



WIDE ANGLE YOUTH MEDIA

2601 North Howard St. Suite 160 Baltimore, MD 21218 www.wideanglemedia.org

Tactical Roadmap (CY24 – CY26)

Overview & Background

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to guide operations during a 3 year period of transition (1/1/2024 - 12/31/2026, CY24–CY26). In 2024, Wide Angle Youth Media (Wide Angle) will move its operations to a new headquarters, Wide Angle’s Studios at the Service Center. It will provide staff with clarity to wrap operations in its current facilities and implement programming in the new space.

Organization Background

Since 2000, Wide Angle has collaborated with more than 7,790 youth in Baltimore City, who have produced hundreds of media projects about their lives and communities. Wide Angle uses media arts education to amplify the voices of youth (ages 10-24), engaging them in quality in-school and after-school programming, summer workshops, workforce training, community events, and other programs. To date, over 5.5 million people have viewed youth work and learned about Wide Angle’s mission via community screenings, television, radio, film festivals, and online.

Wide Angle’s former Strategic Plan (originally FY18-FY22) was extended to the end of calendar year 2023 (CY23), in response to disruptions caused by COVID-19. While the bulk of the original strategic plan was either on track or successfully completed prior to the pandemic, COVID-19’s lasting impact necessitated an extension in order to meet existing goals and thoughtfully envision the near-term future of the organization. During FY20-FY23, Wide Angle established the following grounding tenets to guide its COVID-19 response: resilience, responsive action, storytelling, and clarity. These tenets continue to inform current operations and the development of the following Tactical Roadmap. Most financial budgetary growth projections were initially met within two years (FY18-FY19), however, the extension allowed Wide Angle to recalibrate components such as social enterprise revenue. With a current annual operating budget of nearly \$2.3MM in FY24, Wide Angle’s funding profile includes individuals, foundations, government agencies, contractual partners, and fee-for-service clients. Wide Angle’s fiscal reserve doubled over FY20-FY22, and the organization has a 13 month liquidity ratio. Since FY18, Wide Angle has focused on growing programs and audience viewership to serve the community and share youth voice, achieving substantial success. Wide Angle is looking to the future with an eye toward innovation, intention, and growth.

The organization launched a capital campaign in FY22 to build a new 9,000+ square foot headquarters at 25th and Howard Streets, scheduled for completion in 2024. The [Studios at the Service Center](#) will feature a new state-of-the-art media production and programming facility, gallery space, classrooms and more. Wide Angle’s Studios will include a production studio, loading dock, flexible meeting and classroom spaces, two state-of-the-art media labs, editing rooms, voice-over/zoom room spaces, and work areas for an expanding staff. The Studios will be an accessible community hub that is designed for its unique educational, career readiness, and production needs.

Pre-Work & Plan Development

Tactical Roadmap development was facilitated by staff and supported by Maryland Nonprofits, thanks to generous funding from the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. In addition, it was informed by several FY22-FY23 activities:

- **Vision and Values:** Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression facilitator Ayira Core Concepts LLC facilitated 6 sessions with staff to develop Values and create a foundation for an updated Vision statement.
- **Pro Forma:** Financial sustainability goals are informed by a 10 year Pro Forma, compiled in partnership with CapEx Advisory, to project organizational budget growth and forecast revenue streams over the next 10 years. The Pro Forma will help ensure organizational sustainability as operations and overhead costs expand within the new space.
- **Donor Audit:** In FY22, the Pandit Group conducted an audit of Wide Angle's donors from the previous five years to identify giving trends, strengths, and areas of improvement. The findings have informed Wide Angle's updated individual donor and fundraising strategies. This process was fully funded by T. Rowe Price Foundation (TRP).
- **ICAT:** The Impact Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT), funded by TRP, is a tool that helps nonprofits better understand their organizational capacity based on direct input from the staffing team and key stakeholders. Through an online survey administered by TRP in FY23, the ICAT collected anonymous input on six research-based organizational capacities from Wide Angle staff and board. Input was converted into a report summarizing organizational strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for improvement.
- **Capacity & Resource Development:** A Special Request grant provided by Maryland State Arts Council helped fund critical FY23 positions that bolstered the organization through the initial Roadmap development. In addition, the organization's funding portfolio expanded with new support from government and private philanthropy sectors, as well as through new major donors.
- **HR Accountability and Documentation:** In FY22, Wide Angle hired Prescott HR to conduct an HR audit and work plans, complete a compensation equity study, develop new HR policies and support the development of a compensation philosophy. In FY23, Wide Angle began the process of bringing all staff into compensation alignment, solidified a new staff orientation, built staff wiki, and strengthened staffing capacity through improved and streamlined job descriptions. In FY24, this momentum continued with the development of a managing handbook, and volunteer engagement plan & orientation.
- **Listening Tour:** In FY23-FY24, Wide Angle leadership held conversations with former staff from historically minoritized and marginalized backgrounds, to first make amends for any harms unintentionally caused during their tenure and second, to identify/seek critical feedback on areas of growth to address in the new strategic plan. All participants were compensated for their time and insights and this effort was supported in part by the Peck Foundation.

