

# Literary Arts

Portland Arts & Lectures | Writers in the Schools  
Oregon Book Awards & Fellowships | Delve

## STRATEGIC PLAN

2014-17

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# INTRODUCTION


This plan is the product of a full year's work by the staff and board of Literary Arts.

The first phase of work was to assess the changes in our community—artistically, structurally, socially, as well as locally and nationally—and to take stock of our current programs (both quantitatively and qualitatively). Our process was driven by the professional staff, and it incorporated information from surveys, evaluations, and other means of collecting data about, and feedback from, all our constituents. The result of this work is the Organizational Assessment, found in Section Three.

The second phase of our work was to describe how the organization's programs would evolve in a coordinated way to ensure that Literary Arts is prepared to meet the challenges of our changing community, ensuring our organization is serving in relevant and progressive ways. The results of this work can be found in Section Two: Program Priorities and Initiatives.

Finally, we synthesized and condensed all this work to create Section One: Summary.

We view this plan as a living document that will continue to be updated and changed between now and 2017.



WE HOPE YOU WILL TAKE  
THE TIME TO READ THIS  
PLAN AND HELP US SHAPE  
OUR FUTURE.

# Literary Arts

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SUMMARY

STRATEGIC PLANNING

2014-17



# WHO WE ARE

OUR MISSION IS TO ENGAGE READERS, SUPPORT WRITERS, AND INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION WITH GREAT LITERATURE.

Literary Arts is a nonprofit literary center located in downtown Portland, with a 29-year history of serving Oregon's readers and writers. Our annual budget is \$1.4 million.

The unique value of Literary Arts is that our programs build community around literature. We believe that there's an urgent need for us to bring together artists and audiences, students and adults to share in the stories that tell us who we've been, who we are, and who we will be. This is the legacy of literature in our community.

## OUR PROGRAMS

### PORTLAND ARTS & LECTURES

Brings the world's most celebrated writers, artists, and thinkers to Oregon to engage with our community

#### KEY PROGRAM FACTS:

- 2,300 subscribers make it one of the largest series of its kind in the nation
- these original hour-long talks are broadcast statewide on OPB
- visiting artists have full itineraries of community engagement, including school visits, master classes for professional writers, and media

### WRITERS IN THE SCHOOLS

Inspires public high school students to write, revise, edit, publish, and perform their own creative writing

#### KEY PROGRAM FACTS:

- 3,400 high school students served annually
- 1,100 students participate in 10-week in-school residencies, designed to meet state and national standards for language arts
- 2,270 students participate in author visits, readings, poetry slams and mentoring events, and attend Portland Arts & Lectures / Special Events

### OREGON BOOK AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

Supports, promotes, and celebrates Oregon's writers and publishers

#### KEY PROGRAM FACTS:

- since 1987, the program has awarded over \$700,000 to writers and independent publishers
- Book Awards finalists tour the state with free readings, workshops, and school visits
- the program recognizes literary excellence in both established and emerging authors

### DELVE READERS SEMINARS

Engages readers in exploring challenging books in lively discussion-based seminars led by an experienced scholar

#### KEY PROGRAM FACTS:

- this program engages adults with close reading and peer-to-peer dialogue
- this is our newest and smallest program, and it is already self-sustaining
- scholarships for this program are now available in order to increase access

## OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Deep structural change is occurring in both the publishing industry and our public education community. These changes are having, and will continue to have, far-ranging impact on both readers and writers, of all ages. We believe these changes make the mission of Literary Arts more urgent than ever.

In the publishing world, the continued consolidation of publishers into huge global conglomerates is continuing to reduce their investments in literary writers, and squeezing the mid-list writer off their lists. This threatens the viability of a writing career and determines the kinds of books that are published and made widely available through major distribution channels. The transition to digital, while presenting many opportunities, has reduced take-home pay of authors; it has also further reduced the number of independent bookstores in our community, which are vital to the literary ecosystem.

Our local education system has suffered over a decade of unstable and inadequate funding. Portland Public Schools' on-time graduation rate is only 63%, compared to a national rate of 75%. Inadequate and unstable funding has also led to a dramatic decrease in arts education, and severely limited the number of campuses that can afford librarians and library resources. In addition, schools also have fewer administrative resources to work with non-profit arts organizations; arts organizations must provide these administrative services and absorb their costs if programming is to be effective.

