

**WEIR
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KDHX

KDHX STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2024

PREPARED BY:

Gladiator Consulting

APPROVED BY:

KDHX Board of Directors



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The past decade at KDHX can be characterized by tremendous transition, growth, and obstacles. It is at this critical moment that our team was engaged to lead a strategic planning process. At the center of the process is the question, *“How must KDHX boldly adapt and grow in order to advance its important mission-to build community through media?”*

A fundamental part of the strategic planning process has been to engage with those who know KDHX best. Over the past six months, staff, donors, funders, volunteers and other KDHX community members have weighed in to share their hopes, dreams, and expectations for KDHX. While the station is a source of joy and community for so many, some stakeholders candidly shared the ways in which they were let down by the organization. This included poor leadership and financial mismanagement by a prior Executive Director. It also included allegations of institutional and interpersonal racism, racial discrimination and bias as well as perceptions that KDHX and its leadership actively refused to acknowledge and meaningfully address the resulting harm caused. No matter their role in relation to KDHX nor their experiences, all stakeholders engaged in brave, honest reflection and dialogue. It is clear that all members of the KDHX community want to see the organization thrive.

This document identifies the focus areas and activities that KDHX commits to over the next three years. KDHX must grow and change. Both the St. Louis community and KDHX are at a crossroads in the struggle for racial equity. As an organization with a mission to build community, KDHX has an opportunity to lead as our region’s residents continue to voice their experiences, dreams and hopes for a more equitable future in which everyone can thrive. Once approved and adopted by the Board of Directors, KDHX will develop and commit to annual action plans that will allow for:

1. Transparency with the public
2. Accountability mechanisms for stakeholders
3. Tracking actions to desired outcomes

-Gladiator Consulting, November 2020
www.gladiatorrds.com



ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

History

For over 30 years, KDHX has built a name as one of the region's premier arts and culture institutions. In an increasingly commercial world, the station is proud to be a non-profit media organization celebrating 33 years of independent music, art, and culture in St. Louis and around the world. KDHX has evolved into a community institution dedicated to preserving, presenting, and promoting music and the arts in the St. Louis region. Their mission is to build community through media, which they do by being an essential point of connectivity for area organizations, artists, and audiences. KDHX is recognized as a public service broadcaster and community builder through its various channels - 88.1 FM, KDHX.org, and Folk School of KDHX.

KDHX's flagship program, the community radio station broadcasting at 88.1 FM, provides commercial-free music programming locally produced by volunteers 24 hours a day.

They rigorously curate educational music programming to platform voices not heard in mainstream media. Further, through on-air music, arts and events calendars, and short-form programs like Saint Louis Music Notes and Here's History - a partnership with the Missouri History Museum - they inform and educate listeners about relevant community events and conversations.

KDHX is deeply committed to supporting local and independent artists. They serve local artists, arts, and nonprofit organizations by promoting their work through on-air announcements, calendar listings, event sponsorships, and arts reviews. KDHX employs more than 300 artists per year and donates over \$1 million of free publicity to promote the work of artists and organizations through on-air announcements and on-air short-form programming. KDHX strives to connect its audiences with artists, venues, and institutions that matter.



MISSION

To build community through media.

PURPOSE

KDHX uses the power of music and education to engage and unite individuals and communities.

VALUES

Stewardship: We believe that the proper management of organizational resources, people, things, and ideas are in the best interest of the organization's long-term health & sustainability.

Independence: We believe that KDHX's independence is at the core of its ability to create content and showcase independent music without the influence of commercial interests.

Partnership: We believe the success of KDHX requires partnership between staff, volunteers, donors, and listeners.

Integrity: We believe that KDHX is and must be people-centered, transparent, and honest.

Discovery: We believe that KDHX is built on music and education facilitated through individual joy of discovery.

Passion: We believe that KDHX encourages passion in individuals and leverages that passion into positive community building.

Joy: We believe KDHX should inspire ecstatic experiences.



