



STRATEGIC PLAN

2026 – 2030

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319 Main Street, Smithfield VA 23430

ISLE OF WIGHT ARTS LEAGUE

Our Mission: Our mission is to be a champion and pioneer for the arts in our community. To support our vision, we will nurture partnerships within the community and develop programs that will expand our outreach. We will ensure our longevity by being conscious of our financial and organizational structure. Furthermore, we will embrace our vision by hosting arts events that promote the overall cultural and economic vitality of the community.

Our Vision: The Isle of Wight Arts League and its individual programs; Summer Concert Series, Smithfield Music, Sundays at Four, and the Arts Center @ 319; envision a community that appreciates the arts and experiences it in all forms. We strive to cultivate a culture which integrates the arts into the fabric of the community by engaging academic institutions, businesses and other community entities in various arts programs.

Our Aspirations/Goal: To develop measurable benchmarks for member attendance, event execution, volunteer opportunities, and engagement with our active members. We will increase membership and volunteerism; improve signature events and fundraising efforts; and develop additional outreach programs.

Strategic Commitments: The IWAL Board is committed to involve as many people as possible in events and keep art central to the community, continuously improving programs year over year, & executing the action steps in this plan

Strategic Objectives	Strategies/Initiatives
1. Grow and Engage Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand membership numbers and event participation • Promote opportunities to league membership to provide pathway for new board members and talents • Conduct annual member surveys • Forn a welcoming, creative environment for members and patrons • Increase outreach to minority populations in schools and surrounding communities
2. Expand Community Engagement and Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with schools, businesses, civic groups, and community centers • Establish a marketing group to coordinate multi-channel communications (social media, newsletters, paid/free advertising, flyers, website, email campaigns) • Maintain direct community presence at local events (farmers markets, tourism events) • Leverage technology for marketing, fundraising, and cost reduction • Conduct bi-annual patron surveys
3. Expand Exhibition and Sales Opportunities for Artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand exhibition space within the Art Center • Increase artist participation and sales • Connect new businesses/construction projects with IWAL artists
4. Strengthen Organizational Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening Board development and effectiveness • Enhance audience experience • Pursue grants and corporate sponsorships • Track attendance trends and financial performance

The Programs



Arts Center @ 319: Founded in 1991, provides the operational base for The Arts League. The Center serves as an art gallery, gift shop, arts studios, and a classroom. It showcases a variety of original works by premier regional artists in the consignment gift shop, provides resident artist’s studio space; and offers a full range of visual arts programs, classes, workshops, and camps. In partnering with the Smithfield & Isle of Wight Tourism, the Center serves as a platform for its execution of county cultural tourism initiatives. The Arts Center drives growth through outreach to surrounding communities and counties in the Tidewater area. The program is sustained by gift shop and artist studio sales, studio rentals, class fees, juried exhibits, fundraising, grants donations and Arts League membership fees.

Smithfield Music: Launched in 2005, presents concerts, workshops, special events, and fundraisers to ensure music education for young musicians in our community. This program is vital to exposing the community to various music styles and genres by hosting a cadre of musical experiences from artists of different regions. In collaborative efforts with Smithfield Little Theatre and Smithfield Virginia Events, Smithfield Music provides opportunities to raise funds for youth music education programs in schools (both public and private) and the community. The program is sustained by admission fees, sponsorships, contributions, and fundraising.

Summer Concert Series: Established in 1987 by The Smithfield Times, the series has, for many years, been a joint project of the newspaper and the Arts League. It continues today as an Arts League program in partnership with The Smithfield Times, Smithfield & Isle of Wight Tourism, and Town of Smithfield which provides a venue for performances. The program is sustained by individual contributions and sponsorships.

Sundays at Four: Established in 2008, produces a series of classical music performances for students, professionals, and accomplished musicians. The primary focus is to encourage young musicians through exposure to quality music and public performance. The series partners with churches, civic organizations, and businesses for space and other services for our participants and patrons. Admission fees, performance underwriting, grants, and “free-will” offerings sustain performances and a scholarship program.

Executive Summary: The Board of Directors serves as the leadership of The Arts League. The Board’s primary goals are program and fiduciary oversight, development of partnerships with other community organizations, fundraising, advocacy of the arts to the community, and arts leadership to Isle of Wight County, Isle of Wight County Schools, the Town of Smithfield, and surrounding communities. The costs associated with the business operations of the Arts League are processed through the Arts Center and paid from earned income, admissions, fundraisers, grants, and donations. Each of the League’s programs will have a representative on the board who are required to develop plans, reports, budgets, and measurement tools for their respective programs.

