



ARTISTS PROSPERING!

a report on artists,
their needs, and how we will disrupt
the scarcity mindset



The Field

Created by The Field
in collaboration with
Yancey Consulting and
artists & arts lovers
like you.

thefield.org | art grows here

Artists Prospering! is a bold declaration that doesn't sit very well with the scarcity mindset that pervades our arts and culture sector. It's old and deep.

Most of us can't really shake the omnipresent starving artist trope that undergirds our work, resources, attitudes and programming. It's in the very air we all breathe; even at The Field.

The Field's ambitious Vision, however, is just this: Artists prospering! Holistically. On their own terms. Grounded in their own passion and hopes. Identified via their own metrics, goals and strategies. Disrupting the scarcity mindset of the sector and manifesting abundance.

Our audacious Vision is also *the sector prospering!* Honing in on what we do best and what's most urgent, vital and necessary. Removing systemic redundancies and repetition. Connecting the siloed dots of our sector so that the system works better and so that artists can more fully prosper.

How the heck is all that going to happen? It's long-term generational work that builds intentionally and iteratively. It's collaborative. It harnesses high technology and high-touch interaction so that artists can get access to a full scope of service.

This survey, *Artists Prospering!* is just the beginning.

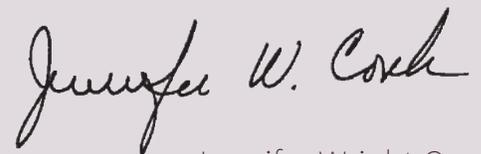
And it starts with listening.

In the summer of 2019 we surveyed approximately 700 artists about their art-making, priorities (both personal and professional) and needs. *Artists Prospering!* highlights what we learned and what we are doing with this information.

It's important to note that we implemented a partnership strategy to reach as many artists as possible across the country - particularly to reach a racially and culturally diverse audience of artists. To do this, we partnered with 20 national arts and culture organizations including culturally and racially specific groups like First Peoples Fund, NALAC, and the Asian American Arts Alliance; and geographically and discipline specific groups like Harlem Arts Alliance and DanceNYC. (Full partner list is in the Appendix.)

It's also important to note that The Field primarily works with generative artists, so this survey was directed to art makers (self-identified), rather than performers. Although we chose to focus on the art maker, we understand that the maker and performer are often one in the same, and that the needs of performers are critical to the overall art-making process.

Lastly, the following report was developed through careful consideration of the survey results we received. We are eager to use the below findings; together with information we will gather from focus groups, to inform future programming that is relevant, actionable, and inclusive.



Jennifer Wright Cook
Executive Director, The Field
December 2019

Artists Prospering! research was conducted by a former Arts Management Fellow who specializes in arts research and analysis. A huge thank you to all the artists and partner organizations who participated in this work.

Our Takeaways

Top Needs:

Art makers agree that a plan for their art-making and life is the #1 need. #2 is a partner or coach to keep them on track and push them forward. #3 is paying debt and saving money.

