

Critical Wind and Wildfires Rapid Impact Assessment

Brief #5, June 4, 2025

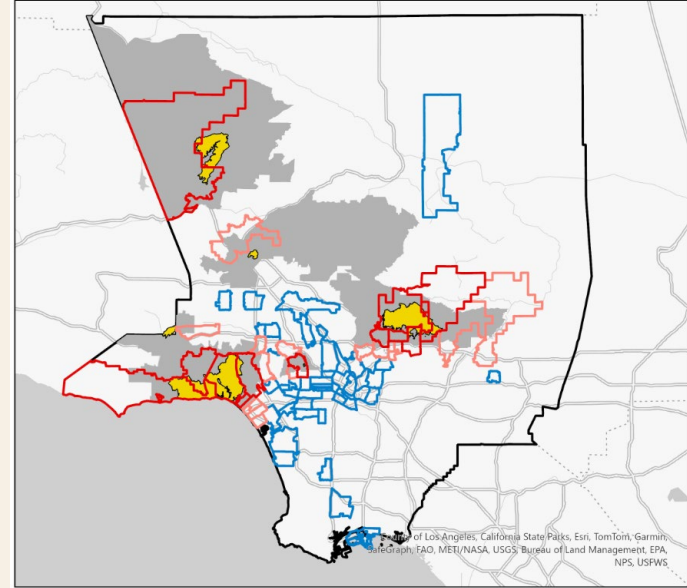
This brief summarizes findings from the [Rapid Impact Assessment](#) survey launched on January 29 to measure the impact of the critical windstorm and fire events emergency on the arts and culture community in LA County.

While the most urgent emergency has passed, many artists and creative workers, as well as arts organizations and institutions, are still struggling to cope with the effects of the disaster.

As of May 4, **166 individual artists** from 58 zip codes and **68 arts organizations and institutions** located in 42 zip codes responded to the survey. This is the fifth and final brief in the series summarizing what they told us.

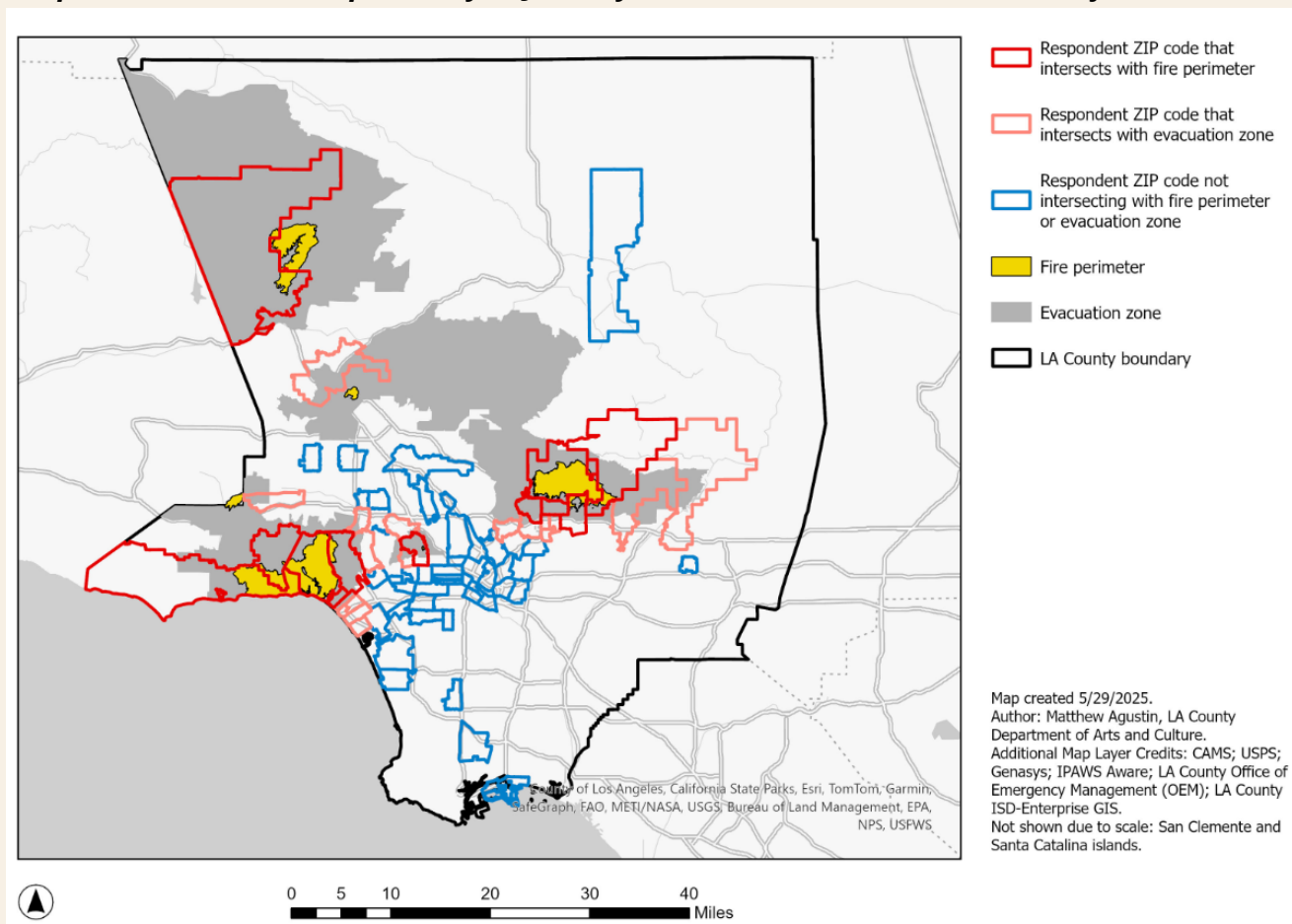
Thank you to our partners at the National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness (ncaper.org) who host the survey.

