



COVID-19's Impact on The Arts

Research & Tracking Update: February 8, 2021

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 research by Americans for the Arts and others on 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 \$15.2 billion, to date. 99% of producing and presenting organizations have cancelled events—a loss of 482 million admissions and \$15.5 billion in audience spending at local businesses (e.g., restaurants, lodging, retail, parking). The total economic impact of organizational and audience-spending losses is \$5.2 billion in lost government revenue and 894,000 jobs no longer being supported. Findings are based on 19,950 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 and have lost an average of \$21,800 each in creativity-based income since the pandemic's onset. Findings are based on 28,500 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 are losing a larger percentage of their creative 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 by combating the ill effects of isolation and loneliness associated with COVID-19. Preliminary findings show that just 30 minutes of active arts activities daily may lower anxiety and depression and increase life satisfaction. All are welcome to participate. ([Survey](#))

4. More Research Studies on COVID-19's Impact on U.S. Arts and Creative Economy

Arts & Creative Industries Lose Billions in 2020	Artists Have Higher Unemployment Rates	Job Losses at Arts Nonprofits Most Severe
America's arts and creative industries lost \$150 billion in sales and 2.7 million jobs just July 2020. The “fine and performing arts” alone (commercial & nonprofit) incurred losses of \$42.5 billion and 50% of its workforce (-1.4 million jobs).	During the quarter ending September 2020, the national unemployment rate was 8.5%. Performing artists have some of the highest unemployment rates of any sector: actors (52%), dancers (55%), and musicians (27%).	Nonprofit “Arts, Culture, and Recreation” jobs were down 36.6% between February and December 2020—five times more than the entire nonprofit sector (-7.4%) and significantly more than other nonprofit subsectors: education (-15.0%), social assistance (-9.0%), and health care (-3.1%).
<i>Source: Brookings Institution, 2020.</i>	<i>Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.</i>	<i>Source: Johns Hopkins University Ctr. for Civil Society, 2020.</i>

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