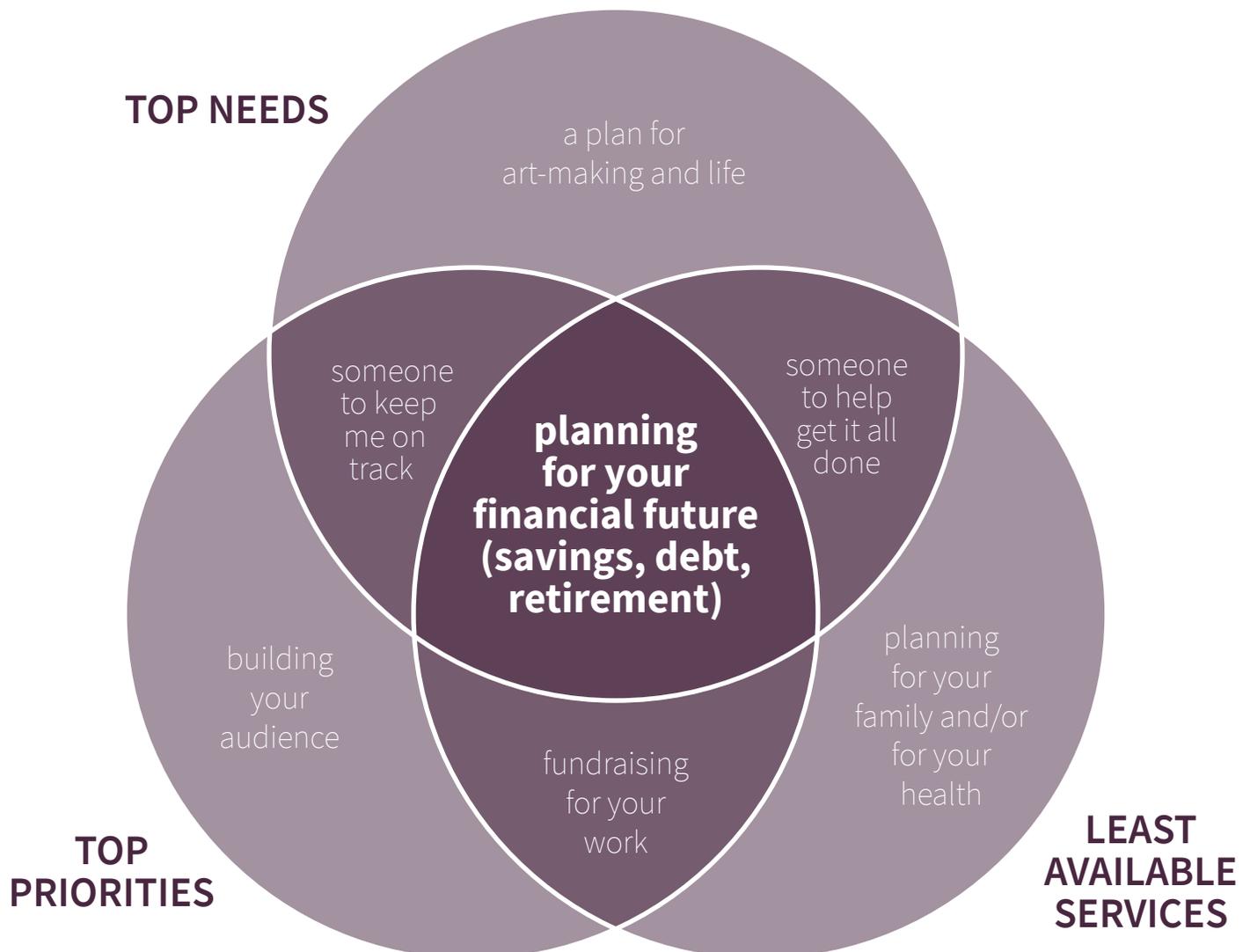
Top 3 Priorities:

Building an audience, planning for your financial future, and fundraising are the three priorities in art makers' lives. Art makers that identify as Non-White rank financial planning slightly above building an audience in their list of top three priorities.

Least Available Services:

Having a partner, manager or team to help get everything done is the least available service to art makers, followed by fundraising and financial planning for the future.

Top needs compared with top priorities and “what’s missing” points The Field toward new opportunities.

