



## 2020 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN – REVISED JANUARY 1, 2022

*“The Bray is a place where magical things spring from a humble brickyard.”*  
- Archie Bray Foundation Board Member

**The Archie Bray Foundation (The Bray)** exists to promote excellence and enhance commitment and investment in the ceramic arts.

**This moment in history offers a unique opportunity.** In 2020 The Bray embarked on a 5 year strategic planning process, initiated during the COVID-19 global pandemic and the Black Lives Matters protests prompted by centuries of racial violence, inequities, and injustices. Engaging this historical and contemporary context, The Bray community has reflected on who we are as an organization and as individuals, and how we can fulfill our mission while leading toward positive change in the fields of ceramics and craft. Each year we will commit to implement and update our strategic plan, as laid out here, to remain accountable to how we move forward from this moment.

Looking back on our history, The Bray has always supported artists from a multitude of cultures, races, genders, and sexual orientations. However, many groups, especially Black, Brown and Indigenous communities, along with LGBTQ+ and Women identifying communities have been severely underrepresented. This lack of full representation and societal exclusion is a problem at The Bray, a problem in the ceramic arts field, and a systemic issue in our country that needs to be addressed. The Bray is committed to actively increasing inclusion, representation, belonging and equity in the ceramics community and working to be anti-racist and anti-sexist in every facet of what we do.

The focus on accountability towards systemic racism is occurring at the same time as a global pandemic, which fundamentally changes how we exist and interact in the world. Even before the pandemic, arts organizations across the nation including The Bray were exploring ways to stay relevant and eminent in an increasingly changing and digitally focused world. The pandemic accelerated that by eliminating in-person events, gatherings, and collaboration, causing our board and staff to find new ways to connect, support, and educate. As we amend and reflect on our strategic planning process, it remains uncertain what the world will look like once the pandemic is over and our society recalibrates with greater social justice and equity practices. How will we be changed? What will be our new normal? What role will art organizations and ceramic art in particular, play in our collective future? How can The Bray impact the ceramic arts world to be diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive? With

these many opportunities, The Bray has reimagined its impact, reach, offerings, and values in light of our new and evolving reality. We are committed to shaping and nurturing long-term, systemic change in our field.

**The time is right to be strategic about The Bray's future.** The Bray has accomplished significant growth and transition over the past 15 years, including a successful capital campaign and implementation of a campus primary plan. Now is the time to revisit the organization's strategic plan and update it to support the sustainable management of facilities, resources, community action, partnerships and public interaction, and to develop and nurture the growth, inclusivity and well-being of our community. The Bray will be 75 years old in 2026. This updated strategic plan defines what The Bray will look like at its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026 and will provide a guide for getting there. We are committed to updating this strategic plan annually to reflect our responsibility to the ceramic arts community with the knowledge that the needs of our local and global communities are ever evolving with the state of the world during these unprecedented times.

**The arts are more important than ever during times of crisis and change.** The arts can help us create a path forward as we collectively transform to create an inclusive, inviting, and actively anti-racist and anti-sexist community. Ceramic art provides opportunities for people to freely express themselves – trying things we have never tried before, seeing things we've never seen before. Our shared studio experience, centered on the elemental material of clay, has the potential to connect us across geography, gender, race, and time. We are learning, doing, and growing together – becoming stronger, more connected, and inspired through the ceramic arts.

## VISION, MISSION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The work of The Bray is driven by our vision, mission, and guiding principles. They collectively define our true north, shaping how we make decisions and lead.

**VISION:** For The Bray, the ceramic arts inspire creativity and connect people of all backgrounds and abilities through transformative encounters in the studio, in the classroom, at the table, and in the community.

