

# COVID Impact Survey #3

November 2021



**We Fund  
Culture.**

**SCFD**

In keeping with its mission and statutory obligations, the SCFD is committed to supporting artistic, cultural and scientific endeavors by financially supporting current cultural activities as well as fostering their growth in the seven-county Denver metro area. To that end, the SCFD has worked to better understand the realities and challenges for its funded partners during the global pandemic by conducting three surveys of our funded partners. We offer our third set of survey results in hopes they can better inform a larger strategy to ensure our arts, culture and scientific organizations can thrive in the coming years.

## SCFD and Sector Snapshot

The SCFD provides funding, through a sales tax district created by voters over 30 years ago, to the vast majority of arts and culture non-profits across the entire seven-county Denver metro area. In 2019, the SCFD provided \$65 million in funding to nearly 300 organizations in Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas and Jefferson counties. These organizations ranged from very small, all volunteer non-profits to local and regional organizations to our state's largest cultural attractions.

The value of the economic and educational value of the creative sector to our Denver metro area is large. Every two years, the [Colorado Business Committee for the Arts conducts a comprehensive study of the value of the organizations](#) funded by the SCFD in both economic and quality-of-life contributions. In 2020, results were mixed due to pandemic shutdowns. During those shutdowns, arts and cultural organization lost about a decade of growth. But data collected in that study for 2019, before the closures, shows a thriving, contributing sector.





## COVID Survey #3: The picture in November 2021



SCFD's COVID Impact Survey #3 was conducted during November 2021 and asked respondents to provide data from January 2021 through the day they responded. For this survey, 207 of the SCFD's total 317 funded organizations provided their data.

### KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Taken as a whole, the data shows the cultural sector is in recovery from the pandemic shutdowns, but also shows that many organizations have still not reached a stable footing on the new landscape.



The financial picture is improving for most cultural organizations, but most report a deep chasm between where they were financially before the pandemic shutdowns and where they are today.



The budget impacts on cultural organizations from the pandemic has been real and sizable.



Organizations report being more confident of their ultimate survival. To this point in the pandemic, the SCFD has not lost a single, funded partner to closure.



Cultural workforce losses have not been regained to any significant degree. While organizations have reported fewer position layoffs, furloughs and eliminations than in previous surveys, they are not reporting widespread rehiring.



Organizations continue to report increased expenses due to COVID-19 related issues.



Virtual programming established or enhanced by organizations during the pandemic shutdowns -- while necessary for these organizations to continue to serve their communities -- has not proven to be reliable monetary support for them.



Overall, organizations are reporting greater optimism about their ability to recover from the pandemic.



## Types of Organizations Responding

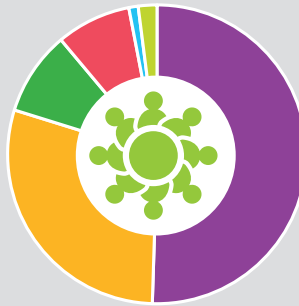
### 207 TOTAL RESPONDENTS

#### TYPICAL BUDGET



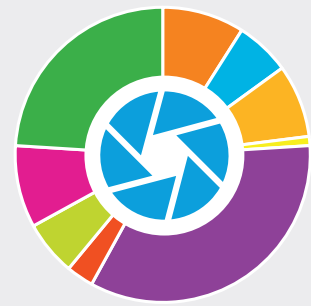
- Less than \$24,999 (9%)
- \$25,000 to \$99,999 (25%)
- \$100,000 to \$249,999 (17%)
- \$250,000 to \$499,999 (19%)
- \$500,000 to \$999,999 (11%)
- \$1,000,000 to \$4,999,999 (10%)
- \$5,000,000 to \$9,999,999 (5%)
- \$10,000,000 and above (4%)

#### TYPICAL COMMUNITY REACH



- 9,999 or less (50%)
- 10,000 to 49,999 (29%)
- 50,000 to 99,999 (9%)
- 100,000 to 499,999 (8%)
- 500,000 to 1 million (1%)
- More than 1 million (2%)

#### DISCIPLINES

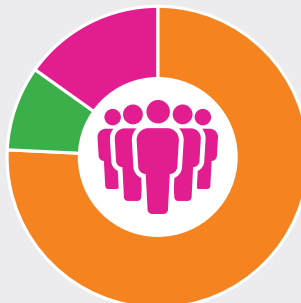


- Art (9%)
- Cultural History (6%)
- Dance (8%)
- Literary Arts (1%)
- Music (34%)
- Natural History (3%)
- Natural Sciences (6%)
- Theatre (9%)
- Multi-disciplinary (24%)



