



Strategic Plan  
2016-2020



## Executive Summary

In 2001, the idea for Union Project was born inside a vacant church building that sat abandoned and in ruins, surrounded by neighborhoods that divided people of different races, economic levels, age, and ability. The dream was to restore the building with the help of those neighborhoods, bringing people together to improve their community. Fifteen years later, our diverse communities have worked together and accomplished something amazing. This historic building has been renovated - urban barn raising style - to become a vibrant center that serves over 16,000 diverse people through programs that connect, create, and celebrate all people.

With the original vision of a restored building realized, Union Project's programming continues to focus on the transformation of lives and communities. While community input, current issues, and changing demographics continue to direct our programs, two core areas have emerged as our primary methods for community building and engagement: The Arts; especially through the teaching of ceramics and Inclusive Community Building; collaborating with organizations and individuals to create opportunities for everyone to participate in social change. We believe that art can create change, and help us build a more inclusive, empathetic, and just community.

Now, with the completion of the 2016-20 Strategic Plan, UP is poised and ready to take our approach to community engagement to a regional level. By 2020, UP will become a leading multidisciplinary arts organization that uses the arts to bridge gaps between communities across Pittsburgh serving 25,000 people via 50,000 experiences, half who are people of color. Over the next five years, UP will focus our work at the intersection of arts and community and grow programs offered to 500 annually. We will better serve children and families by growing K- 12 custom programs off-site, expanding the distribution of UP's Clay Case: Studio to Go, and creating new lessons plans and curriculum guides for in-school and out-of-school time programs.

We will increase opportunities for the community-at-large to engage with art as social change by creating new enrichment opportunities for citizens of all ages, extending our social impact programs throughout the year, and building strategic collaborations with artists, other art organizations, and social service organizations. We will expand our visiting artist program to bring new cultural perspectives and share techniques year round. We will continue to support artists through opportunities to teach, exhibit, and sell their work, while expanding professional development opportunities for both artists and educators.



We will develop the talent and tools of our organization to support these programs; growing staff size and training staff to better support each program area, better represent the communities we serve, and to be able to grow meaningful collaborations. We will also improve critical infrastructure to measure artistic vibrancy, intrinsic impact, and monitor and evaluate program success. By strengthening both technical and communications infrastructures, we will improve our ability to build relationships and inform the region about UP's mission and programs - all while working more efficiently.

Our strategic plan includes key improvements to our building to ensure it remains a community asset. The creation of new educational space, artist studio spaces, and a state-of-the-art facility to house kilns in our side yard will elevate the arts beyond the physical basement, and allow us to better engage the community in demonstrations, dialogue, community art-making, events, and celebrations. UP will also make acoustic improvements to our Great Hall and general building safety improvements to be able to expand our offerings to, and collaborate with, new performance arts partners and better care for the audiences they bring to our facility.

Last, but not least, UP will ensure financial sustainability by completing our Capitalization Plan, continuing to diversify our foundation partners, and after the initial investments needed to implement the first two years of our Strategic Plan, UP will once again grow all non-foundation revenue to 70% of costs of operations.

Along the way, we are dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and sharing of best practices in our field and across the sector. To that end, UP will continue to participate in the Arts Finance Cohort with four other arts organizations in Pittsburgh, sharing resources and knowledge in order to elevate each organization. We are also committed to sharing the content we create through our events and programs, via lectures (locally and nationally), in white papers, and on-line resources.

On behalf of the thousands of community members who have built Union Project from the ground up and continued to improve it every day, we thank you for your interest, feedback, and participation in our vision: Through the arts, everyone is able to transform their lives and their communities.

Yours in Service,  
Jeffrey Dorsey  
Executive Director



## **Mission, Vision, Values**

MISSION: Union Project uses the arts to bridge gaps between communities.

VISION: Through the arts, everyone is able to transform their lives and communities.

### WE VALUE:

#### Inclusivity

We value diversity and are committed to making our programs accessible, affordable, and welcoming to all. We build programs, collaborations, and partnerships that offer opportunities, skills, and resources and engage people in decision-making processes that empower them to make positive social change.

#### The Arts and Artists

We use the arts as a primary strategy for engaging people. Through the arts, we believe we can understand diverse perspectives, create empathy, act compassionately, and learn to accept our fellow-human beings.

#### Collaboration

We believe that collaboration is essential in the creation of inclusive communities. We strive to engage community members in collaborative art that results in the creation of something that is greater than the sum of its parts.

