

Inside Out Strategic Plan – 12-month Extension

Inside Out has completed our current three-year [strategic plan](#), and it's time to look toward the future with a renewed focus. Due to the industry-changing realities of the global COVID-19 pandemic, we are adding new goals to our current strategic priorities to take us through the next year.

With our 30th anniversary festival still fresh in our minds, and not knowing the future of the film and film festival industry post-pandemic, we want to take the next 12 months to focus on the delivery and curation of excellent LGBTQ content. This year, despite a change from in-person to predominantly online delivery, along with a move from Spring to Autumn, we were able to bring queer film to at least as many attendees as in past years. The move to an online format meant we set aside much of our in-person programming while also improving accessibility across the province through our streaming platform to the 162 films in our program this year. We know our audiences kept coming back for more through ticket sales, and we had more than 500 all-access passholders as well! If there was a silver lining for us in our first pandemic-friendly festival, it was knowing we brought queer film into the homes of new and returning audiences, featuring 184 filmmakers with presentations as diverse as our audiences.

At the same time, we are committed to growth as an organization, both in what we feature and how we do business. That's why we are proud to continue to work with partners such as RBC and Netflix, who have recently renewed and increased their multi-year commitment to Inside Out.

In the past three years, we have greatly expanded our year-round and festival programming. We were named one of MovieMaker Magazine's '[Coolest Film Festivals in the World](#)', 'Best Indie Film Festival' by [NOW Magazine Readers' Choice Awards](#), among other accolades.

As we've grown our Ottawa and Toronto festivals, we've also added a focus on year-round programming and education. Building on work with partners including film studios and distributors, in Autumn 2020 we launched [The Library](#) – a Canada-wide, free online resource of LGBTQ short films and educational materials for youth and educators. Through our partnership with OUTtv, we've begun development of a nation-wide LGBTQ crew and talent base, aiming to create further employment opportunities for queer and trans people working across the industry.

We recognize that we cannot grow on our own. Through engagement with industry, our audiences, and LGBTQ communities, we are striving to build on our strengths as we learn from others. That's why we co-founded the [North American Queer Festival Alliance \(NAQFA\)](#), launching innovative programs and resources to connect and empower LGBTQ festival leadership in a new era of collaboration – in close partnership with Frameline (San Francisco), NewFest (New York City), and OutFest (Los Angeles). We've also established a presenting partnership with Netflix and industry partnerships with Ontario Creates, Telefilm, GLAAD, and the CMPA to deepen our connections across the industry.

