

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

2026-27 Business Plan



AGNS
2026-27
Business Plan

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Message from the CEO

It will be another exciting year at the AGNS.

The 2026/27 business plan is guided by the strong strategic foundation set out in *Framing the Future*, the five-year strategic plan launched in early 2025. That plan provides a clear and ambitious direction for the Gallery to be a leading centre for visual arts and cultural exchange on the North Atlantic, where all Nova Scotians feel welcome, engaged, and represented.

As we enter the second year of implementation, our focus is firmly on action. The priorities outlined in this 2026/27 annual business plan reflect the strength of our team, the clarity of our strategic goals, and our shared commitment to a Nova Scotia first approach that celebrates our culture and provides engaging experience to residents across the province.

The visual arts play a vital role in Nova Scotia's economy and in the social fabric of our communities. Through exhibitions, programs, and partnerships that extend across the province and beyond. This year the AGNS will continue to contribute to cultural tourism, support creative livelihoods, and create spaces for dialogue, learning, connection, and wellbeing. This impact is made possible by a dedicated and talented team working collaboratively with artists, funders, supporters, partners, and community organizations.

The 2026/27 business plan outlines the specific work underway this year to advance our strategic goals. Together, these efforts ensure the Gallery continues to serve Nova Scotians today while building a resilient and relevant institution for the future. I look forward to the work ahead and am grateful for the collective effort that makes it possible.

Sarah Moore Fillmore | CEO

Executive Summary

In early 2025, the AGNS launched its five-year strategic plan, *Framing the Future*. Through this plan, the AGNS will become a leading center for contemporary art and cultural exchange where all Nova Scotians feel welcome and at ease. Through carefully curated exhibitions, innovative programs, strategic partnerships, and expanding its permanent collection, the AGNS will encourage deep conversations and engagement across the North Atlantic while inviting participation and heightening impact for all Nova Scotians.

To realize this vision, AGNS will concentrate on three strategic goals and associated objectives, grounded in enhanced curatorial practices, strengthened funding, and improved community and partner relations. These goals are:

- 1 Elevate Nova Scotia Through Contemporary Art
- 2 Create a Compelling Impact
- 3 Set a Standard for Sustainable Operations

A major undertaking in year one was a detailed review of AGNS programmatic offerings. This initiative aims to make improvements to programs offered by the Gallery, to ensure alignment with audiences across the province, while making Gallery activities fun and accessible. The 2026/27 fiscal year marks the second year of implementation for *Framing the Future*. This year will be a continuation of year one, with a focus on enhancing access for Nova Scotians, enriching programmatic offerings in the Gallery and across the province, and further strengthening exhibitions and curatorial offerings at home and across the country. This annual business plan for 2026/27 outlines the specific work being done this year at the AGNS to achieve its overarching goals and objectives.

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

Mandate

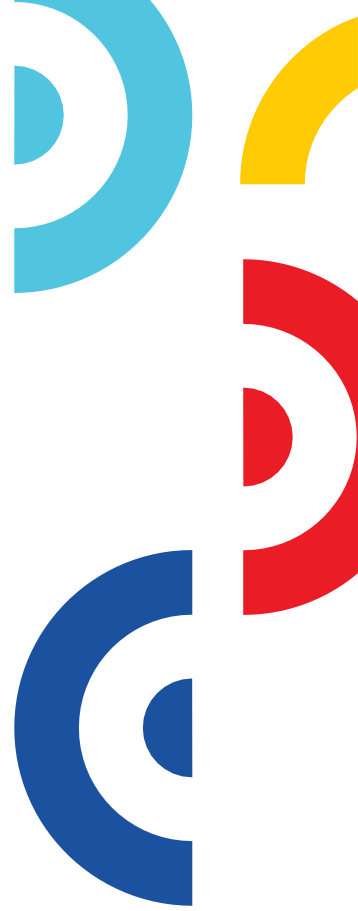
The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia is a Crown Agency of the Government of Nova Scotia, which is mandated, through the *Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Act*, to acquire, preserve, exhibit, and interpret the Province's art collection. The Gallery shall be an agency of the Province acting as custodian for the people of Nova Scotia with respect to their collection of visual art. The role shall include access to, collecting, preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting works of visual art in a regional, national and international context relevant to the communities of and in Nova Scotia.

Mission

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia seeks to present the most vital and engaging contemporary art from around the world. We will embrace tradition and the past by applying a contemporary viewpoint that addresses relevant issues and challenges perspectives.