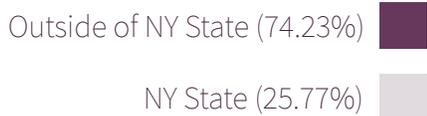
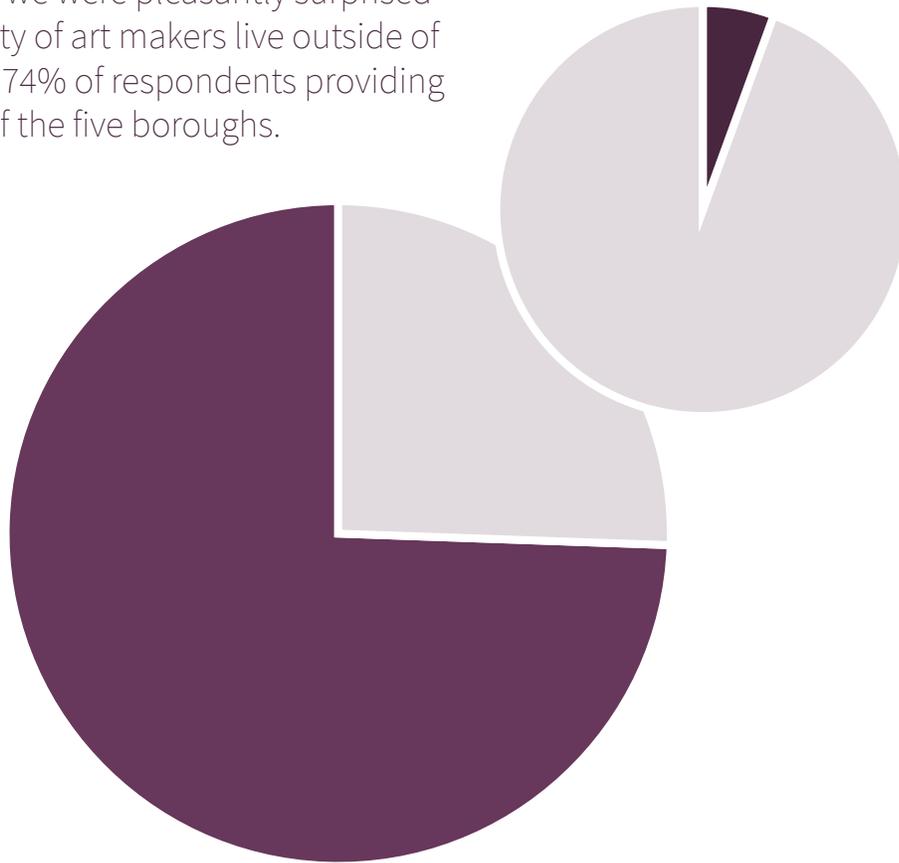
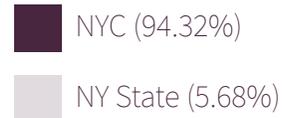


Getting to know the art makers

Geographic representation (What's your zip code?)

New York City is considered a (if not, the) mecca for artists, but we wanted to reach beyond the five boroughs and learn from art makers nationwide. Within the state of New York, an overwhelming number of our survey respondents live in New York City (94%), with only 6% of art makers providing zip codes outside of the five boroughs.

On a national level, we were pleasantly surprised to see that a majority of art makers live outside of New York City, with 74% of respondents providing zip codes outside of the five boroughs.



How did you get the survey?

Email is the most effective tool for engaging artists. 84% of respondents received the survey via email.

Cultural identification of art makers

Of the 683 total respondents surveyed, 65% identified culturally as White; 34% identified culturally as Non-White; 1% chose to not respond.

Of the respondents that did not culturally identify as White:

- 9% identified as African-American or Black;
- 8% identified as Hispanic/Latinx;
- 7% identified as Other;
- 5% identified as Biracial or Multiple Identities;
- 2% identified as Asian;
- roughly 1.5% identified as Middle Eastern, Arab or South Asian;
- and less than 1% identified as American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, respectively.

Of the 7% who chose “Other,” their responses indicated a desire to either not identify culturally, but rather, in universal terms (i.e., human), or a desire to identify in terms of their cultural heritage (i.e., Caribbean, African, European, etc.).

