

Boone County Arboretum Strategic Plan 2024 – 2029

Transparency: The Boone County Arboretum relies on both public and private funding to achieve its mission. This includes public financial support from the Boone County Cooperative Extension Service and the Boone County Fiscal Court and private funding through Friends of the Boone County Arboretum. This document includes the missions and objectives of both the Boone County Arboretum and the non-profit Friends of the Boone County Arboretum since their goals are closely intertwined.

Arboretum Mission: To cultivate a healthy environment through a living museum of plants, conservation, community enjoyment, education, and research.

Friends of the Arboretum Mission: To promote, maintain, and enhance the Boone County Arboretum through outreach, volunteerism, and fundraising.

Brief Summary of Goals & Measures of Success:

GOAL 1: Achieve financial stability to support the Master Plan, including horticultural and educational excellence, plant health and future plant acquisitions.

- Grow Friends membership base by at least 10% annually.
- Grow sponsorship to fully fund collection areas and special gardens.
- Actively promote sponsorship plan. Increase sponsorships by 50% annually until sponsorship program is full, then keep at capacity.

GOAL 2: Increase promotion of the Arboretum's value to the community's quality of life.

- Annual increases in the number of people touched through the Ambassador program, speaker's program, Arboretum events, and other community outreach.

GOAL 3: Enhance, expand, and diversify Arboretum programs to address the needs and interests of diverse clients and users.

- Increase interactions by 50% in 2024 and 2025.

GOAL 4: Receive recognition as a 'museum' by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and as a 'botanical garden' by the Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

- Achieve status by December 31, 2029.

GOAL 5: Actively recruit, train, recognize, and retain a diverse volunteer cadre to support the FOBCA President in meeting the Mission and needs of FOBCA and of the Arboretum itself.

- Steering committees will need minimal supervision by 12/31/29.

Goal 1: Achieve financial stability to support the Master Plan.

Strategy	Tactics	Time Frame	Responsibility
Hire a Development Director (or 3 rd party) to execute Sponsorship Level fundraising plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secure hiring approval 	Jan '25	Management Committee Chair, Development Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secure funding for a two-year position. ● Develop position description. ● Recruit and hire. 	Dec '25	Development Director
Develop a business plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a business, operations and staffing plan for Education and Visitors Center. 	Initial draft by Dec '24, with ongoing dev't	Development Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruit and work with knowledgeable volunteers from business community/local university to create plan. 	Ongoing	Development Director, Arboretum Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to determine the appropriate mix of revenue sources to assure sustainability and expansion of programs, staff, and facilities. 	Ongoing	Development Director, Finance Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update the value of the BCA collections given their maturity and the cost of replacing with comparably sized and aged plants/trees. 	Ongoing	Arboretum Curator, Horticulturist, Volunteers, Arboretum Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update the value for the environmental services (air pollution filtering, storm water absorption, carbon sequestration, etc.) that the plant collections of the BCA provide. 	Nov '25	Arboretum Curator, Horticulturist, Volunteers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop all-inclusive costs for maintenance and staffing to protect the investment in plant collections. 	Nov '24, Ongoing	Arboretum Director, Arboretum Curator
Identify/estimate financial needs per year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a true cost accounting of operational expenses to determine the full cost of operating the BCA, combining all three budget source amounts. This includes all costs for staffing, maintenance, and plant collection replacement and expansion. 	Feb '25	Finance Committee Chair, Arboretum Director, Arboretum Curator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assign a value to the in-kind contributions of all partners and various entities, such as volunteer hours and "soft donor" connections to benefactors. 	Feb '25	Finance Committee Chair, Volunteer Coordinator, Horticulturist
Establish a long-term property contract with Boone County and Extension Service. (The current arrangement is only annual.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secure contract support from BC Judge Executive's Office, Extension Service & FOBCA Board toward the development of a public-private partnership. ● Determine the process and legal documents required to execute. ● Sign contract with applicable parties. 	Feb '25	Arboretum Director, FOBCA President, Judge Executive's Office, Extension District Board
Grow sponsorship to fully fund collection areas and special gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and prioritize needs. 	Ongoing	Arboretum Director, Development Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Renovate Children's Garden. 	Nov '24, Ongoing	Arboretum Director, Horticulturist
Grow sponsorships & partnerships in the region with other NPOs and businesses; grow partnerships with other local government entities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update the informational program on the Arboretum that can be presented to potential partners and sponsors. 	May '24	Development Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and implement a comprehensive program to recognize and promote partners and sponsors (special recognition event). 	Dec '25	Development Director
Develop ways to publicly recognize sponsors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Display sponsor names at all major public events on foam core board, PowerPoint slide, etc. 	Mar '24	Development Director