If you have questions or comments about this brief, please contact us at research@arts.lacounty.gov.



Impact of the wildfires has been felt well beyond the perimeter of the fire zones. More details are on the next page.

Respondent ZIP codes in proximity to January 2025 Critical Windstorm and Wildfires



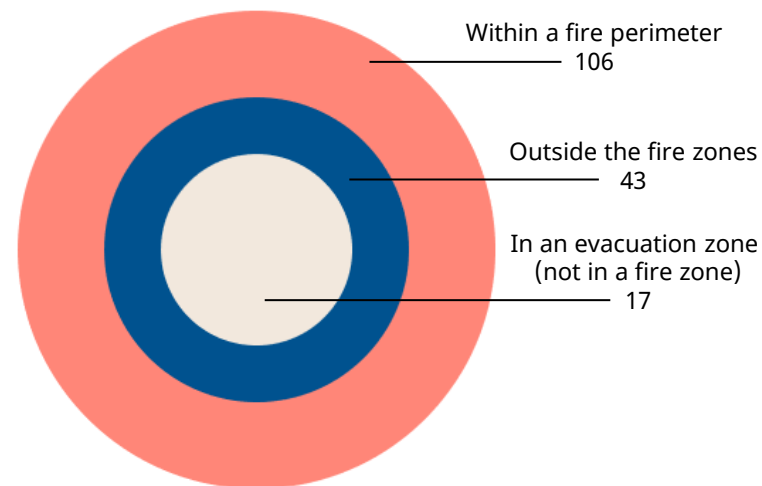
Impact on individual artists

Of all individual artists who responded, 64 percent were located within a fire perimeter, while 10 percent were located outside the fire perimeter but inside an evacuation zone.