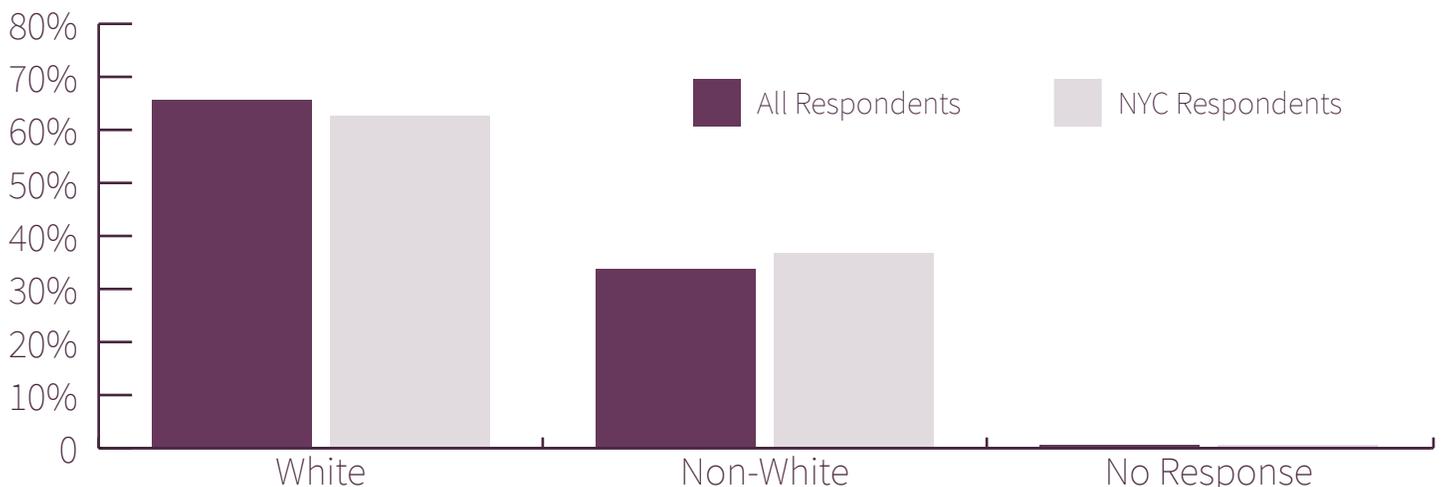
Cultural identification of NYC art makers

New York City, while similar in cultural composition to the rest of the nation, has higher representation among Biracial/Multiple Identities, Asian and Middle Eastern, Arab or South Asian communities, respectively.

Of the 166 respondents from New York City, 63% identified as White; 37% identified as Non-White. Of the respondents who did not culturally identify as White:

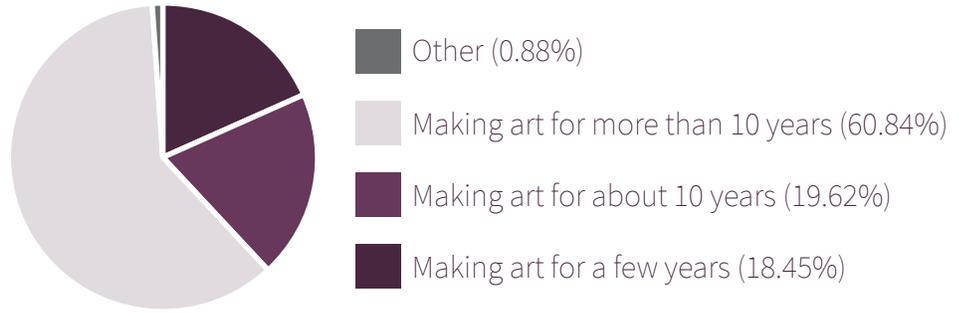
- 7% identified as African-American or Black
- 8% identified as Hispanic/Latinx;
- 7% identified as Biracial or Multiple Identities;
- 5% identified as Asian;
- 5% identified as Other;
- 4% identified as Middle Eastern, Arab or South Asian;
- and less than 1% identified as American Indian or Alaska Native.

Despite our robust partnership engagement strategy, mentioned earlier, we were surprised at the percentage of respondents who culturally identify as White (63%). (The US Census shows 60.4% White Alone [Not Hispanic or Latinx]. The NYC Census shows 32% White Alone.) Thus, while our response rate aligns with US Census data, our NYC response rate does not align with NYC Census data.



