



LIGHTHOUSE
WRITERS WORKSHOP



2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan



Introduction: Expanding the Blueprint

The last Lighthouse strategic plan focused on telling our story. It addressed the biggest challenge we faced: how to inform the community of the successes and growth of our programs while managing their continued expansion. From 2014 to 2018, overall income grew at an average annual pace of approximately 10%. Also during this time, Lighthouse embarked on an ambitious program of community engagement, offering workshops and literary events for traditionally marginalized—or ignored—people, specifically those experiencing homelessness or extreme poverty, individuals coming out of incarceration, and veterans.

The plan took us from 2015 to 2018, our 21st year of existence. During that period, growth continued at a rapid pace, and it's clear that our storytelling and messaging efforts have borne fruit: individual giving increased, as has our visibility in the local philanthropic and arts community. But what has happened organically and, at times, casually, now deserves more coordination and a focus on best practices. The organization is poised to become a cornerstone of the artistic

community and an integral part of the social and cultural fabric of the area, as well as a national leader in the conversation over the role of literary arts and creative writing instruction in our culture.

Late in 2018, the trust that owns the Milheim House at 1515 Race Street, our home for the past seven-plus years, notified us that they plan to sell the property. Our lease term ends August 2021; by then programs will most likely have outgrown the space (as it is currently) unless we make much greater use of satellite locations. We need to decide very soon where our next home will be, and whether the organization is best served by staying in the Milheim House, leasing another property, or by purchasing one. If the latter, then it must be determined if Lighthouse is ready to embark on a capital campaign, or if we should choose an impact investment/mortgage option—or some combination of these.

Overview of the Planning Process

In 2018, the Lighthouse board established a strategic planning committee and engaged Karla Raines and Andrew Straight of Corona Insights to lead the organization through a process that included two mini-retreats. Corona did an extensive internal and external analysis, and the committee surveyed the entire Lighthouse community in order to learn their views on the future of the organization. This data served as the foundation for the plan itself, which went through several revisions before being presented to the full board for approval in February 2019.



Critical Issues Identified

This plan specifically addresses two critical issues that relate to the future of the organization:

- 1** Community Impact and Role in the Culture:
how to deepen and expand this impact in effective ways.
- 2** Location and Long-Term Sustainability:
how to guarantee Lighthouse's existence into the long-term future, both financially and in terms of location.

2023 Action Statements

To address these issues and stay on the cutting edge of cultural relevance, we've created several action statements:

- Lighthouse celebrates our common humanity via the written word.
- We work tirelessly to amplify the role that creative writing and literature play in our society.
- With a comprehensive, flexible, and rigorous curriculum, Lighthouse embraces all levels of artists, from the advanced writer to the person just beginning to explore their creativity.
- We celebrate marginalized or underrepresented voices in order to foster an inclusive and equitable society. Because we hear and appreciate everyone, we are a home for all writers.
- Lighthouse is sustainable financially for the long term; the organization will settle into a new location that is comfortable, accessible, and welcoming to all.





Initiatives

This plan focuses on four major initiatives that address critical issues, using the action statements as guideposts.

1

Focus on the Whole Writer: Provide a superior, inclusive learning experience for writers, fully supporting their development as artists and human beings.

2

Deepen Our Community Impact: We are inclusive, authentic, and resilient in our pursuit of this objective, reaching an ever-expanding audience. We support and encourage everyone to see writing and literature as a highly effective form of connection and self-expression.

3

Be an Arts Cornerstone: Be an energized and innovative leader in the artistic and philanthropic communities.

4

Build a Sustainable and Enduring Organization: Ensure that the impact and importance of Lighthouse is secure now and into the future.

Initiatives—In More Detail*

1

Focus on the Whole Writer: Provide a superior, inclusive learning experience for writers, fully supporting their development as artists and human beings.