**MISSION:** The Bray is actively committed to promoting, celebrating, and sustaining the ceramic arts through the residency program, education, gallery, ceramic materials and technology, and community engagement on a local, national, and international scale. In the words of Archie himself, The Bray makes available, *"for all who are seriously and sincerely interested in any of the branches of the ceramic arts, a fine place to work"*.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- The Bray is committed to providing a community for individuals to work in a safer space of equity, respect, belonging, and support, recognizing the full range of makers, artists, designers, and thinkers who make up our residents, staff, board, students, volunteers, supporters, and creative partners.
- The Bray celebrates ceramics and its place in the history and future of craft and art. We foster an environment where artists can challenge accepted norms, take risks, and explore new ideas regardless of medium.
- The Bray fosters excellence in the ceramic arts through all of our programs. We promote quality in making, exhibiting, and learning about ceramics, and provide access to innovations in ceramic materials, technology, and processes.
- The Bray supports, builds relationships with, and mentors individuals who will shape the future of the ceramic arts.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

The Bray identified four major goals, with supporting objectives, which we believe will enable us to accomplish our mission.

<p><b>Quality.</b> We promote excellence in the ceramic arts.</p>	<p><b>People.</b> We invest in and value people and are committed to inclusion, equity, and belonging.</p>	<p><b>Engagement.</b> We engage a global community of artists, learners, art curators and collectors, and art supporters.</p>	<p><b>Sustainability.</b> We support a strong, sustainable, and adaptable organization.</p>
<p>Provide support for ceramic artists through high-quality studio, residency, education assistantship, and invited visiting artist programming.</p> <p>Improve the quality and reach of the exhibition and gallery programs.</p> <p>Diversify education and engagement programming in the ceramic arts.</p> <p>Enhance the clay business to provide the highest quality materials, clay, ceramic supplies, and technical support.</p> <p>Support a safer learning, living and working environment.</p>	<p>Continue to invest in staff member growth and success.</p> <p>Ensure a high functioning, diverse, and effective board.</p> <p>Enrich an education assistantship program.</p> <p>Enhance volunteer experience.</p> <p>Establish and implement anti-racist, anti-sexist, inclusive policies.</p> <p>Support and facilitate equity and belonging for all in our community.</p>	<p>Develop and use digital content to increase The Bray's and its artists' presence on a local, national, and international level.</p> <p>Increase and retain meaningful connections with and among ceramic artists.</p> <p>Increase connections and partnerships with wider audiences and organizations.</p> <p>Increase curator, collector, and critic engagement with The Bray.</p>	<p>Increase fiscal capacity.</p> <p>Continue to enhance organizational capacity and infrastructure.</p> <p>Maintain The Bray's facilities and workspaces to provide a safe and creative environment for staff, artists, students, and community members.</p>

## GOAL 1: QUALITY. WE PROMOTE EXCELLENCE IN THE CERAMIC ARTS.

The Bray cultivates excellence in the ceramic arts individually and collectively through four programming pillars: 1) residency; 2) gallery; 3) education and engagement; and 4) ceramic materials. The past year and current climate of injustices has provided an opportunity for The Bray to reflect on how we can do things differently and better in relation to our mission. We believe that we most effectively promote quality through our focus on innovation and diversity through all of our programs.



**Residency.** The residency program is at the core of The Bray. We provide time, space, and resources for innovation and creativity to flourish. The Bray is committed to supporting resident and visiting artists from different cultures, ethnicities, races, genders, and sexual orientations. We will continue to take the necessary steps to further diversify our residency and visiting artist programs and better represent the range of life experiences and perspectives that will challenge systemic oppression and broaden our perspective and understanding. Specific steps include actively inviting Black, Brown, Indigenous, LGBTQ+ and Women identifying artists to participate in the residency and visiting artist programs, coordinating with organizations who work with marginalized artists, and implementing scholarship opportunities for artists and students in financial need.

**Education and Engagement.** The education program brings students of all ages into The Bray community to learn new perspectives and processes in ceramics through innovative educational programming. A new education facility was built in 2017 that includes multiple classroom spaces, glazing and firing areas, a research library and a digital fabrication lab. The design of this building is intended to maximize flexibility in programming to expand the educational opportunities.

