Hi-ARTS COVID-19 Impact Artist Survey Results

As of April 20, 2020
Time Frame & Respondents

- Hi-ARTS opened the survey on April 2, 2020
- Anonymous survey was distributed via Google Form by invitation to Hi-ARTS’ community, including:
  - Artists who have previously worked with the organization
  - Artists who live at El Barrio’s Artspace PS109

- **28 respondents completed the survey as of April 20, 2020**
Geography: Primarily NYC

Note: some respondents identified working in multiple areas.
Primary Roles in the Arts Field

54% of respondents are arts educators and/or teaching artists.

Note: respondents could select multiple roles.
Employment in the Arts Field

- **14%** full-time at an institution
- **11%** part-time at an institution
- **82% freelance** (contract as needed)

“Artists are very vulnerable as they work on the edge of society and with no protection, so it needs to be recognized as an industry. This crisis is exposing a lot of things about the society in general... but it shows the reality of the artists and the lack of support in case of difficult times.”

Note: respondents could select multiple types of employment.
Typical Income

- Estimated total **income in 2019**
  - Average: $40,893
  - Median: $35,000

- Proportion of total **income from the arts**
  - Average: 77%
  - Median: 100%
Lost Income & Increased Spending

- Average Income Loss To Date: $3,500
- Average Increase in Spending: $773
- 130+ Total Lost Engagements, including:
  - 31 teaching gigs
  - 23 shows
  - 21 speaking gigs
  - 15 commissions/contract jobs
  - 11 performance/project runs
  - Exhibitions, residencies, readings, consulting jobs, rehearsal processes
Financial Support

- Work from Home
- Savings
- Grants
- Unemployment
- Friends/Family
- Previous Projects
- Cut Costs
- Loans
- Food Programs
- Other Government
- Credit Cards
- Donations

Note: open-ended question. Responses were categorized, and top categories are included here.

Work from Home:
- Teaching online
- Administrative jobs
- Consulting jobs
- Offering virtual programming
- Selling art online
- Media work

“We’re just hoping this ends soon enough to get back to work before it hurts us financially beyond repair.”
“Just because I’m not working for a check, doesn't mean I'm not working. I'm working on work, which can be exhausting mentally. All these unknowns are creating anxiety on what and how are we going to get through this.”
Do you have health insurance?

28 responses

- Yes: 85.7%
- No: 10.7%
- It is up for renewal and not sure what my options will be if my income drops

“Mental health care is a must for all impacted communities.”
What are the main challenges you face now as a result of COVID-19?

- **93%** of respondents:
  - Loss of work + income and/or uncertainty of future work + funding

- **21%** of respondents:
  - Physical + mental **health** and/or **anxiety + isolation**

Note: open-ended question. Responses were categorized, and top categories are included here.
What are the main challenges you will face in the coming months?

- **54%** of respondents: 
  Loss of work + income and/or **uncertainty of future work + funding**

- **48%** of respondents: 
  Paying rent + bills and/or buying groceries

- **11%** of respondents: 
  Physical + mental **health**

- **11%** of respondents: 
  Working virtually and/or maintaining **visibility**

Note: open-ended question. Responses were categorized, and top categories are included here.
What are challenges you were already facing that have now been impacted by COVID-19?

- **40%** of respondents: Finances
- **21%** of respondents: Opportunity + visibility
- **16%** of respondents: Physical + mental health
- **8%** of respondents: Anxiety + uncertainty

Note: open-ended question. Responses were categorized, and top categories are included here.
“this will influence the stories I tell.”

“I can't afford to self-fund anything. So I'm probably going to focus on more commercial projects, or plays with firm commitments from theaters.”

“I recently had an online gig; I am rethinking everything! I am pivoting.”

“I think my work will be enhanced with a greater fervor to succeed in my profession.”
“Some theaters might not reopen, our homes might not make it through.”

“The sector will be thinner and some companies that we know and love will cease to exist. I refuse to be one of them.”

“The large, legacy organizations are failing audiences and artists right now. Will they continue to get the lion's' share of the funding? Or will an new ecology emerge? if the former, there will be a reckoning, the latter a rebirth.”
What have you NOT been asked about your experience that you would like people to know?

“How is your heart? How is your faith? Are you afraid of losing footing with your craft and the things you have been building?”

“Is my son hungry?”

“how difficult it will be for female poc to maintain a trajectory in the arts, it is not designed for us to sustain ourselves, the system is not designed to bounce back.”

“How are you and the people around you handling this emotionally. Are you traumatized? Grieving? Do you sense a high level of anxiety? Do you have a personal support network to help you or are you primarily all alone? Does the isolation disturb you? In what ways?”
Hi-ARTS Programming Response: Virtual Artistic Development Residency

- **71%** of respondents said arts organizations can help by:
  - Providing **financial resources** and/or
  - **Producing + promoting** artistic opportunities now
- Additional responses included:
  - Technology
  - Accountability
  - Feedback
- Virtual artistic development residencies will address artists’ responses

“My artistic practice is always changing because it is influenced by everything around me. Right now I am more curious about how to integrate technologies into my practice in a more risky way.”
Hi-ARTS Programming Response: Virtual Arts Education

- **54%** of respondents identified primarily as **arts educators** and/or **teaching artists** in addition to other roles in the field
- **82%** of respondents are **freelancers**
- Virtual arts education programming will allow Hi-ARTS to both **pay artists** + **increase arts access** for communities

“I love what I do for after school programs and kids. It’s my life and love for teaching that has kept me focused.”
Questions? Please email Development Manager Hanna Stubblefield-Tave: hanna@hi-artsnyc.org

Hi-ARTS (formerly known as the Hip-Hop Theater Festival) has been a leading multi-arts hub within the urban arts movement for 20 years. At once an artistic pipeline, a producer of vibrant creative programming, and a curator of civic engagement opportunities, we advance urban art by empowering artists to develop bold new work, while creating a lasting and positive impact on urban communities. We offer a forum for artists and audiences to come together in exploration of the most complex, critical issues of our society. www.hi-artsnyc.org