Vision

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia is an inclusive public gathering place that connects people with art to inspire new ways of thinking.





Installation view, *Joan Jonas: We come from the sea*, Eltuek Arts Centre, Sydney NS, 2025

Business Plan Goal 1 and Objectives

1 Elevate Nova Scotia Through Contemporary Art

With a focus on contemporary art and conversations, the AGNS will become a key hub for artistic discourse across the North Atlantic, and will focus on developing its collection and exhibition program to showcase global themes from Nova Scotia's uniquely local perspective. This approach will highlight the region's contributions to global art conversations. Through transatlantic partnerships, the Gallery will enhance cultural exchange and broaden its regional and global impact, while also delivering leading art experiences to Nova Scotians, boosting the Gallery's visibility and elevating the province's cultural profile.

This approach, along with the creation of renewed facilities, will establish the AGNS as a major player in the North Atlantic visual arts sector and will significantly raise Nova Scotia's cultural profile worldwide. To make this goal possible, the AGNS will focus on the following objectives over the next five years:

- OBJECTIVE 1: Evolve the permanent collection to support an engaging exhibition program that connects global themes with Nova Scotia's story.
- OBJECTIVE 2: Build partnerships across the North Atlantic to expand cultural exchange and increase the visibility of Nova Scotia's art and culture.
- OBJECTIVE 3: Bring leading national and international artwork, artists, and exhibitions to Nova Scotia.
- OBJECTIVE 4: Develop an enhanced physical space for the AGNS that stands as a premier centre of excellence in the visual arts.

In this annual business plan, the AGNS has outlined a series of actions and deliverables that will allow the institution to achieve the objectives above.

The following charts outline the multi-year actions and annual deliverables for 2026/27.



1 Elevate Nova Scotia Through Contemporary Art

1:1 Evolve the Permanent Collection to support an engaging exhibition program that connects global themes with Nova Scotia's story.

MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Create a collection plan that considers deaccessioning and acquisition of works	1. Create a framework for objects identified for disposition.	Q3
Develop one to three original exhibitions annually from the Permanent Collection	1. Open the following permanent collection exhibitions in 2026/27: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — <i>Joan Jonas: We come from the sea</i> — <i>On the Matter of Memory: The Drawings of Harold Cromwell</i> — <i>Rehang Miss Chief's Wet Dream</i> — <i>Forshaw Day</i> — <i>Colville, Forrestall, Pratt & Pratt: The Work Behind the Work</i> — <i>Garry Neill Kennedy: Work of Six Decades</i> — Refresh Shaw, Laufer, and Ondaatje Gallery Spaces 2. Develop and launch marketing and communications plan for 2026/27 Permanent Collection exhibitions with a focus on owned communication channels.	Q1 Q1 Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q1-4 Q4
Create a \$5,000,000 general acquisition fund to support collection growth	1. Grow the acquisition fund with a minimum of \$250,000 in new pledges or donations.	Q4
Develop initiatives that enhance access to and understanding of the collection	1. Implement a content marketing strategy with a focus on highlighting the AGNS permanent collection.	Q2





1 Elevate Nova Scotia Through Contemporary Art

1:2 Build partnerships across the North Atlantic to expand cultural exchange and increase the visibility of Nova Scotia’s art and culture.

MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Develop and tour one to two exhibitions annually to Canadian and international venues	1. Open the following exhibitions with touring partners: — <i>Camille Turner: Hometown Queen</i> – Hamilton — <i>Séamus Gallagher: OH BABY</i> – Moncton 2. Secure touring venues for the following projects: — <i>Joan Jonas: We come from the sea</i> — <i>On the Matter of Memory: The Drawings of Harold Cromwell</i> — <i>Garry Neill Kennedy: The Work of Six Decades</i> — <i>Layered Terrain: Art, Land, and Environment in Eastern Canada, 1890-1940</i>	Q1 Q4 Q4
Create an exhibition and publication platform that generates opportunities for emerging artists	1. Release Séamus Gallagher publication.	Q4



1 Elevate Nova Scotia Through Contemporary Art

1:3 Bring leading national and international artwork, artists, and exhibitions to Nova Scotia.		
MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Engage leading international artists in the development and implementation of a multi-year exhibition plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open the following exhibitions by leading national and international artists in 2026/27: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — <i>Joan Jonas: We come from the sea</i> — <i>Garry Neill Kennedy: Work of Six Decades</i> — <i>Camille Turner: Hometown Queen</i> Develop and launch marketing and communication plans for 2026/27 exhibitions that celebrate leading international artists through earned, paid, and owned media. 	Q1 Q4 Q4 Q4

1 Elevate Nova Scotia Through Contemporary Art

1:4 Develop an enhanced physical space for the AGNS that stands as a premier centre of excellence in the visual arts.

MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Safeguard the collection by moving to a purpose-built collections management facility that aligns with museum standards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete volumetric assessment to inform long term storage requirements for the future needs of the collection. 2. Work with Government to identify partnership opportunities and options for cost sharing. 3. Complete multi-year operational planning that considers one-time costs, annual operations, funding supports, partnerships, and other operational requirements. 	<p>Q3</p> <p>Q3</p> <p>Q4</p>
Audit existing facility and develop an action plan to address required upgrades and failing infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Informed by the outcomes of the 2025/26 Accessibility Study, develop an inventory of required building updates ranked by impact to operations, safety, and accessibility. 2. Partner with Public Works to assign responsibilities for items identified above and projected costs in time to inform the 2027/28 operating and capital budgets. 	<p>Q1</p> <p>Q2</p>





Installation view, *Hubbard / Birchler: No More Boring Art*, 2025



Business Plan Goal 2 and Objectives

2 Create a Compelling Impact

To create a compelling impact, the AGNS will enhance the visitor experience with innovative public programs and engaging gallery activities, making art more inviting and accessible. The Gallery will work with others to build a more inclusive art scene with mission-oriented programs that welcome diverse perspectives. By tackling and removing obstacles to access and expanding art education, the Gallery will become more welcoming, attract a wider audience, and increase community involvement. This will enrich the cultural scene across Nova Scotia. To make this goal possible, the AGNS will focus on the following objectives over the next five years:

OBJECTIVE 1: Invigorate the visitor experience through new and innovative public programs and activities.

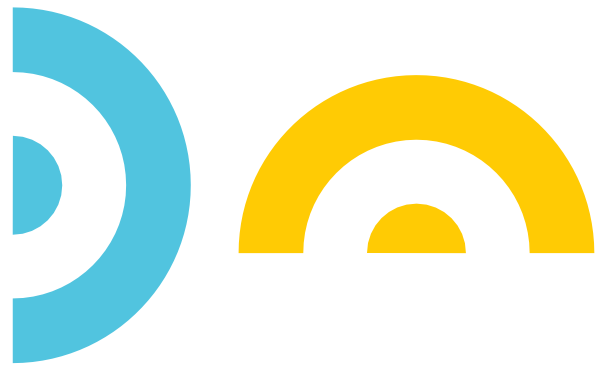
OBJECTIVE 2: Build partnerships that allow diverse communities and artists to create meaningful programs.

OBJECTIVE 3: Improve the overall brand experience by removing barriers to access.

OBJECTIVE 4: Expand the Gallery's impact across the province through art.

In this annual business plan, the AGNS has outlined a series of actions and deliverables that will allow the institution to achieve the objectives above.

The following charts outline the multi-year actions and annual deliverables for 2026/27.

