

# SPRINGBOARD FOR THE ARTS FY22-24 STRATEGIC PLAN

**human - centered**  
**vibrant & just**  
**artists are essential**  
**local economies**  
**systems**

SPRINGBOARD  
for the arts

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## MISSION

**Springboard for the Arts' mission is to support artists with the tools to make a living and a life, and to build just and equitable communities full of meaning, joy, and connection.**

## WHO IS AN ARTIST?

An artist is anyone who thinks creatively about the world and their dynamic place in it. Our definition of artist is broad and includes visual artists, performers, writers, music creators, culture bearers, makers, artisans, storytellers, social conveners, idea purveyors, imaginaries, visionaries, students, teachers, organizers and nurturers. Artists are a powerful natural resource and they exist in every place and community. Springboard helps artists define success for themselves — economic success, recognition, a supportive community, respect, social change, and more. Our work strives to illuminate the value and possibility of a more full and complex conception of artists and their roles.



# EQUITY IS THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL OUR WORK

Springboard's scope is to provide infrastructure, ecosystem and support to artists and communities across Minnesota, the Upper Midwest and the nation. Springboard is for everyone. We know that to be truly "for everyone" means we need to address the recurring inequities that exist in the arts, nonprofit sector and broader economic systems that have prevented "everyone" from equitable access and opportunities.

Across all our programs we start with our intention to increase accessibility and to prioritize communities that are under-resourced. As a baseline all our programs prioritize:

- People who are BIPOC and Native
- People who are LGBTQIA+
- People in rural places
- People with disabilities

We acknowledge that there are additional communities that experience systemic marginalization and extraction, including because of gender, religious belief, geography, and poverty. While these identities may not be defined in our prioritized groups, our goal is to always ask ***"Who benefits?," "Who is being left out?"*** and ***"How can we make this program more accessible to more people?"***



# VISION PRIORITIES

***We're a small and ambitious organization that gets things done. We dream big about a different world that attends to an ecosystem that supports everyone to live and love as they wish while treading gently on this only planet we share. When it comes to our work, we see three interdependent elements that together drive each and all of our programs and activities, from ongoing projects to occasional collaborations to our internal operations. Whether we are working on a new multi-year program, creating a budget, taking stock of staff policies, or updating our board structure, these visions show us the endpoints of our paths and ground our decision-making. Everything we do, we strive to model a more holistic and more equitable ecosystem in order to make a greater difference.***



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# ARTISTS ARE ESSENTIAL

**We support, celebrate and develop individual creative practice, cultural traditions and the broader field of artists as meaning-makers, storytellers, creative thinkers and change agents, so that they are recognized and valued as key contributors to healthy, equitable communities.**

Artists use their creative process and creative power to make meaning, share ideas, bring people together, shift conversations, challenge assumptions and envision new futures. Whether creating moments of joy, objects from local materials, preserving cultural traditions, or challenging society's toughest questions, artists as culture bearers, creative workers, and break-the-box thinkers are key to making communities places where people want to live, participate, and contribute to social change. We believe that the act of creating art and meaning making individually and collectively is a fundamental human right and a critical source of power and agency.



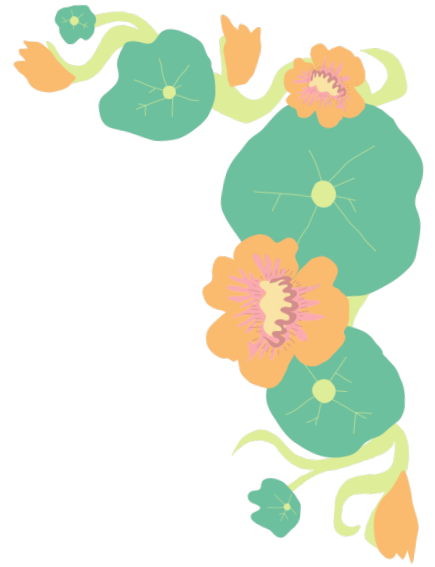
# VIBRANT & JUST LOCAL ECONOMIES

**We seek to create vibrant and just local economies where artists can make a living and a life.**

We broadly define local economies as arenas of exchange and connection, from goods and services to ideas and relationships. The capital of this economy is not only financial, but equally the human, social, cultural and physical. These local economies engage the people connected to a place, and pay particular attention to making reparations to communities that have been and continue to be displaced and disadvantaged, and to identifying alternatives to extractive industries and development. People are able to make a living, create and produce what is self-fulfilling, live where they choose, enjoy a clean environment, and be part of a thriving, regenerative community.



