

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019

As of 2019

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Executive Summary

Baltimore Clayworks was founded in 1980. In the summer of 2017 financial issues forced the organization to close its doors, displacing artists, students, children, and community members. A grass-roots effort was launched by passionate supporters of Clayworks who were able to fundraise, pay off substantial debt, and re-open the organization in October of 2017. Programming was relaunched, and the organization worked to define its direction, questioning how to stay sustainable, relevant, and at the forefront of ceramic arts and the Baltimore area community. The organization hosted several community meetings including a “Charette” which consisted of focus groups having forward thinking conversations about topics such as the definition of community, how diversity, equity, and inclusion are crucial to Clayworks’ mission, and what it means to be innovative within the field of ceramics.

This plan has been developed throughout the course of 2019, and has involved numerous meetings with consultants and a core discovery group, a broad survey which was distributed to five hundred people and answered by 128, A SWOT(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, fundamental and financial analysis of programs, looking at financial trends within the organization, and other data collection.

The process of data collection culminated in a day-long working session which included consultants, Board, staff, and members of the Advisory Group.

This is the first formal plan to be created following the organization’s five-month closure and subsequent re-opening.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this initiative is to develop a three-year strategic plan for Baltimore Clayworks. The following sections provide potential areas of growth and development based on internal and external stakeholder surveys, team conversations, and input from the Executive Director and Board of Trustees.

Mission:

The mission of Baltimore Clayworks is to develop, sustain, and promote an artist-centered community that provides outstanding educational, artistic, and collaborative programs in the ceramic arts. Its core values are artist-centeredness, excellence, inclusivity, integrity, and joy.

Core Values:

- Baltimore Clayworks is Artist-Centered, committed to the principle that making and appreciating art are essential to the nourishment of the human spirit.
- Baltimore Clayworks is Inclusive, bringing a lens of equity in race, disability, and gender to all decisions as we deliver programs to new learners and professional artists, students, and collectors and artists and collectors from diverse economic, cultural, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds.
- We strive for increasing levels of Excellence in our art and in our management. It supports growth and gives us credibility among experts and peers.
- Baltimore Clayworks programs and management decisions are planned and executed with Integrity.
- Joy is pervasive in the Clayworks workplace – classrooms, studios, community facilities, offices and even the Boardroom. This is expressed through the joy of accomplishment, of working in environments of trust and excellence, and of being inclusive and transparent.

Organizational History and Profile

Baltimore Clayworks is a community-centered ceramics institution in the Mt. Washington neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland. Our organization was founded by nine artists in 1980 and in 1984 received its nonprofit 501(c)3 status. We are known for our attentiveness to our city, and possess a national and international reputation for artistic excellence, artists' support, and community involvement. Baltimore Clayworks is governed by a Board of Trustees.

About Baltimore Clayworks

- Provides affordable studio space, equipment, and professional opportunities that encourage participation by local, national and international ceramic artists who produce ceramic artworks of the highest quality.
- Brings stellar emerging and established artists to Baltimore through artist

residency and exhibition programs.

- Offers hands-on studio and community classes in all aspects of pottery, clay sculpture, and ceramic processes for children and adults. Clayworks' educational programs are led by artists who are both locally treasured and retain high national profiles in the field of ceramics.
- Presents on-site, off-site, and online exhibitions and sale of the work of local, national and international ceramic artists, in solo and group format, curated or juried by professional artists in the field. Our exhibitions showcase the best of international, national and local ceramic artists working in sculpture, pottery, installation and conceptual ceramics.
- Develops sensitively conceived and collaboratively designed programs with artists and community organizations that bring art experiences of authenticity, excellence, and meaning into the lives of children and adults who do not usually have such access.

Baltimore Clayworks' priorities for the next three years are:

1. Maintain and develop innovative programming which both represents and challenges the place of ceramics in the larger arts community as well as serving Baltimore and the region.
2. Ensure that Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion are inherent in all of Clayworks' organizational culture, practice, and programming.
3. Maximize and stabilize existing revenue while working to establish new and diverse income sources to sustain financial viability.
4. Evaluate and address human resources practices to ensure that Clayworks' staff, faculty, volunteers, and interns are being compensated in a manner that is equitable within the market, and that Clayworks' policies provide a humane and joyful work environment.
5. Develop new and innovative community partnerships which are effective, mutually equitable, and further support a comprehensive array of social justice initiatives including public health, education, crime reduction, economic development, and cultural awareness in the greater Baltimore area community.
6. Develop and implement an effective and strategic organizational marketing plan.

Summary of Goals, Objectives, and Strategies:

Goal I: Maintain and develop innovative programming which both represents and

challenges the place of ceramics in larger arts community, as well as utilizing programs to enhance the quality of life in the region.

Objective I:1. Set and articulate goals for each program

- Conduct in depth conversations with program staff and program committee
- Assess active engagement within each program
- Re-engage Associate Artists

Objective I:2. Conduct comprehensive programmatic evaluations as they relate to service of mission and fiscal solvency.