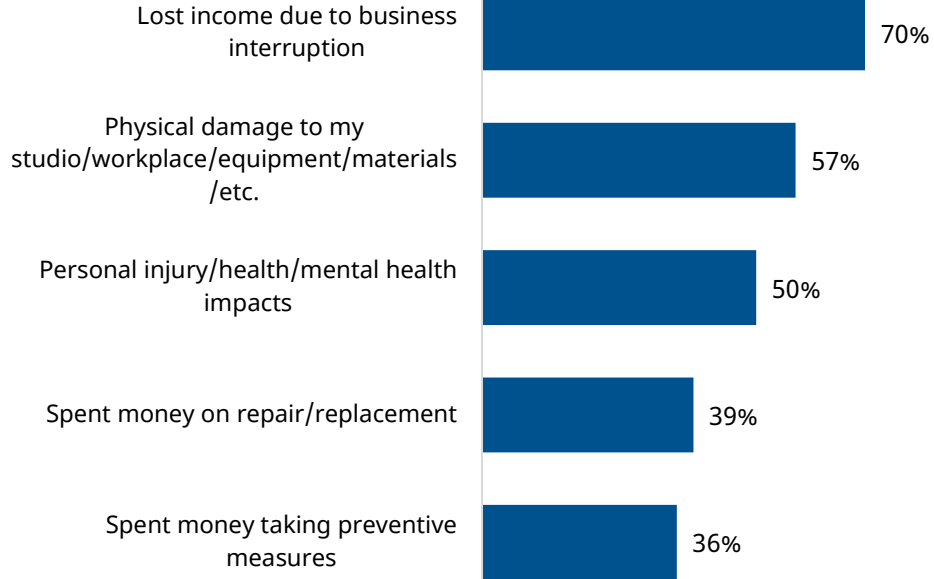
The largest share of them were visual artists (33 percent). Seventeen percent were musicians, 15 percent were multidisciplinary, and eight percent work in media arts. Another six percent were theater artists.

Individual artist locations

based on residential zip codes



Major impacts on individual artists (n=166)



Half or more of all responding artists had experienced lost income, physical damage, or personal health impacts.

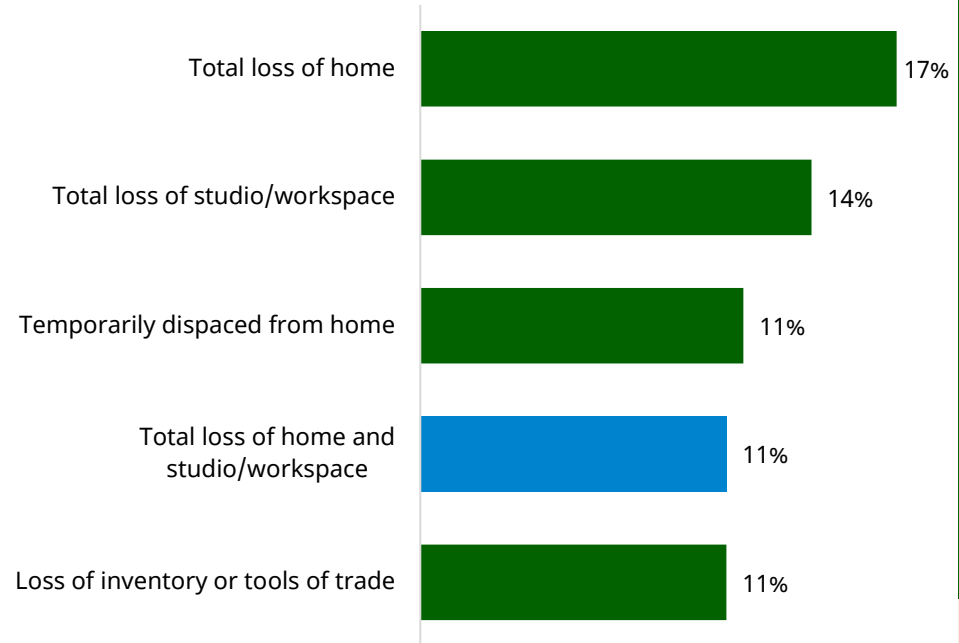
Many experienced multiple impacts.

In addition to answering multiple-choice questions, artists were given the opportunity to describe the impact of the fires in their own words. These answers were coded into categories, as shown in this chart.

While 17 percent of them experienced a total loss of their home and 14 percent experienced a total loss of their studio or workspace, 11 percent lost both. Most often, this is because their studio or workspace was located in their home.

Eleven percent experienced temporary displacement from their homes. In many cases they described damage to homes as well as lingering health effects of ash and soot from the fires.