# HUMAN- CENTERED SYSTEMS



**Through engaging artists, we aim to change policies and structures so that they are informed by and created to support the needs, assets and health of the people who hold the least amount of power within those systems.**

To do this we must acknowledge the truth of our existing structures: that the dominant systems in which most communities operate are built by a historically exclusive and exclusionary group of people, intentionally creating ever expanding disparities, where too many people, generations, communities and places bear the trauma and costs. Worth, value, and wealth have been defined primarily within white supremacist, capitalist patriarchies. By working with artists as creative thinkers, leaders and organizers, we imagine new futures, honor community knowledge and build the systems that will support truly healthy, equitable, and just communities to flourish. We value individual and community needs not only for safety, security and health but also for love, connection, community and meaning.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

How we work is as important as what we do.

## BY ARTISTS FOR ARTISTS

We incorporate the expertise and experience of artists into creating effective and relevant programs and tools to support the interests and needs of artists and communities. We use the broadest definition of who an artist is and build our work through an intentional and creative process using collaboration, communication, iteration and play.

## ABUNDANCE OVER SCARCITY

The tools we make for artists are intentionally designed to be widely usable, shareable and replicable. We strive to create an ecosystem of support for creative people with as few barriers as possible. We share what we have, what we've learned, and our goal is to create welcoming and generous environments, both in person and virtual.

## START WITH COLLABORATION

We seek mutual respect, trust, commitment, and reciprocity with all our partners. We don't go it alone. We help artists collaborate with existing resources and systems, both because there is abundant potential in those partnerships, and because systems will be strengthened by artists' contributions. We build bridges and mechanisms to connect artists as partners in system change.

## THINK BIG, START SMALL

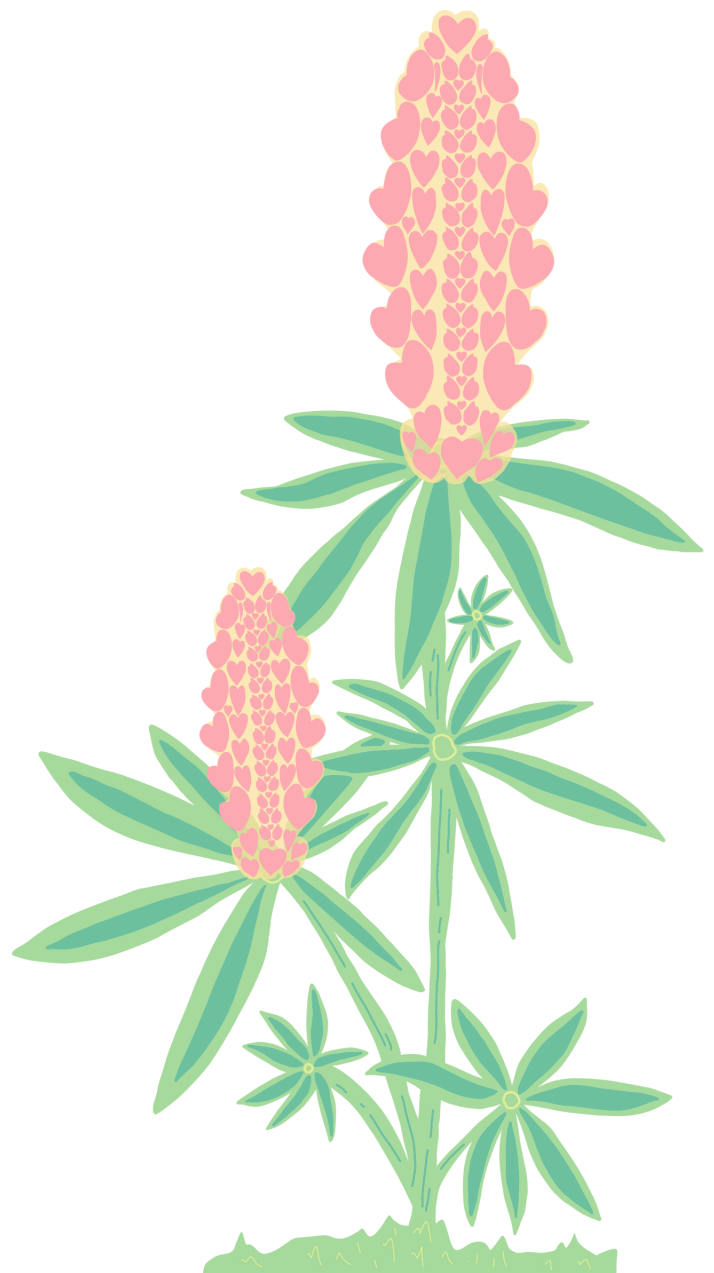
Our work is characterized by optimism that change is possible, and belief that the boldness and creativity of artists can address the challenges facing our communities. We try new things and learn by doing. We respond to big issues by piloting lots of little projects in our own neighborhoods and communities. This approach allows us to be responsive in times of great need and plant many seeds for deeper more sustained movement building work.

