



# NBAF

## VISION 2024-2026

EXPOSE. EDUCATE. ENGAGE. ENTERTAIN.





EXPOSE

ENTERTAIN

EDUCATE

# NBAF

## 2024-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

### OUR VISION

A society where artists of African descent own and benefit from their collective cultural production and have their work supported and celebrated by their community and the world.

### OUR MISSION

To expose, educate, engage, and entertain audiences as we present and support the art and artists of African descent while broadening cultural experiences.

### OUR WORK

We **EXPOSE** audiences to art and artists of African descent through innovative programs and collaborations across dance, film, music, theater, literary and visual arts.

We **EDUCATE** audiences by offering impactful and enriching programs to celebrate the diverse history and the immense depth of African American creative expression to inspire the next generation.

We **ENGAGE** audiences, highlighting emerging and established artists through immersive arts events and public programs that are free and open to the community.

We **ENTERTAIN** audiences by showcasing multi-disciplinary artistic work, broadening the cultural experiences of communities through partnerships with artists and arts organizations.

ENGAGE

TRUST

NBAF

## PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY

### TRUST

We trust that we will work together as a unified team, leading with integrity and goodwill. We respectfully hold each other accountable for creating and upholding a spirit of community that supports and empowers us as we work toward strengthening the legacy of NBAF. We hold ourselves responsible to our community by being good stewards of their trust in this organization. We give each other the benefit of the doubt and work together to nurture a safe space where reciprocity and trust are the cornerstone of our working relationships.

### LEGACY

We honor NBAF's vital history in the Black community and take on the responsibility to grow and strengthen that legacy. We understand that being a part of this history is an honor and that the meaningful work we do today will impact our community for generations to come. In reverence to this legacy, we hold ourselves and the organization to a high standard of excellence and work daily to build upon the greatness that NBAF is known for throughout the world.

### COMMUNITY

As a work community, we center joy at the heart of what we do. We are in the business of bringing the best in Black art to our community, thereby sparking happiness, introspection, and growth, and we bring this same spirit of joy to the daily work we do to that end. We understand that we have the distinct honor of curating experiences of pleasure for our community, and we take this honor seriously and use it as inspiration for everything we create and as a guidepost for how we go about creating programming. We are a community that values active peace and work toward building that in our work environment and community at large.

### INNOVATION

As the vanguard organization promoting and presenting the best in Black art, we always strive to innovate in the field, find creative solutions to the obstacles we face, and present our work in ways that set the standard in the field. We are not satisfied with anything other than excellence and do everything – from ideation to execution – with that in mind.

LEGACY

INNOVATION

COMMUNITY





The background of the entire page is a photograph of a dance studio. In the foreground, a dancer in a maroon long-sleeved shirt and black pants is captured in a dynamic, low-to-the-ground pose. Behind them, several other dancers in black and white attire are performing similar movements. The studio has a light-colored floor and a ceiling with exposed pipes and fluorescent lighting.

# NBAF

## PROGRAMS & SERVICES

NBAF fulfills its mission through the following core program areas:

**1**

### **YOUTH ARTS EDUCATION**

Move/Dance! Program  
NextGen Artist Program

**2**

### **ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT**

Art Academy  
Artist Project Fund  
Artist Showcase  
Grants/Competitions

**3**

### **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

Black History Month  
Black Music Month  
Partnership Programs

# NBAF

## PROGRAM AREA: YOUTH ARTS EDUCATION

### STATEMENT OF NEED

NBAF is committed to nurturing talent amongst Black youth to ensure they have a voice and visibility in shaping Atlanta's culture and can fully participate in the creative economy.

According to a report by the National Endowment for the Arts, students from low-income families are less likely to have access to arts education both in and out of school. This lack of exposure can limit their cognitive development and educational opportunities. Research by the Arts Education Partnership suggests that students with access to arts education tend to have higher academic achievement in other subjects. Arts programs have also been linked to positive youth development and crime prevention. Without access to creative outlets, young individuals in underserved communities may be more likely to engage in negative behaviors.

