REFRAME FILM FESTIVAL

Strategic Plan 2027-2032

Contents

A Message from ReFrame's Leadership Team 3

Mission, Vision, and Values 6

Executive Summary 7

About ReFrame Film Festival 7

Overview of the Planning Process 8

Our Strategic Directions 9

1. Strengthen Financial Resilience and Sustainability 10
2. Diversify Our Audiences and Cultivate Community 10
3. Balance Ambition, Capacity, and Care 11
4. Deepen Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience 12

Next Steps 13

Conclusion 14

Appendix A: Community Engagement Summary 15

Appendix B: ReFrame Leadership (Board and Staff Directors) 18

A Message from ReFrame's Leadership Team

Since 2005, ReFrame Film Festival has brought people together in Nogojiwanong / Peterborough through documentary film and media art. Rooted in social and environmental justice, ReFrame creates opportunities for audiences, artists, filmmakers, and community organizations to encounter compelling stories, engage with urgent issues, and imagine more equitable and sustainable ways of living together.

Much has changed since ReFrame adopted its previous strategic plan in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly disrupted our festival, our sector, and the communities we serve. It required ReFrame to reconsider how we gathered, how we worked, and how we could continue offering meaningful and accessible cultural experiences during a time of isolation and uncertainty.

Our team responded with creativity and care. ReFrame successfully moved online in 2021 and subsequently developed a hybrid model that now combines an in-person festival in downtown Nogojiwanong / Peterborough with virtual programming available across Canada. This model has expanded access for people who face barriers related to disability, geography, caregiving, cost, winter travel, health, and other circumstances, while allowing us to preserve the irreplaceable experience of gathering together around film.

This period also brought significant organizational change. ReFrame rebuilt its volunteer program and in-person audiences following the pandemic; welcomed new staff and governance leadership; strengthened the role of its Programming Advisory Committee; and invested in staffing, governance, accessibility, policies, systems, community relationships, and more sustainable working conditions. These accomplishments represent a considerable collective effort by ReFrame's staff, Board members, volunteers, artists, audiences, donors, funders, sponsors, and community partners.

We begin this new plan with gratitude for that work and with an honest understanding of the conditions in which it continues. ReFrame has emerged from a period of disruption as a stronger and more accessible organization, but one operating in an increasingly uncertain cultural and funding landscape. Our ambitions remain substantial, while the people and resources available to realize them are finite. This plan therefore asks not only what ReFrame hopes to accomplish, but how we can pursue that work responsibly, equitably, and with care.

A Holistic Understanding of Sustainability

The word *sustainability* is embedded throughout this strategic plan. At ReFrame, sustainability means building and maintaining an organization that is resilient, equitable, responsible, and supportive across financial, human, cultural, structural, and environmental dimensions.

Human sustainability means fostering a culture of care that supports the wellbeing of staff, Board and Programming Advisory Committee members, and other volunteers; promotes sustainable workloads and work/life balance, and protects against burnout.

Financial sustainability means cultivating diverse and reliable sources of revenue and support, maintaining fair and equitable employment practices, and aligning our resources with our organizational capacity.

Cultural sustainability means uplifting community voices, supporting artists and cultural workers, fostering meaningful relationships, and sustaining spaces in which people can encounter new perspectives, engage in dialogue, and experience a sense of belonging.

Structural sustainability means maintaining clear governance, thoughtful planning, effective policies, and operational systems that reflect the scale of ReFrame's ambitions without overextending the people responsible for realizing them.

Environmental sustainability means recognizing our responsibilities to the more-than-human world and striving to reduce harm through our programming, partnerships, policies, operations, and use of resources. It also means understanding that environmental degradation cannot be separated from colonialism, racism, economic inequity, and other systems that expose some communities to disproportionate harm.

Together, these commitments offer a holistic understanding of what ReFrame needs in order to thrive over the long term while remaining true to its mission and values.

Decolonization, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion in All Things

Decolonization, diversity, equity, and inclusion are not confined to a single strategic direction in this plan. They are foundational commitments that must inform every aspect of ReFrame's work.

