



# COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on The Arts

## Research Update: June 28, 2021

The coronavirus continues to have a devastating impact on America's arts sector. Even as arts organizations cautiously begin to open, artists and creative workers remain 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 pandemic on the arts.

### **1. Impact on Nonprofit Arts & Culture Organizations and their Audiences**

Nationally, financial losses to nonprofit arts and culture organizations are an estimated **\$17.5 billion**, to date. 99% of producing and presenting organizations have cancelled events—a loss of **543 million cancelled ticketed admissions** impacting both arts organizations and audiences. Additionally, local area businesses, such as restaurants, lodging, retail, and parking, have been impacted by cancelled arts and culture events with a loss of **\$17.2 billion in audience ancillary spending**. **Local government revenue losses are \$5.9 billion and 1.02 million jobs have been negatively affected because of cancelled events.** ([Americans for the Arts Survey](#))

- Approximately half of organizations with in-person programming remain closed to the public.
  - ✓ 51% have targeted a 2021 re-open date. 49% have no target date.
  - ✓ 42% lack the financial resources needed to restart in-person programming. 67% of those report it will take 3+ months to assemble those funds, and 15% are not confident they can do so at all.
- **BIPOC organizations** are more likely to report that they currently lack the funds they need to return to in-person programming than non-BIPOC organizations (55% vs. 38%).
- Audiences are increasingly ready to return. 57% of vaccinated attendees say they are ready to return to cultural events, up from 25% in February 2021. ([AMS Audience Outlook Monitor](#))

**In fact, the U.S. Census Bureau's [Small Business Pulse Survey](#) reports that "arts, entertainment, and recreation" businesses are among the most likely to take longer than 6 months to recover from the pandemic.**

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

Artists/creatives remain among the most severely affected segment of the nation's workforce. 95% lost creative income. At the height of the pandemic in 2020, **63% experienced unemployment.** ([Americans for the Arts Survey](#))

- Alarmingly, **BIPOC artists had even higher rates of unemployment** than white artists in 2020 due to the pandemic (69% vs. 60%) and lost a larger percentage of their creative income (61% vs. 56%).
- 37% have been unable to access or afford food at some point during the pandemic and 58% have not visited a medical professional due to an inability to pay.
- **Johns Hopkins University** reports that, as of May 2021, the percentage of [job losses at nonprofit arts organizations](#) is 4 times worse than the average of all nonprofits (-24% vs. -6%).

### **3. The Economic Importance of Getting Artists and Creative Workers Back to Work**

- The arts are a formidable industry in the U.S. Prior to the pandemic, the nation's arts and culture sector (nonprofit, commercial, education) was a **\$919.7 billion industry** that supported **5.2 million jobs** and represented **4.3% of the nation's economy** in 2019. ([U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#))
- Arts are economic catalysts. The arts industry accelerates economic recovery. A growth in arts employment has a positive and causal effect on overall employment. ([Indiana University](#))
- "Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation" jobs dropped from 2.5 million to 1.2 million between February and April 2020 (-53%). **By January 2021, jobs rebounded to 1.7 million and are up to 1.97 million as of May 2021. Positive news, but arts jobs are still down 21% since before the pandemic** ([U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)).

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