National Black Arts Festival (NBAF) is unwavering in its dedication to nurturing talent among Black youth. While Atlanta stands as a cultural epicenter, the artistic voices of Black youth often face underrepresentation, highlighting the urgency of the NBAF Youth Programs. Recent trends underscore the profound impact of arts education on academic performance, with studies revealing that students engaged in the arts exhibit higher GPAs, improved standardized test scores, and reduced dropout rates. Notably, according to Arts.gov, low-income students highly involved in the arts are twice as likely to graduate college as their peers with no arts education. Moreover, the removal of arts from schools has been linked to concerning trends in youth mental health. Recent statistics, including a study from kinder.rice.edu, illuminate the undeniable connection between arts education and positive mental well-being, showcasing that arts education experiences reduce the proportion of students in school receiving disciplinary infractions by 3.6 percent. The NBAF Youth Programs is strategically positioned to respond to these trends, offering a platform and holistic programming for young artists to showcase their talents and benefit from the transformative power of arts education. By aligning our mission with these pressing trends, we aim to empower the next generation of Black artists, ensuring their representation, resilience, and active participation in Atlanta's dynamic cultural narrative.

### PROGRAM PURPOSE

NBAF Youth Programs are purpose-driven, intentionally nurturing creativity among youth of African descent. Our holistic approach combines high-quality arts education with leadership development, providing a comprehensive foundation for students to become college and career-ready. Specifically situated in Title 1 schools where opportunity gaps disproportionately affect communities of color, our program strategically bridges disparities. Going beyond conventional arts education, we seamlessly incorporate professional and workforce development components into our curriculums, ensuring that students excel in artistic endeavors and acquire practical skills for success in higher education or the workplace. Simultaneously, we integrate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Positive Youth Development into our programs, fostering growth in artistic skills and students' minds and emotional well-being. This intentional approach cultivates self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills, empowering students to navigate challenges and build resilience across their artistic and personal development journeys. Through mentorship, workshops, and real-world experiences, we empower participants with resilience, leadership, and a robust skill set, enabling them to shape cultural narratives, contribute to the creative economy, and confidently navigate their educational and professional journeys.



# NBAF'S YOUTH ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

## MOVE/DANCE

The MOVE/DANCE! PROGRAM provides dance education in local Atlanta public schools to encourage young talent and support their health and wellness goals.

Complimentary programs are offered in six APS schools, benefiting over 1,200 middle and high school students annually. These year-round initiatives provide high-quality dance education, integrating a culturally responsive curriculum emphasizing social-emotional learning, health and wellness, the history of Black dance in America, and college/career preparation.

Students also have the chance to participate in community performances and exhibitions. The program includes enriching field trips to expose students to Black arts and culture in the broader Atlanta community. Additionally, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) partnerships aim to connect youth with college students, providing direct pathways from high school into college and beyond in careers in the arts.

## NEXTGEN ARTIST

The NEXTGEN ARTIST PROGRAM nurtures the dreams and creativity of high school juniors and seniors who are emerging artists of African descent through workshops, mentorship, and professional development.

NextGen Artist extends its impact by providing free programs in five APS schools, reaching over 900 middle and high school students annually. Through extended artist residencies and workshops spanning visual art, film, fashion, and more, students engage with local professionals, creating original work while honing life and leadership skills. The program offers performance and exhibition opportunities to ensure students possess a well-rounded portfolio and skill set for college applications or entry into the art workforce. Additionally, we organize enriching field trips to expose students to the richness of Black arts and culture in the greater Atlanta community. Our strategic partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) facilitate connections between youth and college students, enhancing their exploration of higher education and future artistic endeavors.

## CURRENT OUTPUTS

- Over 2,500 students are reached annually through both Move/ Dance! and NextGen Artist
- 27 teaching artists are employed throughout the curriculum, workshops and residencies provided
- NBAF is in 11 schools across both programs
- 6 residencies provided each school year with 8 workshops across 3 disciplines
- 689 classes provided for Move/Dance! 67 classes provided for Next Gen Artists



# NBAF

## PROGRAM AREA: ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

### STATEMENT OF NEED

In the United States, Georgia ranks 50th in per capita funding for the arts, creating strain for artists facing limited opportunities. For Black artists, this reality is compounded by systemic discrimination, exclusion, and limited access to educational and professional opportunities. This historical context has led to representation, recognition, and resource disparities.

According to the Atlanta Regional Commission, in the last five years, Atlanta's creative industry has experienced an annual job growth rate nearly double that of all other industries. While opportunities continue to expand in film and television, fashion, music, arts, and culture, these jobs are not yet equitably available to communities of color. Black employees only hold 24% of jobs in Atlanta's creative industry, although they represent 48% of the population.

### PROGRAM PURPOSE

NBAF provides Black artists with financial support and professional and artistic development opportunities to bolster their creative and professional skills, enhance their artistic quality, improve their earning potential, and enable more sustainable careers.