Platte Valley Players,  
Adams CO

#### PEOPLE TYPICALLY EMPLOYED



- 99 or less (75%)
- 100 to 499 (9%)
- All volunteer (15%)



Morrison Museum,  
Morrison, CO



## Topline Survey Results



### REVENUE and EXPENSES

*How significant has the earned revenue loss been in 2021?*

- **40%** report a significant or near total loss
- **48%** report some revenue loss
- **10%** report minimal loss, no loss or slight increase

This compares to the September 2020 survey when **94%** reported earned revenue losses with **60%** calling them significant or near total.

*How significant has the contributed revenue loss been in 2021?*

- **10%** report significant or near total loss
- **59%** report some or minimal losses
- **30%** report no loss or gains

This compares to the September 2020 survey when **78%** responding reported a significant or near total contributed revenue loss.

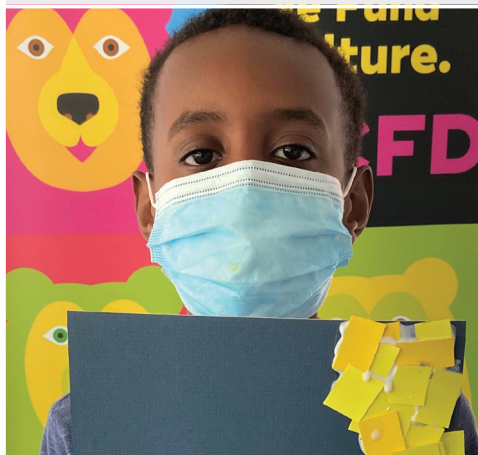


Photos: Downtown Aurora Visual Arts



*Overall, organizations responding reported real dollar changes to their total revenue over a typical year as:*

- Loss of \$1 million or greater (5%)
- Loss of \$500,000 to \$50,000 (29%)
- Loss of \$49,000 or less (51%)
- Gain of \$9,999 to \$99,999 (10%)
- Gain of \$100,000 to \$499,999 (3%)
- Gain of \$500,000 to \$1 million (1%)



**79% of organizations responding indicated some level of revenue loss from total to minimal**







## Topline Survey Results

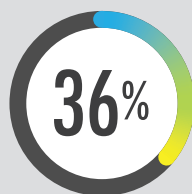


**How severe was the overall financial impact of COVID-19 since March 2020, when pandemic shutdowns were initially instituted for organizations?**

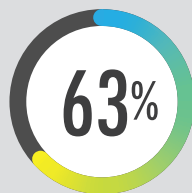
- Not severe **(13%)**
- Moderately severe **(38%)**
- Extremely severe **(10%)**
- Was moderately severe but now improving **(22%)**
- Was extremely severe but now improving **(18%)**

This compares to the September 2020 survey when **86%** responding reported a moderate or extremely severe financial impact.

**How confident are organizations that they will survive the impacts of COVID-19?**



**Moderately confident**



**Extremely confident**

This compares to the September 2020 survey when **59%** responding were only moderately confident of organizational survival and **8%** were not confident at all.

**Have organizations incurred additional expenses as a result as a result of COVID-19?** (These might include adoption of new cleaning/disinfecting protocols, recruiting and hiring services, new technologies, cancellation fees, unexpected marketing expenses ...)

- **70%** say expenses in this area have increased significantly or somewhat
- **22%** say expenses in this area have not increased

This compares to the September 2020 survey when **55%** reported expense increases due to COVID-19 safety requirements.



Denver Botanic Gardens,  
Denver, CO



## Topline Survey Results



### PHYSICAL LOCATION

**8%** report their locations remain dark, though they may be creating virtual content or engaging in other ways.

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**What is the current operating capacity for open locations?**

- **59%** operating at 75% to 100% of a typical year

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**Assuming current public health orders, how will winter impact your capacity?**

- **43%** report it will further reduce capacity
- **51%** report it will make no change or will increase capacity



### WORKFORCE

**How many organizations reduced workforce through layoffs, not rehiring vacant positions for full time, part time or contract employees?**

- **32%** reported fewer than 5 positions lost
- **7%** reported between 35 and 50 positions lost
- **54%** reported no position reductions

.....