Future engagement initiatives were a major goal in the construction of the education building to provide exposure and training for underserved populations and The Bray and Helena community. Black, Brown and Indigenous communities face immense systemic barriers to education – this includes ceramic education and exposure to the arts, which is where lasting change can occur. Since 2018, we have been working with organizations that serve marginalized populations to create a framework which prioritizes a front-facing outreach program in education for these communities. We are continually seeking funding to partner with these organizations to make this a core focus and are excited to roll out The Bray's new educational format throughout 2022 and 2023.

**Gallery.** The Bray strives to exhibit work that exposes our community to a wide range of high quality and cutting-edge artists that work in ceramics. The gallery program aims to inspire people and spark curiosity. To this end, The Bray will widen its scope to curate from both within and outside of the residency program and include artists with national and international exposure. We are also investing in our online capacity to cultivate a broader national engagement with the ceramic arts.

**Ceramic Materials.** The Bray is committed to safely manufacturing high quality clay and providing materials, tools and equipment for artists and makers throughout the nation. Our clay business will collaborate with other Bray programs to serve a diverse population of residents, schools, artists and enthusiasts with the aim of providing material and technical support at varying levels of experience.

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
<p>1.1. Provide support for diverse ceramic artists through high-quality studio, residency, education assistantship, and an invited visiting artist program.</p>	<p>1.1.1 Increase financial support for artists in the residency program.</p> <p>1.1.2 Diversify artists engaged through residency program, including through relationship building, open call and invitational processes and policies, and financial support.</p> <p>1.1.3 Increase long-term programmatic support for the residency program.</p> <p>1.1.4 Maintain and improve technical support for the residency program.</p> <p>1.1.5 Identify and invite artists working in other media to come to The Brays as speakers, visiting artists, or workshop instructors.</p>
<p>1.2 Improve the quality and reach of the exhibition and gallery programs.</p>	<p>1.2.1 Curate ambitious exhibitions on a national scale focusing on the highest quality, innovative, diverse work within and outside of The Bray.</p> <p>1.2.2 Sustain commitment to exhibiting resident work.</p> <p>1.2.3 Enhance online presence of gallery and exhibitions.</p> <p>1.2.4 Encourage collecting of the best ceramics by diverse audiences at all levels.</p>
<p>1.3 Diversify education and engagement programming in the ceramic arts.</p>	<p>1.3.1 Partner with other organizations to prioritize diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>1.3.2 Increase and enrich distance learning content.</p> <p>1.3.3 Analyze the marketplace of students and their needs and interests and modify educational offerings based on the analysis.</p> <p>1.3.4 Consider expanded modes of educational programming utilizing the Education Facility and Fab Lab.</p>

<p>1.4 Enhance the clay business to provide the highest quality materials, clay, ceramic supplies, and technical support.</p>	<p>1.4.1 Enhance safety of clay manufacturing by replacing the large clay making mill.  1.4.2 Analyze clay manufacturing model alternatives to increase quality, consistency, efficiency, and profitability.  1.4.3 Increase online visibility of Bray clay products and resources.  1.4.4 Provide material and technical support to education and engagement initiatives focused on unserved and underserved communities.</p>
<p>1.5 <b>Support a safer learning, living and working environment</b></p>	<p>1.5.1 Provide Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment training  1.5.2 Establish a Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking Policy  1.5.3 Establish policy on Consensual Intimate Relationships.</p>

**GOAL 2: PEOPLE. WE INVEST IN AND VALUE COMMUNITY AND ARE COMMITTED TO INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND BELONGING.**

The Bray's banner of excellence in ceramics is carried by the people who live, work, and learn here. The Bray sets itself apart as “a fine place to work” for staff, board members, education assistants, students and volunteers alike. As the world around us changes rapidly, The Bray will continue to invest in those that sustain the organization’s commitment to quality in all areas.

