

HOW TO USE DATA WHEN REOPENING

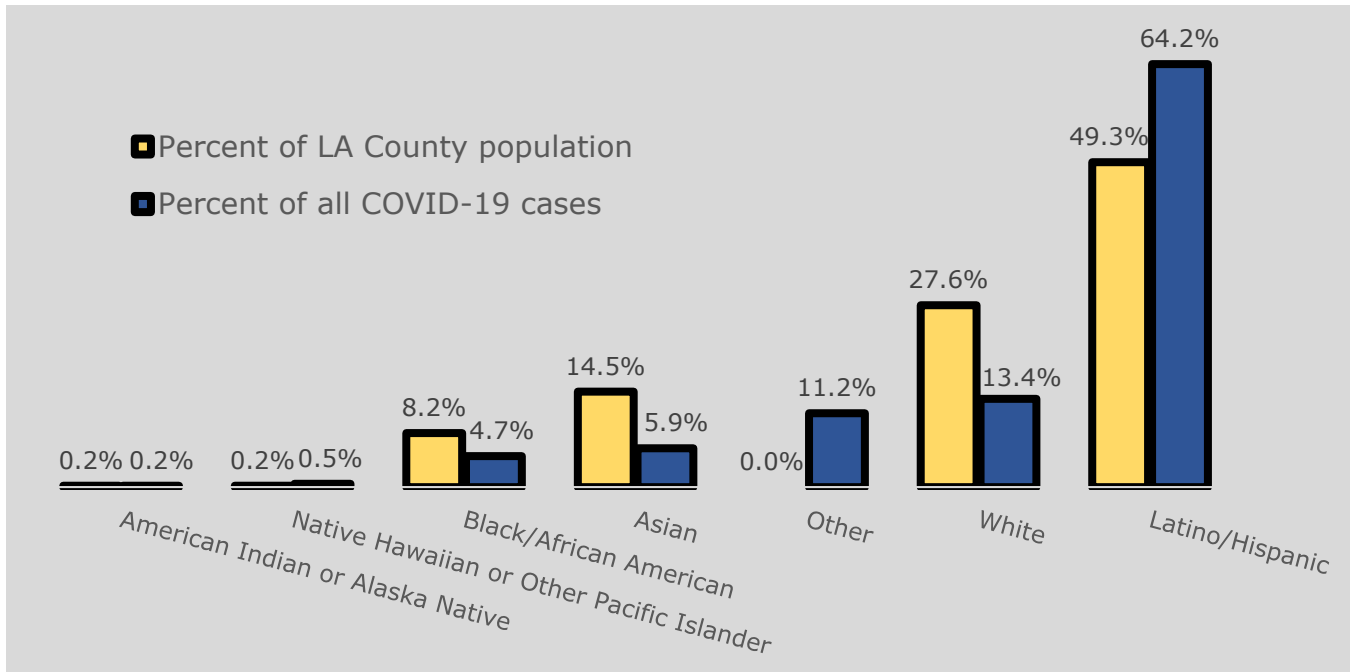
A guide for artists,
arts organizations,
and arts funders



May 2021

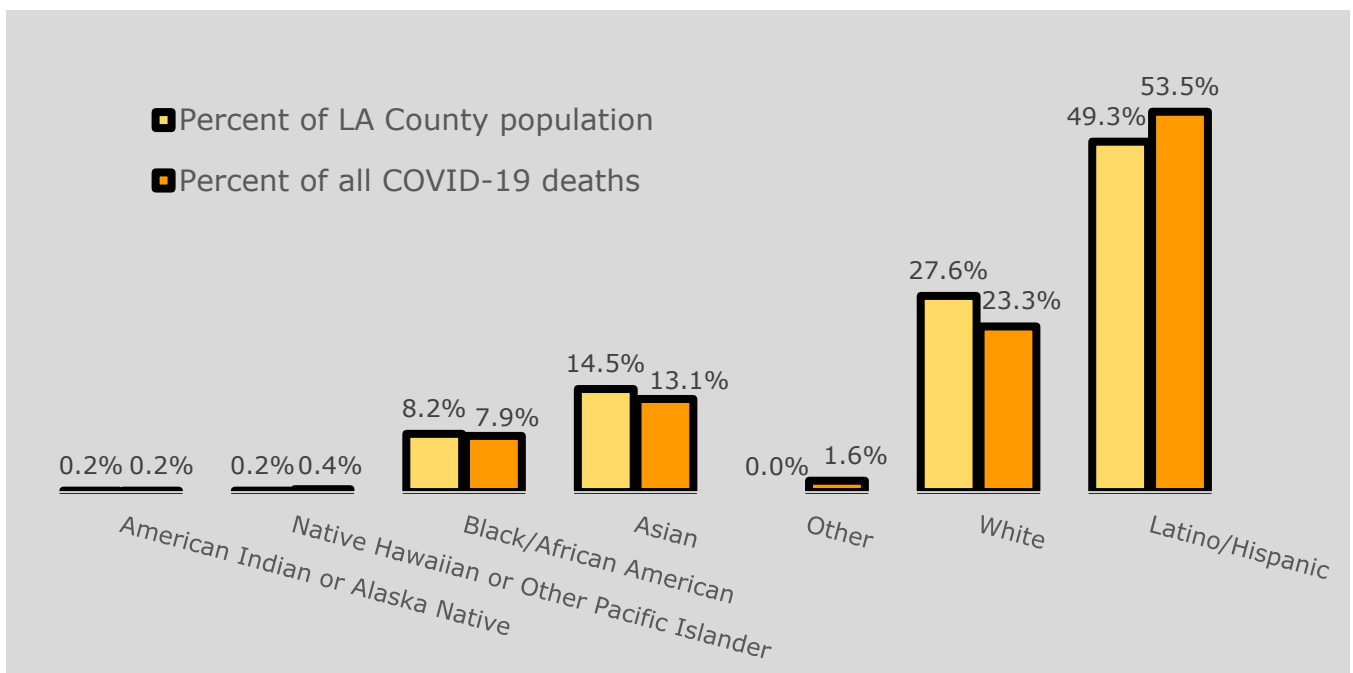
The different communities we serve have had different experiences during COVID-19