We want to share a few more of our accomplishments from the past three years, and show you how we are setting goals for the year ahead, too.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	NEW GOAL
Industry Development	<p>Incubated more than 38 projects through the Film Financing Forum, with additional Canadian Micro Budget and International Feature Film streams</p> <p>Launched the \$50,000 annual RE:Focus Fund, which has supported more than 85 filmmakers since 2018</p> <p>Developed the \$10,000 annual Special Prize for Innovation</p> <p>Launched the \$36,000 annual Documentary Financing Fund with OUTtv</p> <p>Supported 16 projects with COVID-19 Emergency Relief funds</p> <p>Relaunched the Short Film Mentorship Lab to include professional development for emerging producers, partnering with ASAAP to connect industry and community outreach</p> <p>Inside Out added to the Canadian Academy-qualifying list of film festivals, and named a Telefilm Talent to Watch partner</p>	<p>Invest in cross-festival and cross-sector partnerships, with a focus on QTBIPOC-led companies</p> <p>Transition industry events and filmmaker support programs online, creating new infrastructure to support program delivery and increase accessibility for participants around the globe</p> <p>At least 75% of artists supported through the RE:Focus Fund and the Film Financing Forum are BIPOC</p> <p>Develop year-round communications strategy to highlight content supported through Inside Out's industry and professional development programs</p>
Accessibility	<p>Launched Reel Access, a sector-wide initiative led by Inside Out dedicated to improving accessibility of Toronto film festivals</p> <p>Created the Community VIP program to provide free festival access for newcomers, and expanded the Inside Out for All program to serve more than 50 organizations in Toronto and Ottawa</p> <p>Increased content by women, BIPOC and trans/non-binary filmmakers in all exhibition and industry programming each year since launch of 2018 Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Disseminate and implement the Reel Access resource guide at Inside Out and other Toronto film festivals</p> <p>Launch the next phase of this research project, including accessibility audits of film festivals to provide recommendations for the sector</p> <p>Use accessibility-by-design as a principle to create more accessible screenings and events</p> <p>Continue to increase amount of content available with captions and described video year-over-year</p> <p>Improve data collection on filmmakers' identity, race, ability and gender for all submitted and exhibited content in order to monitor our progress on reflecting the communities we serve</p>
Innovation	<p>Developed annual Inside Out Youth Day serving youth and educators, increased all-ages programming at Toronto and Ottawa festivals</p> <p>Launched Episodic programming stream at the festival, including extended 'In Conversations' sessions with queer creators developing TV and web series such as Tales of the City and Eastsiders</p> <p>Built the Festival Lounge, an accessible space to host programming and events for community and industry throughout the Toronto Festival</p> <p>Created increased profile of partners and connections between organizations through the Community Champions program</p>	<p>Expand educational offerings to provide skills training and networking for filmmakers at all levels via online and remote learning</p> <p>Engage with community and industry partners to launch new initiatives that provide direct support to LGBTQ filmmakers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftereffects</p> <p>Preserve partnerships with community organizations while adapting to online program delivery</p> <p>Explore new opportunities to grow outside of Toronto and Ottawa, including partnered outdoor / distant screenings in additional Ontario markets</p>
Program Delivery	<p>Launched a digital platform to deliver 2020 online programming, including co-presentational model for community and non-profit partners to access our platform and host their own events</p> <p>Co-hosted the National Queer Arts Summit, bringing together cross-sector organizations from each province to strategize on future collaborations</p> <p>Collaborated with streaming services to host Inside Out content, including: Crave, CBC Gem and OUTtv</p>	<p>Allow community partners to host content within our digital platform as co-presenters while in-person events are not a possibility</p> <p>Provide program delivery that focuses on the audience experience, translating the valuable components of previous festival presentation models into innovative online and safe in-person programming</p> <p>Increasing access for programming to nationwide and North American audiences, through the network of NAQFA festivals</p>
Operational Focus	<p>Established organizational management systems that help us serve our donors and audiences more efficiently</p> <p>Developed in-house box office and membership systems, improving customer experience and data collection</p> <p>Developed funding relationships with provincial and federal employment agencies to create new permanent staff positions</p>	<p>Re-invent membership online with new experiences that speak to our diverse audiences</p> <p>Develop and strengthen infrastructure for in-person events that adhere to public health guidelines</p> <p>Engage in an organizational review with community on hiring, structure, representation, training and decision-making at Inside Out</p>

This 12-month extension to our strategic plan provides some of our thinking on how to be a better and more representative film festival. As we gear up for our next festival in May 2021, we will continue to learn and grow while keeping our eyes on the broader horizon. What will the film industry look like in five years? How can our festival meet the evolving needs of our audiences? How can a new mandate help us build stronger partnerships and continue to reflect the communities we serve? These questions, and many more, will form our next steps on a five-year strategic plan we'll develop over the course of 2021.

We will report back on our work and how it will inform our next strategic planning exercise. Though there is a lot of uncertainty about the film industry at present, we are confident Inside Out will continue to grow. Part of that growth means greater transparency in our public reporting. We look forward to engaging you over the course of this year on the future of our organization.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our work, your passion for film, and for making us part of your community for more than three decades!

Plan developed by Andria Wilson (Executive Director, Inside Out 2016–20), with consultant Adam Morrison and the support of the Strategic Plan Committee of the Board of Directors (Aisha Fairclough, Chair).

Do you have feedback on Inside Out's new goals? Please reach out to us at board@insideout.ca