

ALBERTA BALLET

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

COVID-19 has devastated the live performing arts world more than any other event in recent decades. It has excluded from our world the very activities that defined the performing arts: we cannot gather large groups indoors; we are not safe to be near much of live music; our dancers cannot rehearse together or perform in partnership. The virus has altered our reality and its toll is felt in devastating ways no matter where you are in the world.

Dance training, recreationally and professionally, has exhibited an unexpected resiliency just about anywhere you look. Students and studios everywhere have accepted these new terms without hesitation. Almost immediately, dancers persevered through Zoom classes and now through the discomfort of masks, physical distancing and limited social contact. These have proven secondary issues to the desire to train—and not only for those who strive toward a professional dance career but for those who unwaveringly embrace the joy of dance. COVID for dance students is an inconvenience and schools have adapted.

In this new world, arts organizations are faced with a profound opportunity. With live performances paused and dance training adapting against all odds, we have a rare moment to reflect on what we do and how we do it. The pandemic has forcibly freed artists from the constraints of ticketed venues, reinvigorating a connection with the source and purpose of their art form. And it has shown how determined burgeoning dancers are to sustain their training. Dance is no doubt struggling through the pandemic but there also lies an opportunity to imagine a new role in a new world—through and after COVID-19.

This Strategic Plan 2021-2025 explores how dance can thrive in this new world, both on stage and off stage: on stage—when safe to do so—in places like Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat and Camrose; and off stage through dance films, community events and choreographic workshops. Our programming must involve more Albertans. They must make up more of our storytellers, designers, students and dancers. Our plan seeks to embrace the provincial aspect of our mandate, with more programming than we've done in recent years.

Although our training has not paused, we are using this time to evaluate how we deliver programming to more Albertans. The restrictions from the pandemic have encouraged us to rapidly develop new digital training resources. With the launch of these resources, we are starting a new conversation about how Alberta Ballet School develops new partnerships and shares our training with other schools throughout Alberta. Our training and our performing must be intimately tied at Alberta Ballet. More Company dancers can come from our students and more of our students can come from Alberta. Talent recruitment must start first with talent development and that must start at home.

There is so much talent in Alberta.

Alberta Ballet is emerging with a new vision to implement a community ecosystem of dance throughout the province. Reflecting the lives, the demographics and the communities of those who live here is at the heart of equity, diversity and inclusion at Alberta Ballet. We will do this by reflecting the stories, spaces and talent found in the communities around us.

Economists project the years ahead will be grim for Alberta's economy, and we need to adapt appropriately. Before COVID-19, Alberta Ballet depended largely on tuition and ticket sales revenue, an enormous success and source of pride for the organization. Alberta Ballet will now need a new model to survive. Adapting to the new circumstances means being intimately tied with more families, more donors, more subscribers and more foundations throughout Alberta.

This strategic plan has community development as its underlying principle. As one of very few truly provincial arts organizations, Alberta Ballet and Alberta Ballet School should be the cultural flagships for this province. By purposefully and demonstrably showing this value, Alberta Ballet will continue to thrive long after the pandemic is in the annals of history.

NEW VISION & MISSION.

To uplift Albertans in every community through dance is Alberta Ballet's new vision. It is lofty and requires a focus on community development and a level of resources that Alberta Ballet does not possess today. The province's population is small, less than that of the GTA, and its geography is great, nearly three times that of the entire United Kingdom. Achieving this vision is no easy feat. It takes an ecosystem, tailored to communities and in partnership with communities. Using dance to uplift the communities of this province is what Alberta Ballet has always been here to do.

Art brings imagination to life. It is the inspiration that people first encounter as children through play and enjoy as adults through literature, music and drama. **Alberta Ballet's mission is to ignite the curiosity and imagination of people in all communities across the province, championing their stories and experiences through dance training, creation and performances.** Alberta Ballet's vision is to uplift communities throughout the province and we will chart this course through this mission.

NEW VALUES.

Alberta Ballet’s values support our vision. They shape our culture and our decision-making processes. Our values inform our strategies and align our board members, staff and volunteers, guiding us in how we serve our communities and what we want to contribute to the people of our province.