OVERVIEW: PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Gladiator began its engagement with KDHX in January 2020. After initial meetings with the KDHX Board of Directors and Executive Director, Kelly Wells, a series of guiding questions for exploration and engagement were agreed upon, with the primary question being *“How must KDHX boldly adapt and grow in order to advance its important mission - to build community through media?”*

In service to this big question were several additional questions:

- Do the current programming/policies of KDHX meet the needs of the community it seeks to serve?
- What are the essential activities for KDHX to strengthen or implement in order to realize its mission of building community through media?
- In what ways might KDHX give voice to underserved or under-engaged segments of the community?
- What holds KDHX back from reaching its highest potential?

The Gladiator team then conducted an artifact review. KDHX shared detailed programming documents, past strategic plans and annual reports, and a number of other organizational documents, including budget and financial statements. Gladiator reviewed these documents to perform an initial assessment on the organization’s strengths and opportunities for growth. This artifact review was then used to design questionnaires and focus group protocols for the second stage of plan development-surveys of and focus groups with KDHX stakeholders.

Five stakeholder groups were engaged - Board members, staff, Community Advisory Board members, funders/donors, and volunteers. Surveying and focus groups were conducted with each group from March through June to collect additional information. Between March and June, Gladiator hosted 3 work sessions with KDHX staff. In these sessions, we used the Great Mondays methodology to uncover KDHX’s purpose statement, define KDHX’s values, and identify which behaviors are good for the culture. By the end of June, feedback from stakeholder surveys and focus groups was distilled by Gladiator into recommendations for three strategic priorities that were then shared with KDHX senior leadership and the Board of Directors for their review and feedback. Additional stakeholders contacted Gladiator Consulting to share feedback outside of this process. As schedules and time allowed, Gladiator staff conducted one-on-one conversations with these stakeholders.

Overview: Plan Development Continued

Following the Board of Directors' feedback and approval on the three strategic priorities, Gladiator convened a 10-member Strategic Plan Steering Committee comprised of representation from KDHX staff, Board, Community Advisory Board, donors/funders, and volunteers. When composing the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, KDHX and Gladiator Consulting sought to include voices not traditionally invited or included in more traditional planning. The Committee met twice in July to provide priority-aligned insights on the long-term strategies to achieve the vision and mission of KDHX and to share ideas on how to make these strategies actionable and time-bound.

Following the Steering Committee meetings, a draft strategic plan was assembled and shared with the Board of Directors Executive Committee for review and feedback. Feedback was incorporated, and a final draft of the plan was developed and shared with the Executive Director and Board of Directors for approval.

See the Appendix for full rosters of Board, Staff, Community Advisory Board, and Strategic Planning Steering Committee members as well as others who provided their input throughout the process.



KEY DEFINITIONS

Stakeholder engagement was rich with candid discussion about the importance of and opportunities for KDHX to fully live into its commitment to the St. Louis community. As such, conversations often included substantive dialogue about not only what it means to be and to serve a “community” but also about diversity, equity, and inclusion. The following terms and definitions were offered to anchor dialogue and inspire action:

Anti-racist: An anti-racist is a human who acknowledges the historical roots of racism, takes responsibility for personal and institutional roles in perpetuating it, and uses both words and action to dismantle white privilege culture in professional, political, community, familial, and personal spaces.

Bias: The story that we tell about other people before we know them.

Implicit Bias: Unconscious attitudes and stereotypes toward individuals and social groups that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions.

Community: A social unit with commonality such as norms, religion, values, customs, or identity. Communities may share a sense of place as characterized by geography/physical space, or virtually such as on a shared communication platform. As a local media hub, KDHX’s primary community are radio listeners in the St. Louis region who value independent music, but there are many opportunities for KDHX to expand its audience.

Community-Centric Fundraising: A fundraising model that is grounded in equity and social justice. Organizations practicing CCF prioritize the entire community over individual organizations, foster a sense of belonging and interdependence, present work not as individual transactions but holistically, and encourage mutual support between nonprofits.