Data as of April 6, 2021



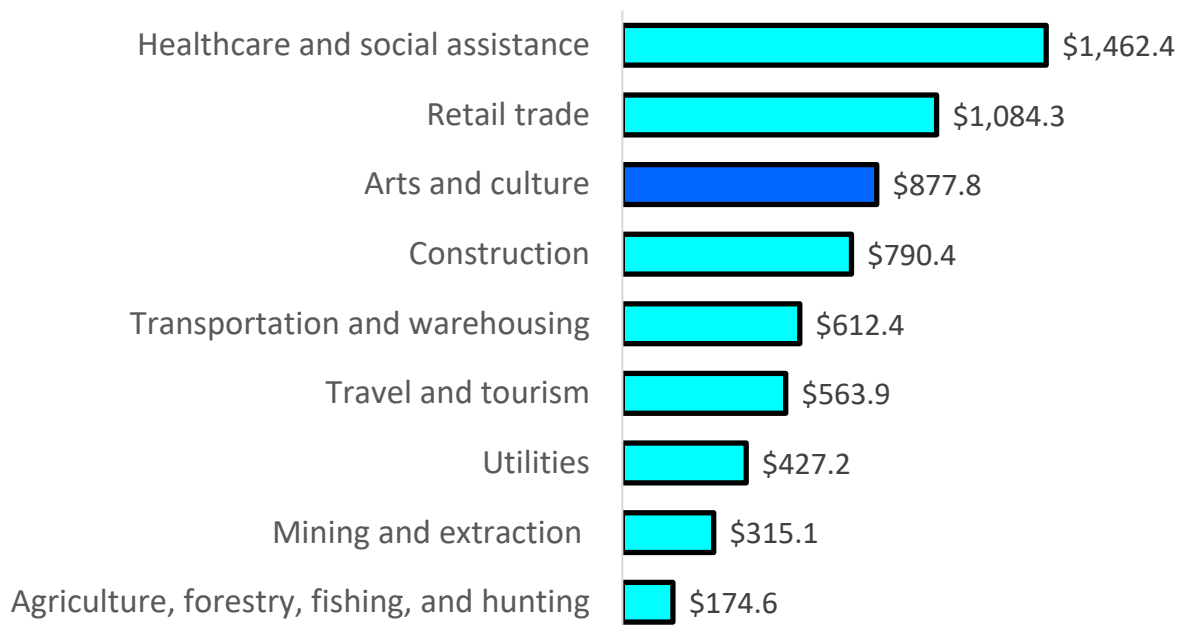
Some communities have been hit harder than others. For example, While Latinos make up 49.3% of the population in LA County, they are 64.2% of all known COVID-19 cases and 53.5% of all deaths.

In planning for reopening, consider how the communities you serve may have been impacted by the pandemic, in terms of physical and mental health as well as economics. How might their needs and hopes differ?



How important is recovery of the arts and culture sector to our economy?

in billions of dollars (2017)



Before the pandemic, arts and culture contributed 4.5% of America's total GDP, more than construction, transportation, or travel and tourism.

Here in California, it's even more important. Arts and culture contributed nearly twice that: 8.2% of the state's GDP.

The impact of COVID-19 on our sector has been dramatic. [One study](#) found that in late 2020, while 27% of musicians, 52% of actors, and 55% of dancers and choreographers were unemployed, 8.5% of the total US workforce was unemployed.

You know recovery is critical to the social, emotional, and mental health of our communities. Learn more about our economic value to the nation in [COVID-19's Impact on Arts and Culture](#). For data about LA County and California, read the [2021 Otis Report on the Creative Economy](#)

Use this data to advocate for support! Your financial recovery is important to all of us.

What do audiences and visitors think about returning to live arts and culture events?



Mural by Olalekan Jeyifous

When will they be ready to return?