These larger structural changes to both publishing and education leave a hole in our community, and insist that Literary Arts does everything it can to support our local writers and to make literature accessible to our community of readers, of all ages. We understand our role to be one in which we must build creative and social capital and by doing so, Literary Arts will continue to make a vital contribution to our community and, ultimately, to the creative economy.

In terms of literary events, there's been a dramatic rise in Portland in the number of large-scale lecture series and readings (i.e. in venues of 500+ seats). For Literary Arts, this means a significant amount of pressure to compete for both talented presenters and for audience. This creates a need to rebalance our funding streams and reduce our reliance on ticket revenue to fund our other work in the community (i.e. for each program to be independently self-sustaining, while remaining linked programmatically).

More generally, both Oregon and Portland continue to change. Demographically speaking, the huge Baby



Boomer generation is retiring, and a smaller generation is succeeding them. This difference in size makes balancing the different generational tastes exceptionally difficult. On the other hand, we are on the cusp of one of the largest generational transfers of wealth in American history, with an estimated \$6 trillion to be donated to nonprofits by 2052.<sup>1</sup> Locally, Portland is becoming more ethnically diverse, faster than ever before. While this trend lags behind the rest of the nation, it is part of a national trend that predicts the United States will be majority nonwhite by 2042.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, this new diversity in Portland has come with increasing social and economic inequality between whites and nonwhites.<sup>3</sup>

Another change is Portland's national reputation. The city is becoming a destination for the "creative class." Our writers and artists are gaining national recognition.

Finally, Oregon remains a challenging place to raise funds for the arts, with few dedicated foundations, low government funding, stretched individual donors, and only a handful of corporate head offices.

Despite these challenges, Literary Arts has thrived over the last three years by adapting to the new environment.<sup>4</sup> Our budget has grown by 39% since 2009. We remain debt and deficit free.

Our accomplishments were most recently recognized in 2012 by the Allen Family Foundation with a "Creative Leadership Award" for \$50,000. This award was given to only four nonprofits in the Northwest.

## 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 distinctive from all other art forms. It offers the best any art form can offer: 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.

## THE CASE FOR LITERARY ARTS

At Literary Arts we seek to foster a lifelong love of literature, as well as to strengthen our community of artists who make it.

We deepen literary experience by engaging readers with highly curated events and seminars, which builds social capital.<sup>5</sup> 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 chance of success in any career. And by supporting writers – specifically by honoring them and giving them financial support – we contribute to building

1 Harvard Business School case study 9-506-027

2 <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/14/world/americas/14iht-census.1.15284537.html>

3 See Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile available at: <http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org>.

4 See "Summary of the 2010-12 Strategic Plan" in appendix for a list of accomplishments.

5 We know from studies that reading and writing literature makes people more empathetic and more civically engaged (i.e. they are more likely to vote and volunteer), not to mention more employable. See the NEA's 2004 reading study, *Reading at Risk*: (<http://www.nea.gov/news/news07/trnr.html>) and the 2012 *New York Times* op-ed "Your Brain on Fiction" <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/opinion/sunday/the-neuroscience-of-your-brain-on-fiction.html?pagewanted=all>

a stable community of creative professionals who will enhance our education, business, and artistic communities.

*What makes Literary Arts uniquely transformative is the powerful connections that our programs make between readers and professional writers, students, and adults.*

A few quantitative measures of our work are: participation rates year after year, the amount of financial support we provide to writers, the number of students we reach, and the access we create to high-quality programming. We measure the quality of our work with constituent feedback, data, and various forms of self-assessment.<sup>6</sup>

The larger impact of our work is to give voice to Oregonians – students, accomplished writers, readers of all ages – to express their experience, to have an audience, and to embrace the experience of others. Our work pushes back against reductive cultural forces that emphasize divisive positions, simplistic explanations, and/or social isolation.

We believe this work contributes to making Oregon more resilient socially, economically, and artistically.

## VISION

Literary Arts is a crossroads for readers and writers, both locally and nationally. Our programs build community around literature with and for a diverse constituency.<sup>7</sup> We do this by fostering a lifelong love of literature as well as supporting the production of new work here in Oregon.

We serve our community in their schools, concert halls, libraries, community centers, cafes, and bookstores, as well as on the Internet and on the airwaves. Our downtown Portland center is the heart of the organization, where we offer a wide range of classes, seminars, events, and broadcasts for readers and writers from teenagers to retirees. This place gives the organization a concrete identity. We also serve communities across Oregon directly, and also support partner organizations around the state.