**438** positions have been rehired or furloughed staff has returned

.....

This compares to the September 2020 survey when organizations reported **3,435** positions furloughed or laid off, **542** positions eliminated.



### VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

**How successful have organizations who pivoted in whole or in part to virtual programming been at increasing engagement for that programming?**

- **83%** report only moderate or limited success
- **14%** report they have been extremely successful

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**For those organizations that have also tried to monetize their virtual programming, how successful have they been?**

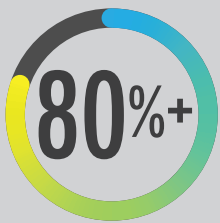
- **90%** report moderate to no success
- **6%** report high success
- **4%** responding haven't tried to monetize their virtual offerings



## COVID Survey #2: The picture in September 2020

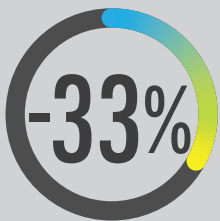


With various public health restrictions in place across the Denver metro area for more than six months, the SCFD surveyed its funded partners for a second time. Again, the survey was self-administered online and was conducted over eight days. It asked organizations 28 questions including organizational size, budget and numbers of individuals served in their community and the region. Questions built on the initial survey to more fully explore the economic and community impact the current public health crisis has had on arts and culture organizations from across the metro area. For this survey, 244 organizations responded. With the following key takeaways:



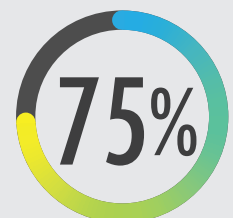
For more than **80%**, the financial impact has been moderately to extremely severe

For **60%**, the earned revenue loss as been significant to near total



About **one third** of creative sector jobs have been lost to layoff, furlough or elimination

Almost **three quarters** of respondents were only moderately confident or not confident at all that they would survive

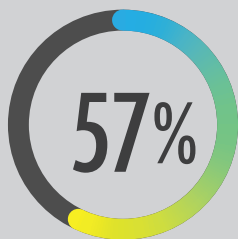




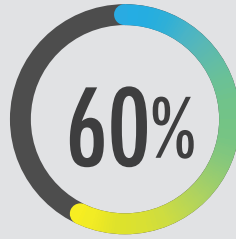
## COVID Survey #1: The picture from mid-April 2020



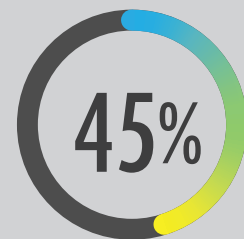
With stay-at-home orders in place for just over a month, the SCFD surveyed its funded partners to develop a snapshot of their various situations early in the public health emergency. The self-administered, online survey was conducted over five days. It asked organizations 21 questions including organizational size, budget and numbers of individuals served in their community and the region. Questions also focused on the impact of recent closures and cancellations, the ability of the organizations to weather these closures over time and their access to resources and supports to help. Ultimately, 275 currently and recently funded organizations responded with the following highlights:



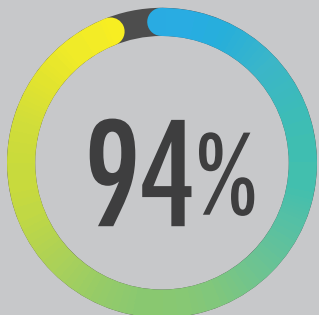
reported four months or less of operating reserves. Most went entirely dark and many lost their performance season, or canceled their major annual event, in the case of festivals.



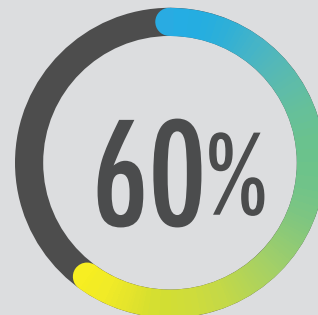
reported a decrease in non-admissions income with an additional **35%** anticipating it in the near term. Only **5%** don't expect a decrease.



responding have already made temporary staff reductions. **21%** of those organizations fear the staff reductions will become permanent.



of the organizations responding expected the current situation to be moderately severe or very severe for their organization.



reported being only moderately confident or not confident at all that their organization would survive.