For ReFrame, this means continually examining and strengthening our programming, relationships, outreach, language, policies, governance, hiring, and decision-making through anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and decolonizing frameworks. It means working to understand and dismantle barriers to access, representation, participation, and leadership. It means supporting ongoing learning and reflection among staff, Board members, Programming Advisory Committee members, and other volunteers.

It also means actively questioning colonial frameworks and assumptions, honouring Indigenous rights, knowledge systems, and cultural sovereignty, and making space for diverse perspectives, experiences, and ways of knowing. We recognize that this is not a finite project or a commitment that can be fulfilled through policy alone. It is a continuous and thoughtful practice, requiring humility, accountability, curiosity, and action.

At the heart of this work is a relationship-centred approach. We will strive to prioritize deep, respectful, reciprocal relationships over transactional interactions and to create opportunities for authentic conversation rooted in equity and care. Through meaningful engagement with audiences, artists, filmmakers, youth, families, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and community partners, we hope to foster a culture of belonging, shared learning, and shared leadership.

Moving Forward Together

ReFrame remains unwavering in its commitment to equity, cultural integrity, environmental responsibility, and the transformative power of art as activism. Throughout our programming, organizational practices, and strategic directions, we stand in solidarity with movements for collective liberation. We will continue to publicly and actively resist systems of oppression by fostering spaces of care, creativity, critical inquiry, and resistance.

We will continue to champion bold, community-rooted storytelling that confronts injustice, amplifies marginalized voices, and inspires dialogue and collective action. We will also look inward, examining whether our own structures and practices reflect the values we champion on screen.

This plan grew from reflection on our previous strategic directions and from conversations among ReFrame's staff, Board, volunteers, audiences, artists, partners, and wider community. Their contributions helped us identify four interconnected priorities for the years ahead: strengthening ReFrame's financial resilience, diversifying our audiences and cultivating community, balancing ambition with capacity and care, and deepening our commitment to environmental and climate justice.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who shared their experiences, ideas, concerns, and hopes throughout this process, and to the members of our team who brought those contributions together. This plan reflects their thoughtful work and a shared belief in what ReFrame can continue to become.

The directions that follow are both an expression of our values and a framework for action. They will require careful decision-making, collaboration, learning, and continued accountability to the communities we serve. We offer them not as fixed answers, but as a commitment to move forward intentionally, together.

In solidarity,

ReFrame's Board and Staff Directors

Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION

ReFrame Film Festival is a community celebration of documentary film and media art centred on social and environmental justice.

VISION

We aim to build socially active, engaged community audiences through the curated presentation of documentary film and media art.

VALUES

We are committed to:

- Supporting and showcasing the work of documentary filmmakers and media artists, especially local creators and artists from equity-deserving communities
- Providing an accessible festival experience by working to dismantle barriers to participation
- Fostering dialogue around issues of social justice, human rights, and environmental responsibility
- Decision-making processes that are inclusive and guided by principles of anti-oppression
- Valuing and empowering employees and volunteers
- Nurturing collaborative community partnerships

Executive Summary

ReFrame enters this strategic planning period following several years of significant change, adaptation, and rebuilding. Since the adoption of its previous plan, the organization has developed an accessible hybrid festival model, strengthened its governance and operational systems, invested in its staff and volunteers, expanded community partnerships, and continued to present bold documentary film and media art centred on social and environmental justice.

This 2027–2032 Strategic Plan was informed by a detailed assessment of ReFrame's previous plan, a leadership retreat and shared strategic planning education, approximately 300 audience feedback responses, a dedicated strategic planning survey, and an in-person community consultation. Together, these activities helped identify ReFrame's strengths, the challenges facing the organization, and the priorities most important to its communities.

The resulting plan establishes four interconnected strategic directions:

1. Strengthen Financial Resilience and Sustainability
2. Diversify Our Audiences and Cultivate Community
3. Balance Ambition, Capacity, and Care
4. Deepen Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience

These directions recognize that ReFrame's continued impact depends on more than growth. It requires diverse and reliable support, meaningful and reciprocal community relationships, alignment between ambition and organizational capacity, care for the people who make ReFrame possible, and a stronger commitment to ecological responsibility. Diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, anti-oppression, and decolonization are embedded across all four directions as foundational and ongoing practices.

