

STRATEGIC PLAN

2014 – 2019

Strategic Priorities

- Advocacy
- Financial security
- Expanded membership
- Widened rural reach
- Increased visibility
- Effective governance

Writers' Guild of Alberta
780.422.8174
1.800.665.5354
mail@writersguild.ab.ca
www.writersguild.ab.ca

The Writers' Guild of Alberta (WGA)

The WGA is a provincial arts service organization that represents both professional and emerging writers in Alberta.

The WGA Strategic Plan

In the spring of 2014, the WGA Board met to develop a five-year roadmap that includes goals to work towards and strategies to achieve those goals. The plan is based upon priorities identified by members through a 2014 survey as well as discussions with Board and staff.

Vision Statement

An Alberta where past, present, and future contributions of writers are supported, acknowledged, and valued.

Mission Statement

The Writers' Guild of Alberta's mission is to inspire, connect, support, encourage and promote writers and writing, to safeguard the freedom to write and to read, and to advocate for the well-being of writers.

Advocacy

Goal:

The Guild will act as an advocate for Alberta writers, supporting their rights and facilitating the promotion of their writing community within Alberta and beyond.

Strategies:

- *Develop strong relationships with key influencers, including funding agencies, the government and the media. (immediate and ongoing)*
- *Involve high-profile members for advocacy work and keep them engaged with the Guild. (immediate and ongoing)*
- *Cultivate a regional and national presence to ensure province-wide representation of advocacy efforts. (immediate and ongoing)*

Financial Security

Goal:

Through fundraising activities that target corporate and philanthropic donors, the Guild will increase revenue and secure long-term finances.

Strategies:

- *Establish a standing fundraising committee. (in place and ongoing)*
- *Create fundraising materials, including planned giving and sponsorship packages that support Guild priorities. (12 months)*
- *Build relationships with potential donors and track all communications year to year. (immediate and ongoing throughout five-year plan)*
- *Communicate results with stakeholders and ensure ongoing recognition and stewardship of supporters and funders. (immediate and ongoing)*

NOTES: Over 50% of our current budgeted income is provided through grant dollars, while up to 30% comes from programs/memberships and less than 10% comes from donors and sponsors. By relying so heavily on grants, we are unable to keep pace with increasing expectations for enhanced services and programs. The goals identified in this strategic plan are contingent on the Board's ability to create new and sustained funding strategies and dollars.

Expanded Membership

Goal:

By adding value to our programs and services, the Guild will grow to serve a larger, more diverse, and inclusive membership that reflects Alberta's changing society, attracting both genders and all age groups.

Strategies:

- *Establish a standing youth committee to help identify youth concerns and interests. (in place and ongoing)*
- *Work with volunteer members to plan local programming and launch "membership drive events" in their own communities (12 months)*
- *Create incentives for current members to assist in building our membership through promotion. (annually)*
- *Ensure programs and services include a range of offerings for all types of members: New/Beginner, Emerging, Mid-Career, and Established. (ongoing and year to year)*
- *Develop mechanisms to connect with both new members and long-term members to ensure their needs are addressed: e.g., Buddy Program, exit interviews for non-renewing members, "Tell Us How We're Doing" forums, etc. (ongoing)*
- *Seek out partnerships with other arts organizations; cross promote programs, services, and memberships (12 months)*

NOTES: Our membership base has remained fairly stable for many years.

Membership numbers in 2013 totalled 1005, which is roughly equivalent to our 2006 total of 1056 members. From 2009 to 2013, 1269 new members joined the Guild and 1387 existing members chose not to renew, for a net loss of 118 during the five-year period.

The 2014 WGA membership survey indicated that our largest demographic consists of women ages 35 – 74, with ages 55 – 64 being the largest subset. While our membership has aged into a higher range, our primary demographic is similar to the 2008 survey results, when the largest demographic was Caucasian women ages 35 – 64.

Widened Rural Reach

Goal:

By establishing new ways to deliver programs and services and enhanced communications with members outside of Calgary and Edmonton, the Guild will extend its reach to all parts of the province.

Strategies:

- *Use technology such as teleconferencing, podcasts, online critiquing, and online workshops to provide programming to members in all parts of Alberta. (12 to 24 months)*
- *Work with libraries/municipal governments in rural Alberta to offer writer-in-residence and other programs. (as funding becomes available)*
- *Augment and refine WestWord to include voices, events, and articles pertaining to different parts of the province. (ongoing)*

NOTES: While the 2014 WGA membership survey indicated that a majority of our members reside in Edmonton (36.76%) and Calgary (32.35%), the most vocal comments came from members living outside the major centers (30.88%). These members are looking for relevant programs and services that can be accessed from their homes or closer to home.

Increased Visibility

Goal:

By increasing visibility, the Guild will better promote writing interests and the value of our organization to our membership, governments, corporations and the public.

Strategies:

- *Develop a stronger audience base by keeping the Guild in the public discussion around the arts (immediate and ongoing)*

- *Build a social media strategy that addresses frequency and types of posts to Facebook and Twitter accounts and other ways to engage membership. (3 months)*
- *Build a media strategy that addresses frequency and topics to communicate with mainstream and independent media (12 months)*
- *Use social media and media communications to drive traffic to the WGA website. (immediate and ongoing)*
- *Monitor and review the traffic and use of the WGA website. Research websites of comparable writing organizations. (6 months) Use feedback and research results to inform the future development and redesign of the website (as funds become available)*

Effective Governance

Goal:

Through responsible fiscal management, sound planning and review, the Guild will continue to be a competent and model charitable organization.

Strategies:

- *Monitor and review policies to ensure they reflect the operation of the Guild and vice versa. (ongoing)*
- *Monitor and review financial statements and general fiscal health. (ongoing)*
- *Continue to conduct and refine the executive director evaluation process. (annually)*
- *Monitor and review guidelines for all ad hoc and standing committees. (annually)*