



houston arts alliance

advancing the arts in houston

2021 ARTS AND CULTURE GRANTS OVERVIEW

Houston Arts Alliance (HAA) is a local arts and culture organization whose principal work is to implement the City of Houston's vision, values, and goals for its arts grantmaking and civic art investments.

HAA is powered by public and private funding. Private funding from organizations and individual donors fuels special projects. This includes disaster preparation, arts education equity for Houston students, research on the state of the arts in Houston, and temporary public art projects that energize neighborhoods.

Public funding from the City of Houston fuels grant programs and civic art investments.

The specific source of funds for city-funded competitive grants is the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT). Hotel room bookings in Houston generate HOT revenue. A portion of HOT revenue is dedicated to promoting arts and cultural tourism to the city.

The city funds HAA's Civic Art investments through separate, non-HOT sources. All of HAA's public work is conducted through contracts with the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA).

Houston artists and nonprofits apply for city funding through five (5) HAA grant categories that are adjudicated through a peer and community-based process. Funded activities support the artists and nonprofit programs and experiences that are made available to residents and visitors of the City. **A list of 2021 and 2022 awardees can be found on our website.**

This report provides an overview of the City's investments in arts and culture grants in Calendar Year 2021/Grant Year 2022.

HAA's service to the community expanded under a new contract with MOCA as of 2020. From 2014-2019, our HOT contract with the City of Houston separated the administration of HOT funding among 4 institutions: Miller Outdoor Theater, Houston Museum District Association, Theater District Inc., and Houston Arts Alliance.

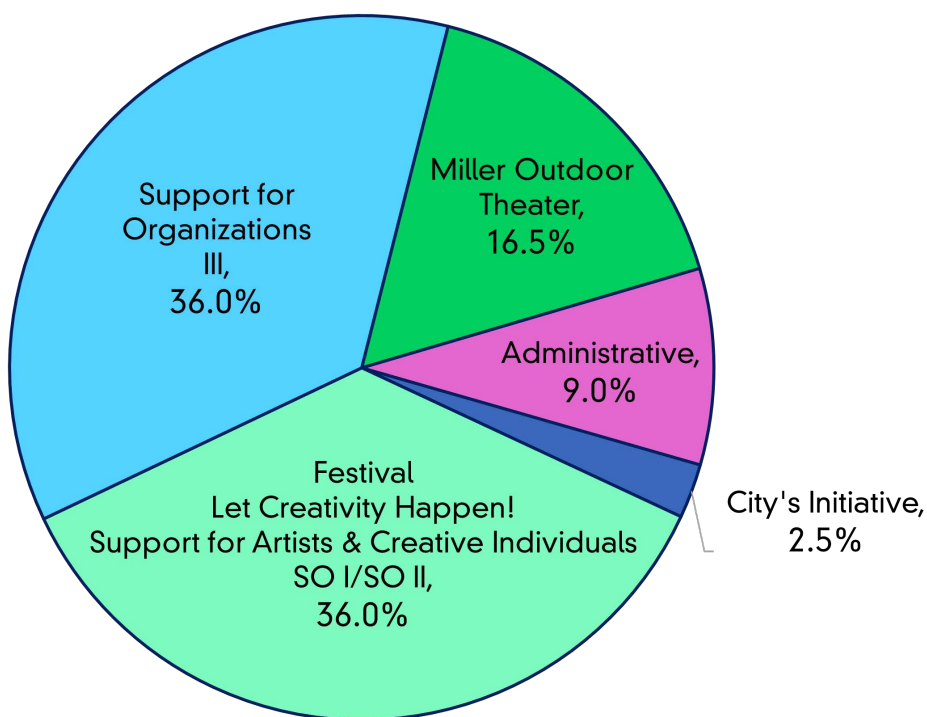
Prior to the expiration of this contract, MOCA proposed a new contract with HAA in response to the City's adopted Arts and Cultural Plan aimed at achieving a higher level of fairness, equity, transparency in the administration of these public resources, significantly reduced overhead to increase the percentage of funds provided to artists and nonprofits as grants, and more equitable competition for all recipients of HOT funds.

Percentage of HOT Funds Distributed Per Grant Program

Per the contract, 36% of HOT funds allocated to HAA are dedicated to organizations with operating expenses over \$10 million that apply for SO 3 grants.

36% is dedicated to organizations with operating expenses under \$10 million and individual artists through SO 1 and SO 2, Support for Artists and Creative Individuals (SACI), Let Creativity Happen! (LCH), and Festivals competitive grants.

2.5% is dedicated to the City's Initiative (CI) grant program.



To bring about this change, a new contract established Houston Arts Alliance as the sole contract administrator of HOT funds dedicated to the arts. Each year, HOT funds are divided and allocated for competitive grants for individual artists and arts organizations.

Organizations that have budgets over \$10 million apply for the Support for Organizations category 3 (SO 3) grant. All others with budgets under \$10 million apply for the Support for Organizations categories 1 or 2 (SO 1/SO 2) grants.

Additionally, Miller Outdoor Theater receives a pass-through allocation of HOT from HAA, for its re-granting and arts commissioning for the city owned and operated venue.

In 2020, Covid-19 created substantial damage to our economy and the wellness of our community. Grant award amounts were based on predicted income from HOT revenue for decades. Subsequent shifts in financial projections and unprecedented economic pressures caused a reduction to actual income from projected HOT revenue amounts that fuel city-funded grants. Due to this economic effect, the grant award amounts that were based on projections for active SACI, Festival, and SO grantees were reduced proportionally and equitably per contract clauses.

In response, HAA in partnership with MOCA and other stakeholders took compassionate, community-informed, strategic actions to address the financial and health crisis experienced by the arts and cultural community. Those actions included:

Contract Extensions for 2020 Grantees

Due to the global pandemic's impact on the economy and mandatory social distance mandates, grantees in the 2020 SACI, Festival and SO grant programs experienced obstacles to completing their contracted scopes of work. Additionally, their projected awards were reduced by 42% of the original amount in May 2020, after the first quarterly payment. HAA surveyed grantees and non-grantees and hosted virtual community forums to create informed options to mitigate the pandemic's impact on the Houston arts community to the fullest extent possible. More than 180 grantees chose to extend their work into CY 2021 with additional financial support from the City and grant contract extensions.

In all, \$1,918,955 of the total 2021 HOT revenue allocation was distributed to grantees before extensions. The 2021 Support for Artists and Creative Individuals grant funds was allocated to 67 contract extensions for 2020 grantees (\$406,381.07) and 20 new 2022 grant awards (\$280,020.00).

2021 Festival grant funds were allocated to 20 contract extensions for 2020 grantees (\$82,490.44) and three new 2022 grant awards (\$30,000.00).

2021 Support for Organizations grant funds (totaling \$5,612,435) were allocated to 97 contract extensions for 2020 grantees and 35 new 2021 grant awards.

2021 SACI grant funds were allocated to 67 contract extensions for 2020 grantees (\$406,381.07) and 20 new 2022 grant awards (\$280,020.00).

Number of Covid-19 Extensions in Calendar Year 2021

▶ 184 grantees from SACI, Festival, and SO received extensions in 2021.

▶ \$1,918,955 of HOT funds allocated before extensions in calendar year 2021.



HOT Allocation toward 2021 Competitive Grants

Through community input, in-depth analysis of prior grants competitions, and a survey of community desires, HAA recommended to the City that at least 37% from the 2021 HOT revenue collections be allocated for a grants competition through the existing four grant programs. Grant making policies were also updated to introduce more predictability and stability in funding for the SACI and Festival grant programs, by providing grants from secured funding as opposed to projected income.

Virtual Programming

Since first experiencing the effects of Covid-19 on its work, the arts and cultural sector continues to deliver innovative and engaging programming to Houstonians and visitors. Arts and culture workers and organizations have expanded their offerings online through various creative platforms, and created innovative and safer ways to connect in-person. The sector in Houston is rich with diverse arts and cultural institutions hosting over 23 million patrons each year, injecting over \$1.1 billion into the local economy.

Cash-in-Hand Funding

Based on community input requesting greater stability, HAA changed the schedule of Festival and SACI grant programs to ensure they are made from cash-in-hand and not from projected income. The 2022 competitive cycle for SACI is the first to implement this policy change. The recommendation for 20 new grant awards— in addition to 67 contract extensions— means more access to the 2022 SACI grant program than before, considering that 71 total SACI grants were awarded for grant year 2020.

Grant Program and Distribution - Calendar Year 2021

GRANT PROGRAM	# OF GRANTS AWARDED	DISTRIBUTION (\$)
City's Initiative*	18	\$173,200
Festival	23	\$106,490
Let Creativity Happen!	29	\$72,500
Support for Artists and Creative Individuals	87	\$686,401
Support for Organizations	264	\$5,605,299
SO Type I	194	\$2,070,163
SO Type II	51	\$278,470
SO Type III	19	\$3,256,666

- ▶ 114 individual artists and creatives received city funding.
- ▶ 264 were awarded through The Support for Organizations grant program.

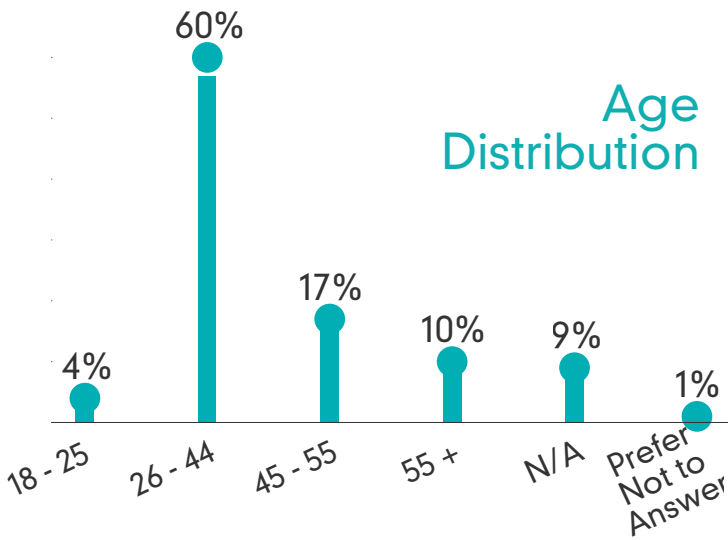
*CI project scopes should fit well within one of these three funding areas:

- **Art + Disaster Resilience Awareness:** Projects that use arts and culture to increase environmental risk, preparedness, and resilience awareness.
- **Art + Neighborhood Cultural Destinations:** Projects that activate and promote an art or cultural asset of a local neighborhood while engaging its community.
- **Art + Conference Tourism:** Clearly defined partnership with a significant conference that produces an activity featuring Houston artists or arts and culture attractions for participants, residents, and visitors.

2021 Individuals Overview

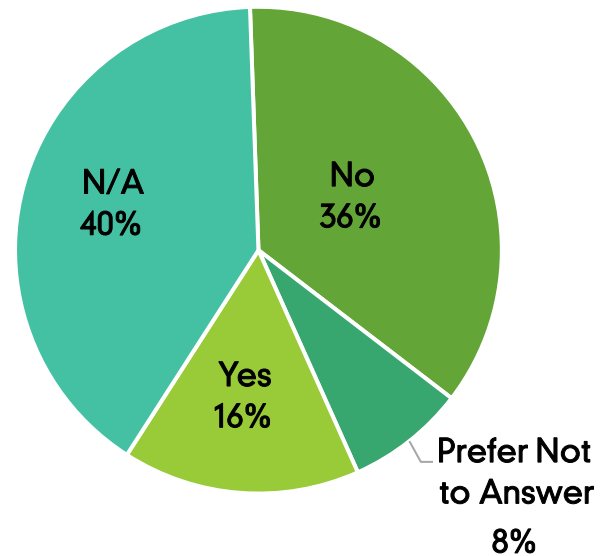
Artists and creatives who reside within City of Houston limits can apply to the City's Initiative, Let Creativity Happen!, and Support for Artists and Creative Individuals grant programs. Awards are up to \$10,000, \$2,500 and \$15,000, respectively. These grant programs attract artists of diverse self-identities, cultural expressions, and career stages. Studying demographic data helps HAA learn and improve towards its goals of equity, inclusivity, and transparency.