PROGRAM SUPPORT:

Program	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Goals	To provide leadership, management, oversight, and support to the Isle of Wight Arts League and its four principal programs.
Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Board development and effectiveness through cross training, workshops and seminars • Enhance financial stability of the Arts League by assignment of the role as business development manager to the Vice President. This initiative will allow for greater focus on future program needs and allow for more sound planning. • Strive to increase visibility of the Arts League and all its programs throughout the community and surrounding areas • Build stronger alliances with other regional arts associations
Timelines	<p>October – January determine candidates for Board of Directors and propose a slate of officers.</p> <p>January - December provide oversight of grant submissions, volunteer programs, committees, and annual events.</p> <p>January – December review plan, develop new ideas and strategies for increasing arts awareness and appreciation especially to younger and underserved population</p>
Person/People Responsible	IWAL Executive Board

Arts Center @ 319

Mission: The organization is dedicated to the development and recognition of the arts as an important, multi-cultural contributor to the well-being and growth of our community, county, and surrounding environs. **Role in Community:** The Arts Center @ 319 is the only non-commercial visual arts venue in Isle of Wight County. It complements the eclectic mix of commercial art galleries, antique shops, boutiques, and restaurants in the Smithfield Historic District and is frequented by county and Hampton Roads residents as well as visiting tourists. The Arts Center and the Smithfield & Isle of Wight Tourism Visitor Center are co-located and share a contiguous space in a repurposed hardware store in the center of the Smithfield Historic District. It has become a destination for tourists and, more importantly, for residents. It is also a showcase of a partnership with the Town of Smithfield and Isle of Wight County in the execution of a cultural tourism initiative.

Program Goals/Objectives: To offer an exceptional fine arts experience to members, visitors, and the community at large. Provide six to eight themed exhibits per year, at least one juried exhibit, eight resident artist studios, art classes, and retail sale of works by member artists. Execute a cultural tourism strategy in partnership with the Town of Smithfield and the County through the operation of the co-located Arts Center and Tourism Visitor Center.

A. Leadership Activities and Advocacy Efforts: The private/public partnership forged with Smithfield & Isle of Wight Tourism in 2009 put the Arts League on point for the execution of a successful cultural tourism initiative to transform the Smithfield Historic District from an antiques destination to an arts destination: Hams, History, Hospitality and HeART. The Arts Center Director will actively participate in the Genuine Merchants of Downtown Smithfield (GMODS) ad hoc committee. The director will continue advocacy for arts in education through Arts League and GMODS initiatives and direct involvement with arts faculty through programs such as student art exhibits, master classes, and demonstration of art techniques for students and the public.

B. Audience Development: The partnership with Tourism and the co-location of its Visitor Center has had a dramatic impact on the exposure of its visual arts programs to residents and visiting tourists. The Arts Center visitor counts in 2024 exceeded 15,000 visitors through the Center. The eight Resident Artists experience daily interaction with visitors. Continued effort is being made to become better known in local neighborhoods and encourage visitation to the Historic District. Outreach beyond the immediate community, other parts of Isle of Wight, and surrounding counties continue.



Develop an exhibit schedule that balances higher quality content (works by critically acclaimed artists) with more content within the economic reach of its community. Introduce new and emerging artists within the Tidewater area. Promote greater interaction with other galleries and artist organizations. Create a “speakers’ bureau” from board members, member artists, and other Isle of Wight Arts League (IWAL) members to serve as program presenters to local organizations and clubs that provide monthly presentations to their membership. Art demonstrations and offsite displays also need to be considered.

C. Opportunities for Youth: Seek an internship program at the Arts Center for local high school students and college students considering a career in visual arts.

D. Artistic Standards: Seek and recruit the best local and regional artists for exhibits; and best local artists and artisans for gift shop.

E. Art Education: Recruit experienced artists to create and offer a wide range of classes and workshops targeted at beginner and intermediate students. Use the Resident Artists to identify arts education opportunities. Investigate offering a **master class** at least once per year to encourage professional development of local artists. Offer art appreciation classes starting at the Middle School level for home school students. The art center will seek to take advantage of programs and instructors offered by the VMFA in Richmond.



