

Live Arts Theatre Strategic Plan 2026-2031

Mission Statement:

Live Arts Theatre is a community focused cultural performing arts institution where amateurs are paired with experienced professionals to produce diverse, challenging theatrical work which engages, educates, and entertains. We strive to improve quality of life in Gwinnett County and the state of Georgia through education and outreach; supporting and collaborating with other organizations that promote growth and enjoyment through the performing arts.

Vision:

Our vision for Live Arts Theatre is based on the following values:

Engagement: Live Arts Theatre seeks to engage the communities we serve by presenting classical and contemporary works that stimulate discussion and action.

Education: Live Arts Theatre provides theatre and arts education to all ages in order to promote life long learning and to cultivate a love for the arts.

Entertainment: Live Arts Theatre seeks to produce theatrical works that will entertain our audiences.

Community Service: Live Arts Theatre seeks to be an integral part of the greater Gwinnett community area by both by partnering with other local organizations who are also committed to improving life in our community, thus providing opportunities an avenue for community members of our community to get involved to join with us and our partner organizations get involved.

Innovation: Live Arts Theatre is committed to stimulating growth in both the theatrical and artistic community. We do this by promoting new and/or diverse works, and while providing a safe environment for the artistic community to explore and experiment in.

Core Beliefs:

1. Education is essential for all. Therefore, we offer everyone the opportunity to enrich themselves and our community through awareness, advocacy, empathy, sensitivity, and artistry.
2. Everyone can find enjoyment in the arts. Therefore, we offer a wide variety of opportunities so that different members of our community can each find something they enjoy.
3. Respect is a key element across all disciplines. Therefore, we are respectful toward ourselves, others, the theatre, and our community, in all that we say and do.
4. Theatre is a medium that is always changing. Therefore, we believe in encouraging new works and new ways of doing things, and actively work to assist in the development of theatre and our greater community.
5. Assessment is the key to innovation. Therefore, we continuously assess our procedures, celebrate our successes, and continue to-develop ways to improve our theatre; and our community.

History:

Live Arts Theatre started in 1993 as a group called County Seat Players. The original group was founded in Lawrenceville, GA for the purpose of bringing quality live theatre to Gwinnett County. This makes the organization one of the oldest community theatre groups in continuous existence in Gwinnett County. The group produced several plays, musicals, and children's programs each season.

In 2009, the group experienced a need for change due to several changes in the needs of the community. The group got a new artistic director, and the group was moved to Buford, GA to provide theatrical programming in a community that

currently did not have access to local live theatre. Given that the group was no longer in the county seat of Gwinnett, the name was changed to Live Arts Theatre. The mission of the group was revised and expanded to promote education and engagement of the community through the arts. As a nonprofit community group, the theatre relies heavily on local community support and grants to fulfill its mission.

Since 2009, Live Arts Theatre has grown and evolved into a community focused professional teaching theatre. We have moved around Gwinnett County, seeking a permanent place from which to offer our services. We were most recently located in the Belfry Playhouse of Norcross Presbyterian Church. This arrangement ended in June of 2020 when the building was sold due to the church having financial difficulties that stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic. We are working diligently to identify and obtain a new location for the theatre to operate out of that will allow us to continue to grow as an organization.

Live Arts Theatre Today:

Live Arts Theatre is a 501c3 community focused theatre that is evolving into a respected cultural performing arts institution. We currently are leasing a shared space at Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church in Duluth, GA, while looking for a permanent location.

The theatre has consistently increased the size of its audience over the past 5 years. We currently offer a 5 show mainstage season. We also produce a reading series and a variety of theatrical and educational events over the course of a season. Over the past 5 years, we have developed our board, which currently has 9 members with arts, business, education, management and financial backgrounds.

The theatre meets its expenses through ticket sales, membership dues, class fees, grants, and donations from the community. We actively seek support from local businesses through program ad sales and donations, both monetary and in-kind. We are committed to operating within our means as we continue to seek funding that will allow us to present larger productions and more diverse programming. We are in the process of applying for additional grant money and corporate sponsorships and have begun to receive some smaller grants. Support of this kind would allow the theatre to offer more of the programming described above to the community.

The Programs:

Live Arts Theatre currently presents a 5-7 show mainstage season each year, consisting of 4-6 plays and/or musicals.

Over the past 5 years, Live Arts has worked to develop a relationship with the local school system. Based on their input, we have developed a series of workshop offerings that were made available to the general public in 2016. We have brought our workshops to many local Gwinnett schools, participated in the DramaRama middle school theatre event, and provided professional development to local teachers. Going forward, we plan to develop these offerings in accordance with our mission to educate, and to provide a funding source for the theatre's operations.

