



OUR MISSION:

To promote the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Italian language and culture through educational and cultural events in the greater Twin Cities area.

While referencing our heritage, we create and promote authentic experiences that represent Italian contemporary culture.

OUR VISION:

To create a broad and inclusive cultural community in the Twin Cities by serving as a beacon for classic and contemporary Italian culture through its language, arts, food, science, and technology.

WHO WE ARE AND WHO WE SERVE:

Founded in 2006, the Italian Cultural Center of Minneapolis/St. Paul is an independent, non-political, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization open to anyone interested in the unique phenomena of Italian culture. We offer a comprehensive approach to Italian language and culture and reject stereotypes and divisive rhetoric.

The organization is comprised of approximately 400 active members and 2,000+ followers and participants across all demographic groups. Guiding the development of our programs and initiatives, our audiences are grouped into the following:

- Italian nationals who have moved to the Twin Cities in pursuit of educational and professional opportunities and wish to maintain ties with other Italians and create a language community for themselves and their families.
- Italian-Americans whose ancestors immigrated to the US and wish to (re)gain a better understanding of the language and current Italian culture.
- Italophiles who want to deepen their appreciation of Italy's artistic and cultural heritage.

ORGANIZATION:

The Italian Cultural Center is a corporation, duly registered under the laws of the State of Minnesota with the Office of the Secretary of State. The ICC is a public charity, maintaining tax-exempt status in accordance with Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The property, business, and affairs of the ICC are managed by or under the direction of the Board of Directors, in compliance with ICC by-laws.

As of January 2018, the Board consists of 1 President and 14 Directors, including a Vice-President and a Treasurer. An additional 6 members attend to the ICC daily operations on a part-time basis. The language school includes 7 instructors. Depending on their areas of expertise, the Directors are encouraged to take on specific duties and to manage its activities in cooperation with the other Directors, members and volunteers.

Although the Board of Directors does not typically involve itself with the day-to-day operation of ICC activities and events, it is nonetheless charged with the duty to oversee all events and activities, ensuring that they are within the scope of ICC's mission and always permitted under the law. The Board is the ultimate governing authority, and as such, holds the present and future success of the ICC in its hands. These duties are discharged in a cordial, professional, and fun-loving environment, acknowledging our love of Italian language, art and culture.

CORE PROGRAMS & STRENGTHS:

- **Language School** – Small groups and university-educated native speakers provide the ideal environment to learn Italian. Our instructors, born and raised in Italy, bring first-hand experience and cultural background of Italian life and current traditions to the classroom. Based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), we offer a wide range of classes from Beginning to Advanced level and provide a full program of study, all year around.
- **Cultural Events** – From unique cooking classes and wine-tasting classes, to lectures, art exhibitions, concerts and literary discussions we offer many opportunities to understand Italy's rich heritage and to celebrate contemporary Italian culture.
- **Cinema** – Launched in 2009, the Italian Film Festival of Minneapolis/St. Paul is a multi-day, annual event that features prominent current first run Italian films and documentaries. Over the years, Italian directors have participated to provide commentary and insights into their films to our Minnesota audience. In 2014, the festival was selected Best of Minnesota by the Star Tribune.
- **Direct Relationship with Chicago Consulate** – The ICC provides services and hosts special events of interest to Twin Cities native Italian residents.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 2018 – 2023

STRUCTURAL GOALS:

1. Maintain and Strengthen Financial & Operational Sustainability

Since 2006, the ICC has continued to grow and evolve into a vibrant and healthy organization. In order for the ICC to continue to grow and offer new programs, additional events and benefits to its members, it is essential to increase our focus on financial sustainability and the generation of more diverse sources of revenue. Specific steps and actions may include:

- Develop yearly financial plans and budgets for a balanced approach to future growth
- Generate additional revenue by increasing the number and frequency of cultural events, language school offerings, food, wine, and travel programs
- Initiate a formal Development/Fundraising plan and process
- Launch a Capital Campaign to improve ICC physical space
- Increase level of financial accountability and analysis including measurable goals

2. Establish Organizational Structure for Future Growth

Since its inception the ICC has been extremely successful with a very limited but dedicated members, board, and volunteers. The organization thrives on the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone involved. Although successful, the overall structure and sophistication of the organization is still limited.