Smithfield Music

Mission: The Music Program will continue to fulfill its mission to subsidize the county and private school music programs in Isle of Wight County by donating money raised throughout the year. This money comes from participation in SVAE Festivals and other performances organized during the calendar year. All monies raised will benefit youth music education in Isle of Wight County.

- A. Target community, geographic area, demographics, artistic environment: The greater Tidewater area is our primary audience, although our network has extended to an audience up and down the east coast who have specifically come for events presented in Smithfield.
- B. **Role in Community:** All proceeds raised by Smithfield Music are given to the youth music programs in Isle of Wight County. The bulk of funds going to the nine public schools in the county (elementary through high school) as well as a private school (Isle of Wight Academy) with a growing music program. Scholarships for advanced music studies have also been a part of our benefit program. We consider the presentation of live music as a part of our responsibility to expose people in the community to performances they otherwise may never see.

Program Goals/Objectives:

A. Leadership Activities and Advocacy Efforts: This area has become well known among a growing circle of performers as a place to find an appreciative listening audience in a welcoming environment. This organization has also had a role in promoting the value of music education in the curriculum of the school system and the benefits far exceed the ability to just play an instrument.

B. Audience Development: Our audience continues to grow as they realize we are a vehicle to see and hear music as the primary focus and not as mere background sound.

C. Artistic Standards: All acts that are brought to perform in Smithfield for the various events that we support have been handpicked for their entertainment values, musical expertise, and their willingness to meet and relate with the audience.

Planned Activities: Plan performances to be presented throughout the year in a local venue, and the continued booking of bands for the three festivals organized by Smithfield VA Events annually. Donations by the public are encouraged.



SUMMER CONCERT SERIES



Mission: To create a family environment set to music.

Summer Concert Series enters its 40th season in 2026. The series is targeted toward the residents of Isle of Wight and surrounding communities. It attempts to provide a wide variety of musical entertainment for families and all age groups. Friday evening concerts attract an average of 250 people weekly.

The Summer Concert Series was created by The Smithfield Times as a downtown business promotion. It has evolved into entertainment for its own sake. The series has become an important part of the summer cultural experience for Smithfield, all of Isle of Wight County, and surrounding communities. The Smithfield Times and its former publisher coordinated the concert series until 2020. Under successive leadership, the current Director has continued the concerts to date with expectations for the future.

Regional music combos from a broad range of genres enjoy performing before an audience that is always appreciative. The series has become a favored venue for new musical groups to build their reputation.

The concert venue has always provided a relaxed environment for families and attempts to devote at least one evening specifically to young children and their parents.

Community bands, military units and a variety of small combos from the region provide a pool of musicians from which performers are selected. With the advent of Internet-linked music samples, it has enhanced the selection of performers that fit the outdoor venue of the series.

Planned Activities: Fifteen concerts are typically scheduled between Memorial Day and Labor Day. A sixteenth large indoor concert, when financially prudent, is held on the Friday after Labor Day.



SUNDAYS AT FOUR PERFORMANCE SERIES

Mission: Established in 2008, Sundays at Four (SAF) presents a series of classical music performances, including occasional classical jazz performances, featuring accomplished professionals and recognized teenage musicians in recitals allowing them to share their art. Programs provide mentoring opportunities for dedicated teenagers and a public venue for them to perform.



Ticket sales, performance underwriting, grants, and freewill offerings support these concerts.

Sundays at Four maintains a Scholarship Fund which can be awarded to a deserving teenage musician. Free master classes are offered to provide students with professional training on their instruments. Student ensembles are given special recognition within the SAF season.

SAF encourages local music teachers to feature their student ensemble concerts within the concert schedule. Exceptional performers are showcased in group and solo recitals. Students have an opportunity to collaborate with a professional pianist accompanying them. Master Classes provide students with

professional lessons of which many would not have the opportunity to enjoy on their own.

Activities Planned: The concert season consists of seven performances, three professional ticketed events, three programs providing professional experience for young musicians, and a recital organized for five or six outstanding teen musicians from Hampton Roads. In addition, the Nelson Linaburg Scholarship Fund presents awards to outstanding students.

Growing Attendance: Audience size varies by venue, program, timing, competing events, and weather. SAF will target younger audiences and feature more music from musicals and classical jazz. Increasing attendance is a main goal. Transportation will be offered for those with mobility issues or older guests. SAF remains committed to quality performances.