# GEOGRAPHY AND PLACE

Springboard's work is rooted in two ideas about geography and place:

1. Local context and ecosystems are best positioned to know what their communities need and to be able to deliver it in a relevant and accessible way. We value and prioritize locally grown systems and solutions.
2. Many communities do not currently have robust or sustainable ecosystems of support for artists, culture makers and creative entrepreneurs. We have a responsibility to share the resources we have and support the growth of these local ecosystems.

In our home neighborhoods and towns we are practitioners, local experts and members of our communities. We have physical spaces to share, animate and contribute, and we have a long term commitment to be a collaborator, supporter, partner and steward. In these places we provide direct programming and services - we DO things. In these places, we provide Springboard's ongoing programs and develop new ideas, partnerships and programs in service of community needs and opportunities. In these places we also strive to be responsive to the specific needs of our neighbors and collaborators. Sometimes this means we do things with less process or beyond the typical boundaries of our programs, in service of relationships and community support.





**HYPERLOCAL - FROGTOWN AND RONDO NEIGHBORHOODS  
IN ST. PAUL, FERGUS FALLS**

**LOCAL - ST. PAUL AND OTTER TAIL COUNTY**

**STATE - MINNESOTA**

**REGION - UPPER MIDWEST (ND, SD, MN, WI, IA AND MI)**

**NATIONAL - UNITED STATES**



The Tiny School of Art & Design by Heidi Jeub at the 2019 Rural Arts & Culture Summit in Grand Rapids, MN. Photo credit: Holly Diestler.



Kalpulli Yaocenoxtli performs as part of Saturdays at Springboard – How We Steward, curated by Aki Shibata. Photo credit: Thaiphay Phan-Quang.

# GOALS & STRATEGIES

## ARTISTS ARE ESSENTIAL

We support, celebrate and develop individual creative practice, cultural traditions and the broader field of artists as meaning-makers, storytellers, creative thinkers and change agents, so that they are recognized and valued as key contributors to healthy, equitable communities.

### Goal 1 Capacity building for artists to make living and life

- **Strategy 1.1** Provide Professional Development (*Work of Art workshops and panels, artist career consultations, Job Board*)
- **Strategy 1.2** Provide Artist Resources (*Minnesota Lawyers for the Arts, Artists' Access to Healthcare, COVID resources, AV closet, Hinge Arts Residency*)

### Goal 2 Capacity building & leadership development for artists to collaborate and work cross-sector

- **Strategy 2.1** Provide professional development (*Art-Train, Creative Community Leadership Institute, Rural Regenerators, toolkits*)
- **Strategy 2.2** Provide opportunities to practice collaborative projects (*Artists Respond, Creative Community Leadership Institute, Hinge Arts Residency, Trust for Public Land partnership, Guaranteed Income Narrative Change*)

### Goal 3 Capacity building for other sectors to engage artists to meet mission

- **Strategy 3.1** Provide trainings and tools (*Art-Train, custom workshops, toolkits, Ready Go, Rural Arts & Culture Summit*)
- **Strategy 3.2** Develop and implement cross-sector programs (*Artists on Main Street, Trust for Public Land partnership, Guaranteed Income Narrative Change*)

### Goal 4 Lift the visibility and broaden understanding of value of artists as contributors to community health

- **Strategy 4.1** Storytelling (*Creative Exchange, presentations*)

## HOW WILL WE KNOW?

- % of financial resources allocated
- # of participants and service users
- # of new and promising pilots for new ways of working, new mechanisms etc.
- # of partners who don't identify themselves as arts groups or artists
- # of toolkits generated and used
- # media mentions

## VIBRANT AND JUST LOCAL ECONOMIES

We seek to create vibrant and just local economies where artists can make a living and a life.