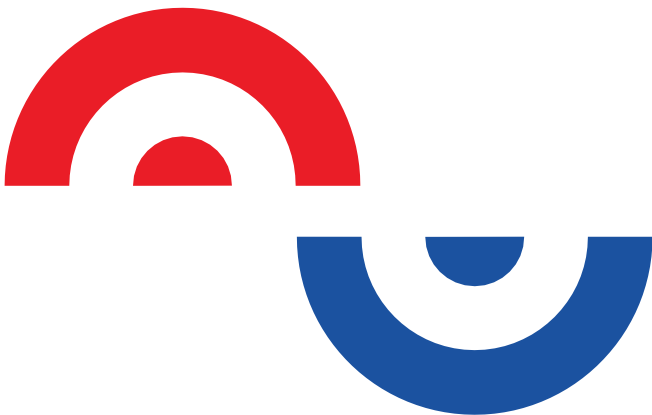


2 Create a Compelling Impact

2:1 Invigorate the visitor experience through new and innovative public programs and activities.		
MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Evaluate program offerings to ensure alignment with the AGNS's goals, vision, and values	1. Develop a detailed multi-year program plan that responds to the findings of the 2025/26 program review.	Q2
Make studio experiences available to visitors during open hours	1. Deliver a slate of studio-based programs that engage audiences and align with the AGNS brand, vision, and values. 2. Identify funding requirements and revenue sources for the program offerings. 3. Deliver existing paid programming, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Art camps for kids (Q2, Q4) — Adult workshops (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4) 	Q4 Q2 Q4
Ensure programming is developed to support the exhibitions on view	1. Deliver program series and event-based public programs to support the following exhibitions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — <i>Conversation Threads</i> — <i>Joan Jonas</i> — <i>Colville, Forrestall, Pratt & Pratt: The Work Behind the Work</i> — <i>Permanent Collection</i> — <i>Camille Turner</i> 	Q1 Q1-2 Q3 Q3 Q4
Create multi-sensory experiences throughout the Gallery	1. Develop an interpretation and engagement strategy for in-gallery experiences that responds to the 2025/26 program review.	Q2

2 Create a Compelling Impact

2:1 Invigorate the visitor experience through new and innovative public programs and activities.		
MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Integrate event style offerings to create unique access points for visitors and supporters	1. Host a suite of events designed to engage patrons, life members, and supporters.	Q4
Formalize the offerings and processes related to group visitation	1. Launch guided and self-guided group offerings for adult group tours and tourist markets. 2. Implement recommendations from the 2025/26 program review related to group visitation. 3. Work with Tourism Nova Scotia, destination marketing organizations, tour operators, and specialty groups to identify offerings that will make the AGNS a core attraction for group travelers and operators.	Q2 Q2 Q4



2 Create a Compelling Impact

2:2 Build partnerships that allow diverse communities and artists to create meaningful programs.		
MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Offer annual public programming in partnership with artists and collaborators working in Indigenous communities	1. Continue to develop artist-led, community-based programming that centers on Indigenous knowledge.	Q4
	2. Offer 1-2 Mi'kmaw language tours of exhibitions on view.	Q4
	3. Contribute to a hands-on art making activity at 1-2 urban Indigenous gathering(s).	Q3
Collaborate with regional institutions to amplify the work of diverse artists working in Atlantic Canada and beyond	1. Partner with Africville Museum and Dalhousie Art Gallery to install <i>Black Ark</i> in Africville Park.	Q2
	2. Present <i>Camille Turner: Hometown Queen</i> in partnership with the Art Gallery of Hamilton, and Stamps Gallery/University of Michigan.	Q4
Work in partnership with community leaders to develop arts programming that amplifies existing community activities that celebrate culture	1. Based on the findings of the 2025/26 program review, identify community leaders, events, and projects that support the greater goals of the AGNS.	Q3





2 Create a Compelling Impact

2:3 Improve the overall brand experience by removing barriers to access.		
MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Improve the use of technology and immersive platforms to increase access throughout the Gallery	1. Identify visitor-focused digital activation opportunities that contribute to a broader interpretation plan and respond to the findings of the 2025/26 program review.	Q4
Extend operational hours to include more evenings	1. Launch a pilot for additional evening(s) supported by programming that engages young cultural seekers.	Q3
Expand free access options for Nova Scotia residents	1. Launch new admission levels that include a free access option for Nova Scotia residents under 25. 2. Offer an annual pass that provides unlimited annual admission to the Gallery. 3. Deepen partnerships with community organizations, schools (including post-secondary), and nonprofits to raise awareness of access programs.	Q1 Q1 Q4
Enhance e-commerce capabilities and systems integration	1. Upgrade the accounting system and create dashboards that provide real-time information to business units and budget owners.	Q2



2 Create a Compelling Impact

2:4 Expand the Gallery’s impact across the province through art education programming.		
MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Contribute to the leadership of P-12 art education within Nova Scotia	1. Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to align key advocacy messages that advance art education in Nova Scotia and grow public funding.	Q4
	2. Review and adapt art education initiatives to respond to the findings of the 2025/26 program review.	Q4







Business Plan Goal 3 and Objectives

3 Set a Standard for Sustainable Operations

To set a standard for sustainable operations at the AGNS, the institution will work on expanding its funding sources to ensure long-term financial stability and reduce dependence on any one source of revenue. A critical component to ensuring success is building a diverse and engaged team while collaboratively creating a lively and innovative environment. Inclusive operations will be guided by principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility that will make the Gallery more welcoming and reflective of the community it serves. This approach will help the Gallery stay financially and operationally stable while enhancing its reputation as a leading cultural institution that excels in sustainability and inclusivity.

