



CONNECTING
CHORDS
MUSIC FESTIVAL

Strategic Plan 2023



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Introduction

In June 2023 the Board, Staff, and invited volunteers of the Connecting Chords Music Festival met for a strategic planning session. After reaffirming the continued relevance of our mission, the group set out a series of goals and ambitions for the organization as we look to improve the running of the Festival and sustain it into the future.

This document details plans for increasing our ability to reach larger audiences; for expanding and diversifying our Board; for improving and streamlining the contributions of the Board towards the running of the Festival; and for setting the organization up for long-term success following the eventual retirement of our Executive Director.

The plan also details a series of metrics that will be used by the Board to assess progress towards these goals over the coming years.

We are grateful to everyone who participated in the process of envisioning and drafting this plan. We look forward to its implementation and to expanding our ability to serve audiences and communities of all faiths and cultures by providing opportunities to connect with each other through music.

Dr. Elizabeth Start
Executive Director

Dr. Beau Bothwell
President



Our Guiding Principles

Our Mission

We serve audiences and communities of all faiths and cultures by providing opportunities to connect with each other through music.

Our Vision

The connecting power of music fosters mutual understanding and respect and builds community harmony.

Our Belief

The intentional use of the intrinsic power of music reaches across faiths and cultures.



Strategic Accomplishments 2016 – 2023

The Festival

- Became annual rather than biennial
- Created “Connecting Chords Music Festival” name (CHORDS: C=community, H=harmony, O= open, ogle, oracle, oops? (I don’t remember), R= resonance, D= diversity, S=sounds?)
- Continued and expanded new outdoor and hybrid activities after shut-down
- Continued to have more events that feature our area musicians
- Have drawn audience from Illinois, Wisconsin and Kentucky (Got Eric....., and artists’ social media)
- Progressive program printing policy: limits waste and enables updates (got Eric and his contacts)
- Collaborated with returning and new partners
- Presented programs in “spring” months, if artists were appealing and in neighborhood
- Trying to be more environmentally responsible: engaging artists already planning to be in the Midwest
- Presented over 120 events
- Increased ticket sales

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access

- Created \$5 ticket prices for anyone 25 and under
- Created pay-what-you-can prices
- Provided tickets for Ministry with Community and MI Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

COVID

- Created work for and featured more area musicians during covid
- Weathered covid (thanks all for being strong, open and imaginative)
- Created new outdoor and hybrid events during covid

Organization

- Got Eric
- Got new logos for MFSM and CCMF (got Eric)
- Website and social media got way better (got Eric)
- Weathered small Board numbers and deaths of Board members
- Acquired and remain at Platinum status in GuideStar.
- Passed our 20th anniversary without making a big deal of it (it was our 14th festival)
- Filed DBA for CCMF

Office and Administration

- Created Belief, Mission, Vision statements and Tagline (2016)
- Got office space
- Started purging and consolidating files, but lost our purger
- Got rid of office

Our Strategic Framework

Our Mission

We serve audiences and communities of all faiths and cultures by providing opportunities to connect with each other through music.

Our Goals

1. CCMF will reach more people through improved marketing and outreach
2. CCMF will sustain and create generative community partnerships
3. CCMF will have a diverse and active board of appropriate size with sufficient volunteer resources
4. CCMF will ensure sufficient organizational capacity and efficiency
5. CCMF will maintain financial stability and sustainability while expanding funding sources

Our Vision

The connecting power of music fosters mutual understanding and respect and builds community harmony.

The intentional use of the intrinsic power of music reaches across faiths and cultures.