The graphs show the distribution to the 114 individual artists and creatives who were recipients of city funding in calendar year 2021.

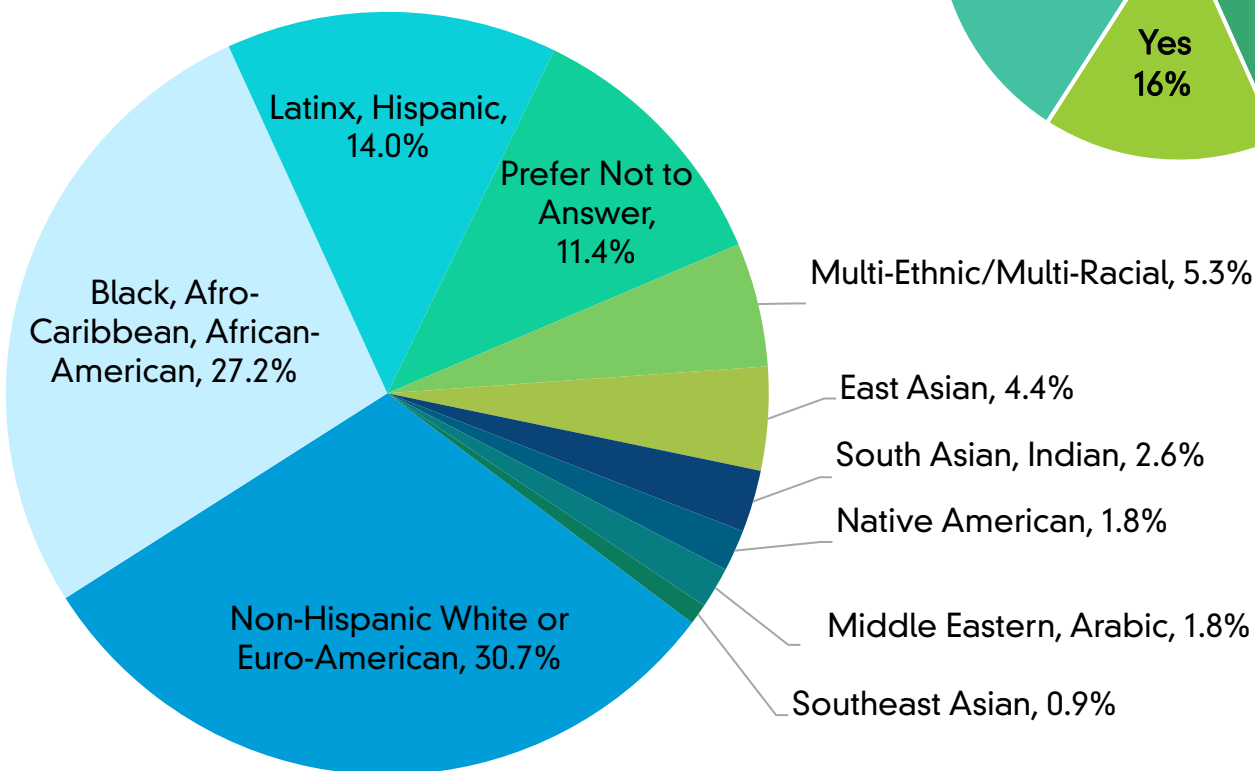


▶ 16% of individuals awarded identify as LGBTQ+.

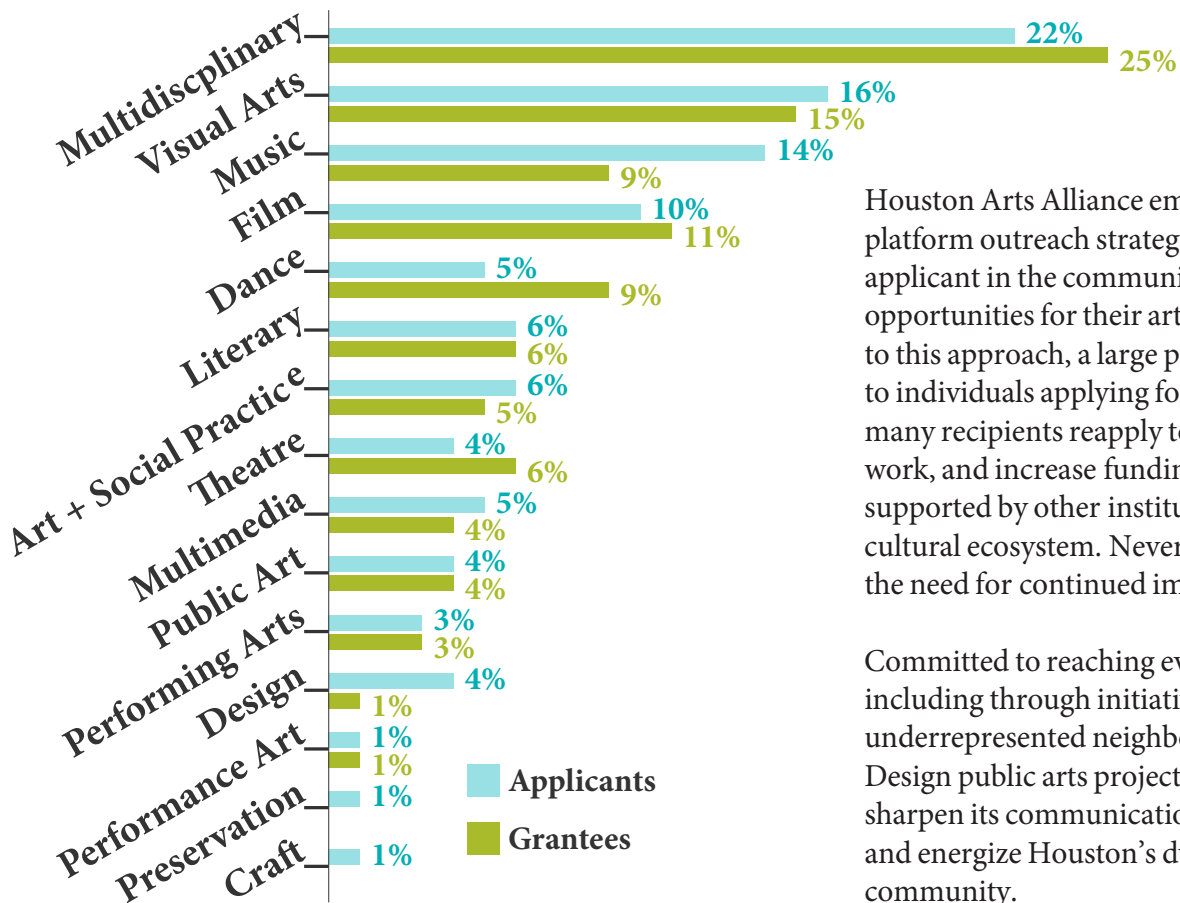
LGBTQ+



Race and Ethnicity Distribution



Distribution by Artistic Discipline



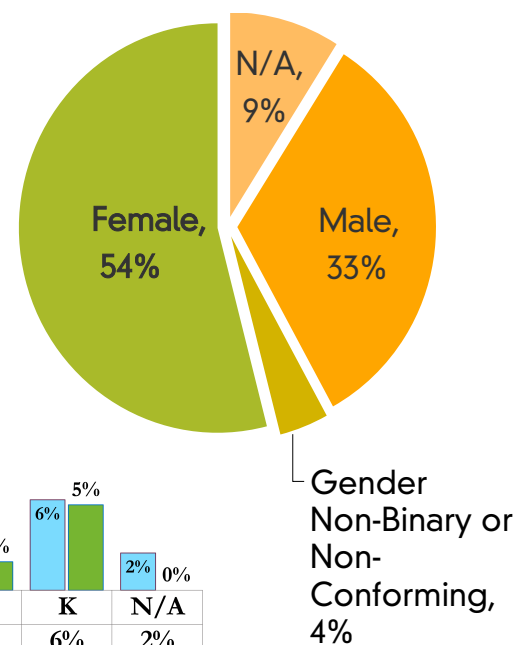
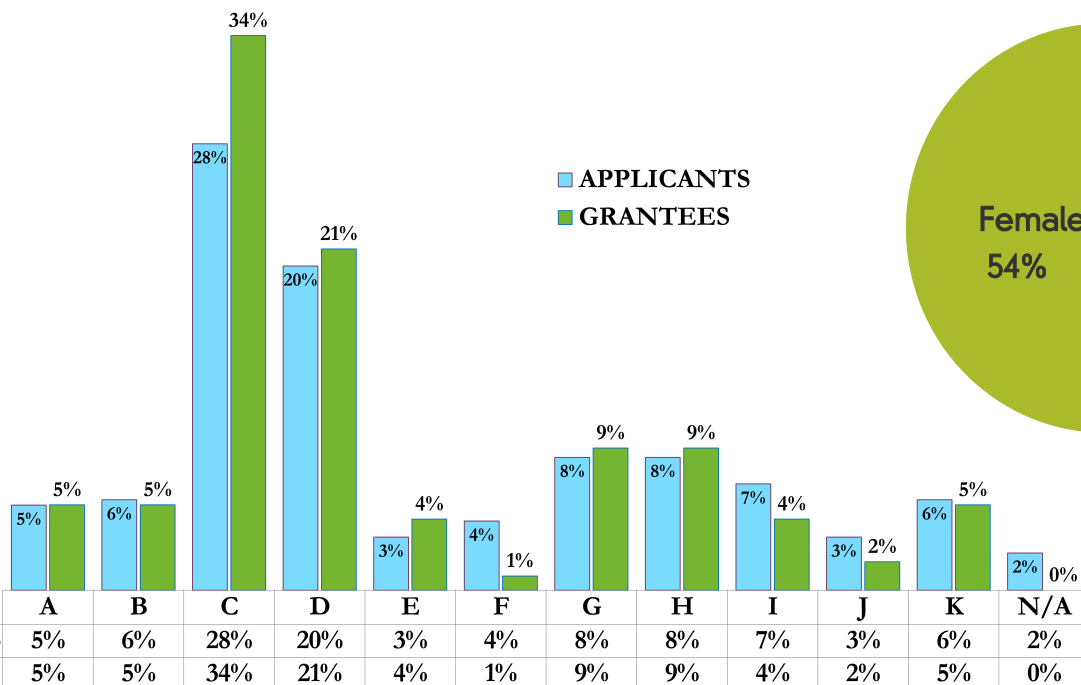
Houston Arts Alliance employs an aggressive, cross-platform outreach strategy to ensure every potential applicant in the community is aware of city-funded opportunities for their arts and cultural work. Thanks to this approach, a large portion of grants are awarded to individuals applying for the first time. Additionally, many recipients reapply to continue iterations of their work, and increase funding for works that are supported by other institutions within the arts and cultural ecosystem. Nevertheless, HAA acknowledges the need for continued improvement.

Committed to reaching every potential applicant—including through initiatives like grants workshops in underrepresented neighborhoods, and Civic Art + Design public arts projects—HAA will continue to sharpen its communications strategy to better inform and energize Houston’s dynamic arts and cultural community.