We believe that quality in ceramics is achieved through inviting, promoting, and encouraging diversity and a sense of belonging. A wide representation of thought, education, geography, culture, and life experience lead to thought provoking and well executed work. By sharing our unique perspectives and experiences, we enhance the quality of each other’s work and implement a more holistic worldview.

The Bray’s organizational stability, as well as opportunities for innovation, depend on the quality, creativity, and diversity of our staff. The organization offers stability, security, and opportunities for growth and development in exchange for talented, experienced, and committed staff. Additionally, The Bray will cultivate positive experiences for volunteers and education assistants who contribute to The Bray’s culture and community.

Recruiting and investing in an experienced, engaged, and knowledgeable board of directors that represent many perspectives and cultures will ensure steady and thoughtful governance that anticipates and responds to change, while maintaining commitment to The Bray’s history and legacy of commitment to excellence in the ceramic arts. The Bray is reevaluating board structure and actively recruiting a body of members to better represent a broad range of constituencies. The leadership of The Bray should reflect the people we aim to support now and in the future.

Our location in Helena, Montana creates opportunities and challenges as we seek to diversify staff, board, student, and artist composition. Over 90% of Helena’s local population identifies as White or of European American descent. This means we have to work mindfully to attract and support people with diverse racial backgrounds and lived experiences to want to live and work in our community. We embrace our role as a cultural leader in Helena and work hard to make The Bray and our local community a more hospitable and safer place for Black, Brown and Indigenous artists to live, work, and thrive.

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
<p>2.1 Continue to invest in staff member growth and success.</p>	<p>2.1.1 Continue to evaluate and optimize staff composition with a lens to value and increasing diversity, including through recruitment processes and policies.</p> <p>2.1.2 Establish and communicate clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations, and evaluate through regular performance appraisals.</p> <p>2.1.3 Analyze and improve policies to support staff safety, well-being, and equitable treatment, including a code of ethics, and policies to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and address grievances.</p> <p>2.1.4 Provide professional development and workforce development opportunities for staff, with a focus on inclusivity.</p> <p>2.1.5 Continue to make living wages and improved staff benefits a priority.</p>
<p>2.2 Ensure a high functioning, diverse, and effective board.</p>	<p>2.2.1 Evaluate board composition and increase diversity.</p> <p>2.2.2 Evaluate board functioning through regular board assessment.</p> <p>2.2.3 Clarify board member expectations, roles, and responsibilities.</p> <p>2.2.4 Establish a diversity, equity, and inclusion committee to lead work to analyze and update personnel and programming policies and processes.</p> <p>2.2.5 Provide resources and training for board members to support an anti-racist movement.</p>
<p>2.3 Enrich education assistantship program.</p>	<p>2.3.1 Continue to enhance and expand education assistantship opportunities, aligning with programming goals.</p> <p>2.3.2 Pursue and enhance partnerships with state and tribal colleges.</p>
<p>2.4 Enhance volunteer experience.</p>	<p>2.4.1 Clarify volunteer roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>2.4.2 Improve volunteer management.</p> <p>2.4.3 Celebrate volunteer contributions.</p>
<p>2.5 Support equity training for all in our community</p>	<p>2.5.1 Provide anti-bias training to address how race, power, gender and privilege impact the workplace, and to assess and strengthen our organizational culture.</p>

**GOAL 3: ENGAGEMENT. WE ENGAGE A GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS, LEARNERS, ART CURATORS, COLLECTORS, AND ART SUPPORTERS.**

Entry points to interaction with The Bray are many and varied, and we aim for greater inclusivity. While the residency program is considered the core of The Bray, many of our constituents can also connect with us through exhibitions and the sales gallery, the clay business, or through our education and engagement programming. Those touchpoints may be more transient, but each person’s interaction with The Bray is important because people carry their experience back to their respective communities and creative practices.

To engage with The Bray’s communities is to communicate with people – to tell our story authentically and purposefully – using channels that are inclusive and resonate with our varied audiences. While physically experiencing The Bray in person is a moving, and for some, a life-altering experience, there are many ways for us to tell our story and connect with people near and far.

