



Professional  
Association of  
Canadian Theatres

# Strategic Plan Overview

November 2025

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# 2026-2029 At a Glance



**4 strategic priorities** focused on organizational resilience, member connection, sector support, and community engagement



**15+ concrete actions** to strengthen advocacy, professional development, and inclusive practices



**Truth and Reconciliation commitments** including dedicated funding



**Comprehensive outcomes tracked** through practical evaluation frameworks



**Mid-term refresh in 2028** to recalibrate and respond to evolving sector needs



**Rooted in member input** from across Canada's diverse theatre community

# The Challenge and Opportunity

Canadian theatre is at a turning point. Not a symbolic one—a real, urgent, structural one.

Since 2019, costs have soared. Audiences have shrunk. Donations have dipped. Theatres at the heart of our communities for decades are now asking hard questions about the future. Yet, through all this, something powerful happened: we rediscovered one another. Not as companies in isolation, but as an artistic ensemble cast.

The crisis has revealed our interdependence and our strength. We discovered new ways to collaborate, adapt, and imagine together. The Professional Association of Canadian Theatre's (PACT) role became clearer than ever: to convene, listen, and support our membership and to advocate for the sector more broadly.

Over the course of this year's strategic renewal, we have looked at the next five years, not through the lens of managing decline, but shaping what comes next. This strategic plan does just that. Rooted in deep engagement with members across the country—including a survey with 50% member response and regional consultation—it sets a bold direction anchored by four strategic pillars: building a more resilient PACT, nurturing a more connected membership, creating a more supportive sector, and cultivating a more engaged public.

Together, these pillars guide us toward a future focused on building something new—and better—together. Real transformation is collaborative. It always has been. We've defined clear pathways of impact—supporting our members, advancing policy, and amplifying the artistic and cultural value theatre brings in Canadian life and as a heartbeat for our nation's cultures.

Our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation is foundational. This plan advances Indigenous advisory protocols, dedicating resources to Indigenous-led programming, and integrating Indigenous values into how we work—moving from policy statements to meaningful action.

We aim to modernize our approach to labour agreements to honour the way artists actually create. We are prioritizing environmental leadership so Canadian theatre becomes part of climate solutions and not another casualty. **This isn't just our plan—it is our commitment.** To equity. To courage. To community. To holding space for diverse voices, artistic practices, and regions. To ensuring theatre continues to serve as vital civic infrastructure and a place where people gather, imagine, and belong.

The work ahead is challenging, and the path is not always clear. But we know what theatre does: it imagines boldly, brings artistic vision to life, gathers people safely, and creates space for new possibilities.

Thank you to everyone who engaged throughout this process, and especially to our Strategic Planning Steering Committee—Alex Currie, Gloria Mok, Natasha MacLellan, Pablo Felices-Luna, and Pat Rundell—for guiding this work.

We're building this future together.  
With gratitude and resolve,



Brad Lepp  
Executive Director, PACT



Kathryn Westoll  
President of the Board, PACT  
Executive Director, Geordie Productions

# About PACT

Founded in 1976, the Professional Association for Canadian Theatre (PACT) has evolved from the 33-member League of Canadian Theatres into a national organization serving more than 170 theatre companies across Canada. PACT's unique convening power—identified by stakeholders as our central strength—positions us to lead this transformation while maintaining the sector unity essential for effective advocacy.

## Our Mission

We serve as an inclusive hub connecting, supporting, and advocating for professional theatre across Canada. We facilitate collaboration, advance equity and accessibility, and champion the essential artistic and cultural value of live performance in Canadian society.

## Our Vision

We envision a Canada where theatre thrives as vital civic infrastructure—nurturing empathy, belonging, and democratic engagement—where theatre practitioners and audiences imagine boldly, gather safely, engage critically, and contribute to a culture of flourishing.

PACT will serve as the essential hub making this vision possible: a trusted convener, effective advocate, and inclusive community that strengthens professional theatre practices from coast to coast to coast.