Together, these strategic directions provide a framework for ReFrame's decisions and annual operational planning from 2027 to 2032, while allowing the organization to remain responsive to changing circumstances and community needs.

About ReFrame Film Festival

ReFrame Film Festival is a community celebration of documentary film and media art centred on social and environmental justice. We aim to build and support informed, thoughtful, and engaged audiences through compelling stories, critical conversation, and connections between the issues explored on screen and work taking place in our communities.

Founded in 2005, ReFrame has grown from screenings in downtown storefronts and galleries into a nationally respected cultural festival. Each winter, thousands of people gather in Nogojiwanong / Peterborough and online across Canada to experience independent Canadian and international documentaries, filmmaker conversations, panels, performances, exhibitions,

and community events. ReFrame also offers accessible, low-barrier screenings throughout the year.

ReFrame has the privilege of existing on the stolen, treaty, and traditional territories of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg. Guided by commitments to equity, decolonization, accessibility, and environmental responsibility, we strive to foster meaningful relationships among audiences, artists, filmmakers, community partners, and neighbours, and to create spaces where people can watch, listen, question, connect, and act together toward positive change.

Overview of the Planning Process

ReFrame's strategic planning process began with a thorough, point-by-point assessment of the successes and challenges of its 2020–2025 Strategic Plan. Led by ReFrame's previous Board Chair and Executive Director between late 2023 and early 2025, this review compared the plan's objectives with the organization's progress and identified areas requiring continued attention.

In May 2025, ReFrame's Board and Staff Directors gathered at Trent University for a day-long strategic planning retreat. Together, participants reflected on ReFrame's mission, values, organizational context, and emerging priorities, establishing an early foundation for the new plan. This work was further informed in November 2025, when Board members and staff directors completed a comprehensive course offered through CharityVillage exploring the ethics and practices of strategic planning in a contemporary Canadian non-profit context.

Community engagement was central to the process. ReFrame staff reviewed approximately 300 responses to annual audience surveys conducted between 2024 and 2026, which included questions developed to help guide the organization's strategic direction. ReFrame's Board Chair, previous Creative Director and Executive Director also consulted non-profit governance specialist Nic Gagliardi of Rise and Run Co. Non-Profit Consulting to develop a dedicated strategic planning survey for audiences, artists, sponsors, donors, community partners, and other invested parties. The survey generated 35 detailed responses.

Further outreach culminated in an in-person community consultation at ReFrame's downtown office. Facilitated by Nic Gagliardi, the session brought together 25 participants from a diverse range of partner groups for a focused discussion on ReFrame's future. Nic synthesized their contributions in a consultation report for the organization.

Members of ReFrame's Executive Committee, including its Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Executive Director, reviewed and brought together the findings from these activities. The resulting strategic directions reflect this combination of organizational assessment, shared learning, leadership discussion, audience data, and direct community input. Further details about the community engagement process and its findings can be found in Appendix A.

Our Strategic Directions

ReFrame's 2027–2032 strategic directions are intentionally high-level and future-oriented, allowing the organization to respond thoughtfully as circumstances and community needs evolve. They provide a framework for annual operational plans with specific, measurable objectives and actions. These operational plans, which are not included in this document, will guide the implementation and ongoing evaluation of our strategic commitments.

ReFrame is an important cultural presence in Nogojiwanong / Peterborough and a gathering place for compelling documentary film, media art, critical conversation, and community connection. These four interconnected directions reflect our commitment to sustaining ReFrame's impact while strengthening our relationships, caring for the people who make our work possible, and embedding equity, decolonization, accessibility, and environmental responsibility throughout the organization.

Our four strategic directions are:

1. **Strengthen Financial Resilience and Sustainability**
2. **Diversify Our Audiences and Cultivate Community**
3. **Balance Ambition, Capacity, and Care**
4. **Deepen Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience**

1. Strengthen Financial Resilience and Sustainability

Objective:

To strengthen ReFrame's financial resilience by cultivating diverse, sustainable sources of revenue and support.