Artists and creatives provide Houstonians and visitors a wide range of experiences through a variety of mediums, including, but not limited to, visual and performing arts, film, photography, design, music, conservation/preservation, folklore, textile arts, and creative entrepreneurship. The arts network reaches throughout the city with representation in every council district, with whom we partner to expand awareness and experiences happening in those communities.

Council Districts of Ind. Applicants and Grantees

Distribution by Gender



Gender Non-Binary or Non-Conforming, 4%

2021 Organizations Overview

Applicants provide multiple identity data points for the expansive audiences they serve. One of the major data points HAA collects is key constituencies by race and ethnicity, self-reported data on organizations' top five audiences. Of those reported, the top five (excluding Prefer Not to Answer) in calendar year 2021 were Multi-Ethnic/Multi-Racial, Black, Afro-Caribbean, African-American, Non-Hispanic White or Euro-American, Latinx, Hispanic, and South Asian.

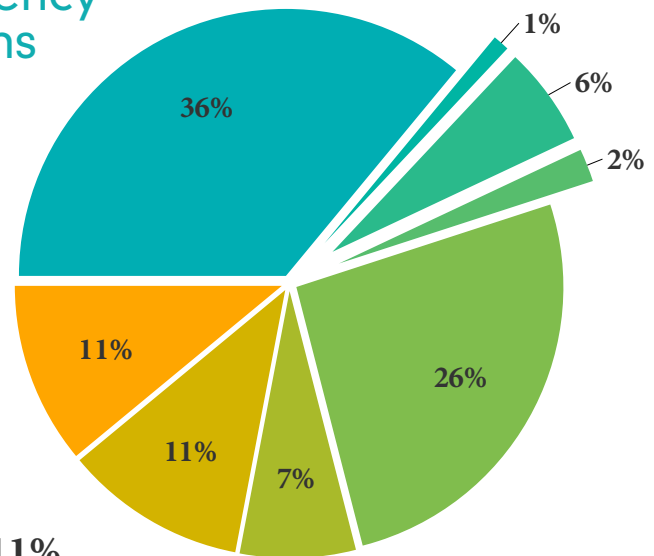
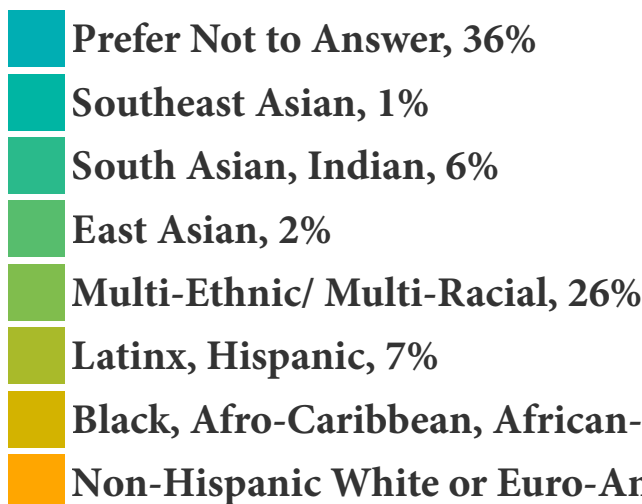
Another major data point collected is key constituencies by audience type, which also is self-reported data on organizations' top five audiences. Of those reported, the top five were adults (general), youth (high school aged), young adults and pre-professionals (college-aged), low-income families or persons, and youth at greater risk.

The City of Houston has a wealth of arts and cultural institutions at all budget sizes*, an integral aspect of a vibrant cultural sector and ecosystem. Nonprofits apply to the Festival, Support for Organizations, and Let Creativity grant programs. They provide operating support for their arts and cultural activities. Organizations under \$10 million are supported with grants of up to 20% of their operating budget size, while the largest institutions with budgets over \$10 million may receive grants of up to 3% of their operating budget size.

Share of Applicant Pool by Budget Size



Share of Applicant Pool by Key Constituency - Race and Ethnicity, Grantee Organizations

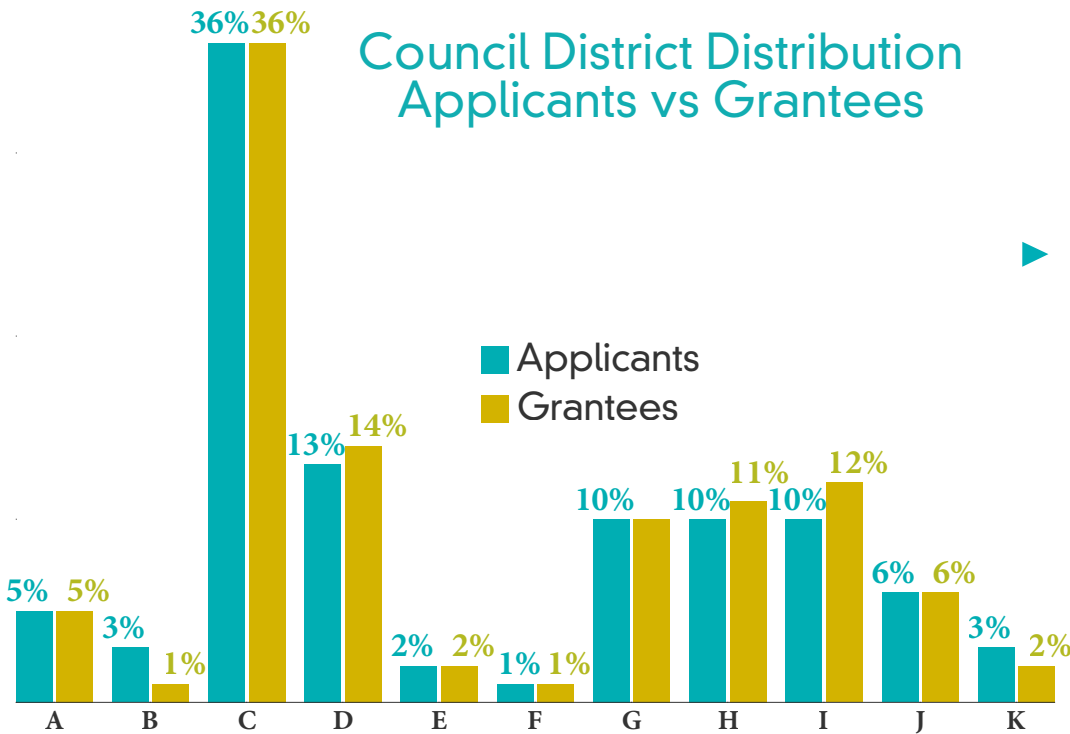


*Budget size numbers represent self-reported budgets of organization applicants to the Support for Organizations grant category and is their operating expenses less in-kind contributions.

Organizations are greatly spread out through all corners of the city and represent the vast diversity of Houston’s residents. Applicants to HAA represent fiscally sponsored projects, nonprofits with an arts specific mission, and those nonprofits whose primary mission may be outside of the arts, but have arts programming.

Often, these arts program extensions offer residents and visitors a cultural experience, inviting others to experience a specific community’s traditions and heritage through various artists’ mediums. Houston nonprofits also offer a wealth of festivals throughout the year across the city.

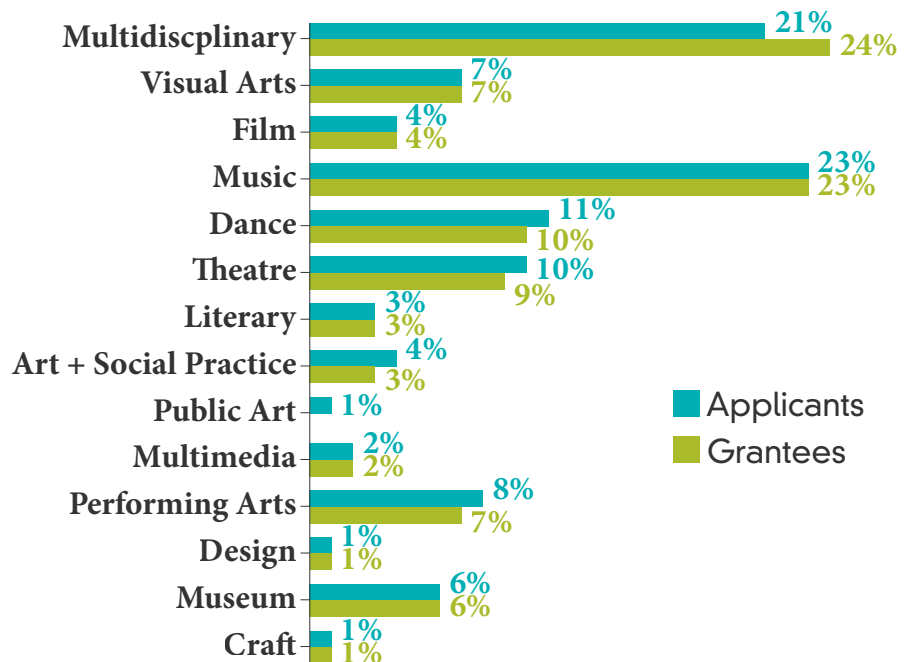
Council District Distribution Applicants vs Grantees



► **SO recipients** are spread out through all corners of the city and represent the vast diversity of Houston’s residents.

Key Constituencies by Audience Type

- **SO 1** recipients are awarded up to 20% of their operating expenses.
- **SO 2** recipients are awarded up to 10% of their arts program budget.
- **SO 3** recipients are awarded up to 3% of their operating expenses.





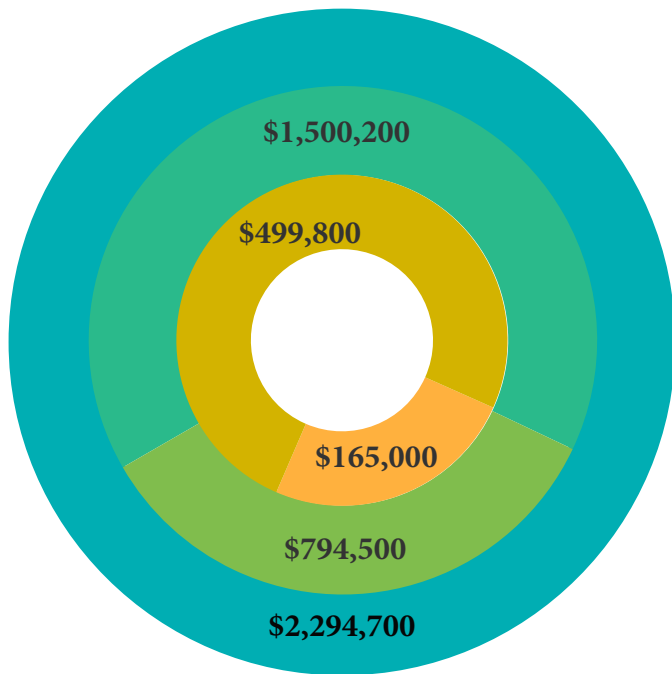
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CARES Act Program for Arts and Culture

The following document outlines a summary of data collected from the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) CARES Act Program for Arts and Culture applicant pool, including relief fund recipients. In total, 226 micro-businesses (firms with 1-9 employees) and 121 nonprofits received \$2,000,000 in CARES relief grants.






CARES Distributions: Applicants vs. Eligible



During the pandemic, MOCA supported the local arts and cultural sector with assistance through the CARES Act Program for Arts and Culture, among other initiatives.

The Mayor and City Council approved \$5 million in relief funding from the City’s Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act— also known as CARES Act— for all disciplines, for both individuals and nonprofits.

MOCA engaged HAA to distribute \$2 million, adhering to legal requirements, structural needs, assessment, and demand.