Diversity: Is about difference. The mix. Diversity means a wide range of nationalities, ethnicities, races, genders, LGBTQIA+ identities, abilities, economic statuses, ages, and much more, co-existing in American culture.

Inclusion: Making the mix work; a sense of belonging for all. Inclusion authentically brings traditionally excluded humans and groups into processes, activities and decision/policy making.

Privilege: Unearned benefits given to a set of people who fit into a specific social group.

Racial Equity: A state in which a person’s life outcomes cannot be predicted by race.

Volunteer: KDHX volunteers are individuals who work in partnership with and under the supervision of the KDHX staff to further the mission of KDHX. Volunteers are highly trained by KDHX staff to fulfill their volunteer roles and play an important role in the success of KDHX. KDHX volunteers do not receive compensation for their work and their roles include Board of Directors, programmers, community engagement, and fundraising.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

A SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

As a result of six months of engagement with a cross-cutting array of stakeholders, several themes emerged within the categories of volunteer and community engagement, communication, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and resource development. Above all, stakeholders shared a deep and joyful love for independent music and for the station. They indicated that they want more of just about everything the station offers.

VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

KDHX is community-powered, which means that volunteers are critical to its entire operation. Volunteers understand their essential role in providing programs and services and to serve as ambassadors to make the station visible and engage the broader community. Volunteers who were engaged throughout the strategic planning process indicated that they were looking for more opportunities for further, deeper engagement with the station but also with the community. Ideas surfaced included various opportunities to engage with KDHX staff, donors, and with other volunteers. Activating volunteers to serve as station ambassadors in more places and events within the community was an idea shared across stakeholders, yet there was a recognition that there needs to be dedicated staff in place in order to do this.

COMMUNICATION

Just about every group of stakeholders indicated that they wanted to hear more from KDHX through mediums in addition to radio. This is a way for the station to further its reach and engagement but also is an important way to provide transparency around what is happening at the station. Ideas surfaced included more direct communication from station leaders, staff, and volunteers via email and a more active blog. Stakeholders indicated additional opportunities through strengthening the station's social media presence. There was acknowledgement of using these additional communication opportunities and others (e.g. focus groups and targeted community conversations) as a way to reach communities not currently listening to KDHX in order to diversify listenership and broaden reach.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

KDHX prides itself on its independence and eclectic musical offerings, and yet, diversity, equity, and inclusion were themes that repeatedly showed up in conversations with stakeholders about the station and its vision for the future. The perception among some of the station's biggest champions indicates racial and cultural bias has impacted staff and volunteer culture as well as donor satisfaction. Additionally, some stakeholder feedback indicates that requests and subsequent attempts to address privilege, bias, and accusations of racism have been refused or poorly executed. Ultimately, there was a strong recognition of the important opportunity for KDHX to use its strengths - music, art, independence - to learn from past choices and set a new course.

FUNDRAISING

One of the station's biggest assets is grassroots financial support. Even so, there was a pervasive perception of debt and financial struggle that was shared across stakeholder groups, often connected to previous leadership. Stakeholders indicated a desire to protect the station's many capital investments (e.g. the tower, building, and technical equipment) and for more transparency about the station's financial state and fiscal management.





PRIORITIES, FOCUS AREAS, AND ACTION PLAN FOR 2021-2024



1. ENGAGE COMMUNITY & EXPAND AUDIENCE

By 2024, KDHX has shown an increase in listenership, which will be achieved by strengthening its dynamic programming, and deepening external connections to better serve and engage the full diversity of the St. Louis community.

As a community radio station, there is recognition that the station's work, and its overall process of engagement, provides an opportunity to inspire and advance dialogue around topics that are important to station leaders, staff, volunteers, and listeners alike. KDHX must focus on strengthening overall **communication** with listeners and other stakeholders as well as bolster **community engagement** efforts that bring **volunteers** and staff together and also within the community. Further, KDHX must evaluate its **educational programming** and consider changes to better meet the needs of a diverse community of listeners.