Career level of art makers

Art makers persist, despite barriers faced throughout their careers. A majority (61%) of survey respondents have been making art for more than a decade.



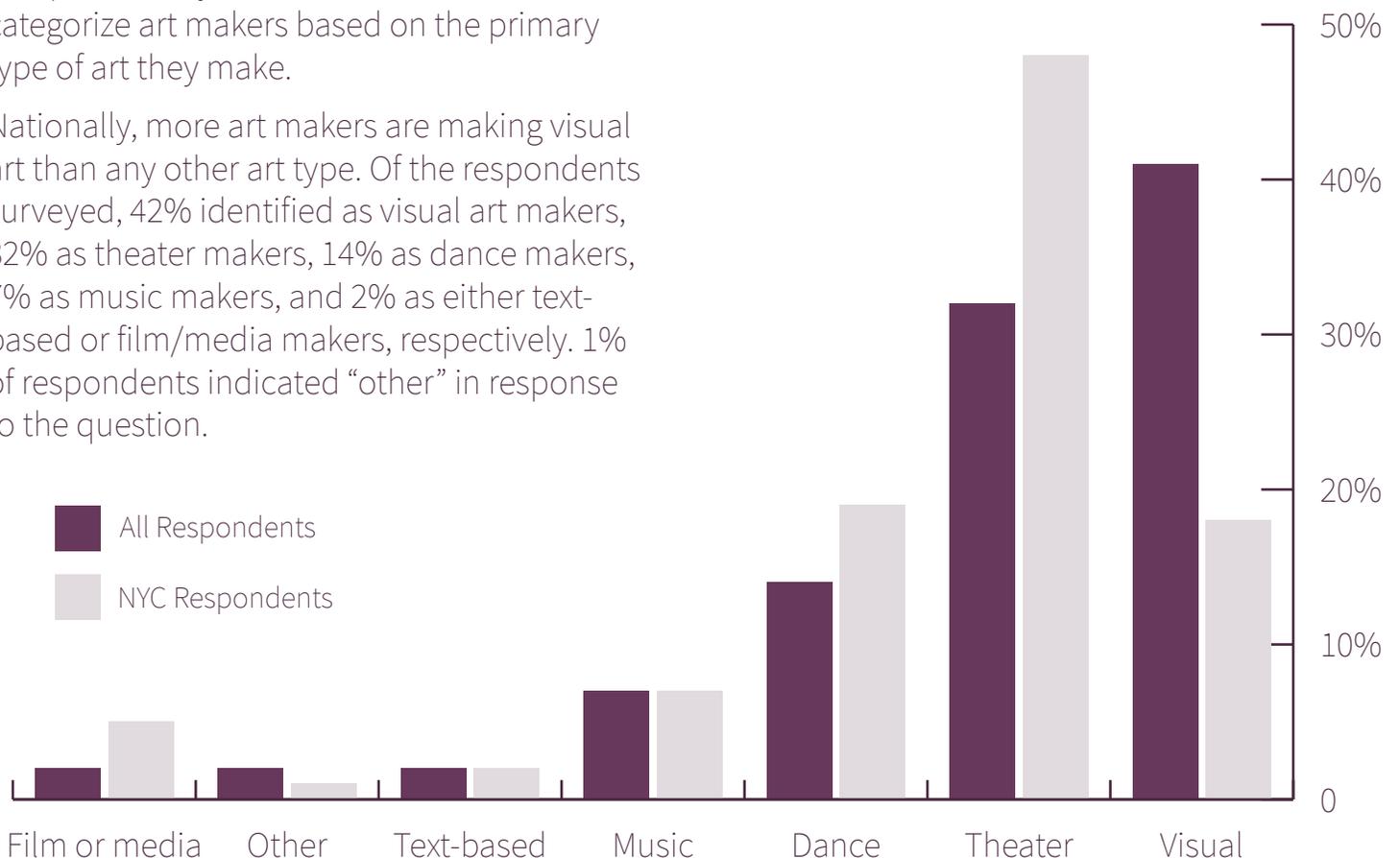
What kind of artwork do you make?