Our Belief

Our Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: CCMF will reach more people through improved marketing and outreach		
Strategic Objectives	Target Date	Responsible
1. Marketing plan	Aug 2023	Marketing Committee
a. Connect to younger audiences		
b. Optimize social media		
c. Give an "Art Breaks" talk at the Kalamazoo Institute of Art		
d. Offer early bird ticket discounts		
e. Look at other markets		
f. Increased outreach ("the influencers")		
g. Ensure all public-facing communications are from CCMF, not MFSM		
h. Find events where the CCMF can have a booth to talk about the organization (e.g., farmers markets)		
2. Presentation package (e.g., service clubs, churches)	Aug 2023	Eric
a. Format: Videos and PowerPoint		
b. Reach out to different communities (go there in person)		
c. Reach to large companies → show preview videos		
d. Create a video highlighting all artists		
e. Sponsor successful events where we can put up banners (e.g., farmers market)		
f. Promote events in person		
g. Find "community relations" officer		
3. Partner with local choirs and community music organizations	Ongoing	Wilma & Janice

Goal 2: CCMF will sustain and create generative community partnerships		
Strategic Objectives	Target Date	Responsible
1. At events, talk about the next event with the partners	Ongoing	Betsy
2. Invite collaborations with smaller organizations (not just music organizations)	Ongoing	The Board
3. Make the ask to collaborate	Ongoing	The Board

Goal 3: CCMF will have a diverse and active board of appropriate size with sufficient volunteer resources

Strategic Objectives	Target Date	Responsible
1. Volunteer recruitment plan	Sep 2023	Lexie
a. Advertise volunteer openings in social media and festival programs		
b. Recruit college students		
2. Dissolve advisory council and offer members to take on other volunteer roles	Sep 2023	Betsy
3. Board recruitment plan	Oct 2023	Ken
a. Define "diversity"		
b. Define "appropriate board size"		
c. Recruit board members from partner organizations		

Goal 4: CCMF will ensure sufficient organizational capacity and efficiency		
Strategic Objectives	Target Date	Responsible
1. Determination whether to hire more staff and/or have work done by volunteers	Mar 2024	Betsy
a. Check resources for volunteers		
2. Decision to hire third party services	Mar 2024	Eric
a. Ad sales		
b. Marketing / social media agency		
3. System for delegating and/or streamlining tasks	Apr 2024	Beau
a. Roster of event jobs for sign-up		
b. Board members are present at events		
c. Greeter / Welcomer		
d. Promote future events at CCMF events: Get feedback and email addresses		
e. Help with setup		
f. Help with welcoming artists		
g. Make introductions		
4. Business continuity plan	Jun 2024	Beau
a. Identify who will sign contracts, checks, etc.		
b. Location of documents (key repository)		
c. List of licensing documents		
d. List of grants		
e. List of computer passwords		
f. Annual calendar with major deadlines		
5. Examine feasibility of legal name change to CCMF	Jun 2024	Tawfiq

Goal 5: CCMF will maintain financial stability and sustainability while expanding funding sources		
Strategic Objectives	Target Date	Responsible
1. Fund development plan	Dec 2023	Beau
a. Endowments for certain events		
b. Restaurants and other businesses can advertise in the program with incentives		
c. Donations for specific events		
d. Reach out to more businesses		
e. Increase number of grants		
2. Develop a donor kit	Jan 2024	Eric
a. Ask donors what they are interested in		

Implementation Schedule

This schedule may be adjusted based on emerging priorities and budget amendments.

Strategic Objectives (sorted by target completion date)	2023		2024	2025	Responsible
	Q3	Q4			
1.1. Marketing plan	Aug 2023				Marketing Committee
1.2. Presentation package (e.g., service clubs, churches)	Aug 2023				Eric
3.1. Volunteer recruitment plan	Sep 2023				Lexie
3.2. Dissolve advisory council and offer members to take on other volunteer roles	Sep 2023				Betsy
3.3. Board recruitment plan		Oct 2023			Ken
5.1. Fund development plan		Dec 2023			Beau
5.2. Develop a donor kit			Jan 2024		Eric
4.1. Determination whether to hire more staff and/or have work done by volunteers			Mar 2024		Betsy
4.2. Decision to hire third party services			Mar 2024		Eric
4.3. System for delegating and/or streamlining tasks			Apr 2024		Beau
4.4. Business continuity plan			Jun 2024		Beau
4.5. Examine feasibility of legal name change to CCMF			Jun 2024		Tawfiq
1.3. Partner with local choirs and community music organizations	Ongoing				Wilma & Janice
2.1. At events, talk about the next event with the partners	Ongoing				Betsy
2.2. Invite collaborations with smaller organizations (not just music organizations)	Ongoing				The Board
2.3. Make the ask to collaborate	Ongoing				The Board