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Display sponsor/donor names within Arboretum based on terms of sponsorship. 	Ongoing	Development Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize sponsors in social media posts and encourage support. 	Ongoing	Development Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create window cling for business doors: "We proudly sponsor the Boone County Arboretum." 	Jun '25	Development Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer "Friend of the Boone County Arboretum" bumper stickers for business vehicles. 	Jun '25	Development Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pursue naming rights for large ticket donors, such as on buildings, shelters, pathways, garden collections. 	Jan '29	Development Director
Appoint a Capital Campaign Advisory Committee to initiate a capital campaign to raise funds for the long-term financial sustainability of the Arboretum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define a capital campaign goal that is sufficient to support 50% of annual operational costs and to fund the construction and operation of the Welcome Center and all other Arboretum facilities. 	Ongoing	Development Director Finance Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine the appropriate distribution of the campaign goal income between an endowment and spendable funds. 	Ongoing	Development Director Finance Chair

<p>Review Vision / Master Plan items at each board meeting to stay on task with long term growth goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Re-engage with Vision / Master Plan, finalize business plan section. ● Continue to build the board with individuals that can make the necessary connections needed to achieve vision plan goals. ● Provide training to board and staff on how to articulate the goals and needs of the vision plan. ● Meet with potential donors regarding their planned giving interests and how they might align with the long-term vision of the Arboretum. ● Engage the private sector to help them envision how the Arboretum can assist with meeting brand objectives through support of the Arboretum. ● Effectively communicate with stakeholders on progress including corporate supporters, donors, members, and volunteers. ● Engage the community with the vision for the Arboretum to safeguard our reputation of success. 	<p>Apr '24, Jun '24, Aug '24, Oct '24, Dec '24</p> <p>Bi-monthly afterward</p>	<p>Arboretum Director, Development Director, FOBCA Board of Directors</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appoint a Capital Campaign Advisory Committee to guide the campaign activities; provide any assistance such committee needs to complete this goal. 	<p>Dec '27</p>	<p>Development Director</p>

<p>Review the existing administrative and financial arrangement for the Boone County Arboretum to identify opportunities to enhance operational efficiency and financial sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Convene a meeting of the partners to conduct an operational SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and answer key questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What aspects of the current structure and process are working best for all partners? ○ What do we each get out of supporting this organization and how can we maximize the benefits to make it work well for everyone? ○ What aspects of the current structure and processes could be improved to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the Arboretum? ○ What are the specific assets and resources we can bring to the table moving forward? ○ What has been and what do we want our future role in the growth of the Arboretum to be? 	<p>Dec '25</p>	<p>Arboretum Director, Development Director, Judge Executive's Office, Extension District Board</p>
<p>Evaluate the option of developing a public-private partnership as the legal organizational structure for the arboretum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess the strengths and weaknesses of a formal public-private organizational structure for achieving strategic goals and enhancing operations (Kris has examples from other PPPs). 	<p>Dec '24</p>	<p>Arboretum Director, FOBCA President, Judge Executive's Office, Extension District Board</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess the costs and benefits of a formal public-private organizational structure for each or the partners and the return each requires to commit to this structure. 	<p>Dec '24</p>	<p>Arboretum Director, FOBCA President, Judge Executive's Office, Extension District Board</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If the assessment is positive, establish the public-private partnership as the legal Boone County Arboretum entity via a signed Memorandum of Agreement by all parties. 	<p>Dec '24</p>	<p>Arboretum Director, FOBCA President, Judge Executive's Office, Extension District Board</p>
<p>Grow Friends membership base by 10% annually.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify new incentives that can be provided to members and affirm the benefits of membership. 	<p>Jun '24</p>	<p>Membership Committee Chair</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist FOBCA in developing marketing materials and make these available at the Arboretum and all Arboretum events. 	July '24	Volunteer & Events Coordinator, Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate an annual membership drive, separate from the Growing Forward Campaign. 	Ongoing, Aug 1 start	Membership Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create & distribute "Friend of the Boone County Arboretum" bumper stickers to members. 	Aug '24	Membership Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use social media (Facebook/Instagram) to attract new members. 	Sept '24	Membership Committee Chair, Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue cost benefit of social media ads on Facebook, per event. 	Nov '24	Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with FOBCA, establish a Junior program for youth to become active with the Arboretum and recognize its value. 	Jan '25	Volunteer & Events Coordinator, Membership Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create walkway signs with QR codes that say: "enjoying your walk, your membership and support contributes to our success, 50% of Arboretum funding comes from people like you!" 	Aug '24	Arboretum Director, Membership Committee Chair, Marketing Committee Chair
Review the current pricing of Arboretum events and ensure compatibility with similar area events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review pricing of other similar events in our area. 	May '24	Volunteer & Events Coordinator, Event Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust pricing as appropriate. 	May '24	Volunteer & Events Coordinator, Event Committee Chair
Pursue avenues to increase profits from fundraising events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a summer evening event (tentative idea: Bourbon & Botanicals). 	Jul '24	Event Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue improving upon the Dogwood Dash 5K. 	Ongoing	Event Committee Chair