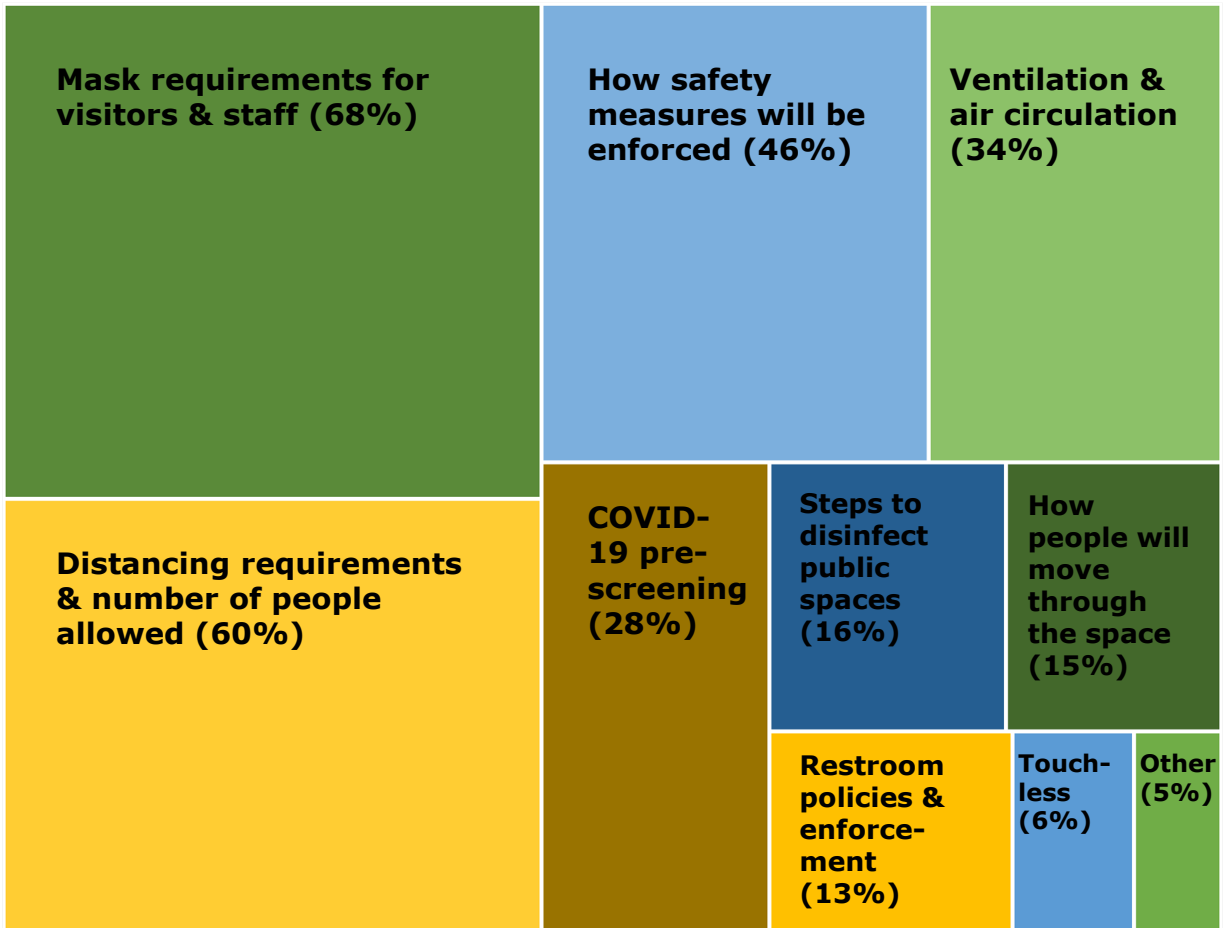
What information will they look for when making a decision about whether or not to buy a ticket?

Many of our grantees surveyed their audiences and participants using WolfBrown's **Audience Outlook Monitor**.

**AUDIENCE
OUTLOOK
MONITOR**

Here's what we learned from this study and several others, along with ideas for how you can **use the data** as our sector reopens, whether you're an artist, an arts nonprofit, or an arts funder.

What do audiences most want to know in advance before returning to live arts and culture events?



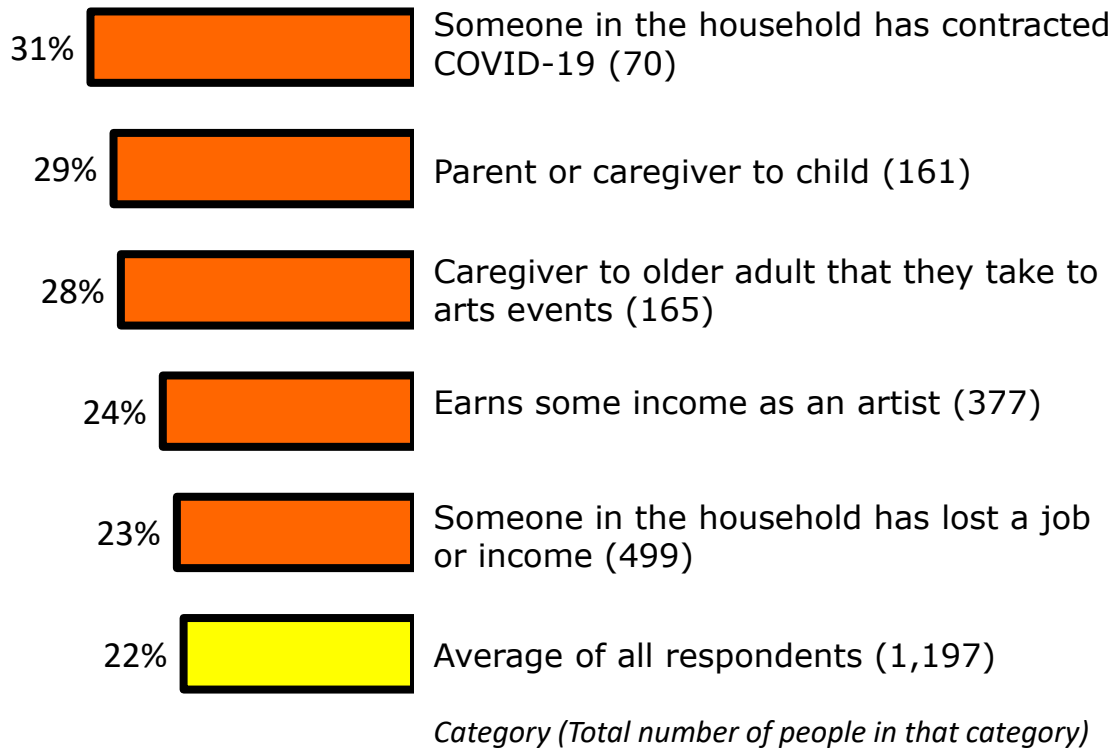
In order to feel safe returning to in-person arts events, audiences and visitors primarily want to know about (in this order)

- 1) Mask and distancing requirements,
- 2) How many people will be permitted in the space, and
- 3) How safety measures will be enforced.