Initiative	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ongoing: Attract and retain the most talented instructors with a focus on quality and diversity, and who represent the entire community we wish to serve.	Offer faculty professional development opportunities that focus on inclusion and equity.	Hire core faculty as employees. Offer benefits to full-time instructors.	Increase faculty salary. Investigate hiring all part-time faculty as unbenefited employees.	Institutionalize faculty training for ongoing best practices in craft, inclusion, and equity.	Become recognized as a desirable long-term employer for accomplished authors/instructors.
Ongoing: Develop all programs and offerings into a nationally recognized model, with a record of student success.	Begin messaging all programs as a part of a continuum, for all levels of writer (and for non-writers, too).	Celebrate successes of individuals and the organization in nationally visible forums.	Seek high visibility opportunities as experts (artistic director?) at conferences, online, and in print.	Provide a space for youth, in a neighborhood or walkable site.	Support our work and deepen its impact with sound research.
New: Be on the leading edge of contemporary literature, exploring and highlighting these artistic forms in RAW classes, thematic offerings, visiting authors, and events.	Create annual themes to focus programs. For 2019: The Whole Writer. Use social media/blog as a resource for readers looking for help with who/what to read. Create annual summer Writer's Studio with a young, emerging writer.	Consider artistic director position to focus attention on this area. Annual Theme: Your Voice Matters. Use Story Festival as a focal point for this work. Find a major partner for Writer's Studio and expand its audience.	Expand Story Festival to be a signature event. Annual Theme: The Whole Community.	Annual Theme: Lighthouse at 25—looking toward the next 25 years.	Annual Theme: Intersections.
New: In an organized way, celebrate and promote faculty and student achievements.	Hire program and content coordinator to manage messaging. Promote using social media, blog, podcasts, and video.	Ensure these stories are an integral part of our social media, annual report, and other materials.	Explore a Lighthouse small press.	Incorporate these works in the Story Festival.	Establish new awards and recognition (beyond the Beacon Award).

* dates and specific initiatives are subject to change

Initiative	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
New: Use institutional marketing to build the Lighthouse customer base and increase fundraising from committed writers and workshoppers.	Grow membership by 8%. Maintain 90% capacity in tuition-based workshops. Increase overall fundraising by 8%. Introduce a Lighthouse Giving Day.	Grow membership by 8%. Maintain 90% capacity in tuition-based workshops. Increase overall fundraising by 8%. Implement more comprehensive donor/member management system and expand use beyond development staff.	Grow membership by 7%. Maintain 90% capacity in tuition-based workshops. Increase overall fundraising by 7%. Celebrate the anticipated impact of the new or renovated space.	Grow membership by 7%. Maintain 90% capacity in tuition-based workshops. Increase overall fundraising by 7%. Celebrate members new and old—connect their Lighthouse stories with 25th anniversary.	Grow membership by 7%. Maintain 90% capacity in tuition-based workshops. Increase overall fundraising by 6%. Create alumni group(s) encompassing BP graduates and other members with shared milestones or experiences.
New: Advance programs, scholarships, and fellowships that build diversity and inclusivity.	Launch Writing in Color program and annual retreat.	Expand Writing in Color programming and add Queer Creatives programming.	Establish long-term funding to support at least one scholarship or fellowship.	Expand long-term funding for additional scholarships or fellowships.	Lighthouse program participants align with Denver metro demographics.
New: Grow number of people served across all program categories. Encourage entire community to see and know the value of writing and reading.	Earned workshop revenue growth = 7% Community engagement growth = 10%.	Earned workshop revenue growth = 7%. Community engagement growth = 20% (If including Story Festival).	Earned workshop revenue growth = 5% Community engagement growth = 20% (If including Story Festival).	Earned workshop revenue growth = 4%. Community engagement growth = 10%.	Earned workshop revenue growth = 3%. Community engagement growth = 10%.

2

Deepen Our Community Impact: We are inclusive, authentic, and resilient in our pursuit of this objective, reaching an ever-expanding audience. We support and encourage everyone to see writing and literature as a highly effective form of connection and self-expression.