SERVE

Community well-being is at the heart of Alberta Ballet. As one of few provincial arts organizations, Alberta Ballet believes in its mandate to deliver dance across the province. Through dance training and performances—in whatever ways we can—we need to provide opportunities for all Albertans to experience the value of dance.



REFLECT

For Alberta Ballet to thrive, we need to tell stories that reflect the diversity of Alberta. It is not enough to perform for our communities; we must involve them and participate with them. Albertans from every corner of the province must see themselves within our offices, our studios and classrooms and on our stages.

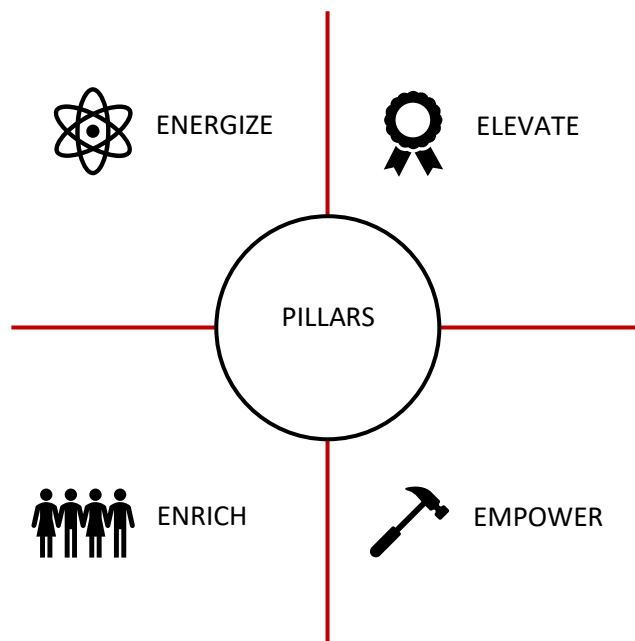


BELIEVE

We need audiences and students, employees and volunteers to believe in the magic of dance. We want to inspire curiosity and a deep personal engagement among all we touch. There is an interdependence between movement and wellness and that wellness is essential to community well-being. To see and feel our human experiences connects us, reminding us all how important we are to one another.

THE FOUR PILLARS.

Alberta Ballet's four pillars represent its action plan. These are what we strive for when we uplift communities, ignite imaginations and reflect our province. Pillars uphold Alberta Ballet's values, give legs to its mission and ensure that the goals the organization are working toward are designed to fulfill its vision.



ENERGIZE.

Alberta Ballet's priority is to energize programming and create new works in new ways for more Albertans. We will use new models to share dance. We will explore a new balance to our activities. Our mainstage performances will be delivered alongside more robust community programming. This balance will help us achieve our vision to uplift Albertans in every community through dance.

New Works

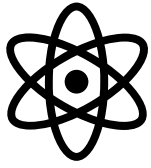
Investment in repertoire is the most high-profile commitment a ballet company makes. Alberta Ballet prides itself on an expansive and diverse repertoire. We have featured works from some of the world's most talented choreographers and storytellers, and in this next strategic cycle, we will use new works to advance our mission of uplifting Albertans. We will focus on creating repertoire that resonates with Albertans, artists, musicians and storytellers. In the next five years, we will pursue significant repertoire projects, ones that speak to the diverse communities of Alberta. We will advance our mission by thoughtfully identifying how we craft new works that will resonate with the communities we serve.

Dance Films

Digital dance content is a new way for us to share dance experiences. We will invest in more performances outside of theatres and directly in community spaces. Dance films provide opportunities for Alberta Ballet to highlight remarkable aspects of Alberta in ways never presented before. We will showcase the history of spaces and the people who make these spaces extraordinary. It is a way for us to meaningfully serve the people of Alberta, while reflecting them in our work.

Story Creation

We will build on our commitment to sharing stories that resonate with Albertans. Alberta Ballet plans to work with some of the very best artists, musicians and storytellers in the province by commissioning works from right here at home. Alberta Ballet is fortunate to have access to some of the country's best costume and set designers working in Alberta, as well as one of the world's pre-eminent post-secondary training programs located in Banff. We will uplift the substantial talent in our province by commissioning more works from Albertans.