This is true across different demographic groups and people who've been impacted in different ways during COVID-19.

Your organization needs to set clear rules in advance, communicate them clearly before and during events, and be prepared to take action if visitors don't comply.

Some groups expect to attend arts and culture events more than they did before the pandemic



Less than a quarter of everyone who took the survey said they plan to attend arts and culture events **more** than they did before the pandemic.

However, as this chart shows, there are some groups where a larger share of respondents said they plan to attend more. For example, among people who've experienced COVID-19 within their household, nearly a third of them said they plan to attend more.

Arts audiences have been affected by COVID-19 in different ways. People with different experiences may have different hopes for engaging with arts and culture in the future.

Consider the communities you serve and how they might have been affected by the pandemic. If you're seeking to serve new audiences that have been hardest hit, consider how their needs might be different.

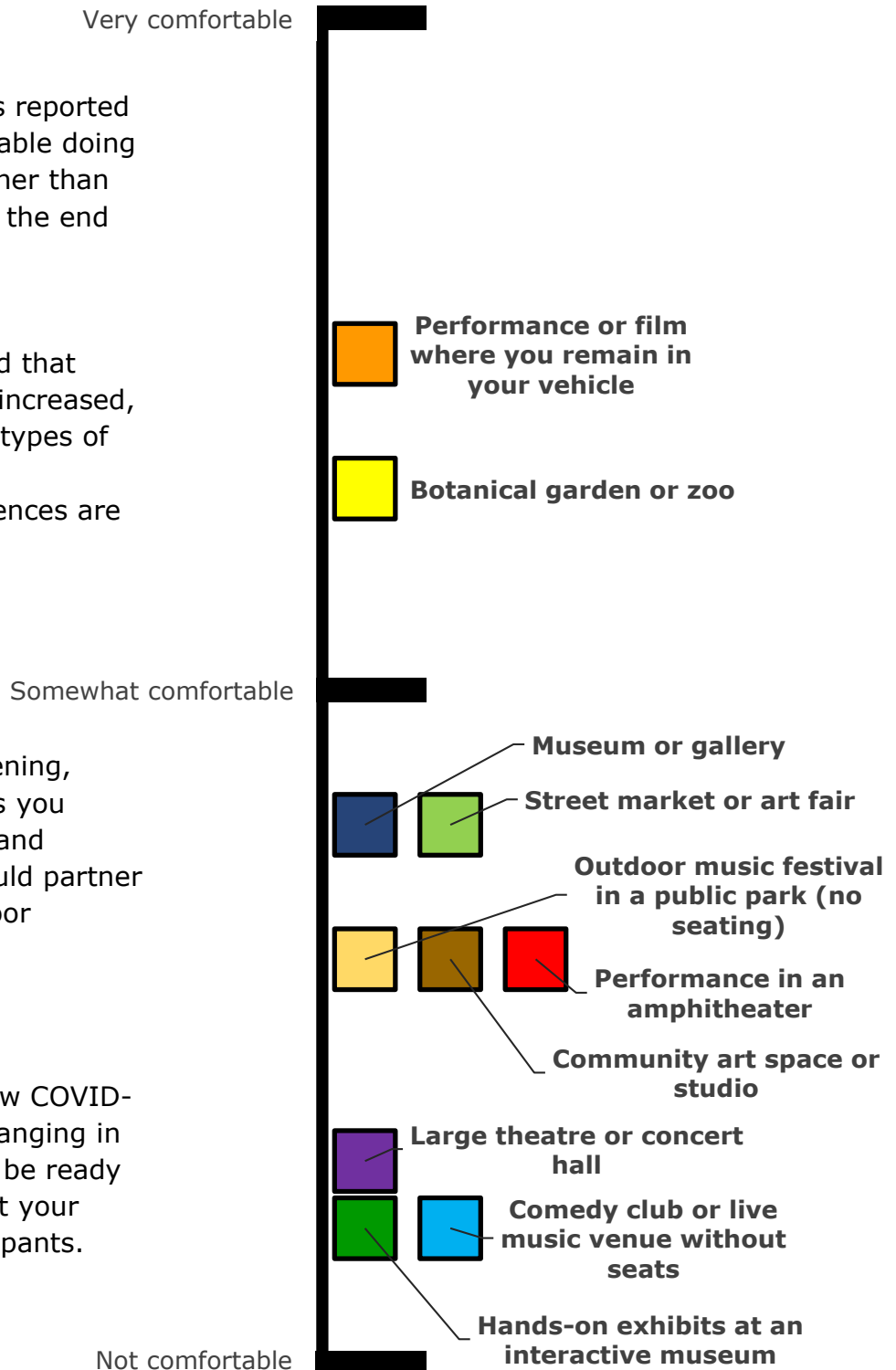
Audiences have different comfort levels for different types of arts and culture venues

In general, audiences reported feeling more comfortable doing outdoor activities rather than indoors. (This was at the end of January 2021.)