ENGAGE COMMUNITY & EXPAND AUDIENCE ACTION PLAN

Proposed Activity	Timeline	Person Responsible	Desired Outcomes
<p>1.1: Develop community engagement framework aimed at increasing KDHX visibility and interaction with the broader St. Louis community, including goals for engaging diverse populations and a calendar of annual community events in which KDHX should have a presence as a vendor or sponsor</p>	<p>Year 1</p>	<p>Leadership Team & Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed community engagement framework • New engagement opportunities identified • Increased inclusion of stakeholders engaged (e.g. POC, LGBTQIA+, young people)
<p>1.2: Maintain a robust volunteer structure and develop an accountability mechanism</p>	<p>Year 2</p>	<p>Leadership Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed operating and training policies for all organizational volunteers • Identified and implemented successful volunteer recruitment strategies • Developed and implemented successful volunteer peer-to-peer engagement
<p>1.3: ED and other leadership team members author a regular blog post to highlight station priorities, developments, and other timely issues that contextualize the role of the station in the St. Louis community</p>	<p>Year 1</p>	<p>Executive Director & Leadership Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased regular stakeholder communications • Provide brand visibility and expertise • Increase transparency

ENGAGE COMMUNITY & EXPAND AUDIENCE ACTION PLAN CONTINUED

Proposed Activity	Timeline	Person Responsible	Desired Outcomes
<p>1.4: Fund, budget, and hire an Engagement Officer as well as a Community Coordinator to build out the engagement department, implement community engagement framework, and recruit volunteers.</p>	Year 2	Executive Director & Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff capacity solely dedicated to community engagement, volunteer stewardship, and educational offerings • At least a 10% increase each year in unique interactions at community events after baseline established
<p>1.5: Fund, budget, and hire an Education Coordinator to evaluate all KDHX educational programming and training and expand offerings to diversify revenue streams</p>	Year 2	Engagement Officer & Leadership team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All KDHX educational programs and trainings moved under one umbrella and monetized • New educational programs created and offered • At least a 10% increase each year in engagement of unique individuals via new programs after baseline established
<p>1.6: Launch educational programming committee to develop and implement a plan for evaluation of all educational programming with recommendations for streamlining and/or growth</p>	Year 3	Engagement Officer & Education Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-informed recommendations to expand educational programming



2. BUILD ANTI-RACIST CAPACITY

As part of an explicit commitment to anti-racism, by 2024, KDHX will identify systemic barriers to racial equity in its industry, in St. Louis, and within KDHX; will institute policy changes and cultural shifts to overcome those barriers; and will serve as a catalyst for accelerating action toward a racially equitable St. Louis.

To authentically live into its mission to build community through media, KDHX aspires to be an anti-racist institution. As such, the station Board, staff, and volunteers must complete extensive **training** so that there is a shared understanding of anti-racism within an organizational context. Further, **dismantling cultural biases** must be a priority. To do so, KDHX needs to invest in a racial equity capacity assessment to identify the organization’s “starting point” and prioritize activities beyond those identified as part of the organizational strategic plan. Additionally, KDHX must undergo a top-to-bottom **policy review**. By building anti-racist capacity, KDHX will create a sense of belonging for a more diverse set of Board members, staff, volunteers, and listeners.

