



COVID-19 Impact on Cuyahoga County Arts & Culture Nonprofits & Creative Workers

Update as of December 31, 2021

Nearly 2 years in, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to devastate local nonprofit arts organizations and creative workers. 65 Cuyahoga County-based arts and culture nonprofits funded by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture report that losses have slowed, but the sector still has significant gaps, stagnant growth and job loss.

Audience Participation as a Bellwether

According to Ohio Citizens for the Arts in January 2022, Ohio’s creative sector is not yet in recovery and won’t be until every organization is operating at a minimum 80% patron capacity. Despite COVID-related safety measures, **audiences in Cuyahoga County are only at 25% of pre-pandemic levels**, based on data reported through SMU DataArts.

CAC’s grant recipients continue to show their resilience and have amended more than 20,000 programs to be online, with lower capacity, or altered with some other precautions.

Revenue, Compensation and Job Loss

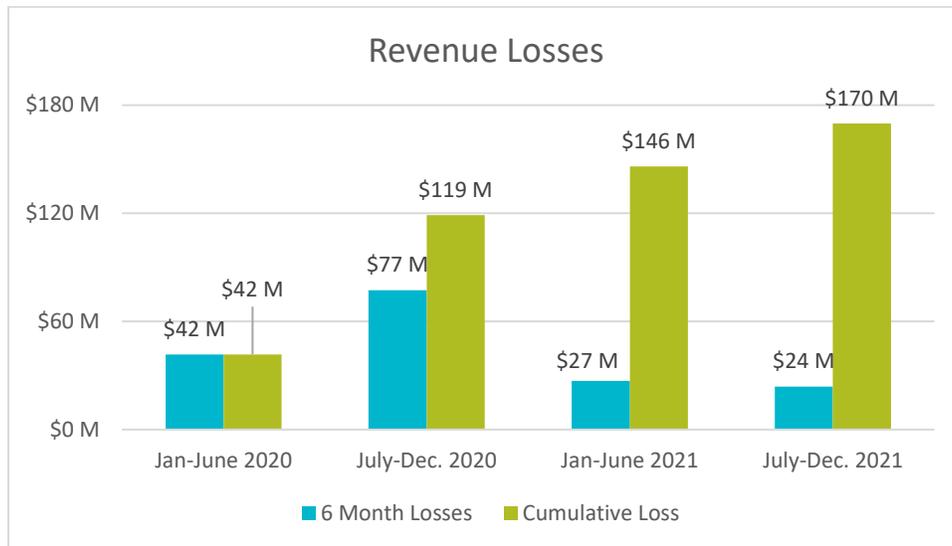
Not surprisingly, layoffs, loss of compensation and total revenue loss continue, although the losses are at a slower rate than in 2020. Federal funding totaling \$81,294,617 helped keep organizations afloat but hasn’t made organizations whole again.

65 Cuyahoga County-based arts and culture nonprofits report:	Cumulative since March 2020	January – December 2021
Total people laid off, furloughed, or hours reduced	5,023	1,866
Loss of compensation for creative workers	\$52,895,050*	\$13,726,687
Total revenue loss	\$170,816,000	\$51,814,347

**SMU DataArts Funder Report data for organizations included in this survey. Pandemic data submitted is understated and includes a mix of FY2020 and FY2021.*

Job Loss Continues: In 2021, **layoffs continued** representing a **loss of compensation totaling \$13,726,687**. A few organizations have begun re-hiring, with a total of **814 positions refilled** and **160 new positions created** to help pivot to online programming and manage public health needs.

Revenue Loss Continues: In 2021, organizations lost \$51,814,347 in earned (ticket sales, admissions, donations, etc.) and contributed revenue. According to data submitted to SMU DataArts, earned revenue has decreased by a startling **65%** compared to pre-pandemic levels.



Programs and Services Transformed: 1,618 programs and activities were canceled or put on hold in 2021, (8,159 since the pandemic started). More than 20,000 events or activities were amended to be online, outdoors, with lower capacity, or altered with other pandemic-era considerations. Despite less income and staffing capacity, organizations are continuing to connect with their communities in new ways.

Some Bright Spots

- Audience participants say they appreciate COVID safety protocols at venues and the flexibility to participate from home online.
- Online programming has allowed organizations to reach new audiences in Cuyahoga County and across the country.

CAC's Ongoing COVID Response

Despite its own revenue declining, CAC will maintain steady funding in 2022, awarding \$12m to 251 arts nonprofits. CAC is working in partnership with Assembly for the Arts and Ohio Citizens for the Arts to advocate for City, County, and State American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that will help recover jobs and support thousands of workers in the creative economy.

COVID-19's Impact on the State & National Creative Economy

In Ohio

- According to the December 2021 Ohio Labor Market Information, **Ohio's Creative Industry continues to suffer from the highest unemployment rate among all sectors.** Arts and entertainment, currently 16.36%, has been the highest unemployed sector since May 2020. Before COVID-19, Ohio's creative economy was a \$41B industry, employing nearly 300,000 people.
- Ohio's creative sector is not yet in recovery and won't be until every organization is operating at a minimum 80% patron capacity. Organizations that can stay in business anticipate facing significant budget deficits over the next two fiscal years, which will delay any sector job growth.
Source: Ohio Citizens for the Arts, January 2022.

Nationally

- Johns Hopkins University reports that, as of **December 2021**, the percentage of [job losses at nonprofit arts organizations](#) remains more than 3 times worse than the average of all nonprofits (-12.5% vs. -3.7%).
- As of July 2021, Black, Indigenous, People of Color-led and serving (**BIPOC**) organizations were more likely to report that they lack the financial resources needed to return to in-person programming than non-BIPOC organizations (55% vs. 38%).
- BIPOC artists had 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%).
Source: Americans for the Arts, January 2022.
- McKinsey & Company anticipates that it will **take the arts sector until 2025 to recover** to pre-COVID-level of contribution to national GDP.
Source: [COVID-19 recovery in hardest-hit sectors could take more than 5 years](#); July 29, 2020

In a muted recovery, it could take more than five years for the most affected sectors to get back to 2019-level contributions to GDP.

Estimated time to recover to pre-COVID-19 sector GDP¹