Plan Methodology

From fall 2022 - spring 2023, staff met over three 1-2 day retreats to develop a new Vision statement (below), refine organization values, and build out plans to operationalize those values. These planning sessions provided the foundation for the Tactical Roadmap, along with pre-work noted above. Members of the leadership team and department managers on staff refined the Roadmap further, with opportunities for full staff feedback and board input at strategic points in development.

In fall 2023, a consultant from Maryland Nonprofits helped Wide Angle finalize its Tactical Roadmap and create annual action plans to further advance the goals of the Roadmap. Throughout the process, staff and board set priorities around achieving the intended impact of goal advancement; identified necessary organizational capacity and financial resources; and established the benchmarks that will make it possible to define success.



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Tactical Roadmap (CY24– CY26)

Mission: Through media arts education, Wide Angle Youth Media collaborates with and amplifies the voices of Baltimore youth to engage audiences across social divides. Our programs inspire creativity and instill confidence in young people, supporting them to navigate school, career, and life.

Vision: We envision that a new generation of media makers, particularly youth from historically minoritized and marginalized communities, will flourish through creative expression and equitable access to professional resources and skill-building opportunities. All levels of the Baltimore-area media arts and communications fields will reflect the full spectrum of residents.

Values:

- **Sustainability:** Promote work/life balance and maintain capacity without overworking staff, so that everyone can do their best work in service of the mission.
- **Relationship-building:** Foster a sense of belonging, value the whole self. Honesty and storytelling are part of the “connective tissue” that builds and sustains healthy relationships for all stakeholders and promotes brave spaces at Wide Angle.
- **Life-long Learning:** Prioritize education, career, creativity, and professional development opportunities of students, staff and board.
- **Authenticity:** Act with intentionality and integrity across the organization as well as with current/potential partners and funders.
- **Compassionate Accountability:** Staff, students, and board fulfill their roles and responsibilities with empathy and understanding at all levels. Implement equitable accountability to ourselves, one another, and the mission through open communication, collaboration, and autonomy.

Tactical Roadmap Guiding Goals: The purpose of this document is to guide operations during a 3 year period of transition (1/1/2024 - 12/31/2026, CY24– CY26). In 2024, Wide Angle Youth Media (Wide Angle) will move its operations to a new headquarters, Wide Angle’s Studios at the Service Center. It will provide staff with clarity to wrap operations in its current facilities and implement programming in the new space.

Key Drivers:

- **An emphasis on authentic relationship building** by meeting the needs of the whole person.
 - In classrooms - youth development programs are student-centered, trauma-informed, and asset-based, engaging participants as collaborators and creative visionaries. Provide opportunities for creative youth development that promote media literacy skills and center youth needs, experiences, and perspectives.
 - For staff - develop clear policies and procedures that uphold this value.
 - Across the organization - prioritize compassionate accountability to underpin authenticity and build relationships, and to consider the whole person.
 - Outside the organization - prioritize authentic relationship building with external partners.

- **Promoting social equity and ARAO (Anti Racism, Anti Oppression) tenets** by providing media education programming that is accessible and responsive to youth lived experiences, with a focus on those from marginalized and minoritized groups.
 - The organization will teach technical, creative, and soft skills that are transferable to a range of career and education pathways – in addition to providing quality mentoring and safe spaces for programming.
 - Combat the digital divide and provide career pathways in media through internships and apprenticeships, and through digital inclusion.
 - Increase accessibility, prioritize BIPOC artists in curricula, explore and acknowledge historical and current power hierarchies and systemic oppressions.
- **Capacity investments in staffing** that will emphasize the organization’s sustainability, continuity and steadiness.
 - After 10 years of substantial programmatic growth, Wide Angle will pursue staffing models and external partnerships that facilitate long-term stability.
 - Preparation for expanding and growing into the new headquarters. This will require components to change and expand, and therefore adequate preparation is needed.
- **A continued commitment to sharing youth voices:** To influence conversations around social equity, Wide Angle will increase its commitment to share quality, youth-driven content with local audiences while expanding its use of national and global distribution channels, and promoting and centering/inserting youth voice into exclusionary spaces (e.g., local media outlets).