Other impacts on individual artists (n=166)



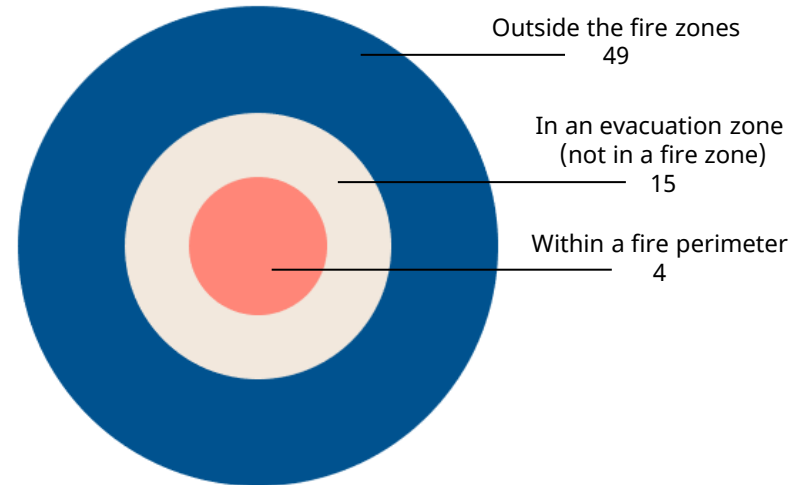
Arts organizations and institutions

The majority of the 68 arts organizations and institutions that responded to the survey (72 percent) were located outside the fire or evacuation zones. Six percent were located inside a fire perimeter and 22 percent were located outside a fire perimeter but within an evacuation zone.

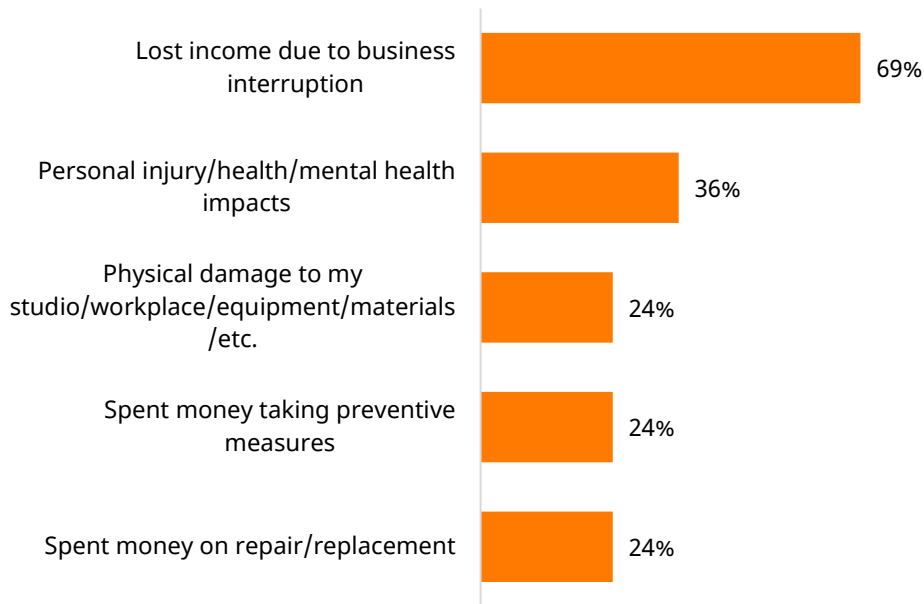
More than half were performing arts organizations. In addition,

- 25 percent were arts community organizations
- 13 percent were visual arts organizations or galleries
- 12 percent were schools
- 10 percent were media arts organizations
- 10 percent were folk/traditional arts organizations

Arts organizations and institutions locations based on office or location addresses



Major impacts on organizations and institutions (n=64)



Although most organizations and institutions were located outside the fire perimeter, 69 percent of them reported loss of income due to business interruption. More than one-third reported that they or their staff had experienced personal injury or health impacts.