ENERGIZE GOAL:

ALBERTA-DRIVEN WORK DELIVERED IN MORE WAYS TO MORE ALBERTANS

OBJECTIVE

To resonate with the communities we serve, Alberta Ballet is pursuing a strong local focus in its repertoire, its digital content and its artistic partners.

PRIORITY	TARGET AREA	TARGETS				
		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
NEW WORKS	Mainstage/Small Stage	0	1	2	2	2
DANCE FILMS	AB Locations	5	3	4	5	6
	Public Screenings	5	3	4	5	6
STORY CREATION	AB Set Design/Construction	0	0	1	1	1
	AB Costume Design/Construction	0	0	2	2	2
	AB Story Commissions	0	2	1	1	1

ELEVATE.

Dance training is for everyone and no institution in Alberta can deliver professional quality training in more studios and to more students than Alberta Ballet School. By increasing training opportunities across Alberta through studio partnerships, virtual training programs and scholarship awards, more Albertans can find themselves in our professional school, and ultimately, on stage as Alberta Ballet dancers.

Talent Recruitment

Through its programming and professional training model, Alberta Ballet School is a means for Alberta Ballet to develop future audiences and attract exceptional talent to the Company. Expanding its reach throughout Alberta will enable the School to develop talent from across the province. Students need to have a solid training foundation by age seven or eight if they hope to one day train professionally. By improving synergies between the School and the Company, Alberta Ballet School students can continue to look to the Company to inform their development while the Company maintains a talented well-trained pool of dancers from which to recruit.

Virtual Training

The global pandemic of 2020 forced organizations in all sectors and from all countries to reassess their operations. Alberta Ballet and Alberta Ballet School have been no exception. When studios closed to prevent COVID-19 spread, we began looking at new ways to deliver programming. Alberta Ballet School developed an online Virtual Dance Training Program that enabled students to access the School's unique curriculum. Alberta Ballet will continue to investigate options for how a virtual presence can help us serve more communities and offer a meaningful connection to our training and our performances.

Partnership Programs

Alberta Ballet School has already proven itself among the world's high-calibre and comprehensive ballet training schools. By working with local dance schools throughout the province, Alberta Ballet School can offer training opportunities to the most talented students by offering specialized training at our Calgary facility once per month. The School can extend its brand reach in the larger markets in Calgary and Edmonton, while offering the same caliber of training previously only attainable in Calgary. We will further serve this network by connecting these schools to Alberta Ballet master classes when the Company is touring.

Scholarships

As we increase awareness about the high-calibre training offered at the School, we need to be ready to support more Alberta students in our Professional Division training, and this means robust scholarship fundraising. We know that the economic outlook for the province is grim, and it's reasonable to expect that more Alberta families will face financial hardships. We will work to be ready to offer financial assistance to Alberta families who want to encourage their child's dream of a professional dance career but lack the needed financial resources.



ELEVATE GOAL:

INCREASE ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL QUALITY DANCE TRAINING FOR STUDENTS AND STUDIOS ACROSS ALBERTA.

OBJECTIVE

Alberta Ballet School will increase access to dance training across the province, elevating the School's reputation as a provincial flagship institution.

PRIORITY	TARGET AREA	TARGETS				
		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
TALENT RECRUITMENT	Competitions Adjudicated	5	7	7	7	7
	Student Engagement	450	600	600	600	600
	Auditionees	300	300	300	300	300
VIRTUAL TRAINING	Videos Produced	100	20	—	—	—
	Student Participation	30	50	65	80	100
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS	Satellite Programs	3	3	6	6	6
	Associate Partners	2	4	7	7	7
SCHOLARSHIPS	Alberta Recipients	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%
	Canadian Recipients	25%	25%	30%	25%	20%
	International Recipients	25%	20%	10%	10%	5%
	Fundraising Recovered	10%	20%	60%	80%	100%
DANCER EMPLOYMENT [†]	Alberta Ballet Dancers Proportion	25%	30%	40%	55%	70%
	Professional Companies (external)	5	10	10	10	10

[†]Dancer Employment: *Alberta Ballet Dancers Proportion* refers to the percentage of professional company dancers employed at Alberta Ballet who are graduates of Alberta Ballet School. *Professional Companies (external)* indicates the number of graduates each year who obtain employment at companies other than Alberta Ballet for the following season.