### Goal 1 More resources to more artists more equitably

- **Strategy 1.1** Support and fund financial health (*Emergency Relief Fund, Guaranteed Income pilot, Kiva, Capital Fund, Incubator, Ready Go*)

### Goal 2 Increase local systems of exchange

- **Strategy 2.1** Build leadership for creative economies (*Creative Economy Fellows, Maker to Market, Community Supported Art, Rural Regenerators*)

## HOW WILL WE KNOW?

- % of financial resources allocated to priority communities
- # of participants and service users
- # of new and promising pilots for new ways of working, new mechanisms etc
- # of toolkits generated and used



## HUMAN-CENTERED SYSTEMS

Through engaging artists, we aim to change policies and structures so that they are informed by and created to support the needs, assets and health of the people who hold the least amount of power within those systems.

### Goal 1 Policy advocacy to change inequitable systems and practices that impact artists and communities

- **Strategy 1.1** Support artists to engage in policy and structures (*Artist Organizer, policy work, Guaranteed Income Narrative Change*)
- **Strategy 1.2** Advocate for policy and policy implementation change (*Work with Business Resource Coalition*)

### Goal 2 Research useful to others and to the field

### Goal 3 Lift the visibility of artists as innovators in system and structure change

## HOW WILL WE KNOW?

- # of policy wins
- # artists engaged
- # of media mentions
- Research generated and number of users

## DURABLE, RESPONSIVE, INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION

The durability of Springboard as a component of the larger ecosystem is also our work. Both as a driver to support artists, communities and human-centered systems, and also as a model for the non-profit sector and all civic-focused sectors. We strive for a durable, stable structure that specifically enables responsiveness and innovation.

## **Goal 1 Strong and stable financial resources and systems**

- **Strategy 1.1** Establish foundational fundraising development practices
- **Strategy 1.2** Institutionalize internal checks and balances between fundraising and accounting

## **Goal 2 Supported and engaged people (board, staff, contractors)**

- **Strategy 2.1** Create mechanisms for board to engage
- **Strategy 2.2** Create more economic opportunities for people we work with (*Artist Career Consultants, contractors*)

## **Goal 3 Environmentally healthy and community relevant spaces**

- **Strategy 3.1** Create mechanisms for community to use our spaces

## **Goal 4 Organizational culture of abundance, health, joy and accountability**

- **Strategy 4.1** Establish organizational processes and procedures

## **HOW WILL WE KNOW?**

- Annual income goals met
- 3 year strategy budget in place
- Development of fundraising ethics and practices
- # new individual donors and funders
- # of retained donors and funders
- # of donors making enhanced gifts
- Environmental reports from our spaces
- Financial systems and practices revised to meet current realities and prepare for the future (reserve fund, budgeting process)
- Internal systems revised to ensure greater equity, clarity and ease (salary structure, job descriptions, hiring practices)



# FY22 SPRINGBOARD STAFF

**Laura Zabel**

Executive Director

**Michele Anderson**

Rural Director, Fergus Falls

**Ricardo Beaird**

Community Development  
Director, St. Paul

**John Bell**

Business Manager, St. Paul

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**Aleydis Valdovinos**

Office Coordinator, St. Paul

**Jun-Li Wang**

Associate Director, Programs,  
St. Paul

# FY22 SPRINGBOARD BOARD

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Stinson Leonard Street

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*Director of Corporate  
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Target Corporation

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*Vice President of Development  
and External Affairs*  
Project for Pride in Living

**Shannon Pettitt, At-Large**

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**Kelly Asche, Ex-Oficio**

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Center for Rural Policy and  
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Rural Community Development



Illustrations throughout by heather  
c. lou. [www.hclouart.com](http://www.hclouart.com)

Back cover photo: Flowers in the  
rain garden with the *Creative  
People Power* mural by Discover  
Dope (Myc Batson & Megan Tate)  
at Springboard's St. Paul offices.  
Photo credit: TJ Lor/JUAL Visuals.

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