We are intentional in our approach, working to be inclusive and to overcome barriers to participation. We strive to elevate literature, and make it more visible and accessible.

We are considered essential to Oregon's writers because of our financial support, cultural authority, local resources, and national network. We strive for national prestige because it brings artistic and financial resources to our constituents.

Our community, broadly defined, considers Literary Arts a responsive and engaged organization, open and evolving. Our partners and constituents have a voice in our programming choices. We are considered one of Oregon's essential arts organizations.

Literary Arts is unique because of the breadth of programs and how these programs bring together readers and writers of all ages. We are recognized as one the most dynamic, innovative, and progressive literary centers anywhere – a model in the nation.

## STRATEGY

Our organizational strategy is to make our programs mutually reinforcing, which results in the creation of a community of readers and writers of all ages who are interacting and engaging through literature. The manner, extent, and degree of this interaction make Literary Arts unique in the nation.

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<sup>6</sup> Each program uses specific metrics to measure its outcomes and impacts.

<sup>7</sup> Age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic standing.



We will continue to focus on three key tactics originally identified in the 2010-13 Plan:

- Harmonization<sup>8</sup> (of our programs)
- Participation (of all our constituents)
- Collaboration (with our community)

In practical terms this means involving readers and writers of all ages in all our programs, and fostering greater connections between our programs. It will mean continuing to have a variety of volunteer opportunities (board, committees, and direct service) while at the same time maintaining the professional services that we have come to be known for. It means collaborating with organizations (both local and national) as well as individuals to adapt and change our programming. This will ensure our relevance to our community. We have proven over the last three years that we are adept at collaboration, and open to change.

### SUMMARY OF KEY INITIATIVES IN THE 2014-17 PLAN

#### Organization-wide

- Stay focused on creating access for as many readers and writers as possible
- Continue our practice of supporting, promoting, and celebrating writers in all our programs
- Develop an organizational diversity plan
- Shift the organizational business model: reduce the dependency of other programs on Portland Arts & Lectures and Special Events ticket revenue by:
  - Significantly growing our endowment
  - Developing new income-generating aspects to our programs
  - Growing individual giving through engagement and institutional positioning
- Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Literary Arts



8 “Harmony” is used here in the musical meaning of the word. Four notes can be played together to form a single unified chord. Each of our programs exists separately, but should work together to form a single unified organization.

## Portland Arts & Lectures / Special Events / Poetry Downtown

- Develop a comprehensive audience development plan, with an emphasis on access and diversity
- Strengthen the brand of Literary Arts as a “service” organization
- Continue to deepen national-level collaborations and build national reputation to manage costs, advance mission, and attract resources
- Consider reviving Poetry Downtown

## Writers in the Schools

- Respond to changing educational environment (i.e. introduction of the Common Core Standards, re-structured school day, school budget changes)
- Find sustainable balance between on- and off-campus activities and define what this means in terms of the program name and identity
- Consider expanding services in east Multnomah County schools

## Oregon Book Awards & Fellowships

- Increase financial support to Oregon’s writers through awards and fellowships that recognize literary excellence
- Build community for and with Oregon’s writers and publishers by:
  - Continuing to collaborate with the community on events @LiteraryArts
  - Continuing to develop (and possibly expand) workshops and classes that provide professional development for writers
- Provide opportunities to deepen the connections between Oregon writers and the national literary community

## Delve Readers Seminars

- Develop greater access through the creation of scholarships and volunteer opportunities
- Experiment with program format, particularly seminar length and tuition
- Increase outreach activities to both Literary Arts’ core constituency and the community in general



## THE STRATEGIC PLAN STRUCTURE

What follows in this section, and in the following sections of the plan, are detailed planning grids that show both the organizational and program activities related to executing this plan. These activities are described in terms of Purpose, Key Staff, Resources Required, Time Frame, and Outcome / Assessment measures.

Following each planning grid is a logic model. Logic models are flow charts designed to illustrate how resources are transformed into social impact. Our logic models have five primary headings: Inputs are the raw resources (i.e. money, staff time); Activities are the events, projects, or other activities that compose a program and that are fueled by inputs; Outputs are “counts” (i.e. number of events, number of participants); Outcomes are the specific changes or benefits to continents; Impact is the social impact, stated as social change. Each model will show some slight variations. For example, some programs have Outcomes split into two categories—short and long term. For the logic model that represents how the whole organization creates social change, the Activities section is represented as a circle to show each of our programs reinforcing each other, as well as the crossover between our intergenerational constituents and geographic reach.