Plan Objectives and Action Steps

A. Community Engagement – Wide Angle will place increased emphasis on participant recruitment and marketing strategies, while also building new opportunities to go into the community, bring students and residents into the space, and build relationships with a diverse group of community members. (value connection: relationship building, authenticity)

1. *Communications (development & communications)*
 - a. Continue to complement the programming annual outreach plan through tailored marketing materials.
 - b. Continue to achieve unified visual branding through templates, branding guide, Social Media SOP, and other resources to ensure Wide Angle brand continuity across platforms and collateral.
 - c. Use of Shared Language and current boilerplate grants language, and biennial review of resources, following industry best practices.
 - d. Quarterly review and tracking of social media stats and other distribution channels.
2. *Outreach (programming, development & communications)*
 - a. Have presence in the community through attending at least 30 activities such as attending community gatherings, art openings, host-school events, participating in relevant collaboratives, etc., annually.
 - b. Deepen relationships to local and state-level policymakers.
 - c. Continue to build relationships with community organizations, value-aligned businesses, and teaching and education programs that focus on and uplift the arts.
3. *Welcoming the Community (all departments)*
 - a. Host community building events (e.g., student showcases, staff/apprentice personal work screenings, networking events for young creatives, donor events, event series, youth town halls, gallery exhibitions)

- b. Explore Artist Residency structure.
- c. Explore community Media Lab use during the day to strengthen local ties and potentially add a revenue stream (connects to *Action Step F. Sustainability*).

B. Program Tracks – Wide Angle will bolster and expand its key middle and high school-aged youth program offerings, continuing to deliver these high-quality models to participants. By FY25, Wide Angle will engage 500 youth annually, and have at least 200 total youth participants in core-long term programs. (value connection; life-long learning)

1. Community Voices (*programming*)
 - a. Shape and define Community Voices workshops with greater intent in location, purpose, and partnership.
 - b. Serve schools, community centers, and other organizations, agencies or communities with high levels of need, interest, and geographic overlap that fuel middle and high school-aged youth programs.
2. Baltimore Speaks Out (*programming*)
 - a. Achieve higher retention rates from middle school to high school-aged youth programs through increased summer opportunities (e.g., MediaWorks), and more frequent communications and check-ins.
3. High School Programs (*programming*)
 - a. Provide 4 offerings in a variety of media tracks per semester (e.g., video, design, photography, social media, stop motion, etc.), increasing the number of participants in each track while exploring niche focus areas in response to student interests.
4. MediaWorks (*programming*)
 - a. Continue to provide high school students with a paid job training opportunity that complements Wide Angle’s more intensive internship and apprenticeship offerings for older youth.
 - b. Continue initiatives to uplift local organizations through in-kind media production and brand development.
5. Fee-For-Service (*programming*)
 - a. Define the Programming fee-for-service model for revenue generation, including staffing structure and capacity to meet the needs of Baltimore City and Baltimore County youth.

C. Workforce Development and College-Bound Culture – Wide Angle will embrace whole student development by strengthening participant career and college pathways, expanding its apprenticeship program, connecting youth to needed resources, and building the organization’s college-bound and career-readiness culture. (value connection: life-long learning)

1. Internships & Apprenticeships (*productions, development & communications*)
 - a. Continue the DLR-registered apprenticeship program with concentrations in production, editing, and design, providing paid full time and part time professional opportunities each year; explore a communications apprenticeship program and determine if aligned to Wide Angle offerings.
 - b. Continue to grow and develop internship opportunities and programming to feed into apprenticeships.
2. Vocational & College Pathways (*productions, programming, development & communications*)
 - a. Strengthen Wide Angle’s college-bound culture through campus visits and regular student conversations around higher education.
 - b. Create stronger partnerships to strengthen and fuel career and college access for Wide Angle participants.

- c. Provide spaces and opportunities for older youth to build their peer network through exhibitions/screenings of their personal work.
 - d. Continue to track high school graduation rates and college matriculation the following fall.
3. Pre-Apprenticeship/Workforce development (*productions, programming*)
- a. FY24: Research structures and identify funding streams.
 - b. FY24 - FY25: Developing the curriculum and evaluation strategies.
 - c. FY25: Hire staff as needed, start to build employer relationships.
 - d. FY26: Reevaluate funding, partners, and employers to ensure proper launch of pilot.