Art makers are making art that is multi-disciplinary, and prefer to characterize their work with more than one art type. We found that, while most individuals chose more than one art type to describe their work, art makers rarely described their work with more than one of the “major” art types, i.e., theater, dance, music, visual. This told us that most art makers identify one art type as their primary focus, yet additional art types describe secondary or complementary focuses. This allowed us to categorize art makers based on the primary type of art they make.

Nationally, more art makers are making visual art than any other art type. Of the respondents surveyed, 42% identified as visual art makers, 32% as theater makers, 14% as dance makers, 7% as music makers, and 2% as either text-based or film/media makers, respectively. 1% of respondents indicated “other” in response to the question.

What kind of artwork do you make in NYC?

In NYC, where the concentration of theaters, of all sizes, is dense, it is not surprising that nearly half (48%) of the NYC respondents are making theatre. Of the remaining NYC art makers surveyed, 19% are making dance; 18% visual; 7% music; 5% film or media; and 2% text-based.



Getting to know the needs of art makers

In order for The Field to achieve its goal of offering relevant programming and resources to art makers, we need to know what they need.

So, we asked a series of questions to get to the root of what keeps art makers from making and showcasing their work, and how art makers would like to be supported personally and professionally.

Managing family responsibilities and meeting grant and artist residencies and exhibition deadlines

...I'm driven, I know my field, I know my studio work, but I'm not fast and I'm not succinct by nature. To do my jobs well I need time to process and rework.

...I'm required to work unpaid hours for my art and arts organizing job in order to get everything done. It's hard to juggle it all and not get behind.

...making a plan with attainable and realistic artistic goals... and then keeping to the plan allowing for reasonable flexibility and changes...

...making decisions about which opportunities are most important for MY business path...

...Art school was hella expensive

Valuing performing arts in a rural economy

Most Important Issues (any and all)

Art makers want their work to be *experienced*, and there's no getting around the need for money and financial freedom.

We asked art makers to choose any and all issues that are most important to them. They said:

- **Building your audience (69%);**
- **Planning for your financial future (saving \$, managing debt, retirement) (62%);**
- **Fundraising for your work (61%);**
- Having a partner, manager or team to get it all done (54%);
- Accessible and affordable health care (53%);
- Getting artistic feedback (45.5%);
- Affordable long-term housing (renting or buying) (41%); and
- Planning for your family (29%).

We segmented responses to the question to see how answers may differ along the lines of cultural identification.

We found that regardless of cultural identification, the top three most important issues facing art makers remain the same.

We do think that it is important to note, however, that while art makers who culturally identify as White chose “building your audience” in greater numbers, art makers who culturally identify as Non-White, chose “planning for your financial future (saving \$, managing debt, retirement) in greater numbers.

Most Important (any and all), segmented by Cultural Identity

WHITE	NON-WHITE
Building your audience (71%)	Planning for your financial future (55%)
Planning for your financial future (59%)	Building your audience (52%)
Fundraising for your work (59%)	Fundraising for your work (50%)

We then segmented the responses based on career level, and again, we found that “fundraising for your work,” “planning for your financial future (saving \$, managing your debt, retirement)” and “building your audience” were the most selected issues of importance for all art makers, regardless of career level. However, we found that each group chose a different

issue as their fourth most important. Art makers who have been making art for a few years, are most interested in artistic feedback; art makers who have been making art for about 10 years are most interested in affordable and accessible health care; and art makers who have been making art for more than 10 years are most interested in a partner, manager or team to help get everything done.

Most important (any and all), segmented by Career Level

MAKING ART FOR A FEW YEARS	MAKING ART FOR 10 YEARS	MAKING ART FOR >10 YEARS
Building your audience	Fundraising for your work	Building your audience
Financial planning	Building your audience	Fundraising for your work
Fundraising for your work	Financial planning	Financial planning
Getting artistic feedback	Accessible health care	Partner/manager/team

Most Important (choose one)

In an effort to set priorities that will motivate our work, we asked survey respondents to choose one issue (out of the above eight choices) that was most important to them.