## Our Values

### Responsive

We adapt quickly to member needs and sector changes while listening actively to diverse voices

### Responsible

We act with integrity and accountability in all relationships through transparent decision-making and ethical governance

### Relational

We prioritize authentic connection and collaboration, fostering genuine community across regions and organizational types

### Respectful

We honour diverse perspectives, experiences, and creative approaches to theatre-making through our inclusive hub approach

# Strategic Priorities (2026-29)

## Strategic Objective 1 - Cultivate a More Engaged Community

PACT will strengthen relationships with funders, partners, and the public to address theatre's sustainability challenges while increasing sector visibility, recognition of theatre's essential value, and long-term vitality.

### Key Actions:

- Strengthen external advocacy and crisis response capabilities for emergency funding and policy development
- Deepen strategic partnerships across sectors including healthcare, tourism, and environmental organizations
- Increase sector visibility through strategic communications, media engagement, and national celebrations
- Champion environmental stewardship while positioning Canadian theatre as leader in climate-conscious artistic and cultural production
- Strengthen talent pipeline and educational partnerships to support sector entry and retention

### Expected Outcomes:

- PACT continues to be recognized as a trusted, influential voice in national arts and cultural conversations
- The theatre community builds new bridges with funders, allies, and audiences
- The sector articulates its value as both culturally essential and environmentally responsible
- A strengthened talent pipeline supports sector entry and retention



# Strategic Priorities (2026-29)

## Strategic Objective 2 - Create a More Supportive Sector

PACT will expand access, equity, sustainability, and artistic leadership development across professional theatre, ensuring programs and resources are accessible across geography, identity, and organizational size.

### Key Actions:

- Advance equity, learning, and sector inclusion through systematic programming and policy review
- Build sector capacity for labour relations and modernized artistic and professional standards across all partnerships
- Expand and diversify professional development offerings for wider range of artistic and administrative roles, company sizes, and learning needs
- Increase access for early and mid-career staff and newer practitioners through simplified onboarding and sliding-scale fees
- Clarify and communicate PACT's sector role while defining clear service boundaries between member and sector-wide services
- Remove barriers to participation through enhanced accessibility and addressing environmental cost impacts

### Expected Outcomes:

- PACT's programming reflects wider voices and creative experiences across roles and regions
- Professional development and labour frameworks align with diverse organizational models
- Marginalized members feel supported, informed, and able to thrive



# Strategic Priorities (2026-29)

## Strategic Objective 3 - Nurture a More Connected Membership

PACT will design new forms of connection and collaboration that meet the sector's emerging realities while building creative innovation, equity, and forward-looking practice.

### Key Actions:

- Strengthen in-person, regional, and social gathering opportunities tailored to geographic realities
- Leverage collective purchasing power for cost savings on sustainable materials and core operations
- Encourage support systems and year-round connection through peer-pairing and mutual support models
- Develop affinity- and practice-based networks organized around shared artistic practices and identities
- Celebrate and share member artistic and organizational success through enhanced communication channels and case study showcases

### Expected Outcomes:

- Members feel greater belonging and support within the PACT community
- The network becomes more inclusive and responsive to diverse member experiences
- Collaboration and mutual support increases across companies and regions



# Strategic Priorities (2026-29)

## Strategic Objective 4 - Build a More Resilient PACT

PACT will strengthen its internal operations, governance, and capacity to better serve members' evolving needs with consistency, transparency, and responsiveness.

### Key Actions:

- Modernize membership tools and directory for improved usability and representation
- Clarify internal communication flows and standardize meeting structures
- Expand staff capacity strategically while implementing technology solutions to support members
- Increase accessibility through targeted improvements to digital platforms

### Expected Outcomes:

- PACT operates more efficiently with systems that reflect member needs
- Members experience stronger reliability and transparency in organizational functions
- PACT is better equipped to respond to change and support a diverse, growing network





# Truth and Reconciliation Implementation

PACT acknowledges responsibility to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Call to Action #83, establishing concrete commitments that move beyond policy statements to meaningful action.