- Implement consistent programmatic audits to occur every 6 months, including consideration of sequential learning and advanced classes curricula
- Formalize community dialogue between program participants
- Make physical space and budget allocations for experimental and innovative programs

Objective I:3. Evaluate usage of Gallery Spaces

- Consider and build budgets for guest curators
- Maximize online/digital visibility for exhibitions and programs
- Explore changing technology and how to implement social media strategies for on-line gallery spaces

Objective I:4. Integrate new technology into educational programs

- Create curriculum that furthers the ceramic arts through technology
- Explore on-line instruction

Goal II: Ensure that Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion are inherent in all of Clayworks' organizational culture, practice, and programming.

Objective II.1 Ensure that Board is diverse and active

- Inventory and document Board skills and demographics
- Identify resources to identify Board recruits
- Standardize by-laws for consistency in Board Member/Officer term limits
- Formalize Board education and training schedules.

Objective II.2 Identify barriers to access and create plans to address these barriers

- Create survey for students/community members
- Further activate DEAI Committee and engage expertise of committee members in identifying and addressing accessibility issues.

Objective II.3 Ensure staff and faculty diversity.

- Adjust recruitment practices to attract a broader range of candidates
- Implement training programs/professional development to support necessary skills

- Build equitable culture between all program faculty

Goal III: Maximize and stabilize existing revenue while working to establish new and diverse income sources with the goal of maintaining financial viability.

Objective III.1 Create resource development plan

- Evaluate previous performance strengths and weaknesses
- Maintain revenue streams and identify new ones
- Utilize the 2020 anniversary year for fundraising

Objective III.2 Develop unrestricted giving

- Develop comprehensive annual sponsorship package
- Solicit sponsorships for specific programs, exhibitions, and events
- Evaluate fundraising events and further monetize them

Objective III.3 Major and planned giving programs

- Educate donors and staff about tax structures
- Formalize procedures for IRA disbursements
- Develop procedure for donations of stock/dividends
- Establish, initiate, and market monthly automatic giving structure

Objective III.4 Create a capital reserve

- Maintain a separate accounting structure for monthly deposits for percentage of annual depreciation

Objective III.5 Establish best practices for fund development and finance reporting

- Create standard financial reporting format for the Board
- Develop formal financial management manual
- Invite external experts to review financials periodically

Goal IV: Evaluate human resources practices to ensure that Clayworks' staff, contractors, volunteers, and interns are being compensated in a manner that is equitable within the market, and that Clayworks' policies provide a humane and joyful work environment.

Objective IV.1 Attract and Retain talented and diverse staff

- Research and identify industry standards for pay rates and benefits packages within similar sized non-profits in the region
- Create budget for professional development opportunities for staff
- Provide staff with necessary tools, equipment, and software
- Maintain/enhance humane and joyful work culture (~~chicken-coop~~)

Objective IV.2 Attract and Maintain talented and diverse Resident Artists

- Research and identify industry standards for residency programs within the field and region. Match expectations and compensation.

- Diversify artists represented in Resident Artist program
- Target diversity across approaches to media, artistic product, and demographic
- Work with Individual Resident Artist to establish goals and provide Resident Artists with access to teaching opportunities, exhibition opportunities and networking opportunities to further advance their individual goals

Objective IV.3 Maintain excellent relationships with teachers

- Consider incentive-based teacher compensation informed by program evaluation and student enrollment.
- Research and Implement hourly pay rate in line with similar sized regional art centers
- Provide Teachers with creative flexibility, tools and equipment required to provide high-quality, innovative educational programming in-line with Educational program model.
- Provide Teachers with professional training opportunities that diversify and advance their classroom teaching skills.

Goal V: Develop new and innovative community partnerships which are effective, mutually equitable, and further support a comprehensive array of initiatives including public health, education, crime reduction, economic development, and cultural awareness in the greater Baltimore area community.

Objective V.1 Identify potential partners by researching trends locally and regionally of social justice issues and corresponding programs that would benefit from arts exposure and also benefit Clayworks programmatic goals.

- Utilize network of existing partners to identify new partners
- Develop and formalize consistent criteria for partnerships

Objective V.2 Partner with social justice and social service programs, educational institutions, and other non-profits to develop programming and apply for funding in tandem.

- Provide staff with networking and professional development opportunities in non-arts sectors
- Engage Board members in broader networking to pursue additional partnerships

Objective V.3 As the partnerships develop plan programming goals for the long term.

- Evaluate the partnership annually
- Create standardized procedures

Goal VI: Develop and implement an effective, and strategic organizational marketing plan that is integrated in all aspects of institutional and programmatic marketing.

Objective VI.1 Evaluate current marketing initiatives

- Collect and analyze data which measures success for marketing initiatives
- Consistently calculate return on investments for marketing initiatives

Objective VI.2 Enhance marketing budget

- Explore increased media sponsorship

Objective VI.3 Increase visibility of organization

- Improve and increase website content
- Increase product visibility online through enhanced shop and exhibition imagery/interactive exhibitions
- Partner with local organizations/businesses for increased exposure
- Increased traditional media marketing
- Formalize plan for social media/set goals for post interactions and visibility
- Participate in national conferences
- Submit articles/seek presence in international journals

Objective VI.4 Provide additional staff support for marketing

- Offer bi-annual trainings for marketing and development staff to ensure their knowledge of contemporary practices
- Hire project-based support staff