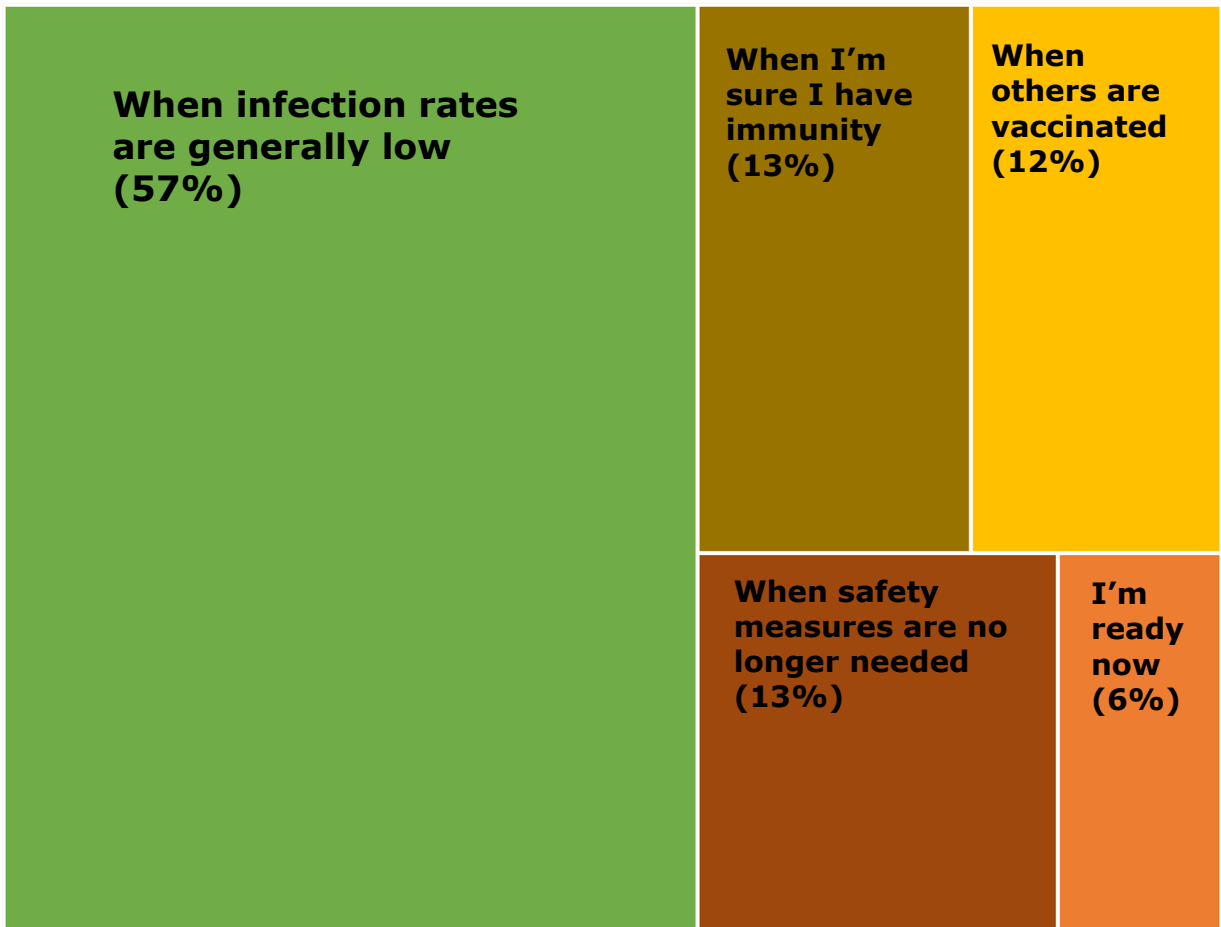
Our survey also found that when infection rates increased, comfort levels for all types of activities and venues decreased. Arts audiences are paying attention!

As you plan for reopening, think about programs you could offer outdoors and organizations you could partner with to provide outdoor activities and events.

Also keep track of how COVID-19 rates might be changing in your community and be ready for how it could affect your audiences and participants.