**ARTIST PROJECT FUND:** NBAF's Artist Project Fund (APF) supports 20 professional artists over a 6-month period in the completion of an artistic project with a \$2000 grant, fostering a sense of community and creative collaboration, and providing immersive artistic and career development experiences to help each participant grow as creative entrepreneurs. The goal is to provide exposure via curated programs to help artists develop new audiences, strengthen their voices and advance their careers. These opportunities include workshops, networking events, and cultural experiences around the city.

**HORIZON AWARDS:** NBAF's Horizon Awards for Emerging Artists seeks to help aspiring emerging artists of African descent in Visual Arts, Music and Film to scale their careers. The award is highly competitive and grants the recipient in each category with a \$10,000 awards package to fund their practice.

**FASHION FORWARD STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION:** The NBAF Fashion Forward Student Design Competition recognizes students of African descent enrolled in a fashion design degree program who have distinguished themselves as cutting edge, creative and innovative, providing tangible recognition to emerging student designers. Individuals selected to receive these awards have excelled academically, mastered their particular fields of study, and are recognized as dynamic emerging talent who possess leadership qualities in their personal life and professional aspirations.

### CURRENT OUTPUTS

- APF supports 20 participants across the disciplines of music, dance, film, theatre, literary and visual arts
- \$40,000 community investment (20 artists receive \$2,000 each)
- Facilitate 3 professional development workshops led by industry experts & 3 cultural outings as a group to support work by local Black artists/peers and to encourage cross-discipline inspiration and collaboration
- Networking and community-building
- Horizon Award grants \$10,000 and promotional support to 1-3 artists annually
- Fashion Forward grants \$2000 and promotional support to a student designer
- The online Art Academy series gives local, national, and global audiences access to low-cost professional learning by industry experts. 4-5 lectures/presentations posted online annually

# NBAF

## PROGRAM AREA: PUBLIC PROGRAMS

### STATEMENT OF NEED

The arts serve as a vital expression of our histories and imaginations. Arts events bring us together for transformative experiences that spark conversations and serve as a positive force, inspiring empathy and awe. NBAF exists to celebrate and advance the work of Black artists, whose contributions reflect the richness of Black culture, identity, and experience. African American communities have traditionally been underserved with high-quality, affordable, accessible arts events. Without access to art and cultural experiences, individuals miss out on artistic expression's enriching and transformative power. Arts and cultural activities contribute to community development and social cohesion. Lack of access to these opportunities may hinder the development of a strong community identity and a sense of belonging.

### PROGRAM PURPOSE

NBAF curates and presents year-round cultural events focused on Black art and artists. Our programs celebrate Black history, culture, innovation, and achievement through immersive arts experiences. Our Public Programs also educate the public on the history, impact, and ongoing legacy of different artists, artistic disciplines, and genres, increasing opportunities for them to learn new and creative tools for self-determination and creative expression.

### CURRENT OUTPUTS

- Annual Black History Month immersive production reaches 500+
- Annual Black Music Month immersive production reaches 2,000+
- Upcoming: Bloomberg Public Art Challenge (2024-2025) "Thriving Together" estimated audience impressions 1M+
- Upcoming: Festival relaunch (2026) estimated audience 7,500





# **2024-2026 STRATEGIC VISION**

- 1. Evolve NBAF Public Programs**
- 2. Grow Youth Programs**
- 3. Increase Organizational Capacity**
- 4. Intentional Organizational Storytelling**
- 5. Community Building**



# 2024-2026 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

## 1. EVOLVE NBAF PROGRAMS

**Vision:** Expand the quality and scope of programs to deepen community impact.

GOAL	METRIC FOR SUCCESS	RESOURCES
Relaunch the festival as a bi-annual event anchored by NBAF’s pillar programs: Black History Month and Black Music Month.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2024, continue to establish NBAF through immersive BHM and BMM programming, growing the audience to 3,000.</li> <li>In 2025, grow NBAF’s audience to 4,000 by adding the Bloomberg partnership.</li> <li>In 2026, aim to have grown NBAF’s audience to 5,000.</li> </ol>	An additional \$500,000 will be needed per year to support the Festival.
Collaborate across public and youth programs – create opportunities to incorporate public programs into youth arts curriculum while also creating opportunities for student exposure and professional performance opportunities during NBAF events.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide four opportunities each year for youth to participate in NBAF events – attend, showcase work, volunteer, etc.</li> <li>Provide two opportunities each year to incorporate public programming into youth activities.</li> </ol>	
Increase workforce development opportunities for artists.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide annual exposure and/or paid opportunities for 75 artists through NBAF programs, growing by 25% year-over-year.</li> <li>Build up professional development opportunities for artists of all ages through skills training/art academy and audition preparation.</li> </ol>	