## **PACT's Direct Commitments:**

- Establish Indigenous advisory protocols and systems working toward decision-making authority over Indigenous-related programming and policies
- Allocate 15% of professional development budget dedicated to Indigenous-led programming and reconciliation education
- Conduct a review of labour agreements to determine whether Indigenous values and artistic working methods are reflected and work to integrate these into future agreements
- Annual reconciliation progress reporting to membership with specific metrics and outcomes

## **Sector Advocacy Initiatives:**

- Advocate for the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts to fulfill TRC Call to Action #83 through enhanced funding
- Support the development of opportunities to celebrate, spotlight, and advance Indigenous Theatre and Artistic Leadership
- Champion sector-wide reconciliation capacity building through resource sharing and best practice development.



# Organizational Foundations

Supporting our strategic objectives is a commitment to strengthen PACT's internal capacity.

**Governance Evolution:** Bylaw revision, succession planning protocols, and transition from operational to strategic board oversight.

**Technology Modernization:** Integrated systems for member management, enhanced virtual engagement, and digital accessibility standards.

**Financial Sustainability:** Current over-reliance on membership dues requires strategic diversification targeting 50% non-membership sources by 2029. New revenue streams include professional development monetization, strategic corporate partnerships, and project-based funding that provides member value without competing with member fundraising. This diversification is essential given the sector's unprecedented financial crisis.

**Environmental Leadership:** Integration of sustainability practices across all operations and advocacy positioning theatre as environmental leader. Integrated systems for member management, enhanced virtual engagement, and digital accessibility standards.



# Implementation Timeline

**2026**

## **Foundation Building**

- Governance structure assessment and bylaw revision
- Technology infrastructure modernization planning
- Staff capacity review and expansion plan
- Environmental stewardship research and partnership development

**2028**

## **Sector Leadership**

- Advanced environmental and accessibility programs launch
- Mid-term progress assessment with member consultation to refine implementation priorities
- Enhanced advocacy and crisis response capabilities

**2027**

## **Program Development**

- Modernized professional development programming launch
- Labour agreement modernization initiatives
- Accessibility program piloting
- Strategic partnership expansion

**2029**

## **Consolidation and Next Planning**

- Comprehensive evaluation and member assessment
- Next strategic planning cycle preparation
- Leadership renewal and succession implementation

# Monitoring and Evaluation

PACT employs a practical evaluation approach balancing quantitative tracking with qualitative feedback.

## Key Performance Areas:

- Staff capacity expansion (scaled with organizational growth) and member satisfaction (85% member satisfaction scores and 90% member retention rates)
- Regional participation rates and peer collaboration projects (60% regional engagement and 12+ peer collaborations annually)
- Professional development enrolment and equity representation (75% professional development participation and representative governance)
- Media mentions and strategic partnership development (25% annual increase in media mentions and 5+ new strategic partnerships)

## Evaluation Activities:

- Quarterly internal reviews and annual member feedback surveys
- Annual progress reporting to membership
- Mid-term strategic review in 2028
- External validation through third-party assessment and comparative analysis

# Next Steps

This strategic plan represents PACT's commitment to sector transformation while maintaining essential functions in labour relations, advocacy, and professional development.

## Immediate Actions:

- Fall 2025: Membership approval and implementation planning
- Winter 2026: Launch first initiatives and baseline measurement establishment
- Spring 2026: Annual progress reporting to membership
- Fall 2028: Mid-term comprehensive review with member consultation

We invite members to engage with aspects of the plan that align with your expertise and interests. This transformation requires collective commitment to the vision of theatre as vital civic infrastructure, fostering empathy, belonging, and democratic engagement across Canada.

Together, we will build a more resilient, connected, and inclusive theatre sector that serves as an essential hub for Canadian cultural life from coast to coast to coast.

**This plan reflects our collective vision for strengthening professional theatre in Canada. We look forward to embarking on this journey with our members, partners, and the broader theatre community.**