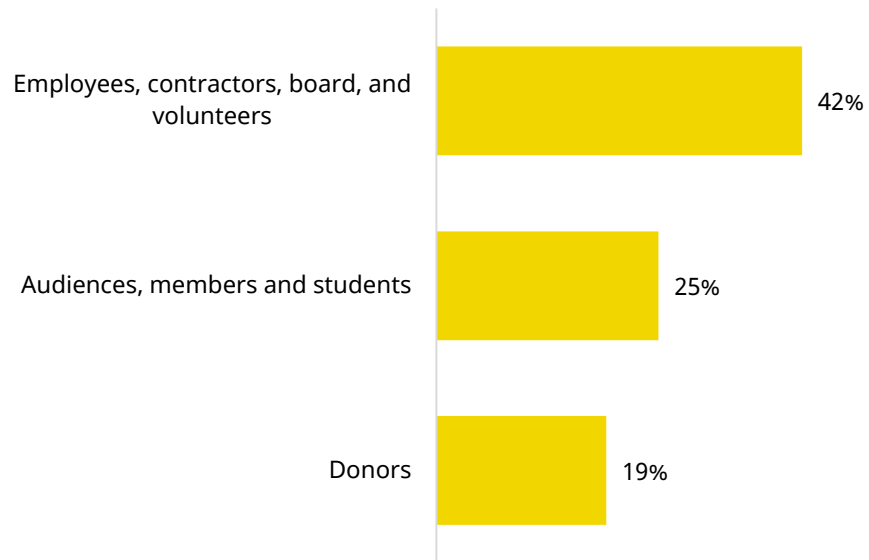
More than one-third of responding organizations (34 percent) sustained some kind of damage during the wind and wildfires. Of these, at the time of their response,

- Four organizations were unable to provide any services
- Seven organizations were able to provide limited services
- 12 organizations were able to operate at full capacity

When describing the impact of the wildfires in their own words, many talked about the impact on their employees, contractors, board members, or volunteers. They also noted impacts on the communities they serve, especially their audiences, members, and students.

Despite the challenges they face, 22 percent of organizations and institutions reported they were engaged in providing some level of recovery assistance or service to communities affected. This ranged from directly raising funds, to providing arts and culture services for free, to amplifying calls for financial support from others in their communities.

Network of impact reported by organizations and institutions (n=68)



In their own words

“We lost our home and all our possessions in addition to our art studio and our business office for our theatrical company.”

“We have lost a significant portion of our revenue as many of our donors have lost homes or have been impacted by the wildfires in Los Angeles.”

“The individuals within our music learning community who have been directly impacted by the fire are in need of access to drinking water, temporary housing, and direct financial assistance. We are currently working to obtain these resources and supplies.”

“I was hesitant to complete the survey, as we were minimally harmed by the fires, but we ARE struggling because of the radically diminished fundraising environment and suppressed ticket sales.”

The impacts they described included temporary and permanent displacements, as well as physical and mental health impacts. Many provided details about their revenue losses, including cancelled shows, reduced ticket sales, and tuition reimbursements.

Nineteen percent of responding organizations and institutions anticipate fundraising challenges resulting from the high number of donors impacted and redirection of philanthropic dollars toward wildfires recovery.

Summary

Many artists, creatives, arts organizations, and cultural institutions began 2025 still recovering from the effects of the pandemic. The months following the wind and wildfires emergency in January have been marked by economic and political shocks that have compounded the ongoing crisis.

The impact of the disaster on LA County's arts and culture community may never fully be measured. Still, there is much to be learned from this Rapid Impact Assessment. Preparation for recovery from the next emergency should incorporate these four important findings:

- For many artists and creatives, homes are also their places of work. Recovery planning should take into account that loss of or damage to a single structure can have double the economic and social impact.
- Arts organizations well beyond the perimeters of the disaster zone will feel its effects. Full recovery for the sector requires resources – including money – adequate to meet all losses, not only direct physical losses.
- The arts ecology is funded by a complex network of earned and contributed revenue sources, each of which is vulnerable to disaster in a different way. Calculation of financial impact – and therefore need – should take all those vulnerabilities into account.
- The people who make up the arts and culture field want to support their communities in recovery, even as they struggle to manage their own losses. Create opportunities to pay them to engage directly in recovery activities.

Artists, creatives, arts organizations, and cultural institutions can be a source of vision for a better future, if the realities of how they work and are funded are integrated into emergency planning.

More information and additional analysis of the impact on arts and culture is available at our **Wildfire Impact Reporting** page: lacountyarts.org/experiences/arts-and-culture-digital-resource-center/wildfire-impact-reporting.