#### Joy

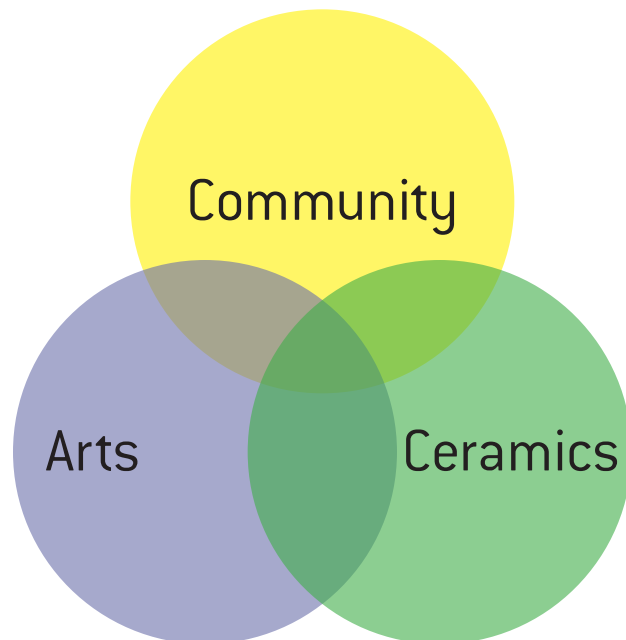
We recognize that building inclusive communities and art making can be hard work and therefore approach our work with joy-filled hearts. We believe joy is contagious and must be felt in order to live out our vision.

## Organizational Lens

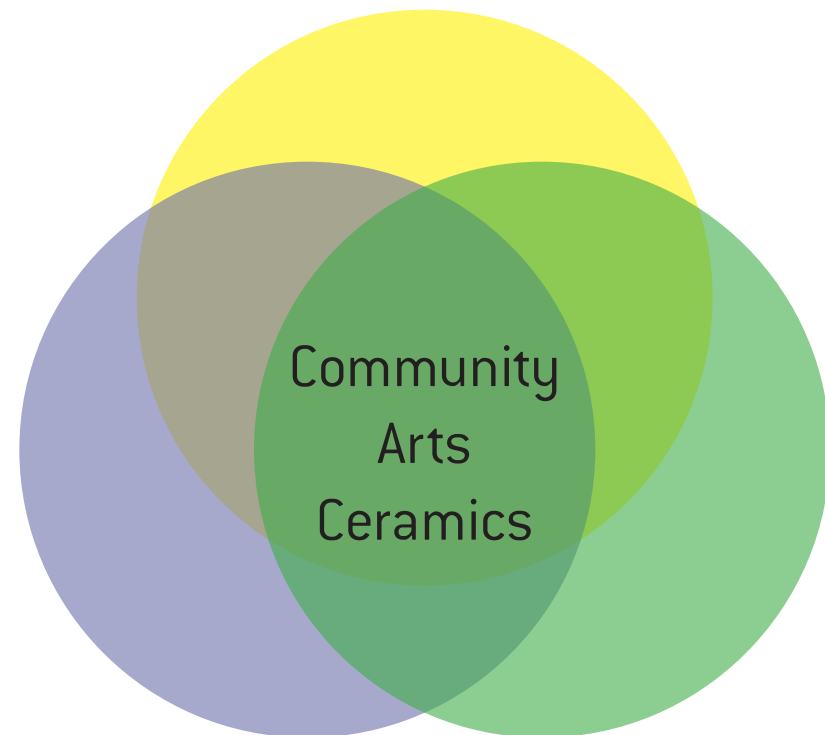
Union Project's strengths lie in community and the arts (most notably, ceramics). Programs, collaborations, and partnerships will hold up one or more of these areas depending on purpose and audience. See Program Matrix for more details.

As we grow programming over the next five years, the intersections between areas will increase, growing Union Project into a true multi-disciplinary organization.

**FY15**



**FY20**





## Vital Few Objectives and Initiatives

Focus Programming at the Intersection of Arts and Community	Develop Talent and Tools	Improve Facility as a Community Asset	Ensure Financial Sustainability
<p>Arts Education Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of off-site program</li> <li>• Lesson Plans</li> <li>• Clay Case</li> <li>• Professional development</li> </ul> <p>Artist in Community Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting Artists</li> <li>• MLK Day</li> <li>• 1,000 Birds</li> <li>• Empty Bowls</li> </ul> <p>Ceramics Studio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire Ceramics Studio Coordinator</li> <li>• Facility Improvements</li> <li>• Strengthen Co-op</li> </ul> <p>Artist Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studio spaces</li> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Sales opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Team Development (See Org Chart for more details)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Governance</li> </ul> <p>Program Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dashboard</li> <li>• Intake</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> </ul> <p>Technology Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT Plan</li> <li>• CRM</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul>	<p>Facilities Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kiln Shelter</li> <li>• Risk Mitigation Improvements</li> <li>• Acoustics</li> <li>• ADA</li> <li>• Lighting/Signage</li> </ul> <p>Building as a Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atrium</li> <li>• Studios</li> <li>• Basement</li> <li>• Stanton Yard</li> <li>• Front Lobby</li> </ul>	<p>Optimize Current Revenue Streams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Donor Program</li> <li>• Private Rentals</li> </ul> <p>Explore new revenue options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merchandise</li> <li>• Preview Event</li> </ul>
<p>Vital Few Objectives and Initiatives are supported by:</p>		<p>Organizational goal setting and evaluation            Full organization marketing refresh            Collaborations            Inclusion Plan            Multi-Year Financial Plan</p>	