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue improving upon the Fall Plant Sale. 	Ongoing	Event Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue improving upon the Spring Tea. 	Ongoing	Event Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue improving upon the TREE Symposium (renamed from TREE Fund Event). 	Ongoing	Event Committee Chair
Increase grant revenues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase grant writing committee membership. 	Ongoing	Volunteer Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships with other organizations that align with our mission to partner on other grants. 	Dec '24	Arboretum Director, FOBCA Board
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research, identify and apply for 2 to 3 grants per year. 	Dec '24	Grant Writing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research, identify and apply for 3 to 5 grants per year. 	Dec '25	Grant Writing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research, identify and apply for 5 to 6 grants per year. 	Dec '26	Grant Writing Committee Chair
Provide current online financial information for persons considering grants or donations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Guidestar and Charity Navigator websites. 	Apr '24	CFO
Implement annual Growing Forward campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate this campaign from the membership drive. Update goals, report accomplishments to supporters, recruit volunteers, explore innovative ways to tie into a kickoff event. 	Ongoing, Starting by July 1 each year	Growing Forward Committee
Goal 2: Increase promotion of the Arboretum's value to the community's quality of life.			
Strategy	Tactics	Time Frame	Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile existing research. 	Jun '25	Marketing Committee Chair

Build a promotion around the health and wellness aspects of the Arboretum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write materials and update: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Website. Print materials. Incorporate into speaker materials. 	Dec '25	Membership Committee Chair, Marketing Committee Chair
Create meditation trail locations & signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit a local hospital sponsor or secure grant funding. 	Jun '25	Development Director, Grant Writing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and build out. 	Jan '26	Horticulturist
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicize availability. 	Sep '26	Marketing Committee Chair
Create and promote a speaker's bureau.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create speaker materials (horticulture, history, and fundraising asks). 	Dec '26	Development Director, Arboretum Director, Arboretum Curator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit and train volunteer speakers (horticulture, community groups, rotary, businesses, etc.). 	Jun '27	Development Director, Volunteer Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote availability of speakers to community groups, clubs, etc. 	Jan '28	Marketing Committee Chair
Promote the Arboretum's 25 th anniversary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan event, public officials portion, followed by ice cream social for all. 	Feb '24	Events Coordinator, Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate key County & Extension staff involvement. 	Feb '24	Events Coordinator, Arboretum Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite Master Gardeners and Boone County Garden Club to participate. 	Mar '24	Events Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue news release re: anniversary. 	Apr '24	Marketing Committee Chair, Marketing Intern

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote event on social media. 	Apr '24	Marketing Intern, Arboretum Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite Boone County officials and Boone County Cooperative Extension Board to attend. 	Apr '24	Events Coordinator
Design and implement a marketing/communications plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a market analysis by surveying Arboretum and Arboretum on Wheels visitors (Surveys, QR Codes, etc). 	Dec '24	Marketing Committee Chair, AOW Manager, Marketing Intern
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate the availability of staff and volunteers from FOBCA to provide expert seasonal weekly tips on radio and television. 	Dec '24	Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a marketing plan that utilizes multiple methods of informative promotions of the Arboretum. 	Dec '24	Membership Committee Chair, Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and refine the " elevator speech". 	Jun '24	Membership Committee Chair, Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train staff, volunteers, and board members on our elevator speech (December board meeting / retreat). 	Dec '24	Membership Committee Chair, Marketing Committee Chair
Generate awareness and community interest focused on an area in the Arboretum via Webcam.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek corporate / media support for camera. 	Dec '24	Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what focus of webcam will be. 	Dec '24	Arboretum Director, Curator
Promote the Arboretum as an amateur photography and artist site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue opportunities at the Boone County Fair. 		Membership Committee Chair, Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High school photography classes. 		Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an art contest, possibly as a joint venture with Boone Co. Extension Art department. 		Marketing Committee Chair

