

# TAPA STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2028



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# Who We Are

The Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA) celebrated its 40th Anniversary in 2021. Originally formed in 1979 and officially incorporated in 1980 as the Toronto Theatre Alliance (TTA), the organization continues to play a vital role in community building for arts organizations and arts workers alike. The TTA changed its name to TAPA in 2004, and became a leading arts service organization (ASO) to champion professional theatre, dance and opera, with an average annual membership of between 150 to 200 organizations.

TAPA is dedicated to listening and learning about the needs of these diverse members to effectively support their individual work, while also acting as a unified voice for the performing arts as a whole. Through a broad spectrum of partnerships and networks, TAPA has a proven track record of establishing new programs and services. TAPA is committed to advocating with all three levels of government to maintain and secure new funding to support arts and culture. In the time of the pandemic, TAPA demonstrated its expertise in the cultural ecosystem and the impact of its work was clearly evident and rippled throughout the sector. As a dynamic ASO, TAPA is a leader in building a strong and thriving creative sector.



The 2022 TAPA AGM. Photo by Anne-Marie Krytiuk.

## Vision

A flourishing Toronto performing arts industry, where artists, arts organizations and audiences feel connected, engaged and empowered to lead positive change through the arts.

## Mission

Supporting the growth of the Toronto performing arts sector, by facilitating learnings, connections and partnerships across industries, communities, organizations, groups and professionals.

# Values

## 1. Equity

Being an empowering and unified voice to amplify historically underserved artists and communities and change for arts organizations and artists through critical education, support and facilitation of learning around values that include access, pluralism and inclusion.

## 2. Advocacy

Facilitating conversations with civic stakeholders to build an understanding of the importance of the arts for the common good; and to secure continued financial support and recognition for theatre, dance, and opera, from all levels of government.

## 3. Engagement

Connecting members with each other through a range of platforms for learning, exchange and integrated community building.

## 4. Membership-driven

Maintaining a dialogue with performing arts organizations and arts workers to actively support and respond to their evolving needs through the reassessment of TAPA programs and services.

## 5. Collaborative

Embracing the experiences of the TAPA membership, Board and Committee members from across organizations and disciplines to elevate all voices.

## 6. Resilience

Maintaining a strong and supportive team to implement fluidity and transparency as an essential practice to be a catalyst for effective change.

# Goals & Objectives

## Suggested timelines:

- ♦ Short-term - 2024-2025
- ♦ Mid-term - 2025-2027
- ♦ Long-term - 2027-2028

## Goal #1

Fostering a shared sense of responsibility toward establishing a collaborative culture of meaningful engagement and cooperation throughout the TAPA membership.

## Why is this goal important?

- ♦ Co-developing relevant knowledge, resources, and opportunities that initiate collective action across TAPA communities.
- ♦ Deepen a shared sense of responsibility towards supporting the TAPA vision of meaningful engagement and cooperation of its members.
- ♦ Leverage member communications (Communique Newsletter) and face-to-face engagement opportunities (Community Meetings), which have been identified by TAPA members as most useful and valuable.

## Objectives (Outputs/Deliverables)

### Short-term:

- ♦ Launch B Street and effectively promote its creative and work spaces to the TAPA membership while making rates accessible for the community.
- ♦ Clearly communicate identity, vision, mission and scope of work and role to more precisely minimize duplicating or competing services within the membership and with other arts service organizations.
- ♦ Establish and expand new feedback loops for obtaining and responding to membership needs, suggestions, and community-driven interests.
- ♦ Continue to advocate for artist caregivers in the performing arts and support the dissemination of resources created as part of Balancing Act's Level UP! initiative (i.e. Social Justice Committee pillars).

### Mid-term:

- ♦ Utilize the new technology at B Street and educate the membership about its features to continue developing hybrid models of engagement to increase accessibility for the TAPA membership.



- Curating the programming of the TAPA Trade Series and B Street professional development opportunities to launch a range of dynamic new multi-week intensives, training & workshops, residencies and classes by responding to the needs of the sector and membership.
- Create space in regular TAPA communications to update the membership on the work of TAPA committees for increased organizational transparency.