-  Total Pool
-  Total Non-Profit Business Applicants
-  Total Non-Profit Business Eligible Applicants Total
-  Micro Business Applicants
-  Total Micro Business Eligible Applicants

CARES Act Overview

Covid-19 sharply impacted a vital part of our culture and quality of life. The sector’s inability to host public gatherings prompted considerable losses of earned income due to canceled performances, exhibitions, art work sales and gig work. Houston’s vibrancy is thanks in part to its diversity of artists, arts nonprofits, and cultural centers rooted in deep traditions.

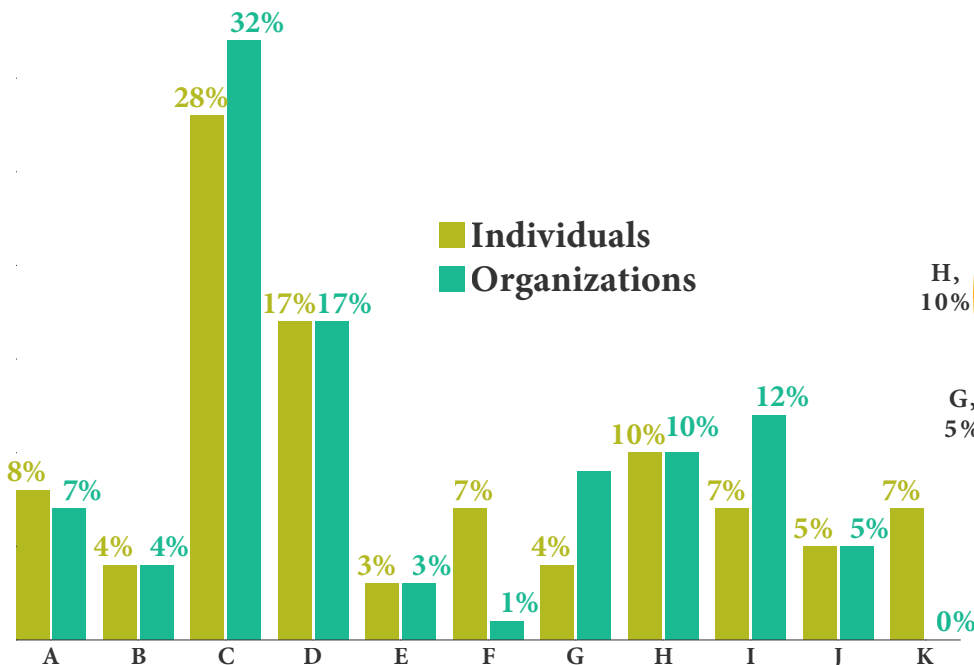
Yet, in spite of the pandemic’s most costly and stubborn obstacles, the sector rallied. Local and global audiences participated in arts and cultural programming through digital channels. Houston arts and culture skillfully pivoted, all while facing acute personal and organizational losses. Houston’s cultural events calendar features online and socially distanced public arts programming even to today.

HAA facilitated two rounds of relief funding, on August 24, 2020, and November 13, 2020. During which, HAA launched two application cycles, verified eligibility, delivered funding recommendations to MOCA, and distributed awards to 347 unique relief recipients. For both application rounds, HAA invited 1,200 creative businesses to apply for funding through a concise, simplified application. It simultaneously adhered to federal requirements written into the CARES Act, and assessed applicant needs and vulnerabilities.

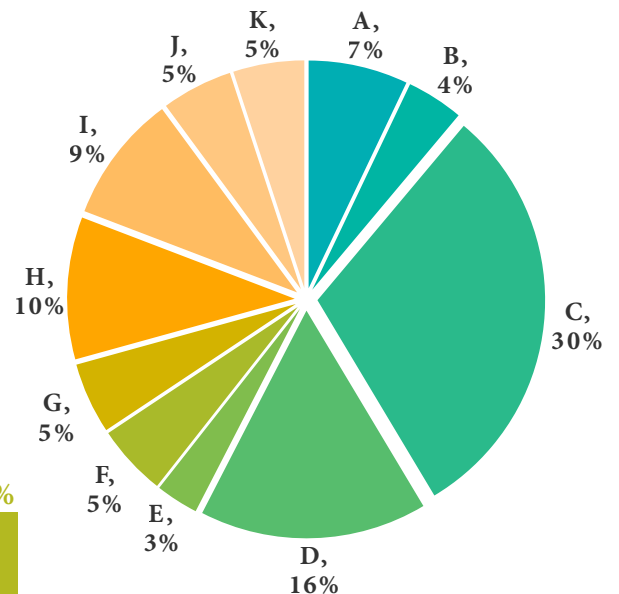
In the first round, individuals were eligible for grants up to \$1,800. Nonprofits were eligible for grants up to \$15,000. Next, HAA increased maximum award amounts, and the number of months for considered losses to reflect the high rates of reported losses from Round 1. The changes took into account the worsening pandemic and the damages accrued each month.

Relief funds undoubtedly bolstered the recovery effort and the cultural vibrancy of Houston through some of the most adverse circumstances in memory.

Council District Distribution Individuals vs Organizations



Council District Distribution Per District



CARES Act Individuals

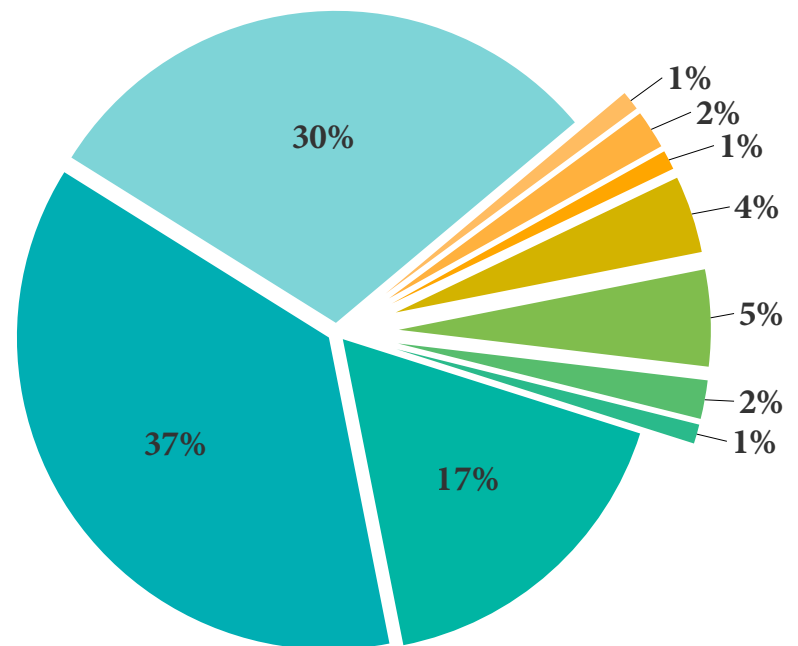
This section of the report outlines the distribution of \$2 million in CARES funding provided by the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs, through the City of Houston, to micro-business recipients by demographics. BIPOC, queer, differently abled, and non-binary or gender non-conforming individuals were prioritized during the application process.

▶ **62 %** of artists are fully unemployed; artists have lost an estimated average of \$27,103 in annual income; 80% have no path toward recovery ([Source](#)).

▶ **64%** of CARES relief funding distributed to micro-businesses (individuals) went to grantees who self-identified in one of the BIPOC communities.

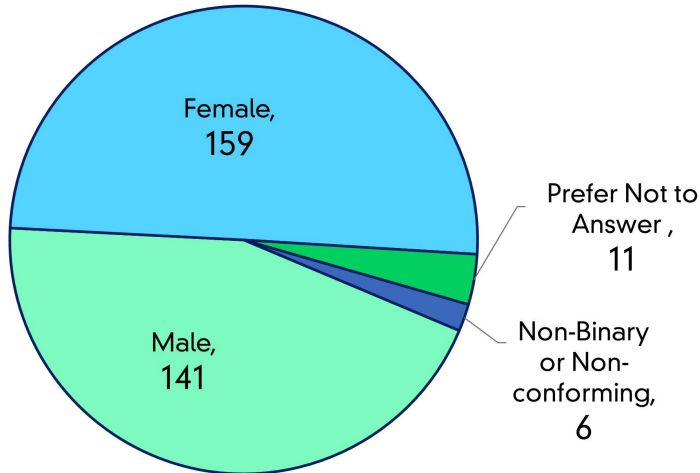
▶ **BIPOC** communities represent some of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, and it is imperative to elevate them ([Source](#)).

Distribution by Race and Ethnicity



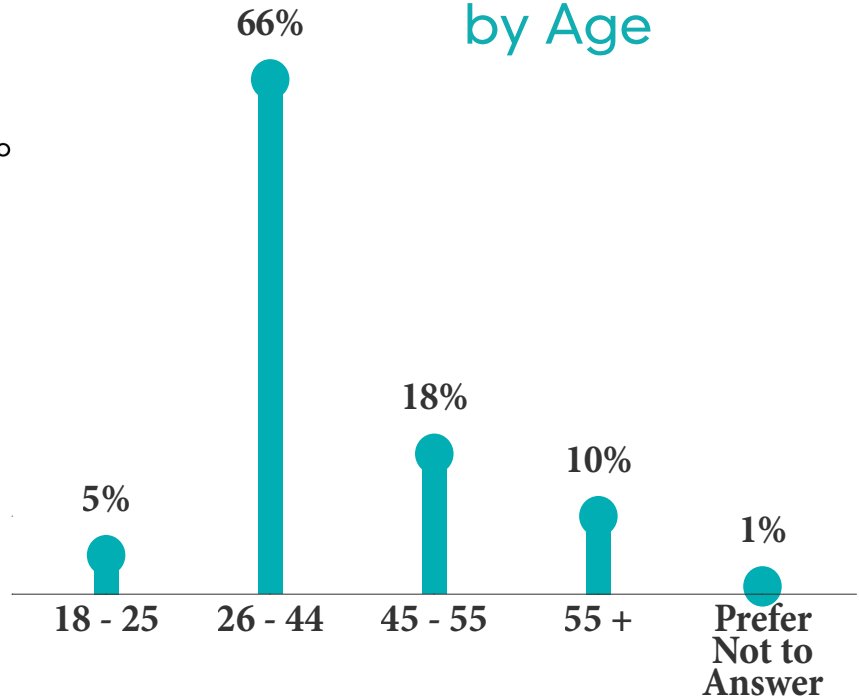
CARES Act Individuals

Distribution by Gender, Recipients



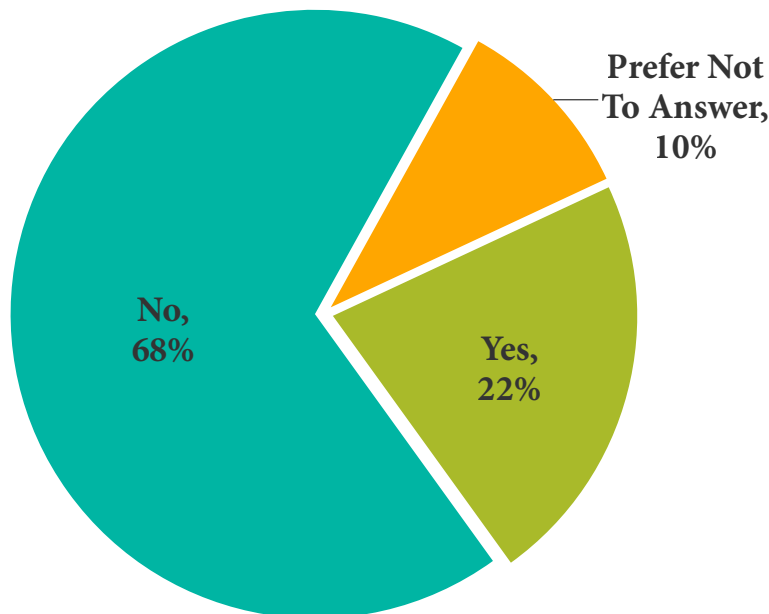
▶ 6% of applicants identified as gender non-binary or non-conforming.