Implementation Tracking Form

Use this spreadsheet on a shared drive for regular updates. You may sort the file by objective, target date, and owners.

After completing one update cycle, add a date to the column and move it to the right by inserting a new column for the new update cycle. This will allow you to keep track of your strategic progress.

Strategic Objectives	Date	Responsible	Update
1.1. Marketing plan	Aug-23	Marketing Committee	
1.2. Presentation package (e.g., service clubs, churches)	Aug-23	Eric	
3.1. Volunteer recruitment plan	Sep-23	Lexie	
3.2. Dissolve advisory council and offer members to take on other volunteer roles	Sep-23	Betsy	
3.3. Board recruitment plan	Oct-23	Ken	
5.1. Fund development plan	Dec-23	Beau	
5.2. Develop a donor kit	Jan-24	Eric	
4.1. Determination whether to hire more staff and/or have work done by volunteers	Mar-24	Betsy	
4.2. Decision to hire third party services	Mar-24	Eric	
4.3. System for delegating and/or streamlining tasks	Apr-24	Beau	
4.4. Business continuity plan	Jun-24	Beau	
4.5. Examine feasibility of legal name change to CCMF	Jun-24	Tawfiq	
1.3. Partner with local choirs and community music organizations	Ongoing	Wilma & Janice	
2.1. At events, talk about the next event with the partners	Ongoing	Betsy	
2.2. Invite collaborations with smaller organizations (not just music organizations)	Ongoing	The Board	
2.3. Make the ask to collaborate	Ongoing	The Board	

Measures of Success

An important element of successful strategy implementation is the development and tracking of success in quantitative ways. The following table can be used to develop key performance indicators for each goal. They may be refined over time depending on their utility.

Goal	Potential Metrics
1. CCMF will reach more people through improved marketing and outreach	Social media followers Email list size Audience size per event Audience total per year First time ticket buyers Size of audiences at PR outreaches
2. CCMF will sustain and create generative community partnerships	# of regular community partners # of annual events with community partners Subsequent events with the same groups
3. CCMF will have a diverse and active board of appropriate size with sufficient volunteer resources	# of board members Board diversity (per definition) # of volunteers
4. CCMF will ensure sufficient organizational capacity and efficiency	# of tasks handled via delegation off-season # of tasks handled during the festival
5. CCMF will maintain financial stability and sustainability while expanding funding sources	% of budget from top grant agencies # of grant agencies # of individual donors \$ in financial reserve % of budget for staff

Annual Strategic Dashboard - Template

Connecting Chords Strategic Dashboard - Annual

Updated: _____

Strategic Goals	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Target	Target Date	Status
Goal 1: CCMF will reach more people through improved marketing and outreach								
Social media followers								▲
Email list size								■
Audience size per event								■
Audience total per year								■
First time ticket buyers								■
Size of audiences at PR outreaches								■
Goal 2: CCMF will sustain and create generative community partnerships								
# of regular community partners								
# of annual events with community partners								
Subsequent events with the same groups								
Goal 3: CCMF will have a diverse and active board of appropriate size with sufficient volunteer resources								
# of board members								
Board diversity (per definition)								
# of volunteers								
Goal 4: CCMF will ensure sufficient organizational capacity and efficiency								
# of tasks handled via delegation off-season								
# of tasks handled during the festival								
Goal 5: CCMF will maintain financial stability and sustainability while expanding funding sources								
% of budget from top grant agencies								
# of grant agencies								
# of individual donors								
\$ in financial reserve								
% of budget for staff								

