



COVID-19's Impact on The Arts

Research & Tracking Update: July 13, 2020

The coronavirus has had a devastating impact on America's arts sector. Since the first U.S. case was reported on January 20, 2020 cancellations and closings have taken place at nearly every arts organization across the country and nearly two-thirds of the nation's artists are now unemployed. Americans for the Arts leads four national 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 \$9.1 billion as of July 13, 2020. 96% of organizations have cancelled events since the onset of the pandemic—some as far out as 2021—resulting in a loss of 327 million admissions and \$10.4 billion in event-related spending by arts audiences at local businesses (restaurants, lodging, retail). The total economic impact of these losses is \$3.3 billion in lost government revenue and 561,000 jobs no longer being supported. Findings are based on 17,200 survey responses. ([Survey](#). [Dashboard](#).)

- 51% of organizations have cancelled events into September 2020 (6% until 2021).
- 12% have already re-opened, 47% have no target date for re-opening (10% never closed).
- 10% are “not confident” that they will survive the pandemic (a loss of 12,000 organizations).
- 29% laid off or furloughed staff.
- Of those that reduced staff, just 39% expect to return to pre-COVID levels by December 2021.
- 60% are making their cultural product available online or through social media.
- *In response to the racial equity movement, 31% have implemented new or enhanced existing arts programs to address the issue of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

2. Impact on Artist/Creative Workers

Artists/creatives are among the most severely affected workers by the COVID-19 crisis. 62% have become fully unemployed and the average financial loss per artist/creative worker is \$23,300, to date. Nationally, they expect to lose \$50.6 billion in income in 2020. Findings are based on 21,400 survey responses. ([Survey](#). [Dashboard](#).)

- 94% report income loss.
- 79% experienced a decrease in creative work that generated income (61% “drastic decrease”).
- 66% are unable to access the supplies, resources, spaces, or people necessary for their work.
- *75% use their art to raise morale and create community cohesion.*

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

This study strengthens our understanding of the mental health impacts of COVID-19-related sheltering in place and whether the arts provide a protective buffer against the ill effects of the associated isolation and loneliness. Preliminary findings suggest engagement in the arts promote better mental health and reduce anxiety and depression. Initially 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 by joining here ([Survey](#)).

4. CARES Act Arts Funding Tracker

On March 27, 2020, Congress passed the \$2.3 trillion CARES Act, with new funding added to replenish popular programs, to financially support small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and gig workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This Tracker measures the success of the arts sector in securing eight federal CARES Act relief funding programs. Results to date are based on 2,800 respondents. ([Share your results & experience here](#).)

- Payroll Protection Program (PPP): 81% success rate
- Emergency Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL): 43% success rate
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA): 43% success rate

The most current version of this update is maintained at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/node/103614.