Key Commitments:

- Pursue longer-term funding stability through multi-year and core operating grants that support strategic and operational capacity
- Increase individual giving via renewed emphasis on monthly giving, donor stewardship, and cultivation of major gifts
- Expand mission-aligned sponsorship opportunities with partners who share ReFrame's values
- Increase earned revenue through festival pass and ticket sales, advertising sales, and year-round screenings
- Further cultivate foundation and private sector partnerships, especially those aligned with justice, arts access, and community-building

Guiding Values:

Mission Alignment
Any new revenue activity must uphold ReFrame's commitments to accessibility, equity, environmental responsibility, and artistic integrity.

Community Accountability
All fundraising and partnership efforts will reflect ReFrame's anti-oppression and community-engagement values.

2. Diversify our Audiences and Cultivate Community

Objective:

To broaden and diversify ReFrame's audiences and deepen community connections through equity-centred outreach, accessibility, inclusive and decolonizing practices, and meaningful youth engagement.

Key Commitments:

- Diversify our audiences through intentional, equity-centred outreach, with particular attention to equity-deserving communities that face barriers to participation in arts and cultural spaces

- Build intentional pathways for children and youth to engage with ReFrame as creators, audiences, volunteers, leaders, and collaborators
- Strive to maintain hybrid presentation as a key accessibility practice that reduces barriers and enables broader participation in the ReFrame community
- Foster meaningful and ongoing relationships among audiences, artists, filmmakers, volunteers, educators, community partners, and neighbours
- Create shared spaces for connection and authentic conversation rooted in equity and care

Guiding Values:

Accessibility
We will continue working to dismantle barriers to participation throughout ReFrame's operations and events.

Youth Leadership
We recognize young people as creators, audiences, leaders, and collaborators whose voices can help shape the future of ReFrame.

Equity-Centred Outreach
We believe that meaningful engagement requires intentional effort to reach communities that are disproportionately affected by systemic barriers to access, representation, and participation.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Decolonization
We will continually examine who is represented, reached, welcomed, and able to participate and lead, using anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and decolonizing frameworks to foster belonging, shared learning, and shared leadership.

Relationship-Centred Practice
We will prioritize deep, respectful, and reciprocal connections over transactional interactions.

3. Balance Ambition, Capacity, and Care

Objective:

To align ReFrame's ambitions with its human, financial, and operational capacity, fostering a culture of care in which staff and volunteers, including members of the Board and Programming Advisory Committee, are supported to do excellent work without overextension.

Key Commitments:

- Align the scale and scope of ReFrame's programming with its staffing, resources, governance, and operational capacity through proactive planning and realistic workload management

- Support sustainable work/life balance, wellbeing, and fair distribution of responsibilities among staff and volunteers to prevent burnout
- Maintain equitable employment practices, supportive working conditions, and stable contracts
- Sustain strong governance through clear roles, shared responsibility, realistic expectations, and thoughtful Board recruitment and succession planning
- Invest in the learning and professional development of staff, Board and Programming Advisory Committee members, and other volunteers
- Embed DEI and decolonization in organizational foundations and practices, including our language, policies, governance, hiring, and decision-making
- Use emerging technologies selectively to reduce administrative burden and support organizational capacity, while developing clear, values-aligned policy and practices that address their implications for people, equity, accessibility, and ReFrame's work

Guiding Values:

Care and Sustainability
We will continually work to align our expectations, resources, and ways of working to support the wellbeing and sustain the contributions of staff, Board members, and other volunteers.

Equity and Decolonization
We will continue examining and strengthening our organizational practices through anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and decolonizing frameworks.

Thoughtful Use of Emerging Technologies
We will approach emerging technologies with curiosity and critical inquiry, using them selectively and transparently where they can support our people and strengthen organizational capacity. We will assess their implications for equity, labour, accessibility, human creativity, and artistic autonomy, including the ways their development and use may reinforce existing inequities.

4. Deepen Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience

Objective:

To centre ecological responsibility across our work, recognizing the connections among environmental harm, social injustice, colonialism, and inequity.