Initiative	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ongoing: Expand community engagement programs to encourage anyone who might not consider themselves a writer to tell their story. Engage with underserved and marginalized communities and amplify their voices by supporting creative work and building a reading audience that is informed and enlightened by the humanity of all.	ICCS for men workshops started. I am Denver up and running, DUG collaboration up and running. See these programs as a continuum for all ages. Promote anthology. Re-launch Reading Show with a focus on inclusion.	Publish and promote annual anthology of community writing. Add new community programs, focused on new underserved communities in a strategic way.			→
Ongoing: Ensure that all people feel welcome in Lighthouse spaces and feel free to be their authentic, expressive selves.	Inclusivity training for all staff and faculty. Review physical space, make decisions on how to make the house feel more welcoming to all. Host a literary community summit for all literary organizations in the state.	Look for ways to include this initiative in Story Festival. Use feedback for continuous improvement.	Ensure inclusive and safe accessibility for all activities and events.	Visually represent all our constituents in art and other elements throughout the new or expanded space.	Create interactive spaces, places, times, for discovery and expression in unstructured ways. →

Initiative

2019

2020

2021

2022

2023

<p>New: Create programming specifically for persons of color and other traditionally marginalized or underrepresented communities.</p>	<p>Launch Writing in Color program; host first Writing in Color retreat. Launch Queer Creatives group.</p>	<p>Expand Writing in Color retreat; work to gain national attention and applications.</p>	<p>Promote work and/or results of Writing in Color and Queer Creatives—expand conversation in the community</p>	<p>Research community and identify groups not engaged with Lighthouse.</p>	<p>Implement any needed new targeted programming to serve community.</p>
<p>New: Build community engagement into a nationally-recognized program.</p>	<p>Implement training program for adult workshops and community engagement. Continue youth training.</p>	<p>Open community engagement training to public; create weekend intensive program that writing teachers can use nationwide.</p>	<p>Offer intern or visiting artist program for people to visit and participate as a way to learn best practices. Complete successful participation in UC Health/NEA study on effectiveness of creative writing in building resiliency and reducing turnover in critical care workers.</p>	<p>Expand partnerships where creative writing can address significant community needs. Effectively tell the story of the science behind creative writing interventions.</p>	<p>Receive presidential medal of freedom (or similar national recognition).</p>

3

Be an Arts Cornerstone: Be an energized and innovative leader in the artistic and philanthropic communities.

Initiative	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ongoing: Via institutional marketing, tell the story of the work we're doing to audiences inside and outside the traditional literary community.	Create quarterly "news" sheet for each major program; share with funders, members, and donors. Use annual report to give an exciting and comprehensive view of the organization. Fully implement marketing training provided by Bloomberg AIM.	Focus on telling our story to the larger community, not just writers. Work to engage with readers and other arts via Story Festival.	Seek local and national recognition via interviews, articles in major media outlets and publications.	Seek local and national recognition via interviews, articles in major media outlets and publications (25th anniversary).	Seek local and national recognition via interviews, articles in major media outlets and publications.
Ongoing: Nurture cross-disciplinary arts collaborations and regional, thematic programs (like Denver Talks and I am Denver).	Collaboration with Stories on Stage, DUG, and ASLD.	Create and roll-out major collaborations for Story Festival.	Continue to create engaging collaborations for Story Festival, and as opportunities arise.		
New: Become and remain a Tier II SCFD organization.	Apply to and get accepted into Tier II. Grow earned revenue by 7%.	Ensure that we stay above the threshold. Grow earned revenue by 6%. Use Tier II collaborations to boost innovation and audience.	Grow earned revenue by 5%. Collaborate with other Tier II organizations in ways that build audience and income.	Grow earned revenue by 4%. Become a preferred creativity and story partner for other Tier II organizations.	Grow earned revenue by 3% Rank in the top 80% of Tier II organizations.