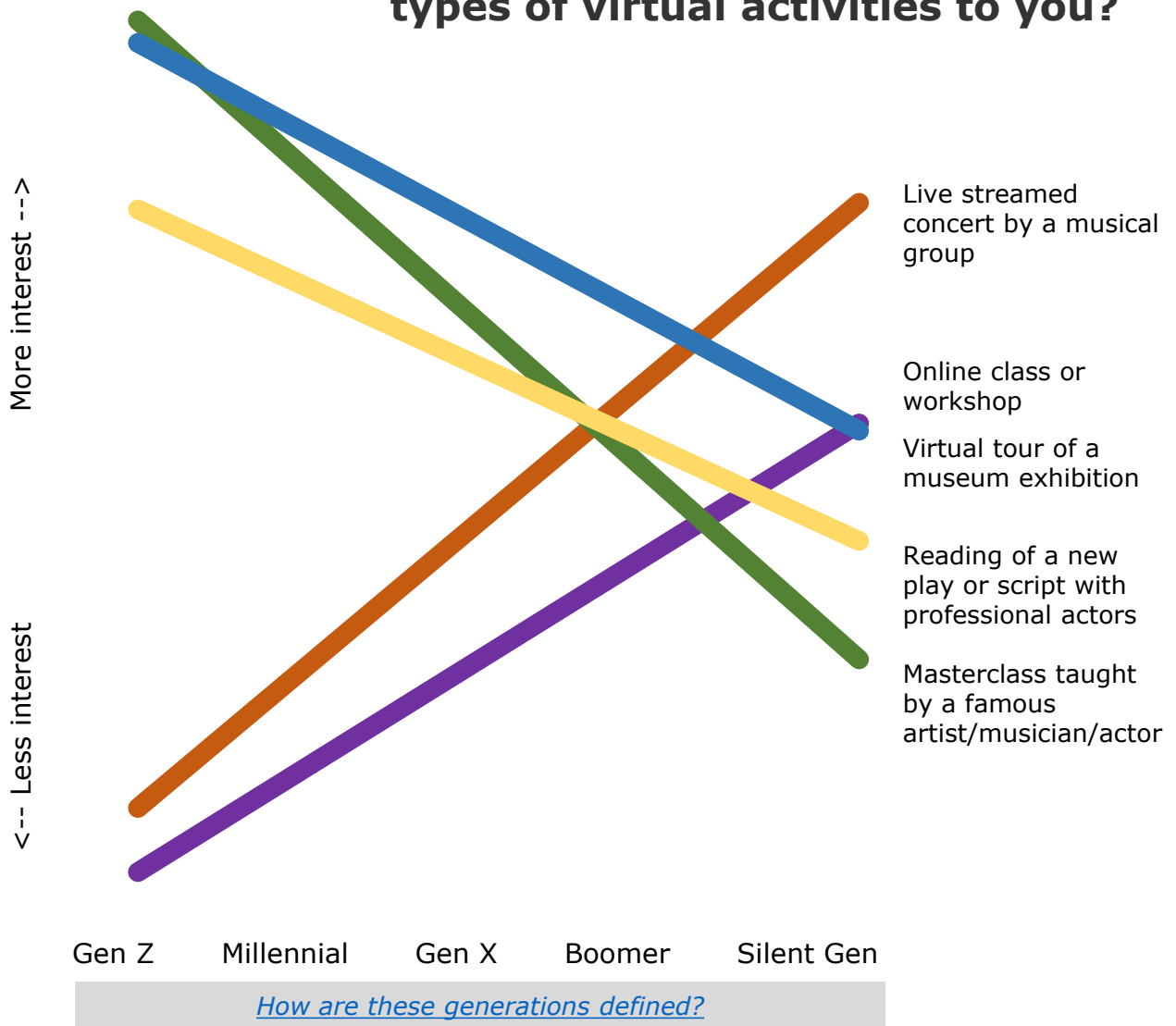
How soon will people who've been vaccinated be ready to return to in-person arts events?



Among arts audiences who've already had at least one vaccine, more than half still planned to wait until infection rates are low before returning to in-person arts events. (This was in January 2021.)

As you reopen, it will be important to pay attention to both vaccination rates and infection rates, as audiences and participants will consider both when making decisions about when to return.

How interesting are different types of virtual activities to you?



Many arts organizations will continue providing virtual programming, and some are planning “hybrid” events that merge live and online activities. If you're planning to continue online programming when you reopen, consider what your specific audiences might be more interested in.

As the chart above shows, different generations are interested in different types of online activities.

This chart reflects arts audiences across LA County. To find out what your specific audiences want, consider sending a short survey or calling up a few people and asking them.

What can you learn about reopening by talking with your audiences and visitors?

Hint: Quite a lot!

In addition to collecting survey data as part of the Audience Outlook Monitor, we trained a small group of arts administrators to interview audience members, visitors, or program participants. Each of them conducted interviews with a handful of people.

Here's what we learned from those interviews:



Arts Datathon: Democratize

- Arts organizations have been acting as **second responders** throughout the pandemic, addressing social isolation and providing much needed resources
 - Such as school and art supplies to families, technology tools, mental health support, and training. Some boosted their WiFi so neighbors can use it in the parking lot
 - For organizations led by and serving communities of color, need has been even more acute given the greater impacts of COVID-19
- Audiences are split in terms of **online participation** in the arts
 - Some are “zoomed out” and exhausted at the end of a long day of work or school
 - Others are able to take classes and engage with people they never could have in ordinary times, due to health issues or demands on their time
- People have adapted to online arts experiences, but they miss **community, connection, and ritual**
 - One talked about how she gets dressed up to go “out” to arts activities with family in the back yard

What opportunities did arts and culture nonprofits discover during pandemic closures?

➤ **Intergenerational programming**

- People are living with parents, grandparents, aunts, and extended family. This creates opportunities for programming that supports connectivity and bonding within families.

➤ **Informal social bonding moments**

- Un-programmed, informal social interaction can help combat isolation and the alienating nature of online events. Think post-event happy hour or an informal Q&A with an artist that focuses on the audience.



Armory Center for the Arts

➤ **Technical assistance and mutual support among arts organizations**

- Arts organizations who participated in this study shared experiences and struggles with their colleagues in ways they hadn't expected. They expressed a desire to continue meeting informally and learning with each other.

➤ **Neighborhood arts and health hubs**

- Community-based arts nonprofits have been playing critical roles during the pandemic and could do much more, but they've been stretched thin by revenue losses and unexpected expenses.
- Agencies and organizations providing health and social services should look to artists and arts nonprofits as potential partners as we rebuild our communities, but financial and other resources are needed.

If you want to find out what your audiences and visitors are thinking in terms of returning to arts and culture events, *ask them*

How to do informal interviews

- Select three to five people who have been avid audience members, visitors, or participants in your programs
- Contact them and set up a time to talk by phone or Zoom – plan for about 30 minutes
- Use the questions below as a starting point, but let the conversation evolve naturally
- After the interview, write down a few things you learned. Share what you learned with staff and board members.