Explanations

1. Text here
2. Text here

■ Meets or exceeds target

■ Caution

■ Below target - action needed

▲ Performance Up

■ No Performance Change

▼ Performance Down

Monthly Strategic Dashboard - Template

Connecting Chords Strategic Dashboard - Monthly

Updated: _____

Strategic Goals	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Status
Goal 1: CCMF will reach more people through improved marketing and outreach													
Social media followers													
Email list size													
Audience size per event													
Audience total per year													
First time ticket buyers													
Size of audiences at PR outreaches													
Goal 2: CCMF will sustain and create generative community partnerships													
# of regular community partners													
# of annual events with community partners													
Subsequent events with the same groups													
Goal 3: CCMF will have a diverse and active board of appropriate size with sufficient volunteer resources													
# of board members													
Board diversity (per definition)													
# of volunteers													
Goal 4: CCMF will ensure sufficient organizational capacity and efficiency													
# of tasks handled via delegation off-season													
# of tasks handled during the festival													
Goal 5: CCMF will maintain financial stability and sustainability while expanding funding sources													
% of budget from top grant agencies													
# of grant agencies													
# of individual donors													
\$ in financial reserve													
% of budget for staff													

Explanations

1. Text here
2. Text here

■ Meets or exceeds target

■ Caution

■ Below target - action needed

Board Involvement Opportunities

The following are potential opportunities for individual board members to be involved in reducing the administrative burden associated with running CCMF and promote CCMF in their circle of influence.

Board Operations

1. Committee chairs call for committee meetings as needed
2. Recruit community members to committees

Help with Events

3. Assign tasks to pairs
4. Set attendance goals for board members at events

Promotion

5. Get the word out: bring others, post events on board members' social media
 - a. Have a person to look for suitable community events
6. Scout for possible artists at other events
7. Earmark free tickets
8. Seek partnerships and coordinate with other arts organizations
9. Reach out to music schools and ethnic communities
10. Suggest Connecting Chords to other organizations

Administrative

11. Let Betsy know of scheduling conflicts
12. Pick up material from printer

Succession Planning Considerations

The following tasks should be undertaken to establish a viable backup system for integral business functions.

Short-term

1. Share monthly to-do list with the board
2. Hire and train a part-time person
3. Extract computer data to the cloud (Eric and Betsy)
4. Set up administrative Google Drive
5. Create Standard Operating Procedures
 - a. Create an event cancellation SOP
 - b. Create an SOP for all major organizational functions
 - c. SOPs covering the first week, second week, etc.
6. Install a 3-member emergency committee and hold quarterly meetings
7. Paid intern
8. Appoint backup person(s) per function: Finance, Events, . . .
9. Have another person write grants (e.g., a board member)

Long-term

10. Train part-time person. That person may staff after leadership change or become the new E.D.
 - a. Determine whether the staff should be an employee or independent contractor
11. Write a job description for the E.D. position
12. Develop a timeline for hiring the new E.D.
13. Betsy to provide retirement date and work backwards
14. Determine a salary for the part-time person / new E.D.
15. Obtain office space if having an employee and/or interns

Planning Participants

We thank these participants for their time and expertise!

Board Members

Dr. Beau Bothwell*	President
Lexie Schroeder Kobb	Vice President
Ken Dettloff*	Secretary
Tawfiq Ali	Treasurer
Janice Lakers	Board member
Tia Davis	Board member
Lori Sims	Board member
Helen Yee	Board member
Wilma Kahn	Board member

Staff & Volunteers

Dr. Elizabeth Start*	Executive Director
Eric Schmidt*	Marketing Coordinator
Michael Krischer	Volunteer and Logistics Coordinator
George Dunn	Long-time donor and volunteer

* Denotes members of Strategic Planning Steering Committee

Definitions

Strategic Goals

Strategic goals describe the results of implementing their underlying strategic objectives. Thus, they are not action statements, but rather “mini visions” or “stepping-stones” that directly contribute to achieving the organization’s overall vision. A strategic plan should include five to seven goals that involve multiple strategies.

