Economic Impact Survey Methodology

About the Surveys

Surveys were distributed in two ways to organizations: organizations who received funding through the COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL Mid-Sized Organizations Fund received the surveys through the program Submittable (used to manage the grant program); other participating organizations responded through Survey Monkey. The surveys were designed to be parallel, with identical questions and format. Participating organizations were both Cultural Alliance member organizations as well as other arts and culture organizations in the Greater Philadelphia region.

The first survey was conducted from October - November 2020 and the second survey was conducted January - February. 266 organizations participated in the first survey and 248 participated in the second survey. 225 organizations participated in both surveys. The bulk of this report focuses on responses from the second survey, although revenue loss information was collected in both surveys.

Occasionally, data from a single organization (or small number of organizations) is removed from calculations in this report. This occurs only in circumstances for which that information changes the results in such a way that they no longer accurately represent the combined experiences of the group of organizations represented in this report. Additionally, not every organization answered every question, and therefore, their responses were omitted from those questions.

Analysis for this report was conducted by Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance staff along with the assistance of Nicholas Crosson. Crosson has worked with nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in research and fundraising for 15 years. Crosson conducted the primary analysis for the estimated revenue loss of the sector and assisted in analyzing other data from the surveys.

Revenue Loss for the Sector

One of the key data points in the report is an estimated loss for the cultural sector in greater Philadelphia. In order to understand the effects of COVID-19 on the arts and cultural sector, the Alliance did extensive surveying of the sector, as well as some statistical modelling.

289 organizations participated in the surveying, including almost all of the very large organizations ($10M+ budgets) from the sector. Another 263 orgs for which the Alliance had previously collected basic data (Annual budgets, etc.) did not participate. As a result, the Alliance knew that the missing organizations represented approximately 34.5% of the total revenue of the cultural sector, and we knew the discipline, location, and other important information about them.

The Cultural Alliance has a long history of substantial research on the cultural sector in the region

– through our Portfolio and Prosperity reports, we have been collecting and analyzing data since 2004. Our reports have been reviewed by journalists, subject-matter experts, and specialists in various fields (e.g. data scientists) and are acknowledged to be of the highest quality work. All of this past work enables us to confidently model the losses for the missing 263 organizations with 34% of the sector's budgets.

A key element is that we know from multiple analyses – including the 2011 Portfolio report, which looked at the effects of the Great Recession on the region's cultural sector – that organizations of similar size, within similar disciplines, have generally been affected in the same way by macroeconomic trends. That is, Large Museums will generally be affected in the same way and small performing arts organizations will be affected in the same way, but there may be key differences between how large museums and small performing arts organizations are affected.

As a result, in order to model the missing data, we "broke down" the dataset into 20 different size-and-discipline-based components, looked at how COVID-19 was affecting each type of organization based on the data from the 289 survey results, and then "totaled" these separate impacts to get a picture of the sector. In doing so, we made some key decisions that we also feel improved the accuracy of the model – e.g. organizations under $50,000 were excluded from our estimates because we did not have a sufficient sample size.

We will continue to collect data and analyze the effects of COVID-19 as additional more detailed data become available. When new data becomes available, we will improve and adjust our findings. For now, we believe that we have the best possible understanding of the effects of this crisis that is available at this time.

"At-Risk" Organizations

To determine "at-risk" organizations, we looked at organizations who answered the following question from the second survey: "If your organization does not receive any additional funding, how long will you be able to continue to survive on current contributed and earned income streams?" with one of the following answers: "0 - 3 months", "3 - 6 months", or "6 - 9 months." 102 organizations, or 41%, answered one of those options.

We determined that this question was the best to determine organizations who were the most at-risk because it asked them to objectively identify a specific period of time where they would no longer be able to survive if their current levels of contributed and earned revenue remained the same.

Job Loss Data

The Cultural Alliance asked for job loss numbers across several areas in the second survey, asking organizations to share information on how staffing has changed due to the pandemic.

For survey purposes:

- Laid off means a position has been permanently eliminated.

- Furloughed means a position has been temporarily let go, with the intention of rehiring pending resources.

- Reduced hours means any decrease in staff hours, including the transition from full-time to part time.

We also asked organizations to provide an estimate of the number of independent contractors whose contracts have been cancelled, postponed or significantly reduced from March 2020 to present. Our "total jobs affected" figure includes the sum of all full-time, part-time, seasonal and contractor positions.