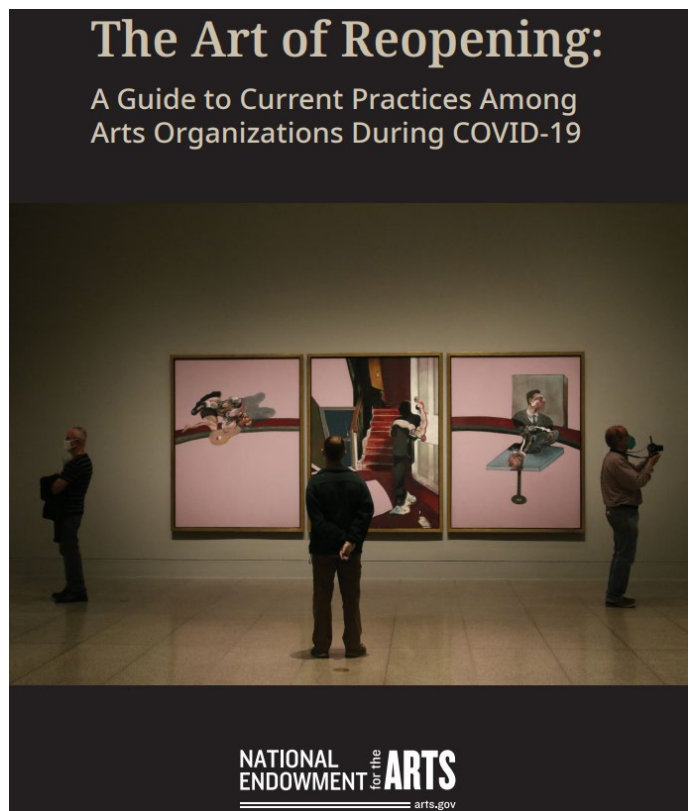
1. How have you (*and/or your family*) been doing this year? How has the pandemic affected your life?
2. What kinds of creative activities have you been doing since COVID-19? This could be anything from painting and dancing to journaling, crafts, gardening, and home decorating. Who have you been doing them with? What do you enjoy about those activities?
3. In general, how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your (*your family's*) creative activities? For example, have you been doing more creative activities, less activities, or different activities?
4. Have you (*or family members*) watched or participated in any online arts or cultural programs in the past few months that you really enjoyed? This might be an online class or a live event broadcast on the internet.
5. What are some of the places you used to go for cultural programs, before COVID-19? Which of these places do you miss the most? What do you miss about them?
6. Have you already started going out to arts and culture events again? If yes, what kinds of events, and where? If not, why not?
7. What kinds of safety precautions are you taking?
8. What can arts and cultural organizations like ours do to support your (*your family's*) creative life as we rebuild lives and communities after COVID-19?

Learn from arts organizations that have already reopened

In their study, [The Art of Reopening: A Guide to Current Practices Among Arts Organizations During COVID-19](#), the National Endowment for the Arts identified common practices among arts groups that successfully have reopened their doors to audiences or visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key lessons learned:

- Strengthen ties with your immediate community
- Identify a public health professional or team to advise on reopening strategies
- Quarantine artists together who are part of a live production
- The unexpected will continue to happen – be transparent when it does
- Reflect on your organization's mission and artistic vision
- Partner with a media/tech organization or artist to document your reopening journey



Don't forget to tap staff and board for insights



Jazz Angels

In 2020 the LA County Dept of Arts and Culture conducted a series of focus groups with staff and Commissioners to find inspiration for how we could support the communities in three ways:

- Helping people make it through the pandemic
- Addressing long-standing inequities in County investments
- Supporting communities in a recovery that must embrace true racial equity

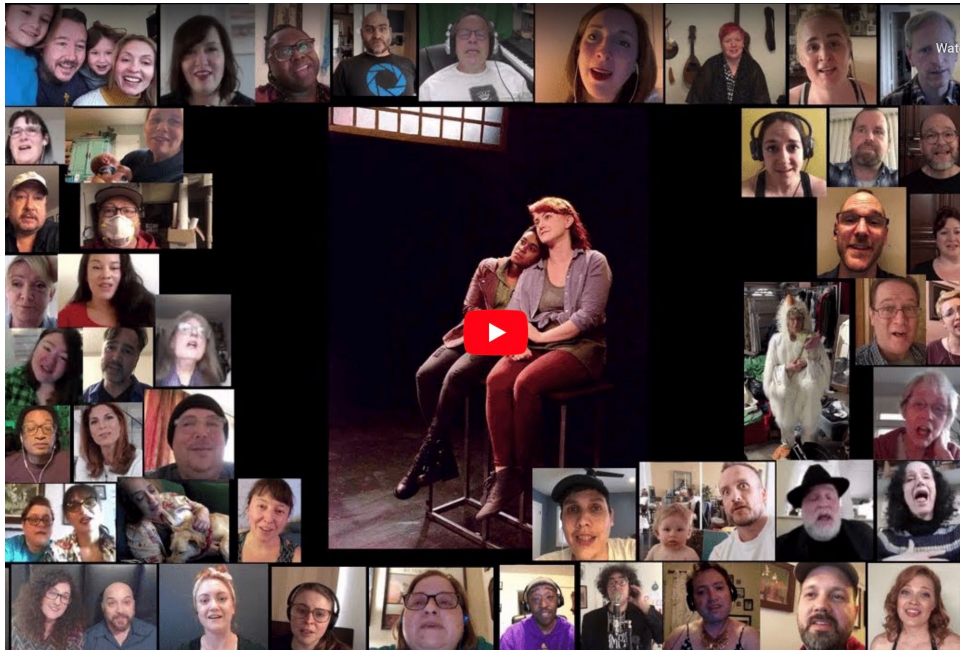
Read what we learned and our recommendations in the report:

[**Arts and Culture 2020 and Beyond: Supporting the people of LA County in crisis and recovery**](#)

Plan for long-term sustainability as you reopen

As you're reopening, give some thought to your long-term operating reserves. A survey of arts and human services nonprofits in the early months of the pandemic found that arts nonprofit "are generally more vulnerable to economic shocks." They also found that nonprofits with more reserves were less likely to

- Reduce staff
- Cut operating hours
- Experience difficulties receiving supplies and services from vendors



Sacred Fools

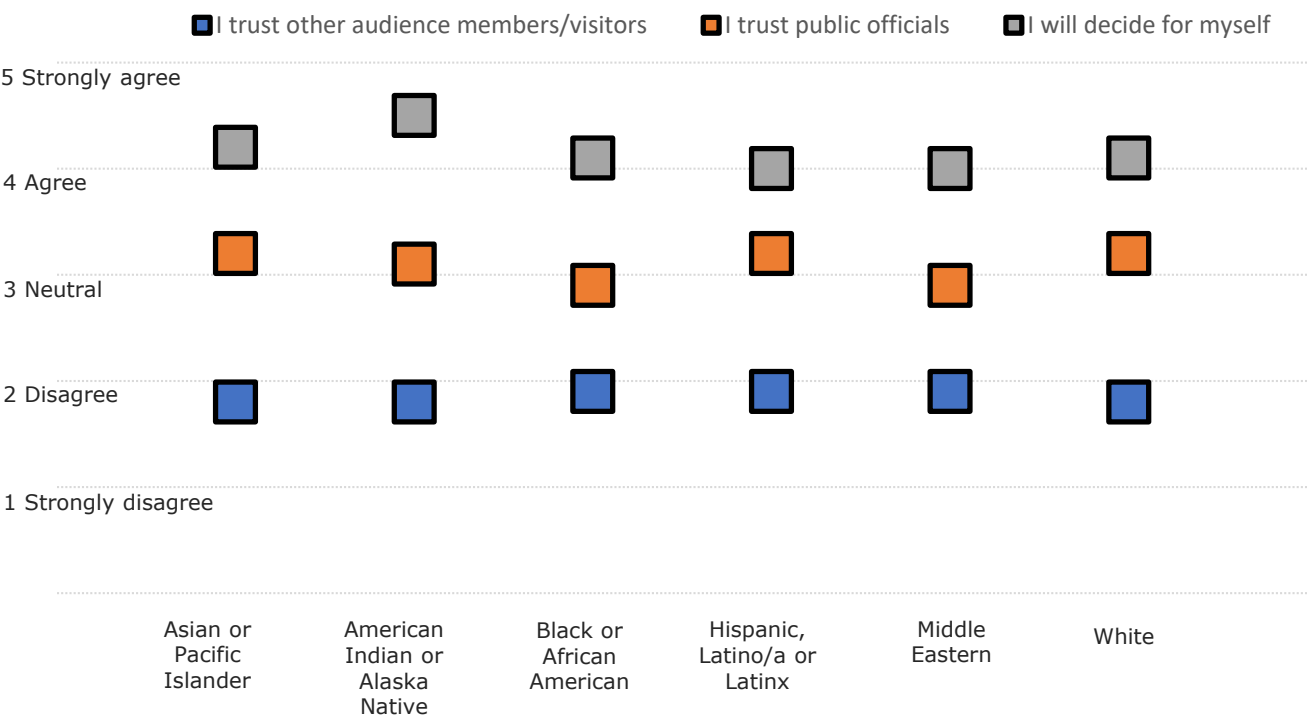
At the same time, the size of operating reserves didn't seem to reduce volunteers or donations, nor did it lead to donors cutting their funding.

Read more here:

[**Are You Ready: Financial Management, Operating Reserves, and the Immediate Impact of COVID-19 on Nonprofits**](#)

How will arts and culture help to rebuild trust within and among the communities we serve?

The Audience Outlook Monitor survey asked, *How much do you agree or disagree with these statements about who you trust to keep you safe during COVID-19?*



For the most part, respondents said they would decide for themselves about their own health and safety. They also generally trust public officials.

But they have less trust of other audience members and visitors. This chart shows how levels of trust varied among different racial and ethnic groups.

One role we can play as second responders is to rebuild trust among the people who come to our events. Consider how your programs, marketing, and even the ways you welcome people back can foster trust and communication between people.

Find more insights for reopening at audienceoutlookmonitor.com

Stay up-to-date on the latest health and safety information

Public Health Orders and protocols are legal mandates! As infection rates change and our knowledge of the coronavirus improves, health orders and reopening protocols evolve. Read them and keep yourself informed:

Reopening Arts and Culture Safely

Failure to adhere to public health protocols could result in Public Health shutting down your event or issuing fines. It could jeopardize the producer or producing organization's status as an eligible County grantee or vendor.



New Musicals Inc.

Another useful resource from Public Health:

[Guidance for Managing Non-Compliant Patrons and Visitors](#)

Questions about your specific events and plans are best answered by representatives from the [LA County Department of Public Health](#). Contact the COVID-19 call center for assistance at (877) 777-5799.

HOW ARE YOU USING DATA TO REOPEN?

Share your story:

research@arts.lacounty.gov

Los Angeles
County
Arts &
Culture