Strategic Objectives

Strategic objectives specify tangible work outputs necessary for achieving a strategic goal. Work outputs may consist of newly developed or updated documents (e.g., those related to procedures, policies, reports, decisions) or changes in staffing, equipment, and facilities. Assigning deadlines and strategy owners—team members who are ultimately responsible for implementing each strategic objective—is essential to ensuring their implementation. Strategy owners may work with other staff members or use external resources to complete a strategy.

Tactics

The methods used to achieve strategic objectives are tactics, but not every strategy requires that tactics be specified in the strategic plan. For example, it is not necessary to specify within the strategic plan how the strategic objective “Marketing plan” will be accomplished. Developing these details is the prerogative of the strategy owner(s). Tactics may be necessary but should be included in the strategic plan only sparingly.

Measures of Success (Strategic Performance Indicators)

Descriptions of the measures of success do not include a numerical target, but rather state what is being measured (e.g., client satisfaction, revenue, staff turnover).

Targets specify numerical values (metrics) that quantify success (e.g., client satisfaction score of 4.7 on a 5-point scale, 80% of client programs rated effective as evidenced by a desired behavior change, revenue growth of 10%, total staff turnover of < 15% per year).

Organizations should track these metrics to gauge success over time. In the absence of established baselines or clear industry standards, an organization may establish its own baselines after a few initial data collection cycles.

Rollout and Implementation Considerations

Strategy Rollout

- Introduce the plan to all staff
- Share the plan summary or the plan document with important external stakeholders
- Post the plan summary on the website

Strategy Implementation

- Focus on the mission and vision in all (major) decisions. Use them when recognizing staff performance.
- Share mission and vision moments
- Sustain strategic focus via meeting agendas
- Staying on track: Internal and external accountability
- Track and report progress
- Celebrate success
- Update strategic plan annually

Tracking Progress versus Tracking Results

Progress

- Strategy implementation
- On time, completed, behind schedule

Results

- High-level measures of success
- Mission, vision, goals

Overcoming Barriers to Implementation

Define success

- Success and failure depend to a large degree on how you define it.
- If you implement half of your strategies and improve even in a small way your bottom line or customer service or employee morale – that could be considered a success over what might have happened if you had no plan at all.

Link your strategic plan to your budget process

- Conclude the planning process – or future updates – by the time the annual budgeting process starts.
- Include new initiatives in the budget.
- Hard choices must be made, and having these conversations early provides plenty of time to develop a budget that provides for strategic priorities.

Link incentives to strategic plan implementation progress and success

- If you consider an incentive system, make sure measures are related to your strategic plan.

Spend time on strategy

- Use strategy-based agendas for leadership and board meetings.
- Schedule quarterly progress reviews with leadership and board.
- Schedule annual refresher meeting with leadership and board.

Communicate – communicate - communicate

- Leaders cannot delegate strategy communication to a newsletter or mass email.
- Leaders model the importance of strategy by talking about the mission and vision to staff any time they have a chance.
- Do not be afraid to over-communicate. It shows the mission and vision are important to you!

Worksheet for Implementing Strategic Objectives

Date Updated:	Date here
----------------------	-----------

Goal:	
--------------	--

Strategic Objective:	
-----------------------------	--

Owner		Project Team	1.	4.
Target Date			2.	5.
			3.	6.

Criteria for Good How you will know the objective has been accomplished well?	
---	--

Implementation Plan	Project Milestones	Target Date	Compl.
Use work outputs for project milestones	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
	5.		
	6.		
	7. Add rows as needed		



Contact Information



CONNECTING
CHORDS
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