### Long-term:

- Leverage the TAPA website member database and create a platform (i.e. a Discord server) so that TAPA members have virtual spaces to connect through and share resources and discussion points.
- Expand beyond existing partnerships to establish new Community Partnerships with organizations that have shared interest in connecting TAPA members with affordable resources, such as professional development, space, and health and wellness access.

## Goal #2

Building organizational capacity to more effectively support the TAPA team to better serve TAPA members and the greater performing arts sector.

### Why is this goal important?

- Secure additional funds to pay equitable wages to current and new staff, including health and wellness benefits and employee incentives.
- The sustainable presence of TAPA is essential to the performing arts sector in Toronto.
- Provides multiple pathways for the professional development of TAPA employees, infusing TAPA's values into the community at large.
- Bridges knowledge between TAPA and its membership and provides opportunities for exchange and applying effective co-leadership.



The 10th Arts Day at the City. Photo by Anne-Marie Krytiuk.

## Objectives (Outputs/Deliverables)

### Short-term:

- ◆ Introduce a new internal staff review process with a focus on individual concerns and workplace satisfaction (i.e. “stay interviews”).
- ◆ Expand strategic partnerships with leaders and organizations serving historically marginalized communities to more adequately inform the work being done in/across TAPA.
- ◆ Identify different ways to roll out additional professional development programs for staff;
  - ◇ Continue to explore what sort of professional development would be valuable to staff; making access to this an ongoing commitment.
- ◆ Develop a succession plan that includes supplementary resources to adequately support the TAPA team with this transition (i.e. onboarding and training).
- ◆ Review CTDF to expand or clearly define what constitutes “commercial theatre.”
- ◆ Create space in regular TAPA communications to update the membership on the work of TAPA committees for increased organizational transparency.

### Mid-term:

- ◆ Introduce learnings from a range of resources and activities, included, but not limited to advocacy, anti-racism and anti-oppression training, education programs and resource development mechanisms.
- ◆ Clearly articulate TAPA core values to collectively establish a community of practice role, function, scope, goals and processes, etc.
- ◆ Explore partnerships with health providers and wellness organizations to bridge greater access to healthcare for TAPA members, including insurance and health benefits.
- ◆ Embed effective engagement with commercial theatre into sustained dialogue and greater amplification of performing arts.

### Long-term:

- ◆ Secure operating funding, public and/or private, to achieve financial health, longevity and vitality.
- ◆ Apply health and wellness support programs for employees.
- ◆ Create a marketing position to manage under-resourced initiatives and communities.
- ◆ Establish multi-year corporate partnerships and/or sponsorships for events that have a broad reach and wide reputation (i.e. Dora Awards).

## Goal #3

Foster audience development to achieve greater impact for the Toronto performing arts sector.

### Why is this goal important?

- This is a collective goal across the TAPA community, wherein members rely on TAPA to guide and support connection.
- Raises public awareness of broader performing arts industry opportunities in Toronto.
- Continuation of partnerships with public and private institutions, such as Gr. 9 -12 schools and post-secondary institutions will cultivate the audiences of tomorrow.

*"I had never been to a live theatre performance outside of a class field trip. I lived in a low-income family and we couldn't afford to go or find time to attend. I am grateful for programs such as hipTIX which help students see live performances."*

**Judy Ngo, Rosedale Heights School of Arts student**

## Objectives (Outputs/Deliverables)

### Short-term:

- Bolster partnership with Destination Toronto and/or other tourist organizations to expand awareness and effectiveness of Now Playing Toronto (NPTO).
- Centralize information on how to access TAPA's discounted ticket offerings such as hipTIX and citySpecial.
- Review hipTIX and citySPECIAL programs to make them correspond to the evolving needs of TAPA members and current market conditions.
- Conduct a member-wide environmental scan of offerings and identify needs, gaps, and opportunities for building more accessible pathways for audience access.
- Exploration of new methods of engaging student theatre-goers.
- Maintain and amplify existing online engagement, and stay informed of emerging platforms to determine the best allocation of limited resources and adjust the engagement strategy accordingly.