Distribution by Age



▶ The wide range of ages represents but one element of the diversity in experience of artists and creatives who applied.

LGBTQ+



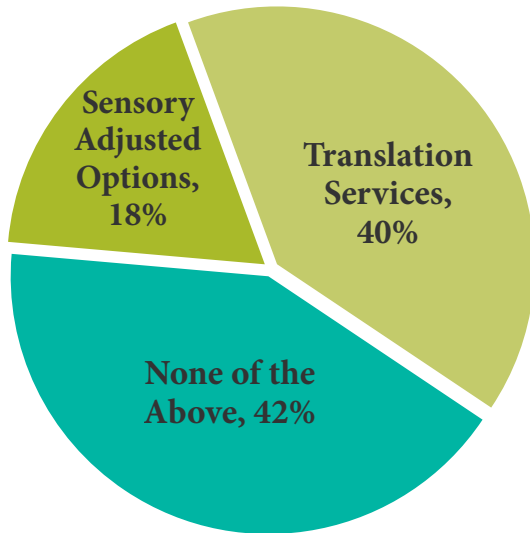
▶ 22% of recipients identified as LGBTQ+.

▶ CARES was designed to prioritize marginalized LGBTQ+ communities.

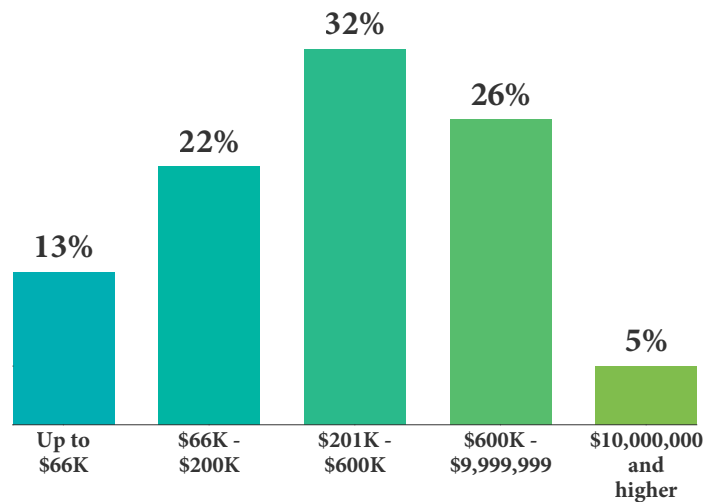
CARES Act Organizations

This section of the report outlines the distribution of \$2 million in CARES funding provided by the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, through the City of Houston, to organizations by demographics. CARES funding provided a critical resource for these organizations. A recent report stated that Texas non-profits with budgets less than \$100,000 are the hardest hit by the pandemic and economic downturn.

Accessibility Services



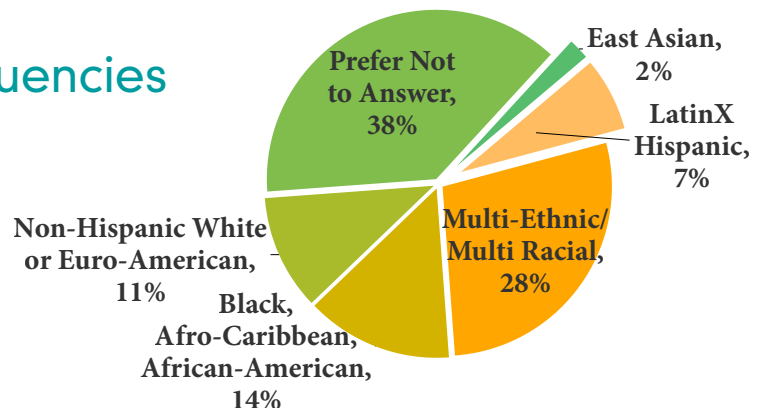
Operating Budget Less In-Kind Range



- ▶ 58% of the organization applicants provided some form of accessibility services, e.g., translation services in a language other than English, and sensory adjustment options for their arts and cultural offerings
- ▶ Grants were tiered in order for the smallest organization applicant to receive a higher percentage of their budget.
- ▶ 35% of funding went to organizations with budgets under \$200,000. 31% went to organizations with budgets over \$600,000.

Race and Ethnicity Constituencies

- ▶ 51% reported a BIPOC community as their primary constituency.



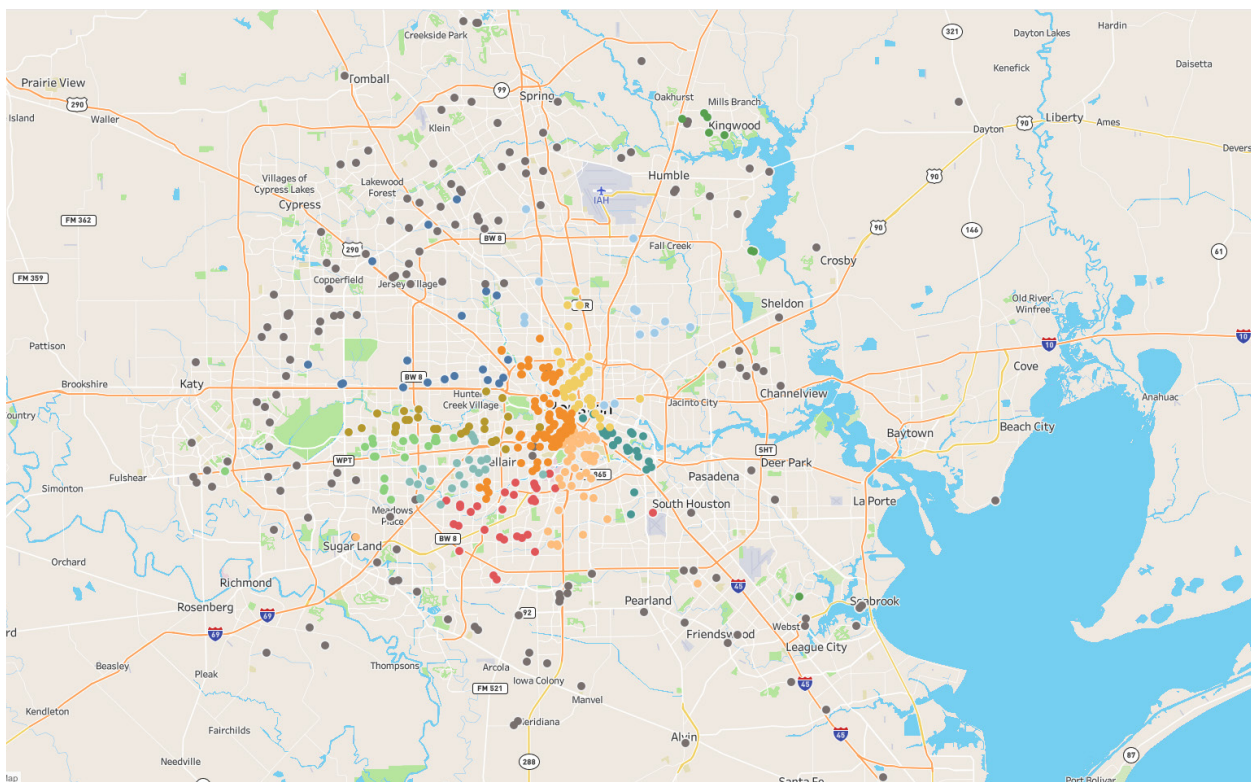
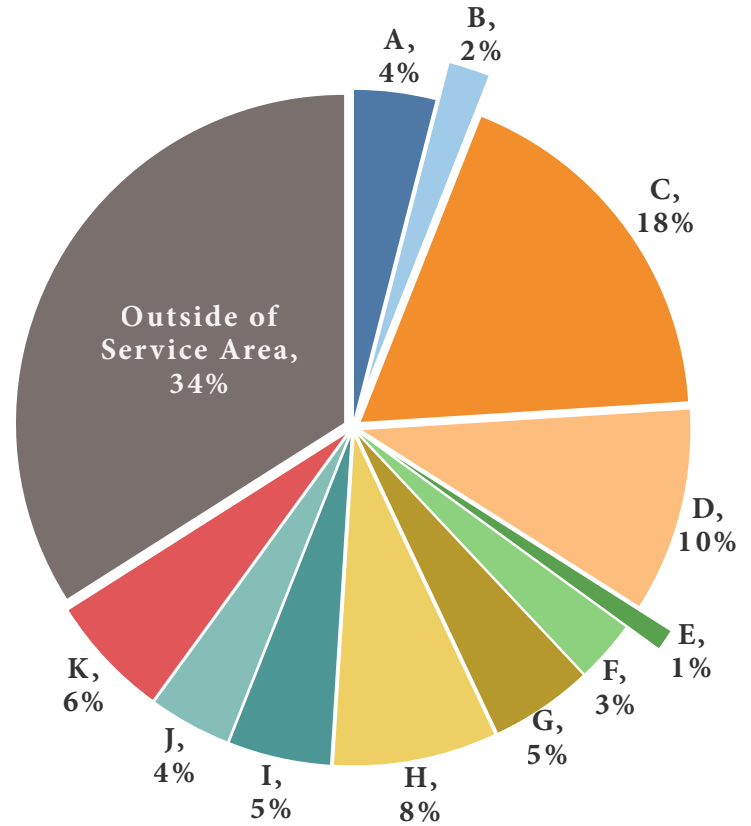
Greater Houston Area Arts Relief Fund

From April 1, 2020 to May 12, 2021, HAA was part of a collective that launched an Artist and Arts Worker Relief Fund. The fund helped secure food, health, and housing security for artists and employees of arts businesses and nonprofits in the Greater Houston eight county area; Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller.

Funds were available to Houston area artists and arts workers (arts nonprofit employees, gallerists, etc.) who lost income and basic life securities as a result of Covid-19. The goals of the fund were to secure basic life needs of arts professionals, to reach as many individuals as possible, and to act as a temporary bridge for arts professionals to connect with more stable, more sustainable sources of assistance. Funding also helped with other self-identified basic needs, such as child care, utilities, and other expenses necessary for a secure life.