The result:

- **Building your audience (26%)**
- **Planning for your financial future (saving \$, managing your debt, retirement) (18%)**
- **Fundraising for your work (15.5%)**
- Having a partner, manager or team to help get it all done (13%)
- Other (i.e., equity, affordable studio space, mentorship) (7%)
- Accessible and affordable health care (7%)
- Affordable long-term housing (renting or buying) (6%)
- Getting artistic feedback (4.5%)
- Planning for your family (kids, elder care, your health) (2%)
- Other (1%)

We recognize that art-making (and life) do not occur in a vacuum, so many of the issues facing art makers are interdependent and circular.

In our preliminary view, building an audience has a domino effect on an art maker's ability to plan financially and fundraise. Exposure, whether on a community-level or larger scale, can open doors to productive relationships, additional or non-traditional funding sources and also greater ticket sales.

Availability of services

In furtherance of our goal of developing programming and offering resources that will effectively impact the lives of art makers, we needed to find out what art makers are currently missing in terms of support.

We asked survey respondents to rate the availability of eight services/resources. We chose services/resources that mirrored the eight important issues in prior questions.

Services ranked from
most unavailable:

- **Having a partner, manager or team to help get it all done (58%)**
- **Fundraising for your work (48%)**
- **Planning for your financial future (saving \$, managing debt, retirement) (45%)**
- Planning for your family (kids, elder care, your health) (41%)
- Accessible and affordable healthcare (40.3%)
- Affordable long-term housing (renting or buying) (40%)
- Building your audience (33%)
- Getting artistic feedback (15%)

Services ranked from
most readily or kind of available:

- **Getting artistic feedback (83%)**
- **Building your audience (65%)**
- **Accessible and affordable healthcare (50%)**
- Planning for your financial future (saving \$, managing debt, retirement) (49%)
- Fundraising for your work (45%)
- Affordable long-term housing (renting or buying) (44%)
- Planning for your family (kids, elder care, your health) (36%)
- Having a partner, team or manager to help get it all done (33%)

Surprisingly, “building your audience,” which respondents chose as the most important issue, is considered readily available or kind of available to more than half of respondents, while “having a partner, manager or team to help get it all done” (fourth on the list of most important issues) is considered the least available service to respondents.

We suspect this is a result of the many do-it-yourself social media tools available to help an art maker grow their audience, and the difficulty the most respondents face in growing their administrative staff.

#1 Help Needed

In our view, a natural follow-up to the question of the availability of services, was the question of what art makers need help with *now*.

Their responses:

- **A plan for my art-making and life (42%)**
- **A partner or coach to keep me on track and push me forward (20%)**
- **Paying down debt (12%)**
- Time management and keeping track of deadlines (10%)
- Saving money for emergencies (6%)
- Other (8%)
- None of the above (2%)

When segmented by cultural identity, results show that art makers who identify as White, and art makers who identify as Non-White mirror each other in terms of the #1 thing they need help with. Both groups prioritize a plan for art-making/life, followed by a partner or coach, then help paying down debt.

When segmented by career length, art makers mirror each other, except that art makers who have been making art for a few years differ in that help with time management supersedes the need for help with paying down debt.

#1 Help needed, segmented by career level

MAKING ART FOR A FEW YEARS	MAKING ART FOR 10 YEARS	MAKING ART FOR >10 YEARS
Plan for art-making/life	Plan for art-making/life	Plan for art-making/life
Partner or coach	Partner or coach	Partner or coach
Time management	Paying down debt	Paying down debt

When segmented by artwork, dance, film, theater and visual art makers most need help with a plan for their art-making and life; music makers most need help with a partner or coach to keep them on track and push them forward; text-based art makers most need help with time management and keeping track of deadlines.

Opportunities for The Field

The Field can best serve art makers with programming that develops practical and functional plans for art-making and life.