Key Commitments:

- Maintain a strong focus on climate and environmental justice, biodiversity, Indigenous knowledge and sovereignty, food systems, and our relationships with the

more-than-human world through documentary film and media art

- Deepen and expand partnerships with organizations and communities engaged in environmental learning, justice, and action, connecting the issues explored on screen with work taking place in our communities

- Develop and implement environmental responsibility and climate action policies to guide ReFrame's organizational practices and decision-making

- Examine and strengthen our approaches to procurement, travel, waste, printing, digital technologies, and resource use to minimize environmental harm while maintaining accessibility

- Critically assess the environmental and inequitable human impacts of emerging technologies and make thoughtful, values-aligned choices about their use

- Honour Indigenous knowledge systems, rights, and cultural sovereignty in our environmental learning, relationships, and practices

Guiding Values:

Environmental and Social Justice
We recognize that environmental and social harms are deeply interconnected and must be understood and addressed together.

Care for the More-Than-Human World
We understand ecological responsibility as an extension of our ethic of care and recognize our responsibilities to the living world and to future generations.

Environmental Responsibility
We will build on our existing practices while continually seeking thoughtful and achievable ways to reduce harm and bring our operations into closer alignment with our environmental values.

Critical and Decolonizing Inquiry
We will examine environmental issues and our own practices with curiosity and critical reflection, questioning the colonial systems, assumptions, and power imbalances that contribute to environmental harm.

Next Steps

To implement this strategic plan, ReFrame's Board and staff will:

1. Communicate the strategic directions to ReFrame's staff, Board, committees, volunteers, partners, and wider community
2. Develop annual operational plans with specific actions, responsibilities, timelines, resource requirements, and measurable objectives
3. Align organizational decision-making, budgeting, fundraising, policies, and programming with the four strategic directions
4. Identify opportunities for Board committees, the Programming Advisory Committee, staff, volunteers, and community partners to contribute to implementation
5. Review progress quarterly, share key findings, and adapt operational plans as circumstances and community needs evolve

Conclusion

ReFrame's Board, staff, and volunteers are proud of what the organization and its community have built together. We are grateful to everyone who contributed their experiences, ideas, concerns, and aspirations to this process. As we pursue these strategic directions, ReFrame's mission, vision, and values will remain at the centre of our work. We look forward to continuing to learn, adapt, and work alongside our community to sustain a festival that fosters connection, challenges injustice, and inspires care and action for one another and the more-than-human world.

Appendix A: Community Engagement Summary

Community engagement took place throughout ReFrame's strategic planning process and included annual audience feedback surveys, a dedicated strategic planning survey, and an in-person community consultation. These opportunities were designed to:

1. Gather the ReFrame community's experiences, ideas, concerns, and aspirations;
2. Include ReFrame's communities meaningfully in considering the organization's future; and
3. Identify shared priorities to inform ReFrame's strategic directions and subsequent operational planning.

ReFrame sought input from people with a range of relationships to the organization, including:

- Audience members and festival-goers
- Artists and filmmakers
- Current and former volunteers
- Board and Programming Advisory Committee members
- Current and former staff
- Donors, sponsors, and funders
- Community partner organizations
- Local arts and justice organizations
- Students and educators
- Other interested members of the community

Audience Feedback

ReFrame staff reviewed approximately 300 responses to annual audience and partner feedback surveys conducted between 2024 and 2026. These surveys assessed the audience experience while also gathering input relevant to ReFrame's future, including perspectives on programming, accessibility, hybrid presentation, community engagement, audience development, and the social and environmental issues respondents most wanted ReFrame to address.

Feedback was strongly positive overall and demonstrated considerable affection for and confidence in ReFrame. Respondents consistently valued the quality and range of films, the opportunity to encounter perspectives and issues not widely represented elsewhere, the festival's welcoming atmosphere, and the experience of gathering with others around documentary film.

The surveys also identified areas requiring continued attention. These included reaching younger and more diverse audiences, maintaining accessible and affordable participation, creating opportunities for connection and discussion, balancing in-person and virtual experiences, and sustaining the festival within its available financial and human resources.

Climate change, environmental justice, biodiversity, and ecological preservation were consistently among the issues of greatest interest to respondents.