## Strategic Planning Goals

	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
Total UP Program Experiences	26,000	30,000	35,000	42,500	50,000
<i>This measures any time someone experiences a program led by Union Project, a collaboration, or a partnership.</i>					
Total UP Programs	260	300	350	425	500
<i>This measures all programs, classes, workshops, and events developed by Union Project.</i>					
Total Collaborations	20	35	50	75	100
<i>This measures the programs, classes, workshops, and events developed in collaboration between Union Project and another org.</i>					
Total Artists Served	150	200	300	400	500
<i>This measures the artists (both ceramics and non) that benefit from Union Project programs, collaborations, and partnerships.</i>					
Total Economic Impact to Artists	\$60,000	\$70,000	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$100,000
<i>This measures the revenue generated for artists through sales events, sales opportunities, and grassroots fundraising efforts.</i>					
% of total people served that are people of color	38%	40%	43%	46%	50%
<i>Union Project strives to be even more diverse than the Pittsburgh community, ensuring that at least half of the people served are people of color.</i>					
% of programs that serve low income communities	20%	25%	30%	40%	50%
<i>Union Project is dedicated to inclusion, and will develop programs and partnerships specifically to serve and be accessible to low income communities.</i>					
Total Individual Donors	210	275	325	400	500
<i>Union Project will continue to grow our individual donor base, while retaining 30% of donors year to year.</i>					
Non-foundation Revenue	60%	51%	51%	60%	70%
<i>While growing the operating budget, both non-foundation revenue and foundation revenue will continue to grow and diversify. While higher investments are expected in order to grow programming, as programs grow in attendance and revenue the ratio is expected to return to 30/70 – relying more heavily on non-foundation revenue.</i>					



## **The Creation of Union Project's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan**

UP's new 2016-20 Strategic Plan was created over a 13 month period with the support of UP's board and staff, UP stewards, UP ceramics cooperative artists, two consultants, a Chatham University intern (studying Community Organizations Sustainability), and nearly 100 community members (via community meetings, surveys, and interviews). Direct oversight of the entire planning process was conducted by a board designated Strategic Planning Committee including the Board Chair and Co-chair, and a board member with extensive strategic planning, community engagement, and project management experience. Staff to the committee included UP's Executive Director, Director of Engagement, and shared Chief Financial Officer. This committee met at key stages throughout the process including all facilitated sessions, and kept the board informed of progress at each monthly board meeting.

UP's entire Board of Directors were also directly involved in the strategic planning process by:

- Participating in the kick-off visioning session (December 2014) – facilitated by Jackson Clark Partners
- Facilitating and participating in all four community meetings (including meetings with Community Leaders, Ceramics Artists from UP's Co-op and across the region, Artist and Arts Organizations at large, and facilities experts)
- Participating in two summer follow up sessions (Summer 2015) to formulate Mission, Vision, Values and key objectives of the Plan (also facilitated by Jackson Clark Partners)
- Participating in monthly discussion and updates at Board Meetings and finalizing the plan

A second consultant (Pareto) then worked with staff to implement work plans for initiatives within the objectives approved by the board and to ensure measurable outcomes were fully integrated in UP's Dashboard tool to monitor progress and update the board and staff. Pareto will continue to support UP's staff via two Planned Momentum Review Sessions to monitor the plan in 2016.

UP wishes to acknowledge Neighborhood Allies whose financial support enabled UP to hire both consultants to help complete this Plan.