Re-engage KY National Guard Burlington Campus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage volunteerism. 	Apr '24	Volunteer Coordinator, Arboretum Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership (to Friends of BCA? What does this mean? - Bridget). 	Apr '24	Volunteer Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate into our events. (Equipment displays etc.) (Could use them for Dogwood Dash? Touch-a-tree?) 	Apr '24	Volunteer Coordinator
Fully develop the Polar Vortex Magnolia patent & trademark.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage a grower with a MTA (Material transfer agreement) to build production. 	Oct '24	Arboretum Director, Horticulturist
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a marketing plan for the plant. 	Dec '24	Horticulturist Marketing Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicity for debut of plant. 	Dec '26	Marketing Committee Chair, Development Director, Arboretum Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out samples for widespread trials. 	Dec '26	Arboretum Director
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a committee for managing plant introductions, with help from horticulture staff (protecting the assets and collecting royalties). 	Dec '26	Arboretum Director
Collect data on who attends or uses Arboretum programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a system to capture people touched through: Ambassador program, speaker's program, Arboretum events, AOW, and other community outreach. 	Mar '24, Ongoing	Volunteer Coordinator, Events Coordinator, AOW Manager
<p>Goal 3: Enhance, expand, and diversify Arboretum programs to address the needs and interests of diverse clients and users.</p>			
Strategy	Tactics	Time Frame	Responsibility

Enhance the resources available to support and expand the programming of the Arboretum on Wheels (AOW).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transition to full-time Manager for AOW (include in business plan). 	Jan '26	Management Committee, Finance Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a job description (mostly done, but part-time) with defined responsibilities and position within the organization. 	Jan '25	Management Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhance the budget line for the operation and staffing of AOW to assure sufficient science educators to meet demand. 	Ongoing	AOW Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building solid staffing structure with a 5-person team for two years out, dependent on booking demand. 	Ongoing	AOW Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enrich the educational materials associated with AOW for youth and adults, with partner assistance. 	Ongoing	AOW Manager, Education Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the number of face-to-face interactions with students (initial year-over-year target of 50% increase), and increase booking demand. 	Ongoing	AOW Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to develop adult education programs with a "green" or environmentally sustainable emphasis. 	Ongoing	Education Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Market school and adult education programs regionally. 	Ongoing	AOW Manager
Effectively represent community interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure the Board composition reflects the diversity of the metro area in terms of racial make-up, gender, age, and geography. 	Ongoing	FOBCA Board, Membership Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use survey data to adapt and change programming. 	Ongoing, July 1	Event Coordinator

Goal 4: Receive recognition as a 'museum' by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and as a 'botanical garden' by the Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

Strategy	Tactics	Time Frame	Responsibility
Determine the requirements for gaining certification as a museum by the Institute for Museum and Library Services and then evaluate the costs and benefits of seeking this certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational structure development per requirements. 	Jan '29	Arboretum Director, Arboretum Curator
Apply for Botanical Garden Accreditation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use existing Arboretum Accreditation as template to complete application. 	Apr '24	Arboretum Director

Goal 5: Actively recruit, train, recognize, and retain a diverse volunteer cadre to support the FOBCA President in meeting the Mission and needs of FOBCA and of the Arboretum itself.

Strategy	Tactics	Time Frame	Responsibility
Identify and implement Best Practices in volunteer recruitment, recognition, and retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with volunteer coordinators of other non-profits such as St. Elizabeth Healthcare, Cincinnati Zoo, etc. CAVA (Cincinnati Association of Volunteer Administrators). American Public Gardens Association (Public Garden focus). 	Mar '24	Volunteer Coordinator
Develop position descriptions for steering committee chairs and members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify skill sets needed. 	Jun '24	Volunteer Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate expectations. 	Oct '24	Volunteer Coordinator
Consider vice-chair positions for continuity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Jun '25	Volunteer Coordinator
Identify training needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver training (i.e. grant writing). 	Jan '25	Volunteer Coordinator

Ensure committee chairs understand their roles and responsibilities and the FOBCA's and Arboretum's vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recurring interaction with committee chairs. 	Jan '25	Volunteer Coordinator
Identify and recognize the value of volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop system for tracking volunteer hours donated. 	PAST DUE	Volunteer Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a value-based recognition system for volunteers. 	Jul '24	Volunteer Coordinator
Network with large employers and community organizations (i.e. Rotary) to identify people with special skills for volunteer positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actively recruit leadership, marketing, etc. skills. 	Oct '24	Volunteer Coordinator

Holding area for key messages:

- Public funding accounts for 50 percent of the Arboretum's operating budget
- Health/wellness message
- Value statement

Holding area for required actions:

- Revise FOBCA by-laws and other documents to reflect new mission statement.
- Present new, improved mission statement which better clarifies the mission to FOBCA membership.
- Pursue grant with Ford's Bronco Wild Fund for Track Chair