As the ICC moves into its next stage of development, a more sophisticated organizational structure needs to be developed and implemented. Proposed changes to the organizational structure include the following:

- Develop 2-tiered board structure comprised of a supervisory board and a management board
- Develop Board Committees
- Investigate hiring an Executive Director
- Increase number of paid staff
- Evaluate employee/freelance policies/procedures and tax/liability compliance
- Establish Team Engagement Leader position to evaluate board participation and formalize board recruitment/evaluation process
- Develop a formalized activation and evaluation process for events and activities
- Maintain compliance with non-profit status and practice

PROGRAM GOALS:

1. Increase and Enhance Membership

The ICC enjoys a unique position in the Twin Cities cultural community. It is highly regarded by its members and followers and is acknowledged as the premier Italian Cultural organization in the Twin Cities. This status offers the ICC the opportunity to increase its membership numbers by continually increasing and improving its program offering that may include:

- Develop and implement a plan to reach our goal of 1,000 members by 2023.
- Attract additional native Italian members via special events and children school.
- Improve membership retention through marketing communication and improved benefits.
- Increase social media presence and relevance to our audiences.
- Enhance volunteer training and appreciation.
- Organize special events specifically for sponsors and donors.
- Develop a formal Marketing Communication Strategy to broaden our reach, improve our content and message and maintain brand equity
- Update our website to improve user experience and administrative functions

2. Increase and Expand Event Offerings

The events offered by the ICC continue to grow in number and improve in quality over the years. The events are well attended and highly rated by members and non-members. There are numerous opportunities for new and additional events to be created and developed that will enhance the profile of the ICC within the community, better serve its members, and generate additional revenue. Included are the following:

- Maintain a calendar of established food, cooking, and wine tasting classes
- Offer annual seasonal themed events – such as Carnevale, Natale, Ferragosto
- Re-launch monthly film screening program (*Cineforum*)
- Create scientific and technology showcase events in cooperation with local companies and universities
- Seek co-productions with organizations – MIA, Caponi Art Park, WAC, other local international cultural organizations
- Organize gatherings and events that tie into major Italian sporting events
- Create new series of events (e.g. The Italian Excellence in Arts and Science series) or innovative one-time events (e.g. Leonardo exhibition).

3. Expand Language Program

The language program is the cornerstone of the ICC both in terms of its cultural offerings to the community and revenue generation. The language program is comprised of native speakers teaching professionals and allows the ICC to offer a full range of classes for adults and children. Creating additional classes and programs will enhance and strengthen the language program and the organization overall. Strategies may include:

- Broaden Language school offerings – develop specialized classes for travelers, business, study abroad prep for college students
- Expand scope and reach of Open Houses to showcase upcoming events and activities
- Maintain and refine our current language-focused travel program
- Partner with other ICCs in the US to promote adult immersion classes in warm climes for long winter weekends
- Expand children’s school and events aimed at families and children
- Seek PLIDA (*Progetto Lingua Italiana Dante Alighieri*) certification or equivalent to increase recognition of our language program and become an approved testing facility

4. Broaden and Strengthen Relations with Italian Cultural Organizations

The ICC enjoys a positive relationship with the Consulate and IIC in Chicago, who recognizes the ICC as a premier regional Italian cultural organization. Cultivating and strengthening this relationship brings additional opportunities for us to offer higher-level programs and events. In addition, there are many Italian cultural organizations similar to the ICC across major metropolitan areas in the US. Developing relationships with these organizations provides an opportunity for us to work together, share ideas, knowledge and programs. Toward this end, we commit to the following:

- Continue to strengthen relationship with Consulate and IIC Chicago for services and events
- Initiate and establish regular contact with other US-based ICCs
- Seek direct Italian Government contact and support

5. Upgrade Physical Space to Accommodate Growth

The ICC’s current location in the historic Hennepin Center for the Arts building in downtown Minneapolis has served it well over the last 10 years; however, the ICC activities and programs have begun to outgrow the space. A focused effort to find a new space that can economically and functionally accommodate the ICC’s future needs to be undertaken. The following is a list of desirable criteria for a new space:

- A dedicated identifiable proprietary space
- Downtown Minneapolis or immediate vicinity location

- Improved and additional classroom space
 - Instructional kitchen and cooking space
 - Library
 - Separate administration area
 - Large meeting area
 - Amenities – such as espresso bar, cinema, consistent technology
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About the ICC Strategic Planning Process

The ICC's 2018-2023 strategic planning process began in March 2017 and included 18 long-form interviews, a review by key board members, a presentation of the initial findings to the Board as well as a final review and approval by the President and Board of Directors. The process was intentional about gathering information from a variety of sources and people that would help provide important insight into the ICC's future direction.

The Strategic Plan provides a general framework for the ICC to advance its mission while serving as a guide for all current and future activities, including their suitability and priority. The overall Plan is designed to ensure that the ICC continues its path of growth and cultural relevance in the Twin Cities. With its approval, the Directors and Members become committed to following the goals and implement the recommendations of the Plan. The Board may periodically revisit the strategies as internal and external factors change.

Strategic Planning Committee Members

Brian Balleria
ICC Board Member

Sandra Gengler
ICC Board Member

Additional review and insights by ICC board members:

Anna Olivero
Fabrizio Bonelli
Vittorio Raimondi, President

❖ Approved by majority vote of the board of directors on 26 March, 2018.