Objectives	Strategies
<p>3.1 Develop and use digital content to increase The Bray’s and its artists’ presence on a local, national, and international level.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Develop a more comprehensive website.            3.1.2 Enhance social media content and presence.            3.1.3 Use all Bray media platforms to promote Black, Brown, Indigenous, LGBTQ+ and Women identifying artists in the ceramics field and those that have been involved with The Bray.</p>
<p>3.2 Increase and retain meaningful connections with and among ceramic artists.</p>	<p>3.2.1 Support former residents' access to connect with each other.            3.2.2 Develop approach for current residents and Bray staff to stay connected with former residents.</p>
<p>3.3 Increase connections and partnerships with wider audiences and organizations.</p>	<p>3.3.1 Develop relationships with organizations and people to enhance The Bray’s focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.            3.3.2 Support events to build community and increase engagement and investment in The Bray.</p>
<p>3.4 Increase curator, critic, and academic engagement with The Bray.</p>	<p>3.4.1 Find ways to engage speakers with national reputation and serious thoughts about ceramics for critical discourse.            3.4.2 Identify and engage leaders in the fields of art collecting as well as museum and gallery directors and curators.            3.4.3 Cultivate relationships with journalists, art critics, and art publications nationally and internationally.</p>



**GOAL 4: SUSTAINABILITY. WE SUPPORT A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE, AND ADAPTABLE ORGANIZATION.**

The Bray is committed to operating efficiently and sustainably to ensure the organization remains a vital centerpiece of the ceramic arts community. Our ability to adapt and evolve, while staying true to our mission and values, is essential to our survival in the face of a changing cultural landscape and global crisis. The board of directors and staff will use sound fiscal decision-making to ensure we can continue to support this important work for future generations of artists and enthusiasts.

Objectives	Strategies
4.1 Increase fiscal capacity.	4.1.1 Continue to increase contributed income through development work. 4.1.2 Analyze earned income streams across organizational pillars to determine strengths, needs, and opportunities, aligning with strategic priorities. 4.1.3 Work to grow the value of The Bray's investments to keep pace with organizational needs and outpace inflation.
4.2 Continue to enhance organizational capacity and infrastructure.	4.2.1 Develop and maintain a robust information technology infrastructure. 4.2.2 Develop and implement a marketing and communication plan.
4.3 Maintain Bray facilities and workspaces to provide a safe and creative environment for staff, artists, students, and community members.	4.3.1 Develop annual and long-term capital maintenance budgets for replacement costs and to keep buildings, equipment, and other assets in top condition, accessible, ADA compliant, and sustainable. 4.3.2 Develop a grounds and facilities plan and a safety plan, remembering the historical environment and stewardship of our natural environment as an important legacy for future generations.
4.4 Commit to working toward social justice within the ceramics field.	4.4.1 Partner with organizations, community leaders, allies, and advocates to envision, foster, and work toward social justice.

**AN ONGOING STRATEGY**

To honor the *plan* aspect of the 5 year goal set in motion in 2021 with this strategic plan, each year in January the document will be reviewed by the Communication Director and updated in basic ways that reflect DEI language adjustments and provide updated information and specific action based momentum at The Bray. Main updates for 2022 are around Education and DEI language. After updates are complete, the final document is approved by the Director and the board as applicable.

The updated and approved Strategic Plan for 2022 will be posted on the website in January, and reviewed each consecutive year leading up to the 75th anniversary in 2026.

We will not publish quarterly progress reports in relation to the Strategic Plan but focus instead on the action of the terms laid out in the document. We will show progress by action-based work both on-site at The Bray and

through all digital communication and online platforms. If there is ever a need from our community to readdress including a progress report aspect of the long-term effort for our Strategic Plan, our team will assess what is approachable and support transparency around the progress of our efforts as appropriate to the request.