BUILD ANTI-RACIST CAPACITY ACTION PLAN

Proposed Activity	Timeline	Person Responsible	Desired Outcomes
2.1: Enroll staff and Board in CrossRoads Anti-Bias, Anti-Racism (ABAR) training	Year 1	Board of Directors & Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendees indicate increased understanding of anti-racism and the racist history of St. Louis Build shared baseline and lexicon for discussing matters of race and racial equity
2.2: Create an organization-wide anti-racism charter (statement) and goals	Year 1	Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of statement to explicitly name organization's commitment to anti-racism and specific goals and tactics to live out this commitment; begin implementation of goals
2.3: Develop a clear action plan for addressing systemic racism and investing in systemic change	Year 2	Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified an assessment partner Conducted stakeholder sessions and policy reviews to capture the organizational "starting point" Prioritized areas of growth Developed a racial equity capacity plan

BUILD ANTI-RACIST CAPACITY ACTION PLAN CONTINUED

Proposed Activity	Timeline	Person Responsible	Desired Outcomes
2.4: Develop a plan for enhancing Board, staff, and volunteer diversity.	Year 3	Executive Director & Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased staff and volunteer diversity such that the composition of KDHX stakeholders is representative of the broader St. Louis community
2.5: Update hiring protocols/processes to ensure diverse candidate pools and questions to assess cultural competency and biases of incoming staff members and volunteers	Year 1	Executive Director & Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased staff and volunteer diversity such that the composition of KDHX stakeholders is representative of the broader St. Louis community
2.6: Complete top-to-bottom review of all Board and organization policies and procedures to check for cultural biases and make recommendations to address and change	Year 1	Board of Directors & Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased retention of diverse Board, staff, and volunteers Staff and volunteers report increased satisfaction and sense of belonging related to organization's overall diversity and inclusion
2.7: Develop and implement annual DEI training for all active KDHX volunteers	Year 3	Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build shared baseline and lexicon for discussing matters of race and racial equity Increased understanding of organizational expectations in regard to bias and cultural awareness

3. INCREASE FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP & MANAGEMENT

By 2024, KDHX will increase fundraising by 15% by diversifying fundraising streams and implementing sector best practices for stewardship and financial management.

KDHX has experienced great financial support from its listeners over the past years. By adopting a **Community Centric** approach to fundraising efforts, the organization can **diversify and expand** its existing donor base and increase financial income. Diversifying channels of financial support will create a strong foundation of funding for building capacity and program growth. Developing **processes and procedures** around donor communication, stewardship, and financial management will allow for transparency, efficiency, and advancement of resource development.

Proposed Activity	Timeline	Person Responsible	Desired Outcomes
3.1: Adopt Fund Development Standard Operating Process & Procedures	Year 1	Executive Director & Donor Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase efficiency and ensure transparency in fundraising practices; adopt community-centric donor communications and develop timeline; draft/update policies as needed
3.2: Adapt resource development activities to reflect Community Centric Fundraising (CCF) practices	Year 2	Executive Director & Donor Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a fund development plan to increase organizational fundraising by 15% over three years; set short-term and mid-term strategies for existing and new revenue streams; obtain board approval

INCREASE FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP & MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN CONTINUED

Proposed Activity	Timeline	Person Responsible	Desired Outcomes
3.3: Engage Fund Development Committee	Year 3	Executive Director & Donor Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align committee with CCF principles • Rewrite committee description & expectations • Obtain buy-in, roll-off and/or recruit • Prepare for/communicate intensive engagement to build committee culture
3.4: Board Development and Training	Year 1	Board of Directors & Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen board leadership and commitment • Review and update Board Policies to align with strategic plan goals • Obtain buy-in and/or roll-off • Redefine board roles & responsibilities (Governance Committee) • Adopt a Board matrix & standard for Representation • Develop & implement board orientation and ongoing training series; • Practice mission engagement and Board fellowship

ACTION PLAN GANTT CHART



	Person Responsible	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Engage Community & Expand Audience				
1.1: Develop community engagement framework aimed at increasing KDHX visibility and interaction with the broader St. Louis community, including goals for engaging diverse populations and a calendar of annual community events in which KDHX should have a presence as a vendor or sponsor	Leadership Team & Staff			
1.2: Maintain a robust volunteer structure and develop an accountability mechanism	Leadership Team			
1.3: ED and other leadership team members author a regular blog post to highlight station priorities, developments, and other timely issues that contextualize the role of the station in the St. Louis community	Executive Director & Leadership Team			
1.4: Fund, budget, and hire an Engagement Officer as well as a Community Coordinator to build out the engagement department, implement community engagement framework, and recruit volunteers.	Executive Director & Leadership Team			
1.5: Fund, budget, and hire an Education Coordinator to evaluate all KDHX educational programming and training and expand offerings to diversify revenue streams	Engagement Officer & Leadership team			
1.6: Launch educational programming committee to develop and implement a plan for evaluation of all educational programming with recommendations for streamlining and/or growth	Engagement Officer & Education Coordinator			