To make this goal possible, the AGNS will focus on the following objectives over the next five years:

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase and diversify annual funding while reducing dependency on single source funding.

OBJECTIVE 2: Cultivate a highly engaged and diverse team.

OBJECTIVE 3: Advance Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) initiatives that foster a stronger sense of belonging for Nova Scotians.

In this annual business plan, the AGNS has outlined a series of actions and deliverables that will allow the institution to achieve the objectives above.

The following charts outline the multi-year actions and annual deliverables for 2026/27.



3 Set a Standard for Sustainable Operations

3:1 Increase and diversify annual funding while reducing dependency on single source funding.		
MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Increase earned revenue from public-facing activities	SHOP	
	1. Increase retail sales by 2% compared to 2025/26 forecast.	Q4
	2. Maximize wholesale of Maud Lewis product nationally and internationally and increase wholesale revenue by 22% compared to 2025/26 forecast.	Q4
	3. Develop a plan for the development of an AGNS collection line, including a collection publication.	Q2
	ADMISSIONS	
	1. Launch a new admission structure designed to enhance access for Nova Scotia residents.	Q1
	2. Increase admission revenue by 12% compared to 2025/26 forecast.	Q4
	3. Increase paid group visitation among tourism markets through group travel partnerships.	Q4
	PROGRAMMING	
	1. Adjust pricing structures to respond to the recommendations in the 2025/26 program review.	Q3
2. Launch new paid programming as outlined in the 2025/26 program review.	Q3	

3 Set a Standard for Sustainable Operations

3:1 Increase and diversify annual funding while reducing dependency on single source funding.

MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Raise \$5,000,000 annually from philanthropic sources	1. Launch and implement new Legacy Giving Society — Confirm five planned gifts. — Solicit two new planned gifts.	Q1-4
	2. Grow AGNS membership by 50 (new acquisition/member re-engagement) aligned to a revised membership structure launching in April 2026.	Q4
	3. Elevate donor stewardship — Patron Program delivery that attracts 10 new Patron donors. — Establish workflows for three donor/prospective donor segments (new donors, monthly donors, members) that reduce attrition and improve retention.	Q4
	4. Raise \$250K in designated Curator’s Circle funds and continue to build pipeline for future fund growth.	Q4
	5. Develop a concept for new mass fundraising product to be delivered in 2027/28 (accessible; linked to vision/mission; potential to align with other revenue generation).	Q2



3 Set a Standard for Sustainable Operations

3:2 Cultivate a highly engaged and diverse team.

MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION	2026-27 DELIVERABLES	COMPLETE BY
Develop a formal learning and development strategy that embraces inclusion, life-long learning, and professional growth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer at least three targeted training sessions addressing the top three areas of need identified in the employee engagement action plan, ensuring at least 80% of staff in those areas attend. 2. Develop and implement mechanisms to track and monitor employee training to ensure alignment with annual goal setting and identified areas of development. 	<p>Q3</p> <p>Q2</p>
Empower and celebrate employees through an engaged, safe, and inclusive workplace	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct engagement survey with all staff. 2. Review the latest employee engagement survey results to evaluate the effectiveness of the current action plan, identify the top three recurring issues, and implement at least two targeted adjustments to address these issues. 	<p>Q3</p> <p>Q4</p>
Build the framework that fosters development and professional growth in a creative environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalize and ratify AGNS's first collective agreement, ensuring compliance with legal requirements and alignment with organizational priorities. 2. Within 90 days of ratification of the new collective agreement, review all HR policies, procedures, and systems to identify required changes and update required documentation as needed within 120 days. 3. Communicate changes to all staff through at least two information sessions and a written summary and conduct a compliance review within 90 days of implementation. 	<p>Q3</p> <p>Q4</p> <p>Q4</p>
Finalize and implement accessibility plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify key priorities and resources required through the establishment of accessibility project-scoring matrix to rank and phase initiatives. 2. Maintain and engage the AGNS Accessibility Advisory Committee in accordance with its Terms of Reference. Maintain membership of a minimum of eight (8) members, with at least 50% representation from persons with disabilities or disability-serving organizations. 	<p>Q4</p> <p>Q4</p>



Installation view, *Blacklight*, 2025



 ART GALLERY
OF NOVA SCOTIA

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