One of our core educational programs is our LAT Intensive program, which is offered at no cost to our community. Participants have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in Directing, Stage Management, Technical Theatre, and Costume Design apprenticeships. Our apprentices learn real world skills through structured workshops, production work, and through one on one mentorship from experienced working professionals.

Advisement:

The theatre's bank is currently Southern First Bank, where we maintain two accounts. The first is for general operations and the second is for our strategic fund that holds the money designated to fulfill our goals of having a permanent location and hiring paid staff. Our treasurer, Dawn Davridge, is a licensed financial professional, and has extensive experience in this area. She continues to build on the systems developed by previous treasurers Tami Scheinman and Randall Avery, and is expanding our ability to forecast our income and expenditures. We have access to the GA Arts lawyers hotline, and are members of GA Lawyers for the Arts. This service is provided to the citizens of Georgia on a pro-bono basis. We have a relationship with 2 local lawyers who have offered to assist with contract review. Our managing director, Colin Pearce, is a licensed attorney, and has agreed to serve the theatre. We have several people on our board with technical, management and business expertise, and have the ability to add board members as the need arises.

Our Community:

Live Arts Theatre is located in, and mainly serves Gwinnett County GA. We also draw participants and audience members from surrounding counties within the state of Georgia.

Gwinnett County is a diverse community, and has a mix of demographic populations. Gwinnett County is a large suburban area located 30-40 miles northeast of Atlanta. The theatre is currently located in Duluth, and our main draw comes from the communities of Duluth, Lawrenceville, Norcross, and Peachtree Corners. We are focusing our search for a permanent location in these areas.

*All demographics based on information obtained by the US census bureau, as of July 1, 2024, and was obtained from www.census.gov.

Population Demographics

Town	Population	White	Black or African-American	Native American	Asian	Hispanic or LatinX	Other	Mixed or more than 2 races
Duluth	29,609	33.9%	22.7%	0.1%	25.4%	15.6%	0.1%	2.7%
Norcross	16,592	19.7%	24.8%	0%	10.2%	46.2%	0.1%	3.4%
Peachtree Corners	38,014	48.9%	23.6%	1.1%	10.3%	15.1%	0.1%	2.7%
Lawrenceville	30,834	30.5%	37.6%	0.1%	6.1%	25.9%	0.1%	4.0%
Gwinnett County	936,250	35.4%	29.8%	0.8%	12.5%	21.7%	0.1%	2.9%

Household Makeup

Town	Number of Households	Household Size	Children Under 18	Over 65 living independently
Duluth	11,202	2.62	22.3%	16.5%
Norcross	5,087	3.23	31.4%	5.9%
Peachtree Corners	16,905	2.55	23.3%	12.5%
Lawrenceville	10,524	2.79	25.1%	12.3%
Gwinnett County	293,330	3.1	26.6%	10.5%

Languages

Language data taken from CDC.gov via the Gwinnett Public library. We have included the top five languages spoken in Gwinnett County as a whole to better understand the community we serve.

Total population of Gwinnett County: 588,448

- 1) English 426,735 (73%)
- 2) Spanish 56,825 (10%)
- 3) Korean 8,170 (1%)
- 4) Vietnamese 6,770 (1%)
- 5) Chinese 4,335 (0.07%)

Income information was obtained from <https://www.welfareinfo.org/> and <https://censusreporter.org/> based on July 2019 data.

Income Demographics

Town	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	% of Families at or below the poverty line	% of Individuals at or below the poverty line	% of children under 18 at or below the poverty line	% of Individuals 65 or over at or below the poverty line
Duluth	\$71,220	\$29,393	12.8%	11.7%	14%	22%
Norcross	\$58,236	\$23,634	21.4%	17%	28%	2%
Peachtree Corners	\$71,149	\$43,783	10.2%	9%	14%	5%
Lawrenceville	\$52,585	\$25,057	21.6%	20.1%	31%	11%
Gwinnett County	\$72, 109	\$31,170	9.2%	9.3%	13%	8%

Local children mainly attend Gwinnett County Public Schools. There are a number of private and parochial schools which operate in the area as well. School demographic information was obtained from www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us and free and reduced lunch data (Title One/childhood poverty) was retrieved from <http://www.dec.state.ga.us/>

Income and Student Demographics

	Duluth	Norcross	Discovery	Meadowcreek	Central Gwinnett
Total number of students	16,500	9,803	8,843	16,465	8,152
High Schools	2	2	1	2	1
Middle Schools	3	1	1	2	2
Elementary schools	6	3	4	6	4
Private Schools	5 (Duluth)	7 (Norcross)	(Included in Central Gwinnett)	7 (Lilburn, Tucker)	5 (Lawrenceville)
Number of high school students	5,970	3,904	2,825	3,877	2,444

Number of middle school students	3,333	1,319	2,026	2,951	1,745
Number of elementary school students	5,673	1,990	3,992	3,992	3,265
Number of private school students	1,524	2,590	Data not available	3,325	671
Students eligible for free/reduced lunch	64%	85%	77%	86%	71%
Communities served	Duluth	Norcross Peachtree Corners	Lawrenceville Duluth	Norcross Duluth Lilburn Tucker	Lawrenceville

Aims:

Live Arts Theatre has identified 3 core aims for the period beginning September 1, 2026. We plan to accomplish these aims by August 31, 2031, at which time a new 5-year strategic plan will be implemented.