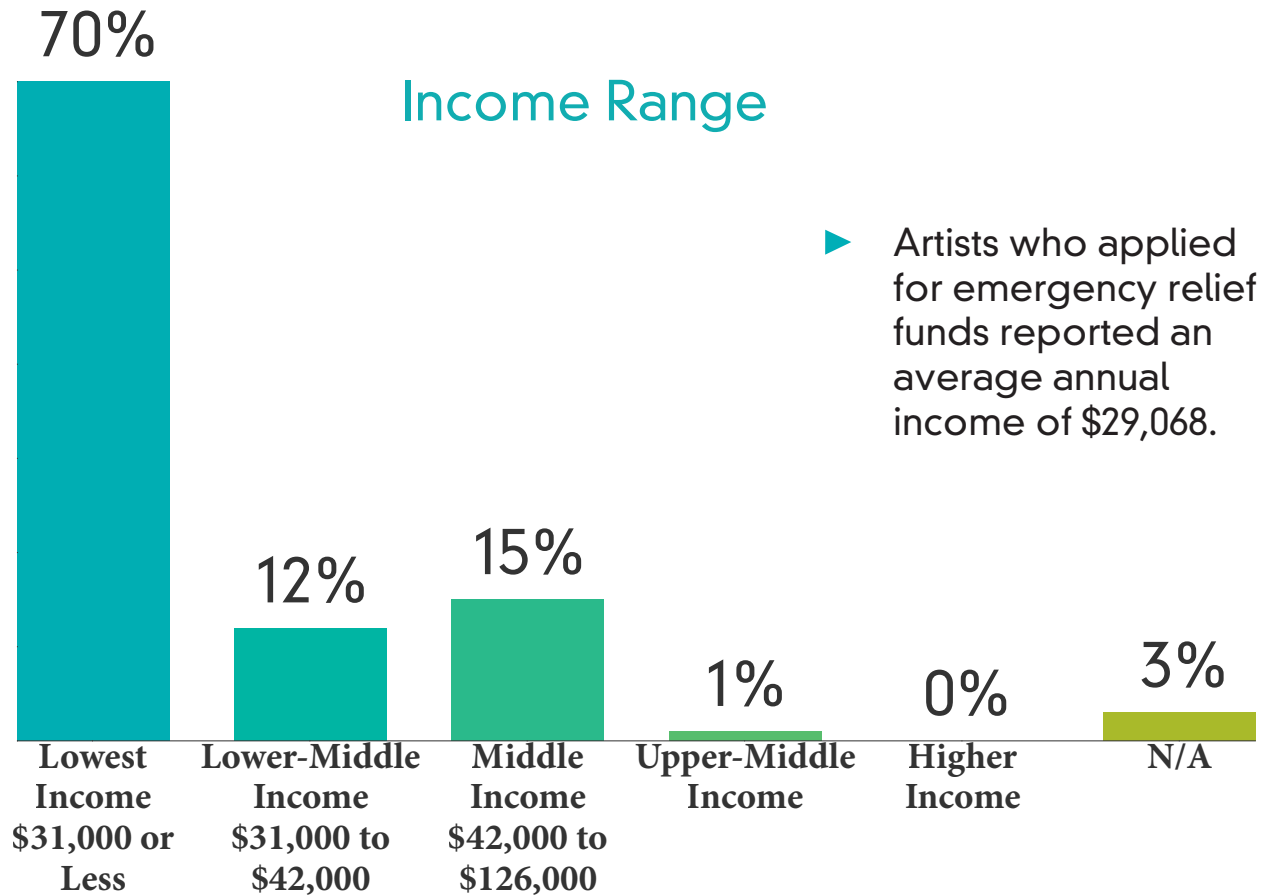
Grants up to \$600 were distributed to 543 artists and arts workers and served as a bridge to public assistance options for a total of **\$847,409**.

Distribution by Council District

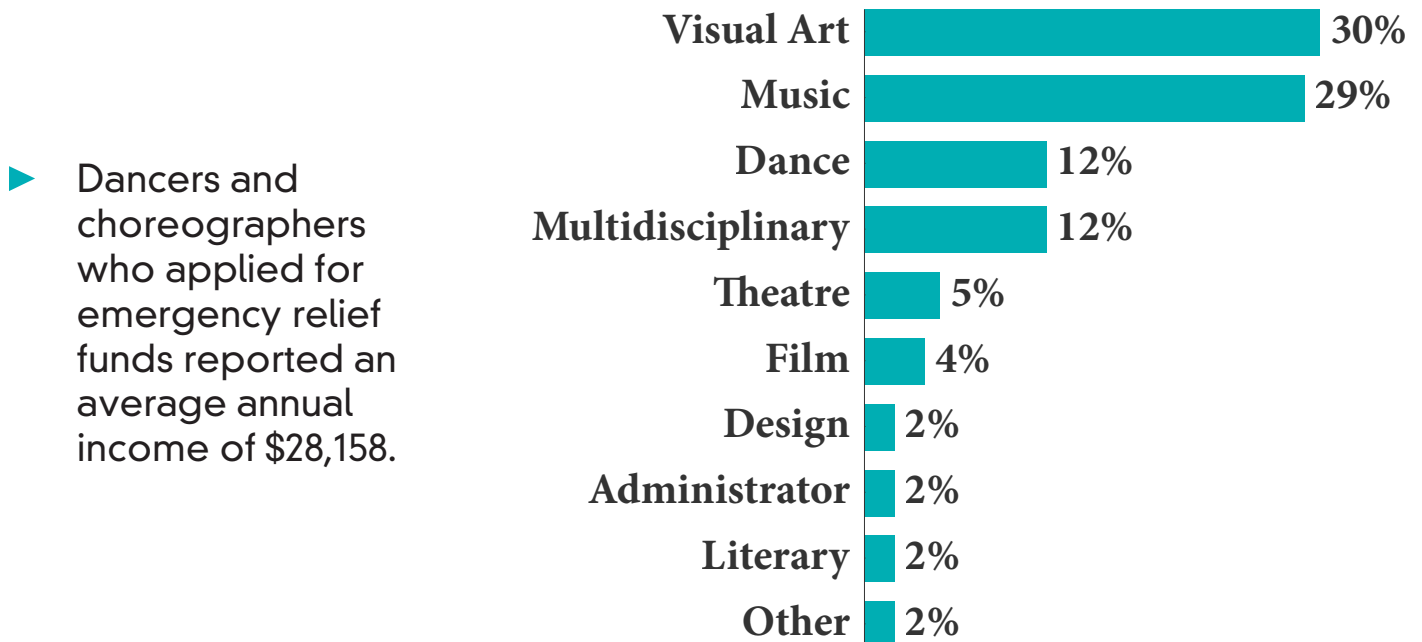


- COH Council District
- District A
 - District B
 - District C
 - District D
 - District E
 - District F
 - District G
 - District H
 - District I
 - District J
 - District K
 - N/A
 - Out of Service Area

Greater Houston Area Arts Relief Fund

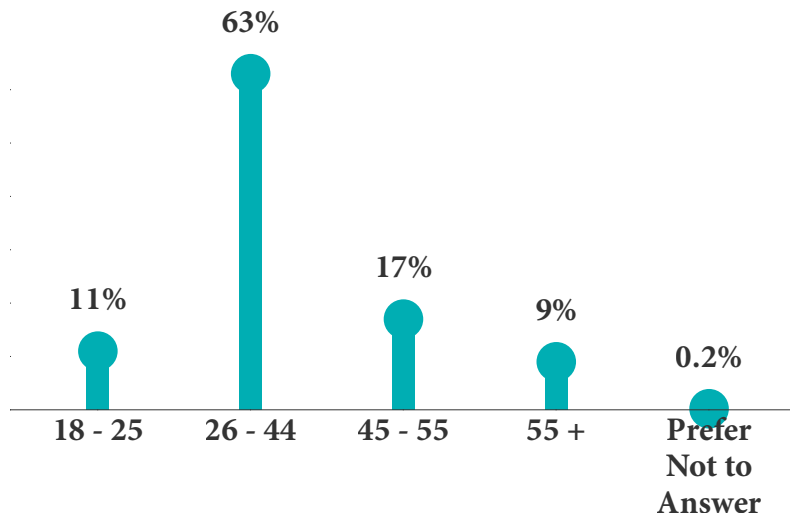


Distribution by Artistic Discipline

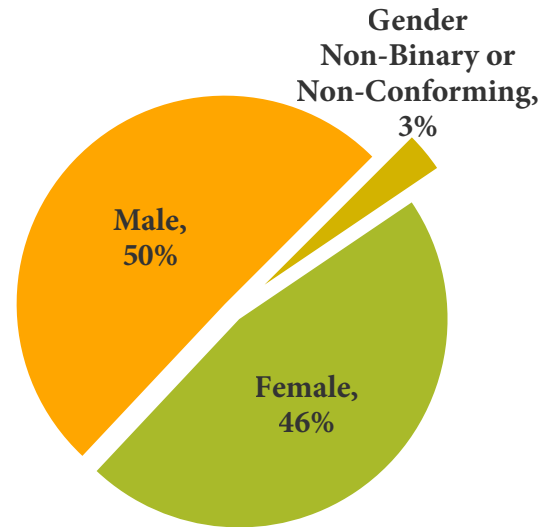


Greater Houston Area Arts Relief Fund

Distribution by Age

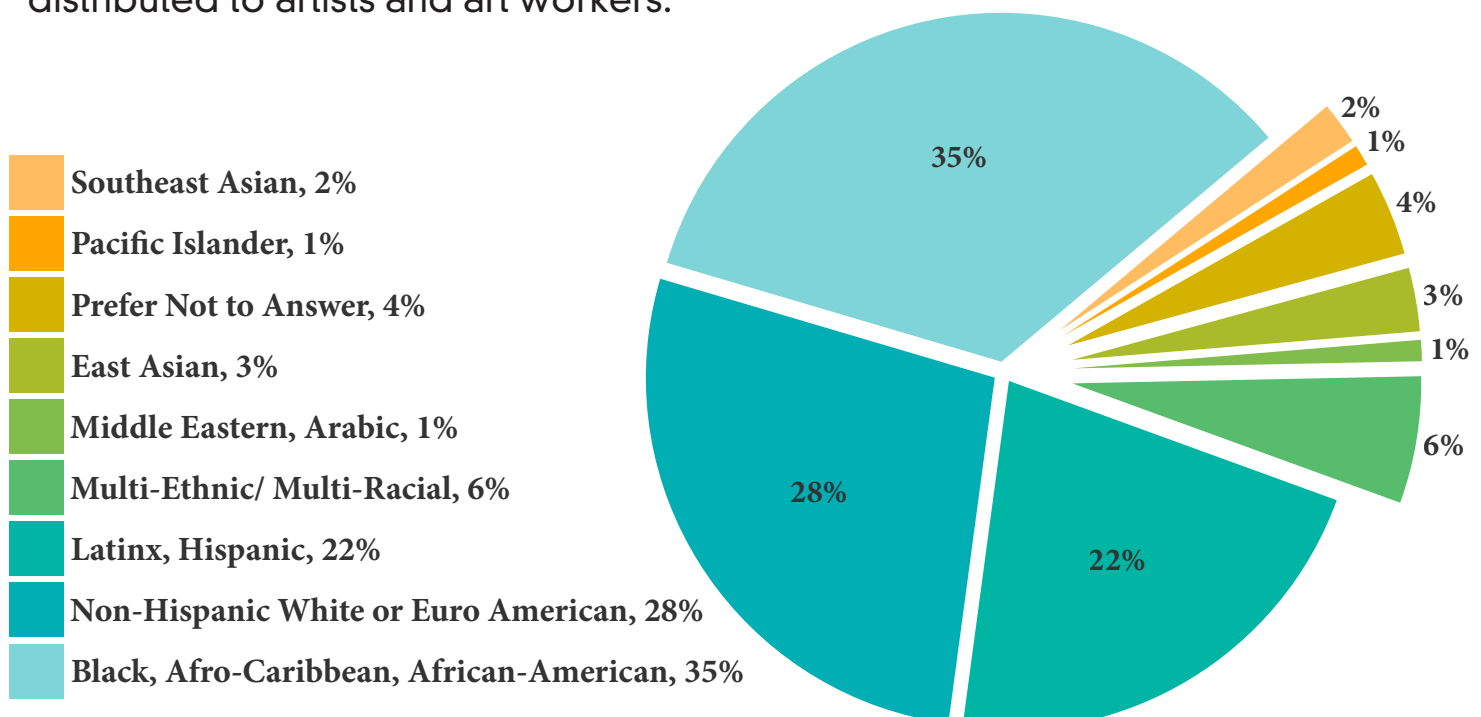


Distribution by Gender



- ▶ The emergency relief fund serviced eight counties, which included Harris, Fort Bend, Montgomery, Brazoria, Galveston, Liberty, and Chambers.
- ▶ \$325,775 total funds distributed to assist artists and cultural workers with health, housing, food, child care, utilities and other basic needs.
- ▶ 542 grants up to \$600 were distributed to artists and art workers.

Distribution by Race and Ethnicity





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2021 PANELIST OVERVIEW

In 2021, Houston Arts Alliance (HAA) welcomed 111 panelists— arts experts from the community— to read and score grant applications. Panels review and deliberate on the applications. They assign scores to them, which then are combined with objective measures to determine final scores and each application's relative rank.