	Person Responsible	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Build Anti-Racist Capacity				
2.1: Enroll staff and Board in CrossRoads Anti-Bias, Anti-Racism (ABAR) training	Leadership Team & Staff			
2.2: Create an organization-wide anti-racism charter (statement) and goals	Executive Director			
2.3: Develop a clear action plan for addressing systemic racism and investing in systemic change	Executive Director			
2.4: Develop a plan for enhancing Board, staff, and volunteer diversity.	Executive Director & Board of Directors			
2.5: Update hiring protocols/processes to ensure diverse candidate pools and questions to assess cultural competency and biases of incoming staff members and volunteers	Executive Director & Leadership Team			
2.6: Complete top-to-bottom review of all Board and organization policies and procedures to check for cultural biases and make recommendations to address and change	Board of Directors & Leadership Team			
2.7: Develop and implement annual DEI training for all active KDHX volunteers	Leadership Team			

	Person Responsible	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Increase Financial Stewardship & Management				
3.1: Adopt Fund Development Standard Operating Process & Procedures	Executive Director & Donor Relations			
3.2: Adapt resource development activities to reflect Community Centric Fundraising (CCF) practices	Executive Director & Donor Relations			
3.3: Engage Fund Development Committee	Executive Director & Donor Relations			
3.4: Board Development and Training	Board of Directors & Executive Director			

APPENDIX

The KDHX logo is a red circle with the letters "KDHX" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joan Bray - President
Gary Pierson - Vice President
Kristen Carroll - Secretary
Nelie McNeal - Treasurer
Paul Dever
Ray Finney
Franc Flotron
James Hill
Frank Riddick
August Schlafly
Matt Vianello

SENIOR LEADERSHIP & STAFF

Kelly Wells, Executive Director
Ronnie Wisdom, Chief Media Officer
Andy Coco, Chief Production Officer
Andrea Dunn, Chief Donor Relations Officer
Jesse Hebsen, Underwriting Account Executive
Jon Valley, Production Coordinator
Nathaniel Knoll, Media Relations Manager
Kati Giblin, Office Manager

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Todd Alan
Dewitt Campbell
Tom Eaton
Kathryn Ewing
Sue Greenberg
Steve Knight
Jeremy Miller
Ken Mocabee
Ed Reggi
Stefene Russell
Jody Sowell

STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE

Kristen Carroll, Board
Ray Finney, Board
Andrea Dunn, Staff
Nathaniel Knoll, Staff
Stefene Russell, Community Advisory Board
Dewitt Campbell, Community Advisory Board
Ace Rowe, Volunteer (DJ)
Bill Gelb, aka DJ Wil Wander, Volunteer (DJ)
Courtney Dowdall, Donor
Christine Ratz, Donor

ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Andy Heaslet, Volunteer
DJ Wil Wander, Volunteer (DJ) Focus Group Participant
DJ Drea, Volunteer (DJ) Focus Group Participant
Bob Buck, Donor, Focus Group Participant
Mark Thompson, Donor, Focus Group Participant
Joseph Stremlau, Donor, Focus Group Participant
Christine Ratz, Donor, Focus Group Participant
Paul Klee, Donor, Focus Group Participant
Emma Klues, Focus Group Participant
Nina Needleman, Donor, Focus Group Participant
Courtney Dowdall, Donor, Focus Group Participant
Susan Littlefield, Donor, Focus Group Participant

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