Strategic Planning Survey

With guidance from non-profit governance specialist Nic Gagliardi of Rise and Run Co. Non-Profit Consulting, ReFrame developed a dedicated strategic planning survey for audiences, artists, volunteers, donors, sponsors, community partners, and other invested parties. The survey received over 30 responses from people with longstanding relationships with ReFrame.

Respondents expressed overwhelmingly positive impressions of the festival and particularly valued its community atmosphere, social and environmental justice focus, accessibility, community partnerships, and interactions with staff and volunteers. Many described ReFrame as an important cultural gathering place that provides access to compelling films, creates opportunities for learning and reflection, and connects people around issues of shared concern.

The priorities most frequently selected for ReFrame's next three years included:

- Expanding and diversifying audiences, especially youth
- Strengthening organizational sustainability and long-term stability
- Building financial resilience through more diverse revenue sources
- Maintaining community access and inclusion
- Supporting staff capacity, fair compensation, and retention
- Sustaining year-round community presence and programming
- Deepening environmental sustainability
- Strengthening relationships with equity-deserving communities

Respondents strongly supported accessible practices such as captioning, pay-what-you-can admission, physically accessible venues, the Community Access Program, transit-friendly locations, and online or hybrid access. Hybrid presentation was valued for its flexibility and its ability to reduce barriers related to disability, health, geography, winter travel, caregiving, and scheduling. At the same time, respondents recognized that hybrid delivery requires significant financial and staff resources.

Community Consultation

On May 12, 2026, ReFrame hosted a two-hour strategic planning workshop at its downtown offices. Facilitated by Nic Gagliardi, the session brought together community members, volunteers, and people with close organizational knowledge to reflect on ReFrame's evolution and collectively imagine its future.

Participants worked in small groups through three activities:

1. Sharing personal ReFrame memories to ground the conversation in lived experience;

2. Creating past, present, and future timelines across personal, organizational, and broader environmental contexts; and
3. Imagining a future ReFrame festival and identifying the “backstage” conditions required to make that vision possible.

A closing discussion allowed participants to identify important tensions and considerations. Nic subsequently synthesized the session’s contributions in a report for ReFrame’s strategic planning team.

Engagement Results and Recurring Themes

Across the surveys and community consultation, participants expressed deep care for ReFrame and a strong desire to see the organization continue. Several interconnected themes emerged:

- **Community and belonging:** ReFrame’s relational quality, grassroots history, and ability to bring people together are central to its value.
- **Audience diversification and youth engagement:** Participants wanted ReFrame to reach more diverse communities and create meaningful pathways for children and youth to participate.
- **Accessibility and hybrid presentation:** Accessible venues, affordable admission, captioning, community access, and virtual participation remain important, although the cost and capacity implications of hybrid delivery require ongoing consideration.
- **Financial and organizational sustainability:** Participants identified stable and diverse funding, strong internal systems, and realistic alignment between resources and activities as essential to ReFrame’s future.
- **Staff and volunteer capacity:** Concern about workload, invisible labour, and burnout underscored the need to care for the people responsible for ReFrame’s programming, operations, and governance.
- **Scale, intimacy, and identity:** Participants valued ReFrame’s close-knit community atmosphere and encouraged the organization to preserve that quality as its reach and complexity evolve.
- **Environmental responsibility:** Survey respondents demonstrated sustained interest in climate change, environmental justice, biodiversity, and ecological preservation, reinforcing the importance of keeping environmental responsibility central to ReFrame’s work.
- **Equity and community relationships:** Participants emphasized inclusive outreach, representation, reciprocal partnerships, and continued engagement with equity-deserving communities.

These findings helped shape ReFrame’s four strategic directions and will continue to inform the annual operational plans developed to implement them.

Appendix B: ReFrame Leadership (Board and Staff Directors)

Board of Directors, 2026-2027

Melanie Buddle, Chair
Simal Iftikhar, Vice Chair
Michelle Nguyen, Secretary
Spencer Allen, Treasurer
Mary Adams
Danielle Britton
Tanya Kranc
Angeni Lovelday
Kalreen Pendleton Jiménez
Kayt Ward

Staff Directors

Ryan Barnett, Creative Director
Kait Dueck, Executive Director