#1 HELP NEEDED	NOT EASILY AVAILABLE	MOST IMPORTANT
A plan for art-making and life	Having a partner, manager or team to help get it all done	Building your audience
A partner or coach to keep me on track and push me forward	Fundraising for your work	Planning for your financial future (saving \$, managing debt, retirement)
Paying down debt	Planning for your financial future (saving \$, managing debt, retirement)	Fundraising for your work

With proper planning, art makers can tackle their most important issues: building an audience, financial planning and fundraising.

Moreover, with a well-crafted plan, art makers can employ a partner, manager or team to help get everything done. In order for this programming to be successful, the plans must be:

- Adaptive to career level, artwork and evolving circumstances
- Mindful of the rigors of goal-setting and budgeting
- Engaging to ensure lasting effects
- Utilizing of both digital and human interactions to maximize engagement

Dive deeper and get personal

The Field is using survey data to form artist focus groups based on based on their disciplines, career levels, and other metrics.

These focus groups are intended to collect more personalized information from art makers, and should take shape in both traditional and nontraditional ways. For instance, The Field can provide opportunities for art makers to convene and network, while gathering information that is important for the next phase of this work. Focus groups should:

- Serve as platforms for community building
- Occur in intentionally accessible spaces
- Provide valuable resources to participants

What we learn from these focus groups will inform the drafting, procurement, and/or delivery of art-making plans that best cater to individual art makers.

In November 2019 The Field hosted three focus groups for 33 NYC-based artists of color, to hear more in depth about their goals and needs. The composition of these particular focus groups was intended to address the under-representation of artists of color in the survey data as mentioned on page 6 (“Cultural identification of NYC art makers”). We also launched a second survey diving deeper into issues of financial literacy in December 2019.

The Field will share analysis from the focus groups, as well as the second survey, in early 2020.

Develop programming that is adaptive and fruitful

Models exist that may inform the development of The Field’s future programming or spark potential national partnerships in furtherance of one goal: help art makers prosper.

The following models and suggestions stem from related research conducted by two partner organizations.

- Springboard for the Arts, Work of Art: workshops and toolkits
- Artist U recommends programming that is linked, so that sessions are not one-offs. Programming that relates to a plan for one’s art-making and life presents an opportunity to engage art makers over a series of courses that address issues like strategic planning, marketing, financial planning, etc.
- Artist U also recommends events that center around hiring help where artists who have successfully hired administrative help share their experiences, and artists have the opportunity to meet with aspiring administrators.

Follow-up and showcase successes

This work should set the tone for continuous engagement with the art makers served by The Field.

Events that highlight success stories and reinforce community building among art makers will make it so that this work bears continuous fruit.

Appendix

Survey Partners

Alliance of Artists Communities, Alternate Roots, ArtistU, Asian American Arts Alliance, C4, Dance/NYC, First Peoples Fund, Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, Harlem Arts Alliance, Hunter College, Kickstarter, Latinx Theatre Commons, MAP Fund, NALAC, Milwaukee Field, NY Women in Film and Television, PDX The Field, Springboard for the Arts, Stage Directors & Choreographers (SDC), and Queens College.

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Artists Prospering! report design by Nancy Ahn.

Survey Questions

What's your zip code?

How did you get the Survey?

Who shared the Survey with you?

Which organization shared the Survey with you?

How do you identify culturally?

What kind of artwork do you make?

How would you identify your career level?

Which of the following are most important to you?

- Fundraising help and services
- Getting artistic feedback
- Having a partner, manager or team to help get it all done
- Planning for your financial future (saving \$, managing your debt, retirement)
- Planning for your family (kids, elder care, your health)
- Affordable long-term housing (rent or buy)
- Accessible and affordable health care
- Building your audience

Of the above list, what's the one most important thing to you currently?

In your experience, are the following services available to you? (See above list.)

What do you need help with?

- a partner or coach to keep me on track and push me forward
- a plan for my art-making and life
- saving money for emergencies
- paying down my debt
- time management and keeping track of deadlines
- None of the above

From the above list, what's the #1 thing you need help with?



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