ENRICH.

Alberta Ballet will deliver more programming to communities across the province. We will meet audiences outside of the theatre with several ways to join in shared dance experiences beyond buying a ticket to a performance.

Stewardship

Our stewardship has focused most on the communities that join us at our Jubilee performances. We have prioritized strengthening these relationships, working attentively to deliver value to our donors, subscribers and ticket buyers, sponsors and other local partners. We will continue to provide the engagement and follow the principles that have allowed us to strengthen these relationships. We know this community has not historically reflected Alberta's diversity, and we will apply the strengths we've developed in building relationships to reach new communities. Stewardship will expand to include more than those who can join us in the Jubilee. We will look to reach more audiences, online and in-person, in more geographies.

Community Activations

We will meet our audiences more often outside of the theatre. To play a leadership role in the province, we will engage in new ways to share dance with Albertans. This includes sharing a love for dance in ways that meaningfully intersect with other community celebrations. As part of the fabric of the province, Alberta Ballet will be part of the parades, festivals and public spaces that bring Alberta's diverse groups together.

Provincial Touring

Watching dance on stage is a special experience. Dance has evolved to shine its brightest and most emotive when an audience is captivated by all the stagecraft that goes into a professional performance. In Fort McMurray, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, Camrose, Lloydminster, Red Deer and Medicine Hat, Alberta Ballet we will deliver our full performance experience on more stages throughout Alberta.

Choreographic Workshops

We will invite more Albertans to participate in our creative process, and we will remove barriers that traditionally limit who gets to participate. As our School nurtures new generations of dancers to pursue professional careers, and as we hire new graduates to apprentice with our company, we understand that apprentices need guidance. They must shift from training to master a technical movement to working artistically to support a choreographer's vision. Alberta Ballet will create opportunities to give more Alberta dance students and more emerging choreographers what they need to practice and explore the collaborative elements of dance creation.



ENRICH GOAL:

INCREASE VALUE TO ALBERTANS BY DELIVERING AN ECOSYSTEM OF DANCE EXPERIENCES IN MORE COMMUNITIES.

OBJECTIVE

Alberta Ballet will deliver an ecosystem of dance experiences, giving more Albertans a variety of ways to benefit from the well-being that comes with engaging in dance activities.

PRIORITY	TARGET AREA	TARGETS				
		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
STEWARDSHIP	Stakeholder Events	4	8	12	12	14
	Stakeholders Engaged	80	160	400	420	480
	New Stakeholder Geographies	4	4	7	7	7
COMMUNITY ACTIVATIONS	Alberta Communities	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
PROVINCIAL TOURING	Distinct Provincial Venues	4	4	7	7	7
	Performances	8	8	14	14	14
	Audiences	800	800	1000	1200	
CHOREOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS	Workshops	1	1	2	2	2
	Participants	15	15	30	40	40
	Geographies Represented	1	1	2	2	2

EMPOWER.

Our new strategy and vision require a very different way of working. We also need new ways to fund our objectives now that performance income is projected to take a long time to recover. We need a stronger base of community support, and we will endeavour to build that support by reflecting those we serve.

Students, Subscribers and Donor Growth

As we adapt to a changed reality, Alberta Ballet requires greater investment in those essential relationships that keep Alberta Ballet thriving and sustainable. We are looking to do more than expand our reach across the province. We will build a loyal patron base and invest in our efforts to inspire donor support, and key among these endeavors is our dance ecosystem. Students, subscribers and donor bases need to deepen, grow and reflect the communities Alberta Ballet serves.