Initiative	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
New: Be active and visible in decision-making and planning activities for arts and culture in the metro area (e.g. Imagine 2020, and cultural commissions), always advocating for literature and creative writing so it's seen as comparable to visual art, dance, music.	Have a staff person on Denver Arts Commission and/or other decision-making entities. Host a literary community summit for all literary organizations in the state.		Participate in arts community planning as opportunities arise.		→
New: Plan and launch a story festival in 2020 to engage a wider audience, build greater visibility, and increase earned revenue and philanthropic support.	Test run. Begin planning for rollout in 2020.	Rollout festival.	Expand festival with more partners and story forms.	Establish sister city/organization or other relationships to make the festival regional or national.	Incorporate international element in festival programming.

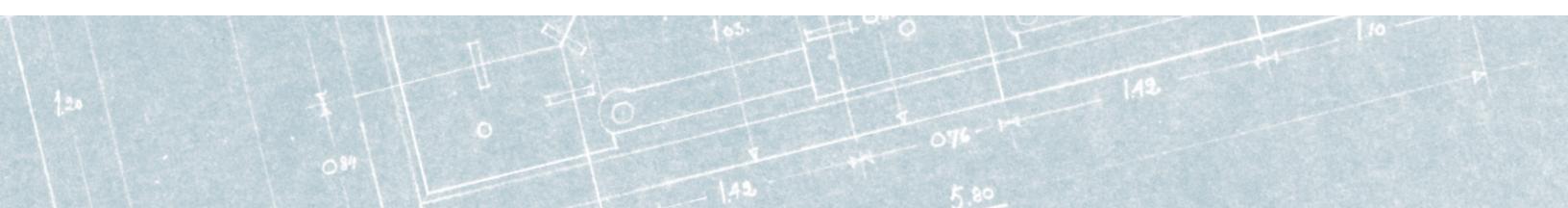
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Build a Sustainable and Enduring Organization: Ensure that the impact and importance of Lighthouse is secure now and into the future.

Initiative	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
New: Grow staff and board so that they're powerful advocates in fundraising efforts.	Nominating committee sets goals for the next five years; revamp board cultivation and training for new board members. Grow board to 16 members, focusing on diversity and inclusivity. Use Bloomberg training to create clear roles and opportunities for board participation.	Ongoing training for board members and staff is an integral part of board service and staff training. Grow board to 18 members. Each board member is actively engaged as fundraising advocate for one or more program initiatives. Create advisory board to further engage the community.	Board is a proud and visible leader in fundraising and community advocacy. All staff understand their role in sustaining and growing support for the organization and it's reflected in their goals.	All board and staff can easily articulate the impact of one or more Lighthouse programs outside of their own area, along with the case for support.	Board or board advisory groups include all constituents, especially community and youth.
New: Grow annual (non-capital) philanthropic support by 10% each year, for the next five years, in order to sustain the financial viability of the organization.	Implement plan for corporate sponsorships, meet budget target of \$15,000. Gain \$25K in-kind support. Build on success of last year's casino night, increasing attendance and donations by 20%.	Hire second development position. Focus on individual giving—and capital campaign (if we go in that direction). If yes on capital campaign: finish quiet phase of campaign, announce to larger community.	Use move to a new location (or purchase of 1515 Race) to engage the community and excite them about programs and the future of LH, build endowment, and cover any additional capital and moving costs.	Celebrate 25th anniversary with major fundraiser campaign and party.	Convert capital campaign staff to annual fund focus.
Ongoing: Leverage support of SVP and Bloomberg to address HR issues (e.g., status of instructors, salary review, succession planning).	Complete SVP real estate, financial, HR board analysis. Revise salary and staffing plans as needed. Create succession plan to carry organization through the next five years.	Find ways to retain core faculty: Hire core faculty as employees. Offer them benefits. Implement succession plan, as needed (may require staff reorganization).	Find ways to retain quality faculty: Consider hiring all faculty as unbenefited employees.		



