



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE FIELD OF DANCE: PART I

PUBLIC REPORT



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DANCE/USA

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INTRODUCTION

Dance/USA launched the Coronavirus Impact Survey to garner the initial impact of the global pandemic on the dance community in the United States.

The Dance/USA Coronavirus Impact Survey was shared with the managers of member dance companies in the United States (216), dance service organizations (33), presenters (40), individuals (105), Dance/MetroDC and Dance/NYC who passed the survey onto their constituents and was shared on all of Dance/USA's social media platforms. The survey was launched March 18, 2020 and closed on April 17, 2020.

A combined total of 647 organizations and individuals responded to the survey with a completion rate of 63%. California (91 or 14% responses), New York (76 responses or 12%) and Alabama (46 responses or 7%) had the most responses. All other states had less than 30 responses. Total responses, though greater than the Dance/USA membership, still only represent a small fraction of the dance community across the United States.

238 Organizations are represented in 298 total responses. 36 of these organizations had multiple responses by different leaders that represented different facets of their organization. 178 completed the survey and 128 answered as many questions as they were able, for a completion rate of 46%. The States with the highest number of responses were New York (39 responses or 13%) and California (33 responses or 11%).

349 individuals took the survey with 231 completing the survey and 118 partial responses. The completion rate among individual responders was 54%. California and New York had the most responses with 58 response or 17% and 37 responses or 11%, respectively.

ORGANIZATIONAL DANCE COMPANIES

The Organizational section of the survey explored the organization's readiness and reaction, observed patron response, the initial and projected financial impact on revenues, compensation and expenses, as well as the need for advocacy and their highest concerns for the future. Organizations with budgets between \$100K and \$499K represent 30% of total responses.

Data from the 298 dance related organization responses demonstrate the following:

- 85% or more of respondents indicated that they were prepared or somewhat prepared to make decisions regarding cancellations and interrupted business operations. 20% or more had already cancelled performances, events and educational programs and 40% or more were planning to cancel or had already cancelled these activities as far out as 5 weeks or more in the future.
- 22% reported very little to no change in audience behavior in ticket cancellations, 24% in ticket exchanges and 35% reported a little increase in concerned calls/emails from patrons.
- **40% reported total ticket sales losses of \$30,970,989.** The average loss reported is \$262K and the median loss \$13,000.
- **46 % reported total other earned revenue losses of \$13,596,583** with an average loss of \$101K and a median loss of \$10K.

- **30% reported total fundraising income losses of \$6.8M.** The average loss was \$78K and the median \$3K. Contributed income shows a total loss of \$4.4M from 72 respondents, with an average loss of \$62K and a median loss of \$5K.
- Respondents reported a total loss in revenues, averaging a \$650K loss per organization and a median loss of \$31K.
- When the current financial season or period is over, responding organizations estimate that they will have lost a total of \$190M, averaging \$2.3M and a median of \$80K.
- Of 240 respondents 122 (51%) of respondents said that they would like to compensate their artists and staff during this pandemic but were either unable to or unsure that they would be able to. 118 (19%) reported that they would fully compensate their artists and staff and 30% said that they would be partially compensating their staff and artists.
- Respondents indicated the need for advocacy in securing a bailout by the federal/state governments for dance (70), a staff and artists relief fund (48) and fundraising relief funds from foundations (23).
- 185 respondents expressed their greatest concerns lay in their ability to pay their staff/artists, continued revenue losses with fixed expenses and the overall health of their staff and artists.

INDIVIDUALS

The Individual section of the survey explored the individual's readiness and reaction, the financial impact, the areas of need and highest concerns for the future due to the pandemic. The largest percentage of responders indicated that their work in dance was in Dance Education (75%), Performing (64%), Choreography (60%) and Administrators (27%). The average income from the field as reported by 349 respondents was \$29K and the total income reported was \$4.9M.

Data from 349 individuals in the dance field responses demonstrate the following:

- The average income from the field as reported by 349 respondents was \$29K and the total income reported was \$4.9M.
- Individuals reported that they were responding to the pandemic by, social distancing, taking virtual classes, networking online, offering virtual classes, applying for unemployment, looking for other work and trying to find ways to keep active.
- Individuals reported total average loss in engagements for the season such as in performances (6), Rehearsals (19), Commissions (12), Teaching (65), Consulting (9), Producing (13) and other engagements (15).
- 51% reported delays in payments and 59% reported no access to any other kind of work.
- 36% of respondents had applied for unemployment and 64% had not applied for unemployment or were ineligible for unemployment based on independent contractor status.
- 85% reported having some form of health insurance.
- The most critical needs identified were salaries/wages/compensation, food, cleaning supplies, communication tools and access to mental health care, stated in order of number of respondents.
- 31% of respondents indicated that they did not know who to contact for support during the pandemic and 37% had not yet contacted anyone for help. 18% expressed that they had no support mechanism to assist them.

- The highest concern expressed was not knowing what would happen to the individuals and their careers in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Total revenue/compensation losses reported between organization and individual respondents (647), exceed \$35M. Many organizations and individuals have turned to virtual programming in the form of social media platforms, live streaming, and taping rehearsals. Others are exploring outdoor performances, while others are cancelling, restructuring, or postponing their seasons. The challenges indicated come with copyright infringement and union rules that prohibit virtual displays of dance or the artists. Independent artists/teachers ineligible for unemployment and government aid, with cancelled/deferred contracts, appear to be the most vulnerable by this pandemic with little to no resource to rely on to weather the duration of the pandemic.

The Dance/USA Research Department thanks all members of Dance/USA and the dance community who participated in the Coronavirus Impact Survey for helping to focus the dialogue on what effects are being felt by dance-based organizations. A follow-up survey to track progress and changes will occur in early 2021.