## Program Matrix

Program Areas	Current Activities	New Activities
<p><b>Arts Education</b>            This program area serves youth and families through youth classes, custom programs, and outreach.            This area is mainly focused on community, arts, and ceramics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus for expansion is on K-12 Programs (both ceramics and non-clay) off-site to serve even more youth.</li> <li>• To support both youth and teachers, UP will continue building lesson plans in partnership with local teachers, and template those lesson plans in order to impact even more classrooms.</li> <li>• The Clay Case will continue to be used in both classrooms and homes, with integrated lesson plans deepening the experience.</li> <li>• UP will begin offering professional development for educators and artists through ACT 48 and teaching artist trainings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classes, camps, workshops</li> <li>• Custom programs</li> <li>• Outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act 48</li> <li>• Curriculum building and templating – with Clay Cases, schools, and partners</li> <li>• Package Clay Cases for classrooms, partner</li> <li>• Convert Atrium into a Learning Lab</li> <li>• Teaching Artist (TA) Training</li> <li>• Arts Education Symposium</li> <li>• Afterschool Program</li> </ul>
<p><b>Artist in Community</b>            This program area serves all ages by bringing artists and communities together through events, ongoing programs, and visiting artists.            This area is mainly focused on community, arts, and ceramics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand MLK Day to create events and programs throughout the year that use arts to bridge gaps, build knowledge and understanding, and introduce the community to creative outlets.</li> <li>• Expand the Visiting Artist Program to bring in more artists to present programming, align with major events, interact with the community, and create artwork.</li> <li>• Improve current programs to better connect with the community (Empty Bowls, 1,000 Birds, etc).</li> <li>• Begin adding new programs, both UP led and collaborations with other groups and orgs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MLK Day</li> <li>• Visiting Artist Program</li> <li>• Soup N’at</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend MLK Day to multiple locations</li> <li>• Use a yearly theme to connect programs</li> <li>• Extend Visiting Artist Program</li> <li>• Monthly Conversation Series</li> <li>• Community Group Sings</li> <li>• Weekly idea sharing</li> <li>• Community Based Residencies</li> <li>• Collaborative Art Projects</li> <li>• Large Commissions</li> </ul>

## Program Matrix continued

Program Areas	Current Activities	New Activities
<p><b>Ceramics Studio</b> The ceramics studio is one of UP’s greatest assets. It plays a part in each program area, and needs to be closely maintained to ensure continued success and leadership in the ceramics community. This area is mainly focused on ceramics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The addition of an Arts Education Coordinator to manage the arts education program will open up staff capacity to focus on studio management.</li> <li>• The addition of a Ceramics Studio Coordinator will place priority on management of the co-op, AIR, and studio improvements.</li> <li>• Complete key studio improvements (additional workspace, kiln-shelter, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artist in Residence</li> <li>• Ceramics Cooperative</li> <li>• Open Studio</li> <li>• TECH</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Kiln Shelter</li> <li>• Facility Improvements for AIR and co-op: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional workspace</li> <li>Kiln and glaze room</li> <li>Slide studio</li> <li>Ventilation</li> <li>Back basement renovation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Wheelchair accessible wheel</li> <li>• PD via Artist Services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Artist Services</b> This program area serves artists through workspace, professional development, and exhibit/sales opportunities. This area is mainly focused on the arts and ceramics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue providing sales opportunities, and explore options for merchandise and exhibits.</li> <li>• To better support artists (both ceramics and non-clay), begin transitioning some office spaces to studio spaces.</li> <li>• Expand on artist services by adding PD workshops and administrative support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atrium Studios</li> <li>• Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artist development, professional development, and admin support</li> <li>• Group exhibits</li> <li>• Studio tours</li> <li>• Merchandise and CSA</li> </ul>

<p><b>Space Rental</b> Space Rental will continue to be a service UP provides, but not considered a program. Arts programs will be integrated into program areas, forming partnerships and collaborations.</p>
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# Organizational Chart 2015

Initial phase of building program team

Program begins focusing on arts and community

Board of Directors

Executive Director  
High level liaison and relationship builder, between the org and board of directors, public, other organizations, cohort partners, and external stakeholders.

## Engagement and Program Team

## Operations Team

Director of Engagement

Ceramic Program Manager

Marketing Coordinator

Community Program Manager

CFO

Office Manager

Custodian

Ceramics Co-op

Teaching Artists

UP Stewards

Volunteers

Key:

Support

Volunteers

Shared

Program: ● Facilities: ● Accessibility: ● Financial: ● Development: ● Marketing: ● Governance and HR: ● Vision and Strategy: ●



# Organizational Chart 2016-2020

Full build out of program team

Program focused on arts and community

Board of Directors

Executive Director  
High level liaison and relationship builder, between the org and board of directors, public, other organizations, cohort partners, and external stakeholders.

## Engagement and Program Team

## Operations Team

Strategy and alignment

Program managers and coordinators

Program support

We get by with a little help from our friends!

Director of Engagement

CFO

Marketing Manager

Artist in Community Manager

Arts Education Manager

Ceramic Studio Manager

Space Rental Manager

Office Manager

Atrium Artists

Teaching Artists

Co-op Steering Committee  
AIRS  
Ceramics Co-op

UP Stewards

Custodian

Volunteers

Key:

Support

Volunteers

Shared

Program: ● Facilities: ● Accessibility: ● Financial: ● Development: ● Marketing: ● Governance and HR: ● Vision and Strategy: ●