Initiative	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ongoing: Leverage Bloomberg training to grow support, membership, and public awareness.	Bloomberg: create and institute five-year program plan, institutional marketing plan.	Finish Bloomberg training. Implement new knowledge. Reflect principles in staff, faculty, and board handbooks.	Establish a culture reflecting dedication to renewing the cycle of great art, communication, and support.		
New: Resolve space issue in way that advances programmatic goals, addresses community need, and improves the bottom line. Determine if the organization is ready for a capital campaign.	Complete feasibility study, continue interviews to accrue capital campaign and impact investing knowledge, begin looking at real estate. Continue exploring partnership space idea. Begin capital campaign or begin looking for new space to lease, or fully explore purchase of 1515 Race with renovations.	Make decision on space: purchase 1515 Race; move to new leased location; or purchase a new space. Continue capital campaign (quiet phase at first, announce public phase at Lit Fest) or impact investing.	September 1: Move into new space (either owned or rented), or complete purchase on 1515 Race. If moving, celebrate our new home with program and membership enhancement, the "why" (the impact) of the permanent home (see appropriate sections).	If 1515 Race is purchased, complete renovations and then celebrate our improved home with program and membership enhancements enabled by the facility.	Settle in.
New: Fundraise to ensure long-term financial sustainability, whether it be an operating reserve or endowment.	Build \$100K (total) operating reserve margin by year-end. Set funds aside in special account. Grow awareness of Epilogue Guild as means of leaving meaningful literary legacy.	Grow operating reserve margin to \$150K by year-end. Set funds aside in special account. Honor and steward EG members with appreciation and information.	Grow operating reserve margin to \$200K by year-end. Set funds aside in special account.	Grow operating reserve margin to \$300K by year-end. Set funds aside in special account.	Grow operating reserve margin to \$400K by year-end. Set funds aside in special account.



The Lighthouse Mission

The mission of Lighthouse Writers Workshop is to provide the highest caliber of artistic education, support, and community for writers and readers in the Rocky Mountain Region and beyond. We strive to ensure that literature maintains its proper prominence in the culture, and that individuals achieve their fullest potential as artists and human beings.

Values

Accessibility: Lighthouse welcomes all people who want to learn more about writing, no matter their age, experience, or education. It's important to our vision and mission that we keep our offerings affordable and our facilities convenient for all community members.

Collaboration: Writing is often seen as a solitary art; however, all writers need the inspiration and support of others. Our workshops engage students, teachers, and peers in deeply collaborative relationships. We seek opportunities to explore other arts and media with regional and national partners.

Creativity: Lighthouse believes in the innate creativity of all people by fostering experimentation and innovation.

Community: Lighthouse provides space and spirit for fellowship among working and aspiring writers. We offer readers unique ways to discover the writer's way. We invite everyone who values arts and culture to explore the written word. And we support the vibrancy and diversity of the Colorado artistic culture.

Discovery: We believe that writing empowers greater understanding of self and others and thereby encourages compassion and empathy in our society.

Excellence: Lighthouse is dedicated to supporting the highest potential of each writer, whatever his or her goals and talents. We are committed to increasing awareness of local and national authors producing high quality work.



◦ Staff

Michael Henry, Executive Director
 Andrea Dupree, Program Director
 Laurie Wagner, Director of Development
 Kim O'Connor, Young Writers Program Co-Director
 Dan Manzanares, Community Programs Coordinator
 Roxanne Banks Malia, Young Writers Program Co-Director
 Genna Kohlhardt, Workshops Program Coordinator
 Manuel Aragon, Operations Manager
 Rachel Weaver, Satellite Program Manager
 Jeremy Medina, Marketing and Communications Coordinator
 Suzi Q. Smith, Community Engagement Coordinator
 Abigail Lahnert, Administrative Specialist
 Torin Jensen, Program and Content Coordinator

◦ Board

Rich Devlin, President
 Rudy Melena, Co-Vice President
 Randy Sylvan, Co-Vice President
 Gary Dudley, Treasurer
 Rebecca Arno, Secretary
 Rick Bailey
 Mark Bell
 Brooke Dilling
 Deanne Gertner
 Sarah Gilbert
 Maha Kamal
 Juliette LaChapelle
 Annette Taylor

“Lighthouse Writers makes me hopeful about the future of the arts in America.”

—George Saunders, recipient of the 2017 Man Booker Prize



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“Without question, Lighthouse has absolutely changed my life.”

—2018-19 Young Authors Collective member