HAA uses the panel process to adjudicate and rank all grant applications. This long-time process removes HAA staff and board from the evaluation of grant applications. Engaging artists and representatives from the community to share in critical decision-making aligns with HAA's values of transparency and inclusion.

Panels feature a diversity of skills, self-identities, and experiences as they assess the merit of applications requesting City of Houston funds. HAA strives to represent every Houstonian and visitor that this cultural community serves.

PANELIST OVERVIEW

Together panelists serve as an independent group of experts and community members that review and evaluate all grant applications.

Rather than a means for simply judgment-based outcomes, the panel process is for the benefit of applicants. Panels provide feedback on every application, regardless of decision or score, that applicants may find constructive and actionable.

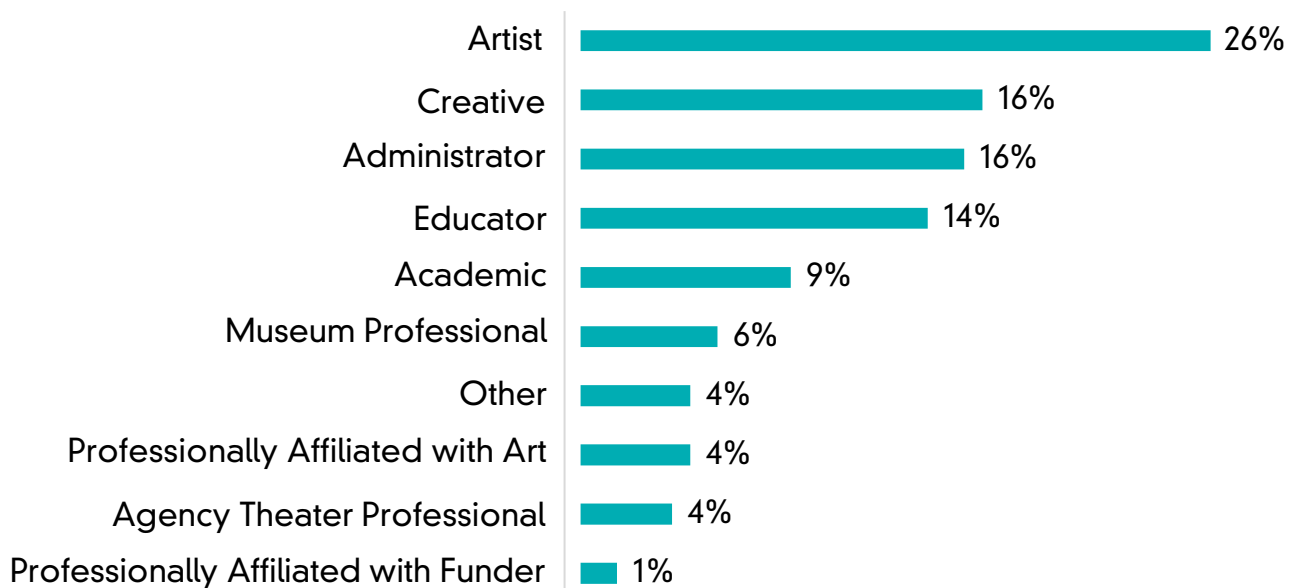
This enhances their knowledge both in their field of practice and the grants process. Through this feedback, HAA aims to establish a process that goes beyond grantmaking, one that enriches Houston’s larger artistic culture.

The panel experience offers applicants insight into the grantmaking process and professional development for artists and arts workers. Panelists commit to reviewing about 35 applications prior to their panel discussion. Grants and Civic Art + Design panelists each receive a \$200 honorarium.

HAA invites everyone with arts experience to take part.

- ▶ **Artists** We seek community leaders, professionals and corporate volunteers representing the arts, cultural, creative, academic, public and private sectors make up the HAA panelist pool and play a vital role in determining awards.

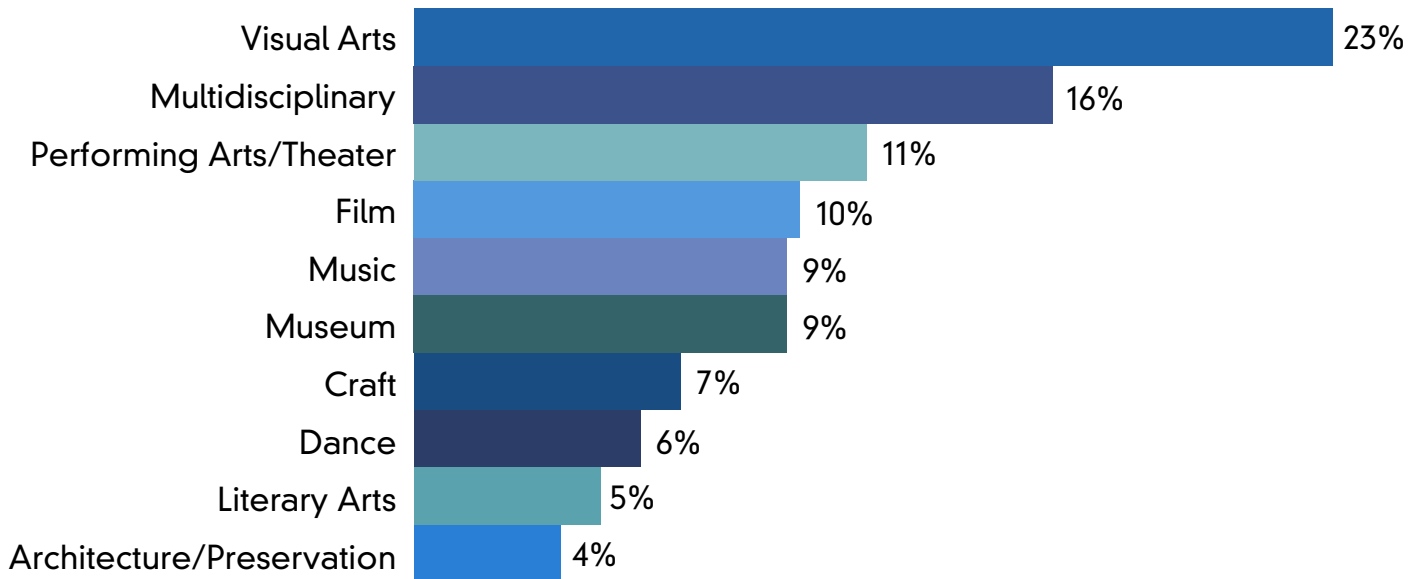
Panelist Profession



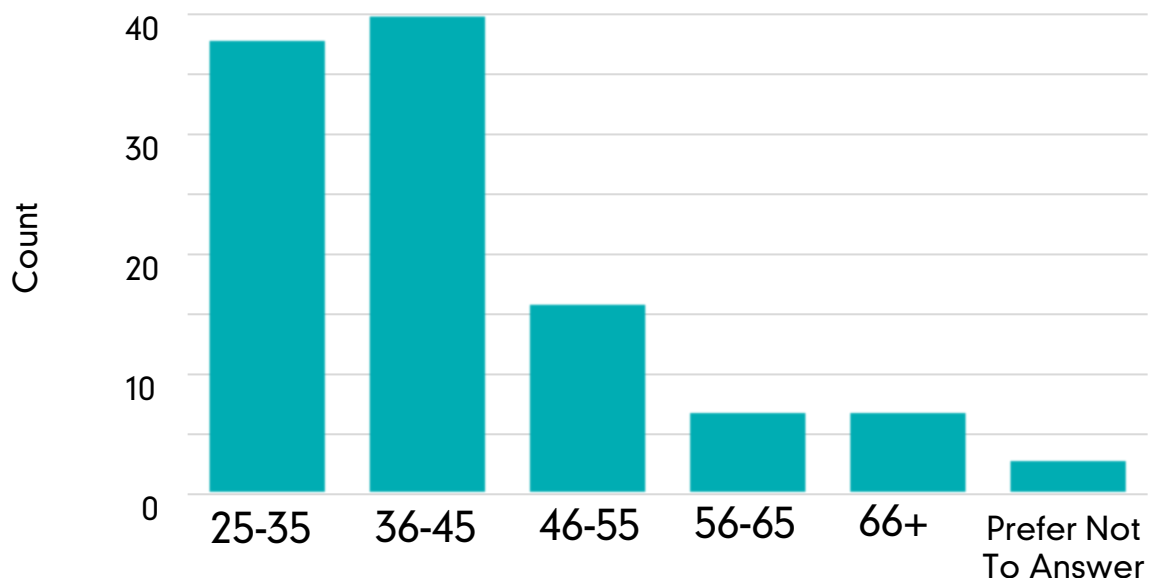
PANELIST OVERVIEW

► **Peer and community-based panels** assess proposals from Houston artists and nonprofits that apply for city funding through five HAA grant categories.

Artistic Medium of Interest or Involvement



Panelist Age



PANELIST OVERVIEW

The City's Initiative grant program is allocated 2.5% of HOT revenue dedicated to the arts. Unlike other HOT revenues dedicated to the arts, City's Initiative funding can "carry over", meaning that it will be distributed at later dates. Remaining balances are retained in the City's Initiative account year over year.

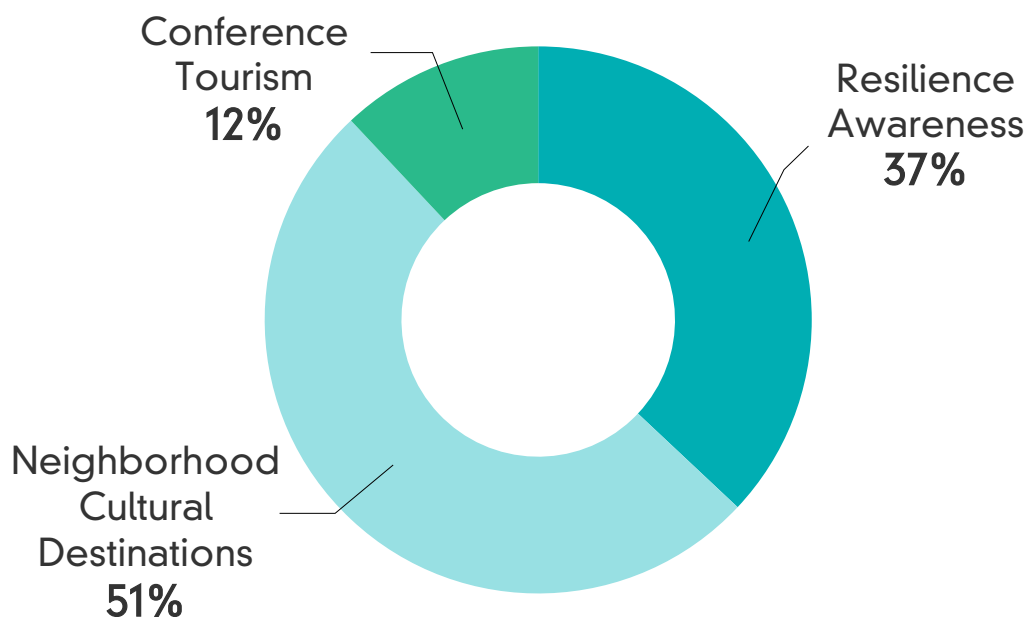
The project scope should fit well within one of these three funding areas:

Art + Disaster Resilience Awareness: Projects that use arts and culture to increase environmental risk, preparedness, and resilience awareness.