*"hipTIX was an invaluable resource during my three years in theatre school. Having affordable access to so many professional theatre and dance performances helped me grow as an artist and inspired me to work harder. Thank you hipTIX!"*

**Julien Rutherford, Humber College student**



## Mid-term:

- ◆ Strengthen relationships with corporate partners, and commercial partners to leverage resources and public reach.
- ◆ Review long-term partnerships with educational institutions to respond to current needs:
  - Gr 9-12 secondary schools
  - Post-secondary institutions, including student groups, faculty, staff, and administrators
  - Revisit hipTIX pricing structure as required, pending sponsorship.
- ◆ Create an audience matrix to help segment and more deeply understand the membership, where you examine: age, location, event attendance history, etc., and association with TAPA.
- ◆ Expand and fund an external marketing plan to identify and foster new audience pathways to TAPA member offerings.
- ◆ Publicly share the successes and partnerships that are achieved through the above connections.

## Long-term:

- ◆ Establish pathways by which members can collaborate with each other to promote access programs, to organically nurture new and grow returning audiences through these programs.



The 2023 Dora Mavor Moore Awards with host, Craig Lauzon. Photo by John Lauener.

## Goal #4

Ensuring new and existing TAPA programs, initiatives and committees are anchored by the pillars of the TAPA Social Justice Framework.

### Why is this goal important?

- Responds to the ever-changing needs of different communities.
- Serves to encourage co-leadership in achieving social change, sector-wide change, and organizational change.
- Educates and thereby mitigates the occurrence and impact of subtle acts of exclusion.
- Contributes to the overall well-being of artists and arts professionals.
- Aligns strategy with focus to make greater room for stories and audiences that emerge from equity-deserving groups, i.e. TAPA as representative or amplifier of voice(s).

## Objectives (Outputs/Deliverables)

### Short-term:

- Invest time and resources into new and existing programs, initiatives and committees that address access barriers.
- Introduce new affordable individual membership levels to improve access opportunities for underserved artists
- Secure hipTIX sponsorship in order to ensure affordable access for underserved youth and maintain a minimal barrier pricing structure.
- Amplify social justice advocacy as an embedded priority in all TAPA activities.
- Facilitate a curriculum of learning and education around EDIA, anti-oppression, and social justice for TAPA members, staff and the Board to feel better supported in professional praxis and promote cultural competency.
- Aligning all PAIS ancillary award committees to be conducted in the same manner and share the same structure in order to support fair and equitable adjudication of all applicants, under the guidance of a committee Chair, with an emphasis on eligibility and equity.

## Mid-term:

- ◆ Provide space for professionals from equity-owed groups to learn, connect, and lead change through the arts.
- ◆ Support the development of a comprehensive toolkit associated with Black Out Nights, in collaboration with the Black community, and reflecting members' feedback (i.e. Social Justice Committee pillars).
- ◆ Partner with relevant cross-sectoral organizations and leaders to create EDIA and Social Justice resources, affinity groups and approaches for collective advocacy and inclusion.
- ◆ Secure a central platform for knowledge exchange and storytelling between the different levels of TAPA membership to better support intergenerational learning and potential mentorship.
- ◆ Active recruitment to increase participation and engagement of TAPA members participating in Arts Day at the City by 10-20%.
- ◆ Continue to leverage the Dora Awards and other TAPA programs and services to include or embed advocacy, EDIA & Social Justice Committee work in being responsive to changing cultural environments.



citySPECIAL at the ballet in 2019. Photo by Anne-Marie Krytiuk.

## Long-term:

- ◆ Strengthen relationships with existing social service organizations that serve equity-owed communities to cross-promote and support each other's work.
- ◆ Remain committed to supporting and empowering historically underserved artists and communities, including but not limited to racialized, d/Deaf, Mad, d/Disabled, immigrant, refugee, Indigenous, mature/senior, youth, etc., while also seeking new community partnerships.



**TAPA STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2024-2028

**theatre**  
**dance**  
**opera** **toronto alliance**  
**for the**  
**performing arts**