D. Amplifying Youth Voice – Wide Angle will heighten its focus on content distribution through all layers of staffing and programs to engage diverse audiences, create broader awareness of content, and generate exposure for the organization (value connection: authenticity).

- 1. Authenticity (*programs, development & communications*)
 - a. Reflect authentic, student-centered, and student-selected messages/themes in Programs projects and assignments.
 - b. Provide youth with opportunities to present their work to the public.
 - c. Complete the development of Youth Council (required training, active period to be on council) and prepare for launch by FY26.
- 2. Partnership Building (*development & communications*)
 - a. Continue to collaborate with three to five distribution partners to share youth work with larger media audiences.
 - b. Maintain annual tools to share with partners that highlight key content, themes, and messaging (press kit, Impact Report).
- 3. Distribution Models (*development & communications*)
 - a. Implement local strategies including advertising and PSAs, community screenings, traditional media, and grassroots models with a youth-to-youth focus.
 - b. Continue to leverage national efforts (e.g., public television and radio, film festivals, temporary exhibitions, educational distribution partners, and youth media exchange partnerships) to support annual audience goals.
 - c. Emphasize efforts around increased online presence and web channels, film festivals, and conference presentations.

E. Organizational Development – Wide Angle will prioritize increased investment in staffing, providing team members with training and professional development that support program participants and its overall mission and vision. (value connection: sustainability, life-long learning, compassionate accountability)

- 1. Life-long Learning (*all departments*)
 - a. Provide access to internal and/or external training to staff, interns, and apprentices that meet the creative, educational and socio-emotional needs of program participants and encourage their success at Wide Angle, at home, and in life.
 - b. Prioritize use of at least 25% of Professional Development hours.
- 2. Staff capacity & workplace culture (*admin & operations*)
 - a. Research and invest in additional staffing positions to promote sustainable workloads and complement needs of a growing organization and whole student engagement.
 - b. Implement HR Policies and Procedures that align to and uphold organization values, provide staff with clarity, and promote equity via hiring, compensation, position roles and responsibilities, annual reviews, opportunities for growth, etc.

- c. Implement modes of staff feedback, promote open communication within and across departments, and hold time for staff collaboration and team building through activities such as bi-annual retreats, staff work days, and productive staff meetings.
 - d. Continue to move towards industry leadership in competitive pay and benefits by building off of the compensation equity study.
- 3. Board Accountability to roles and responsibilities (*board, admin & operations*)
 - a. Build out Board Onboarding with support from MD Nonprofits
 - b. Increase Board support around ICAT areas (Fundraising, Advocacy, Organizational Development)
 - c. Strengthen organizational sustainability with additional risk management, succession planning, student safety plans, and moving into federal compliance with accounting policies and procedures.
 - d. Engage former Board members and improve recruitment strategies.
- 4. Evaluation of Impact (*programming, development & communications*)
 - a. Programs team to work with consultant to develop theory of change
 - b. Revise an evaluation strategy for MS and HS programming
 - c. Add a Community Voices short exit survey to workshop structure
- 5. Anti-Racism / Anti-Oppression (ARAO, *board, admin & operations*)
 - a. ARAO tenets are reflected in Board Recruitment policy, guest artists, curricula, HR functions, workplace culture
 - b. Pathways are in place for youth and community members to influence and shape decision making (e.g., Youth Advisory Council, consistent surveys of youth experiences)
 - c. Review protocols to advance goals around accessibility in external communications channels, workplace culture and in classrooms.

F. Sustainability - craft and implement a development plan that aligns to the 10 year Pro Forma and ensures that adequate resources are in place year to year to sustain additional staff positions, increased rent costs, and other expenses connected to the new Studios facility. (value connection: sustainability)

- 1. Revenue goals (*productions, programming, development & communications*)
 - a. Develop a plan to meet projected increases of 35%+ organization budget growth by the start of FY26 (in alignment to ProForma, years FY24-FY26).
- 2. Philanthropy (*development & communications*):
 - a. Move from raising 70% to 68% of the total organization budget by the start of FY26.
 - b. Develop and implement an expanded major giving program and increased state investment to complement the existing grants portfolio.
- 3. Fee-for-Service (*productions, programming*)
 - a. Move to raising 32% of total organizational revenue (combined from both departments) by the start of FY26, through a diverse funding portfolio that includes media production services with photography, design, and video, fee-for-service programming, and/or distribution of media/curriculum.
 - b. Identify and build out additional revenue streams accessible via new facilities at the Studios at the Service Center.