Community and Market Research

Ongoing market research is critical to our objectives. Coming out of COVID-19, we will need a better understanding of the changing global marketplace for dance student recruitment and how the provincial market may aid us in better recruitment opportunities. We need to understand how communities of all sizes across the province navigate the coming uncertain and potentially lean years. Beyond economic data, we also need a deeper understanding of the communities we strive to serve. We want Albertans to see themselves in our programming and we can only accomplish this with both extensive relationship-building and data-driven market intelligence.

Data Management

Understanding our data is the foundation to making good business decisions. It allows for better client prospecting—whether potential donors, students or subscribers—and it ensures we have new abilities to target and attract clients through digital marketing efforts. Data management is an ongoing effort. Technology is always improving, and we can anticipate in the coming years there will be new developments that will help us analyze data quicker and with greater accuracy. Alberta Ballet relies on efficient systems to register students, sell tickets and analyze and respond to donor preferences. With great data management, we can make great decisions.

Endowment

Ticket sales and tuition may be more challenging to earn than ever before but understanding this reality has prompted us to reconsider what resources Alberta Ballet can access for long-term sustainability. Endowment gifts, matched in part by Canadian Heritage, can help us make up the areas in our revenue stream that will be slow to recover. A \$20 million endowment will generate the funds needed to support the programming Alberta Ballet is committed to delivering each year. We have raised nearly 20% of our goal already and are on our way to ensuring we can serve more of our province as we go forward into a new economy, a new province, and a new future.



EMPOWER GOAL:

INCREASE ALBERTA BALLET'S CAPACITY TO SUSTAINABLY DELIVER PROGRAMMING THROUGHOUT ALBERTA.

OBJECTIVE

To ensure Alberta Ballet remains sustainable, we need to increase our focus on stakeholder relations across the province, leveraging our new strategy for endowment potential.

PRIORITY	TARGET AREA	TARGETS				
		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
PROVINCIAL	New Patron Geographies	4	4	7	7	7
STAKEHOLDER	New Student Geographies	3	3	6	6	6
GROWTH*	New Donor Geographies	1	4	6	7	7
COMMUNITY AND MARKET RESEARCH	New Municipal Relationships [†]	5	2	1	—	—
	New Civic Partners ^{††}	14	7	7	—	—
	Demographic Profiles [‡]	6	3	3	3	3
DATA MANAGEMENT	School Registration System		Y	—	—	—
	Middleware System		Y	—	—	—
	Personalized Data Engagement ^{‡‡}	15%	30%	60%	100%	100%
ENDOWMENT	Campaign Matching & Completion	\$8M	\$12M	\$16M	\$20M	—

*Provincial Stakeholder Growth: This represents the number of new locations in Alberta from where we've been able to attract new patrons, students and donors.

[†]New Municipal Relationships: Represents new relationships formed with municipal bureaucrats or politicians.

^{††}New Civic Partners: Represents venue management, tourism boards or other major institutions.

[‡]Demographic Profiles: Market research intelligence on each community, segmented by geographically-relevant indicators in each community.

^{‡‡}Personalized Data Engagement: Data intelligence as a percentage of our customer records that are personalized and have customized targeting built.

CONCLUSION.

Alberta Ballet's new strategic plan represents a dramatic shift from its previous focus. Delivering a dance ecosystem in places like Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Camrose and Lloydminster will help bolster our donors and subscribers. Not everyone in Alberta can make it to our schools in Calgary and Edmonton or to the Jubilee Auditoriums. We are Alberta Ballet, and we are Alberta's dance company.

Our new dance ecosystem ensures that every community we're targeting has increased access to performances, community participation and professional dance training. Community enrichment only works when we deploy a holistic series of regular and recurring activities. These communities all have dance students and they all have theatres. The time is ripe for Alberta Ballet to help train those students and to be featured on those theatres' playbills.

We need deeper relationships with more Albertans than ever before.

Enriching Albertan's lives is central to ensuring our sustainability and there are so many ways to achieve this. Ultimately, by demonstrating our support to communities throughout Alberta, we can build an enormous base of supporters who stand in our corner, ensuring we thrive long into the future.