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## ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING GRID

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	PEOPLE	RESOURCES	TIME FRAME	OUTCOME/ASSESSMENT
Shift business model	Diminish the financial dependence of the WITS and OBA&F programs on PA&L and Special Events	All staff, All board; Foundations; fundraising volunteers	Additional contributed and earned income.	2014 -2017	Decreased budgeted surplus from PA&L by 10% each year over the three-year period; commensurate rise in general operating or program funding; growth in endowment income.  Depending on funding opportunities, be more aggressive in shifting the business model.
Create and execute an endowment campaign to honor the life, vision, and commitment of Brian Booth	Honor Brian Booth and his legacy. Grow endowment to create funding stream for the OBA&F program	AP, Board, Collins Group	Financial contribution from Board Directed reserves, and all Board members	June 2013- June 2014	1) Target for campaign is met. 2) Limited impact on general operating fundraising.
Create Organizational Diversity Plan	Provide the organization with a holistic diversity plan to strengthen community to serve diverse audiences to broaden access	Consultants, All Staff, All Board	Fees for consultants (Allen Money)	2014 - 2016	December 2014: Plan delivered, with first phase executable through 2017
Build access and outreach	Ensure that Literary Arts is living up to its mission and obligations to provide as much access to our community as possible (without giving up another crucial principle of paying artists and teachers)	All Staff, All Board.	Additional income	2013-2014	1) As per Diversity Plan (above), each program should have clear understanding of outreach / partnership goals to communities of color 2) By Fall 2015 a minimum of 10% of the services provided by each program are scholarship based.



## ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING GRID CONTINUED...

<p>Assess Capacity Building</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) WITS: In East County Schools?</li> <li>2) WITS: youth classes @Literary Arts</li> <li>3) OBA: Writing Workshops @Literary Arts</li> <li>4) Delve</li> <li>5) PA&amp;L: Revive a version of "Poetry Downtown"</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Reach underserved schools in East County with residences and other WITS services</li> <li>2) Develop earned income for WITS and provide a new service</li> <li>3) Determine appropriate size and scale for writing workshop project</li> <li>4) Determine the right scale for Delve</li> <li>5) Can we present nationally/internationally renowned poets that reaches a general readership (rather than an academic one)</li> </ol>	<p>MR, AP, LD</p> <p>MR, AP, LD</p> <p>SD, AP, LD</p> <p>JF, AP, LD</p> <p>SD, AP, LD</p>	<p>Asses space needs</p> <p>Assess staff needs</p> <p>Assess funding potential for each project.</p>	<p>January 2014 -- January 2016</p>	<p>a) Completed reports, include infrastructure, staff &amp; funding needs. Dates included in separate program grids.</p> <p>b) Reports will include recommendations and implementation schedule (if we elect to go forward with expanding various projects/programs).</p>
<p>Celebrate 30th Anniversary of the organization</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) "Consolidate" the organization's anniversaries into one date to convey a sense of organizational unity.</li> <li>2) Raise the profile of Literary Arts in the community, locally and nationally.</li> </ol>	<p>All staff, All Board</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Planning: 2013-14 Anniversary: 2014-15</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Completed outline of activities delivered for December 2013 Board meeting.</li> <li>2) Each program has a unique way to celebrate / commemorate the organizations, anniversary</li> <li>3) Determine a "measurable" benchmark for general public.</li> </ol>

## ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING GRID CONTINUED...

<p>Review Finances</p> <p>1) Review relationship with Union Bank</p> <p>2) Review Board Directed reserves</p> <p>3) Create Audit Committee</p>	<p>1) Review fee structure; possibly move small endowments to OCF</p> <p>2) Determine if some of reserves can be re-invested in capacity building or other activities.</p> <p>3) Add additional "controls" to financial activities of the organization</p>	<p>AP, MM, Treasurer Board</p> <p>AP, MM Treasurer,</p> <p>AP, MM</p>	<p>Tickets/ passes to other LA events.</p>	<p>By June 2015</p> <p>By June 2015</p> <p>By June 2013</p>	<p>1) Board has reviewed banking relationship, approved changes</p> <p>2) Board has reviewed banking relationship, approved changes; sum set aside for capacity building or other projects.</p> <p>3) Audit committee is created annually and is part of institutional practice.</p>
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## ORGANIZATIONAL LOGIC MODEL