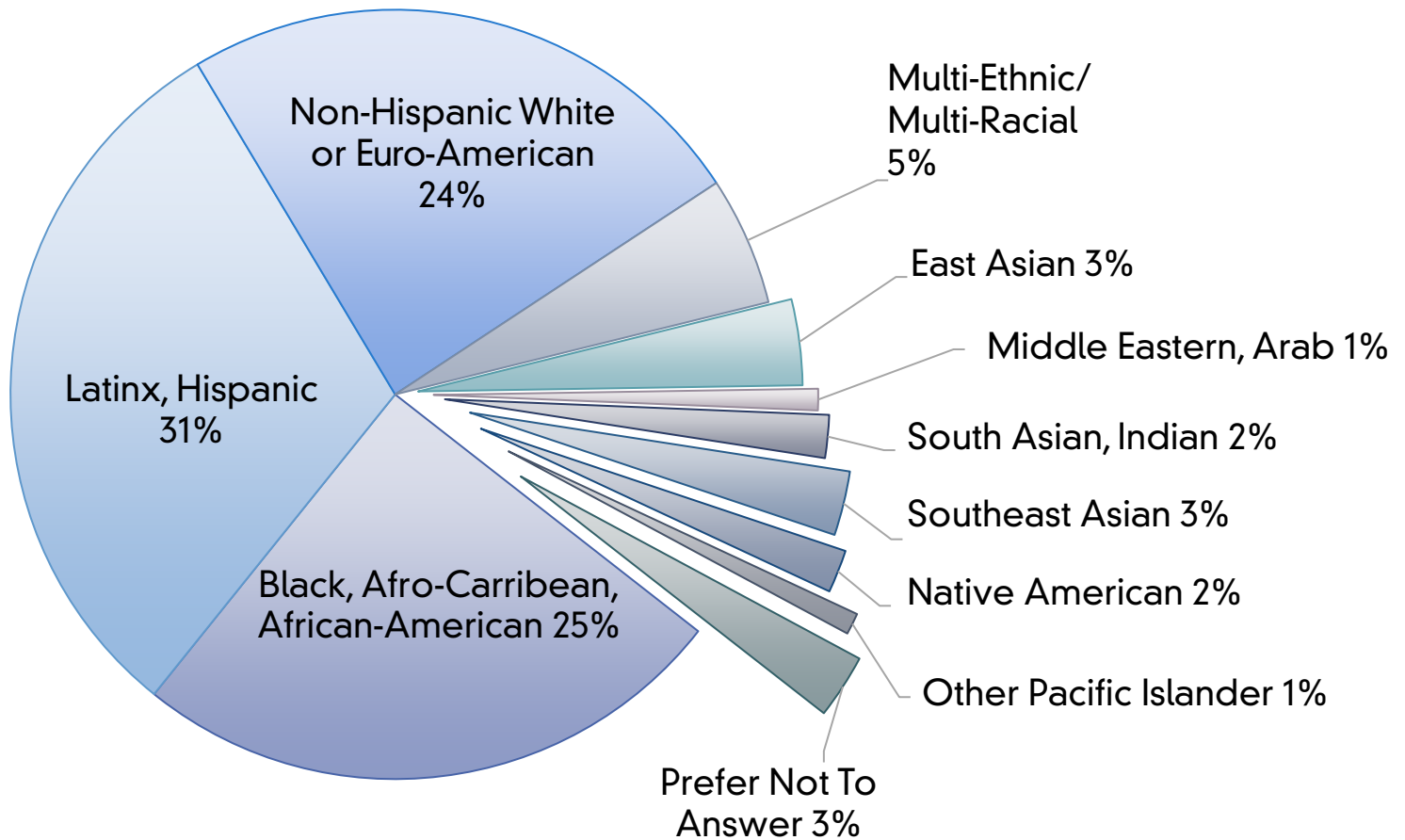
Art + Neighborhood Cultural Destinations: Projects that activate and promote an art or cultural asset of a local neighborhood while engaging its community.

Art + Conference Tourism: Clearly defined partnership with a significant conference that produces an activity featuring Houston artists or arts and culture attractions in Houston for participants, residents, and visitors.

City's Initiative Awardee Funding Areas

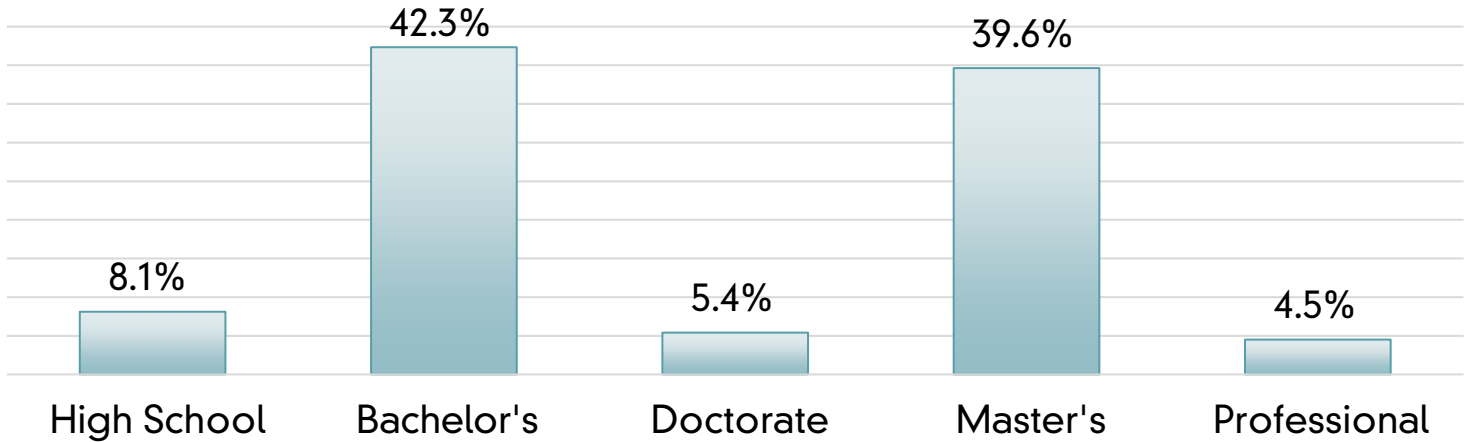


Race and Ethnicity

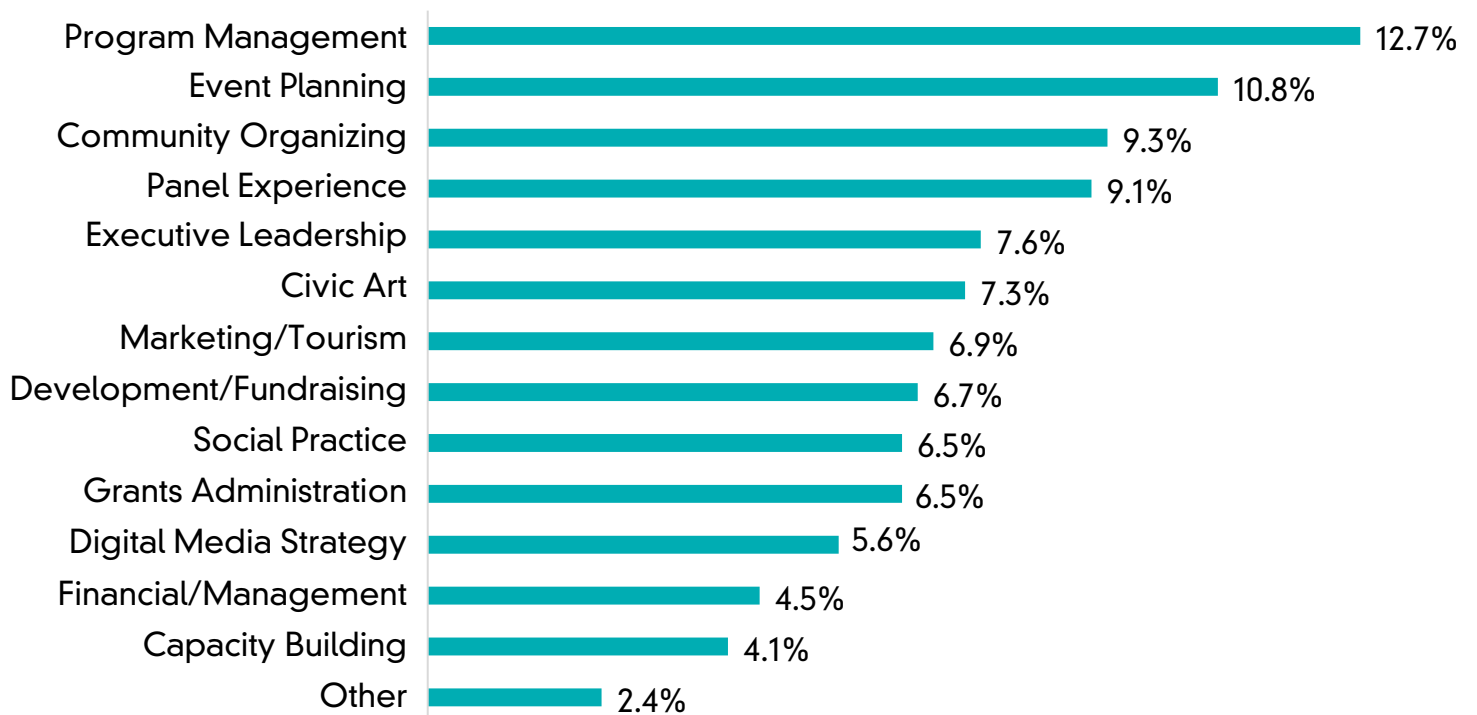


PANELIST OVERVIEW

Highest Degree Attained

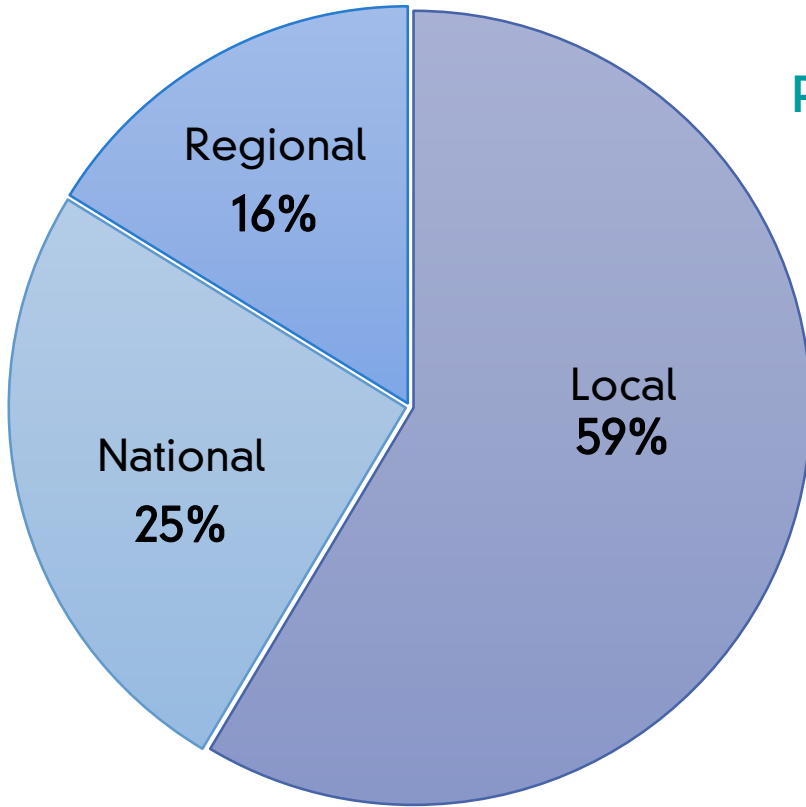


Professional Areas of Expertise



PANELIST OVERVIEW

Panelist Location



► **Virtual panels** allow HAA to invite panelists from local, regional, and national levels.

Gender Identity