1. To develop a broad and diverse base of financial support which will enable us to better serve the community in fulfillment of our mission and vision.
2. To clarify and identify specific needs for offering our programming to the community at a higher level, including physical plant, and staffing needs.
3. To increase our impact on the community by helping to improve their quality of life through the arts.

Objectives:

Live Arts Theatre will achieve the first aim by:

- Creating and implementing a long-term funding strategy that will allow Live Arts to increase its offerings to our community.
- Developing and cultivating relationships with a larger base of patrons, volunteers, government and business entities.

Live Arts Theatre will achieve the second aim by:

- Creating a blueprint of the fully realized cultural performing arts institution that LAT strives to be for the community.

Live Arts Theatre will achieve the third aim by:

- Increasing our relationships with various groups in our community.
- Expanding the number of people who benefit from the programming we already offer.

Strategies:

- Creating and implementing a long-term funding strategy that will allow Live Arts to increase its offerings to our community.
 - By 2031, LAT will be able to maintain an operating balance available in the Live Arts bank accounts that equals 100% of the upcoming fiscal budget year.
 - Increase recurring individual donations to reach 30% of our annual budget.
 - Increase our recurring business contributions to reach 30% of our annual budget.
 - Maintain our ticket revenue at 20% of our annual budget.
 - Maintain our grant and other revenue at 20% of our annual budget.
- Developing and cultivating relationships with a larger base of patrons, volunteers, government and business entities.
 - Ensure that no more than 20% of funding in each category is dependent on any singular source.
 - Develop guidelines, training, and a toolbox for the board members to assist with developing and cultivating relationships in the community.
 - Expand our base of patrons, volunteers etc to ensure that our programs can operate with just 20% of the volunteer base.
 - Expand board and membership participation in community groups and events.

- Creating a blueprint of the fully realized cultural institution that LAT aims to be for the community.
 - Conducting a comprehensive audit to identify and clarify all higher level needs for each aspect of our programming.
 - We endeavor to complete this audit by February 28, 2027. This audit will be board led, with support given by our Co-Artistic Directors.
 - We endeavor to complete a strategic funding plan by June 1, 2027.
- Expanding our relationships with different groups in our community.
 - Each board member will identify at least 2 external groups with which they are interested in forming a relationship.
 - The board works as a unit to strategize how to utilize the relationships to develop support for the theatre. This will include tracking the development of these relationships.
- Expanding the number of people who benefit from the programming we already offer.
 - Enhancing and developing new methods for marketing the programs we already offer.
 - Develop a specific process for getting new ideas and people to the right places.

Financials:

The fiscal year at Live Arts Theatre begins September 1 and ends August 31.

Revenue Category	20/21 COVID	21/22 COVID	22/23	23/24	24/25
Ticket Sales	\$3,048.00	\$3,128.00	\$7,158.00	\$6,566.00	\$11,196.40
Season Ad Sales	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$215.00
Membership Dues	\$1,654.50	\$2,169.00	\$1,846.00	\$2,216.00	\$2,342.00
Education Program Fees	\$888.00	\$769.00	\$432.00	\$1,787.00	\$1,355.00
Annual Campaign (GA Gives)	\$1,765.00	\$2,600.00	\$5,283.00	\$4,790.00	\$5,435.00
Concessions	\$0.00	\$349.00	\$445.00	\$717.00	\$1,034.00
Sponsors	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Individual Donations	\$2,565.99	\$1,160.00	\$1,240.45	\$2,052.41	\$4,068.28
Fundraising Events	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$454.00	\$1,039.96
Monthly Giving	\$4,215.00	\$3,815.00	\$2,301.00	\$2,005.00	\$1,210.00
Grants	\$3,750.00	\$5,750.00	\$20,335.00	\$10,098.00	\$11,457.00
Corporate Donations	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$540.00	\$788.00	\$820.00
Other Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$840.12	\$530.82	\$523.49
TOTAL	\$17,886.49	\$19,740.00	\$40,420.57	\$32,004.23	\$40,696.13