



# COVID-19's Impact on The Arts

## Research & Tracking Update: December 14, 2020

The coronavirus continues its devastating impact on America's arts sector. Since the first U.S. case was reported in January 2020, cancellations have taken place at virtually every arts organization in the country and artists/creative workers are among the most severely affected segment of the nation's workforce. This is a summary of Americans for the Arts' studies tracking the human and financial impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the arts.

### **1. Impact on Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Sector**

Nationally, financial losses to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations are an estimated \$14.6 billion, to date. 99% of producing and presenting organizations have cancelled events—a loss of 481 million admissions and \$15.2 billion in audience spending at local businesses (e.g., restaurants, lodging, retail, parking). The total economic impact of organizational and audience-spending losses is \$5.04 billion in lost government revenue and 867,000 jobs no longer being supported. Findings are based on 19,900 survey responses. ([Survey Dashboard](#).)

- 35% laid off or furloughed staff.
- 63% make their cultural product available online or through social media (67% of these organizations expect to continue their virtual presence post-pandemic).
- 10% are “not confident” that they will survive the pandemic (a potential loss of 12,000 organizations).
- 41% of nonprofit arts organizations are currently open. 59% of organizations remain closed.
  - ✓ Open: 12% have remained open throughout. 29% have since re-opened.
  - ✓ Closed: 20% have a target date for re-opening. 39% have no target date for re-opening.
- Top 4 Barriers to Reopening: (1) customers unlikely to attend, (2) government restrictions/guidelines, (3) staff/board do not feel it is yet safe, and (4) impractical to produce art product in current environment.

### **2. Impact on Artist/Creative Workers**

Artists/creatives are among the most severely affected workers by the pandemic. 63% have become fully unemployed. They expect to lose an average of \$21,500 each in creativity-based income in 2020 (\$50.6 billion, nationally). Findings are based on 27,200 survey responses. ([Survey Dashboard](#).)

- 95% report loss of income.
- 79% experienced a decrease in creative work that generated income (62% “drastic decrease”).
- 67% are unable to access the supplies, resources, spaces, or people necessary for creative work.
- 78% have no post-pandemic financial recovery plan.
- Black, Indigenous, artists of color (BIPOC) have higher rates of unemployment than white artists due to the pandemic (69% vs. 60%) and expect to lose a larger percentage of their 2020 income (61% vs. 56%).
- Top 3 Needs for Artists: unemployment insurance, food/housing assistance, forgivable business loans.

### **3. COVID-19 and Social Distancing: Impact of Arts and Other Activities on Mental Health**

This ongoing study demonstrates that the arts provide mental health benefits to the public—even during the pandemic—combating the ill effects of isolation and loneliness associated with COVID-19. Preliminary findings show that just 30 minutes of active arts activities daily lowers anxiety and depression and increases life satisfaction. Begun by University College London in the UK, the study has been extended to the U.S. in partnership with the University of Florida and Americans for the Arts. All are welcome to participate. ([Survey](#))

### **4. Arts and Creative Industries Have Success in Accessing PPP Loans**

On March 27, 2020, Congress passed the \$2.3 trillion CARES Act to financially support small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and gig workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the total 4.9 million PPP loans (worth \$500 billion), 173,243 of them were made to arts and creative economy businesses worth \$13.7 billion, which preserved 1.1 million jobs. Nonprofit arts organizations alone secured 9,917 loans—valued at \$1.8 billion—which preserved 176,000 jobs. (Read more [here](#).)

The most current version of this update is maintained at [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/node/103614](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/node/103614).