

The Ark's Mission

"The Ark is a non-profit organization dedicated to the enrichment of the human spirit through the presentation, preservation, and encouragement of folk, roots, ethnic music and related arts. The Ark provides a safe and welcoming atmosphere for all people to listen to, learn about, perform and share music."

VISION STATEMENT for THE ARK FY2020-24: **MIDPOINT REVISION**

VISION 2020-2024: *Revised for the Covid and Equity Era*

Introduction

The work and accomplishments of The Ark's previous five-year plan (FY2015-2019) set the stage for a new era at The Ark. Generous support from our communities enabled us to purchase The Ark's space, pay off the mortgage, and complete major renovations and updates, providing The Ark with unprecedented security and capacity. We understand that with ownership and increased capabilities comes the opportunity and responsibility to **expand The Ark's involvement and impact across its communities**. We began our next five-year plan poised to further develop The Ark's leadership role as we continue to advance its mission of enriching human spirits through the power of music.

New Context

We launched The Ark's FY2020-FY2024 Strategic Plan in the fall of 2019, shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic hit. On March 11, 2020 The Ark **closed to in-person programming** and staff began working from home at reduced hours. For the remainder of FY20 and continuing through FY21 we regrouped to develop and deliver **virtual programming**. We returned to live programming at the venue in late August 2021.

Midpoint Status

The first quarter of calendar year 2022 found us mid-plan in the midst of a changed and changing world. Much of our original vision for The Ark's Strategic Plan 2020-2024 remained relevant, but the context had shifted:

- **Musically**
 - The **music industry** has been severely impacted by the pandemic. It's not yet clear how touring and live performance will ultimately change as a result.
 - Venues and audiences are ready to embrace hybrid **technology** that combines live shows and livestreaming; artists are not there yet.

- **Socially**
 - It's not yet clear how **audience** habits and expectations have changed long-term as a result of the pandemic.
 - Ongoing **social and racial inequities**, underscored by events like the murders of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, have brought a greater sense of urgency and immediacy to The Ark's intention to consciously address and expand diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

- **Financially and Structurally**
 - The Ark has a limited **financial "runway"** that will allow us to sustain expected operating losses over the next three to four years and invest in revising our infrastructure to meet the future.
 - We have to make informed guesses about what this **infrastructure** should look like since the world we've entered continues to evolve. We do know that to meet this changing environment:
 - We need to **grow staff**.
 - We need to **expand our adaptive capacity**.
 - We need to redouble our efforts to **welcome and include new and diverse voices across all aspects of the organization**—in programming, staffing, volunteers, leadership, decision-making...
 - We need to **plan now for how we continue to fund** our new infrastructure and new initiatives before we reach the end of our runway.

Revised Vision (as of 4/26/2022)

As we navigate the continued uncertainty of the Covid environment, we will make strategic decisions and investments that **help audiences and artists return to live music during these times**. To address the ongoing, urgent issues of racial inequity and social injustice, the staff and Board of The Ark will interrogate our organizational culture by **re-evaluating systems, customs, and traditions** with an eye toward **cultivating diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging**. We realize that the best way we can honor The Ark's legacy and carry it forward is to encourage **new generations and new communities of music lovers** to express that legacy's heart and intention in ways that are meaningful to them. We will **grow our capacities for adaptability, flexibility and responsiveness**, learning to **co-create** and develop innovative programming with new people and partners in the community, and **welcoming new voices into The Ark** to become part of shaping and guiding its future.

Our revised FY2020-FY2024 Strategic Plan will continue to focus on three key areas: **Evolution, Stewardship, and Infrastructure**. Over the remaining two years of the plan:

- We will assure The Ark's **continued relevance and impact** by **assessing and responding to needs and trends** in our communities, music, and society.
- We will assure The Ark's **sustainability** by supporting and caring for its most important assets: **People, Programming, and our Venue**.
- We will invest deeply in **expanding diversity and inclusion** within our programming, across our constituents, and throughout our organizational culture. Listening, learning, and being open to critical feedback will be vital for building an increasingly inclusive space and organization.
- With music as the primary channel for connecting people to The Ark, **programming will remain central** to our efforts to develop new relationships, create new partnerships, and broaden our audiences and other constituencies. Along with this, our **marketing and outreach** will likewise evolve, investing in resources to reach new markets.
- As we further develop The Ark's **inclusiveness** we will **focus on ways to enhance the authentic and welcoming hospitality that has always been its core**.
- We will update The Ark's **administrative infrastructure** and **strengthen its internal operations** to keep pace with current needs, developing appropriate structures and systems that support The Ark's growth and evolution and enhance its cultures.
- We will continue to invest in **capital projects**, such as HVAC replacement, that provide a safe environment and support The Ark's most important assets: People, Programming, and our Venue.
- We will continue our commitment to **fiscal responsibility** and ensure The Ark's long-term sustainability and viability. The current unstable financial environment will require us to develop sustainable models for earning revenue from hybrid programming (in-person with livestream) and other initiatives.