## 2. GROW YOUTH PROGRAMS

**Vision:** Expand Youth Program Offering to reach more students throughout the region.

GOAL	METRIC FOR SUCCESS	RESOURCES
Expand youth programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Expand into one new school district .</li><li>2. Add four additional school partners.</li><li>3. Increase program participation to 5,000 students by 2026 – 1,500 of those students will be new to NBAF programming.</li></ol>	Estimated expense of \$50,000 per school.
Secure new sources of revenue to directly support youth programming growth.	Identify and secure three new funding sources to help meet the expenses related to youth program growth.	Support from the board to help establish relationships with new funders.



# 3. INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

**Vision:** Develop organizational capacity for sustainable growth.

GOAL	METRIC FOR SUCCESS	RESOURCES
<p>Attract and retain talent for a right-sized organizational structure.</p>	<p>Increase staff size to 10 by 2026, creating and fulfilling roles to support development &amp; sponsorships, festival staff, and marketing staff.</p>	<p>\$180,000 minimum to hire 3 new positions.</p>
<p>Increase Board membership to 20 members and fill existing gaps currently present on the Board.</p>	<p>100% of dues given; 100% participation and achievement of “give and go get” policy; Increased attendance to both fundraising events and 75% attendance rate for board meetings.</p>	<p>Time and referrals from the Board to help identify strong candidates, vet them, and onboard new members.</p>
<p>Secure diversified financial resources to support NBAF’s growth goals.</p>	<p>1. Support annual budget of \$1,300,000 in 2024,                  2. \$1,800,000 in 2025                  3. 2,000,000 in 2026.</p> <p><b>Action steps to secure revenue:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase Individual Giving Base.</li> <li>2. Cultivate Current &amp; Lapsed Donors.</li> <li>3. Grow the Recurring Gifts Program &amp; create more donor-giving opportunities.</li> <li>4. Cultivate “Friends of the Festival” campaign to help drive fundraising for Festival initiative.</li> </ol>	<p>Increase revenue by \$750,000 to achieve a \$2 million budget by the end of FY26.</p>

# 4. INTENTIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL STORYTELLING

**Vision:** Utilize exemplary and focused storytelling to build a loyal base of patrons and supporters.

GOAL	METRIC FOR SUCCESS	RESOURCES
<p>Document NBAF's history through a living archive that is accessible.</p>	<p>Secure grant/ funding to create a digital archive of NBAF history and a system to store NBAF content.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Catalog and store photos/videos.</li> <li>2. Gather content/documentation from past programs, projects, and events (open call to the community).</li> <li>3. Capture oral histories in interviews.</li> </ol>	<p>An archival system and funds to allocate to a new system.</p>
<p>Build a robust digital presence.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase newsletter subscribers by 25% (6,500 subscribers).</li> <li>2. Increase followers on social media platforms by 25% for each platform (IG, Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube).</li> <li>3. Increase website and social views by at least 50% with collaborative posts &amp; digital partnerships.</li> </ol>	<p>Hire a staff person dedicated to marketing at approximately \$60,000/annually.</p>
<p>Continue to develop NBAF brand identity through cohesive and intentional marketing.</p>	<p>Craft compelling visual and narrative pieces that communicate NBAF's impact through branding/style guide materials, youth programs collateral/ newsletter; and organizational content: such as annual campaigns (example – I am NBAF), org collateral (bi-annual mailers), video creation, etc.</p>	



# 5. COMMUNITY BUILDING

**Vision:** Deepen relationships to build a strong community of NBAF ambassadors

GOAL	METRIC FOR SUCCESS	RESOURCES
Maximize community partnerships (institutional peers, sponsors, local arts and community-based organizations).	Strengthen partnerships through multi-year commitments/partnerships; endowment fund implementation.	Set aside \$25,000 of revenue for partnerships.
Engage alumni (students and participating artists).	Operationalize a tracking system. Engagement: Increase youth engagement: 2 youth newsletters per year.	
Sustain a cohesive and healthy internal culture.	Prioritize staff and board retention and satisfaction through annual employee surveys; Board report card; staff retreats, etc.	



# NBAF

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*\*Each council member served as a  
former Board Chair for NBAF.*



# NBAF

1429 Fairmont Avenue // Suite J // Atlanta, GA 30318

Instagram: @nbaf // Facebook: @nbafreimagined  
YouTube: @nbafreimagined



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