities and key performance indicators
- ★ reports at the monthly public Commission Meetings,
- ★ communication strategies (website, newsletter, social media)
- ★ Inclusion in the *Annual Report*.

You can't play every note that you know in one song.

Nasar Abadey: Drummer, Composer, Educator

Thank you!



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