

Los Angeles
County
**Arts &
Culture**

Measuring Participation

Six years of professional development events and workshops at the Department of Arts and Culture

Matt Agustin | Nick Green | Bronwyn Mauldin

APRIL 2022

Introduction and Background

The mission of the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture) is to advance arts, culture, and creativity throughout LA County. Arts and Culture strives to ensure that everyone has access to the benefits of the arts. One critical service we provide toward achieving that goal is professional development and technical assistance (PD/TA)¹ to the arts and culture field. Over the years our PD/TA programs have included workshops on evaluation, applying for funding, human resources management for arts nonprofits, leadership development for arts educators, “office hours” programs providing personalized guidance to civic artists, social media training for performing artists, and the annual arts datathon.

In 2014, Arts and Culture (then the LA County Arts Commission) hired Harder + Company Community Research to conduct an internal study of our PD/TA services, funded by the LA County Quality and Productivity Commission. As a result of the findings from that study, we established a PD Task Force made up of Arts and Culture staff that worked to collaborate more effectively and establish common PD/TA processes across our different divisions. This included collecting consistent data about the demographic makeup of people who attend our PD/TA programs. Arts and Culture collects and analyzes this demographic data in order to understand whether the demographic makeup of our participants is representative of the demographics of the arts and culture workforce countywide and whether it is representative of the demographics of all LA County residents. We review the findings to identify communities we are underserving.²

The COVID-19 pandemic had significant impact on arts and culture, from cancellations and closures to lost revenue and unexpected expenses. Arts programming and engagement moved online as did the work of administering arts organizations. Shifts that began in 2020 are still ongoing and evolving. All Arts and Culture PD/TA programs were moved to a virtual format in early 2020. We continued collecting participant demographic data, which is included in this analysis. As of this writing in April 2022, all PD/TA programs continue to be held online.

In this report we present findings from our analysis of six years of PD/TA programs, from 2015 through June 2021. After a brief description of methods, key findings are presented in the main text. Appendix A shows attendance counts in these events by year. Questions from the data collection instrument can be found in Appendix B.

Methods

A common survey instrument is used to register participants in all PD/TA events, which is collected at the point when participants register for the event on Eventbrite. Only those individuals who actually attended these events, either in person or online, were included in this analysis.

To gather data about the racial or ethnic background of our participants, we utilize a registration question that offers similar response options as the U.S. Census race response options. It is structured slightly differently such that the “Hispanic or Latino” category is merged into the list, and respondents are invited to check every option that applies. Because of this format, when analyzing this data to compare to county demographics from the U.S. Census or American Community Survey, we recoded responses where a participant checked more than one option. When a participant selected Hispanic or Latino, regardless of selecting one or more options, that response was recoded as Hispanic or Latino. If Hispanic or Latino was not selected, but more than one response was selected, that response was coded as “Mixed Ethnicity.” If “Mixed Ethnicity” was selected, the response was recoded as “Mixed Ethnicity” no matter how many other options were also selected. “Decline to State” was coded whenever that response was selected.

For most analyses in this report, each individual who participated in any PD/TA event during a single year was counted once. If a single person attended multiple events in a single year, that person was counted once. The exception to this was a small number of people who provided different answers to the same questions when they registered for different events. For example, someone may have identified themselves as Female when they registered for one event, then selected Other when registering for a different event. While this could have been an error, it equally could have been an individual’s evolving view of their personal identity. Rather than change that individual’s response, we included both responses in this analysis.

Who Attended

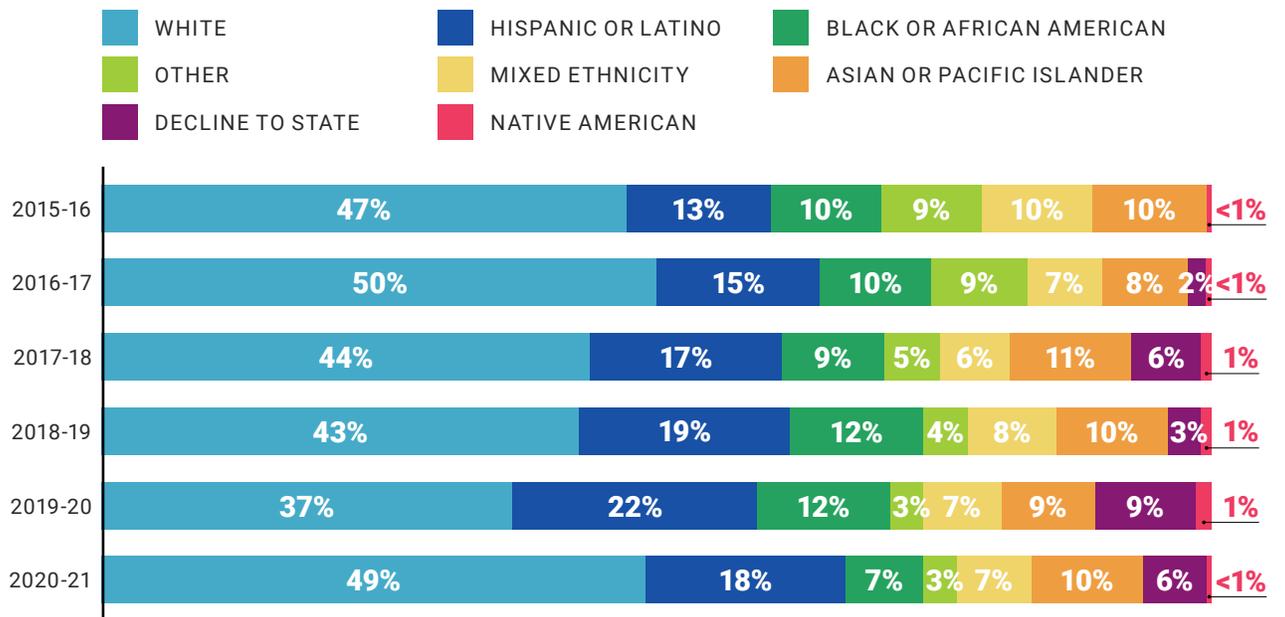
Data was analyzed for a total of 6,594 attendees who attended 264 PD/TA events from 2015-16 through 2020-21. Table 1 shows how many PD/TA events were held each year and breaks down attendance by several factors. On average, each year about 17 percent of participants attended more than one PD/TA event offered by Arts and Culture. Each year, about two percent of participants attended four or more PD/TA events.

TABLE 1: PD/TA EVENTS ATTENDANCE BY YEAR

	Number of events	Total attendance	Unduplicated attendance	Average unduplicated attendance	N (%) attending more than one event
2015-16	60	1,333	1,041	17	193 (19%)
2016-17	43	1,029	781	18	148 (19%)
2017-18	41	1,104	871	21	144 (17%)
2018-19	36	980	838	23	119 (14%)
2019-20	34	571	467	14	60 (13%)
2020-21	50	1,577	1,196	24	247 (21%)

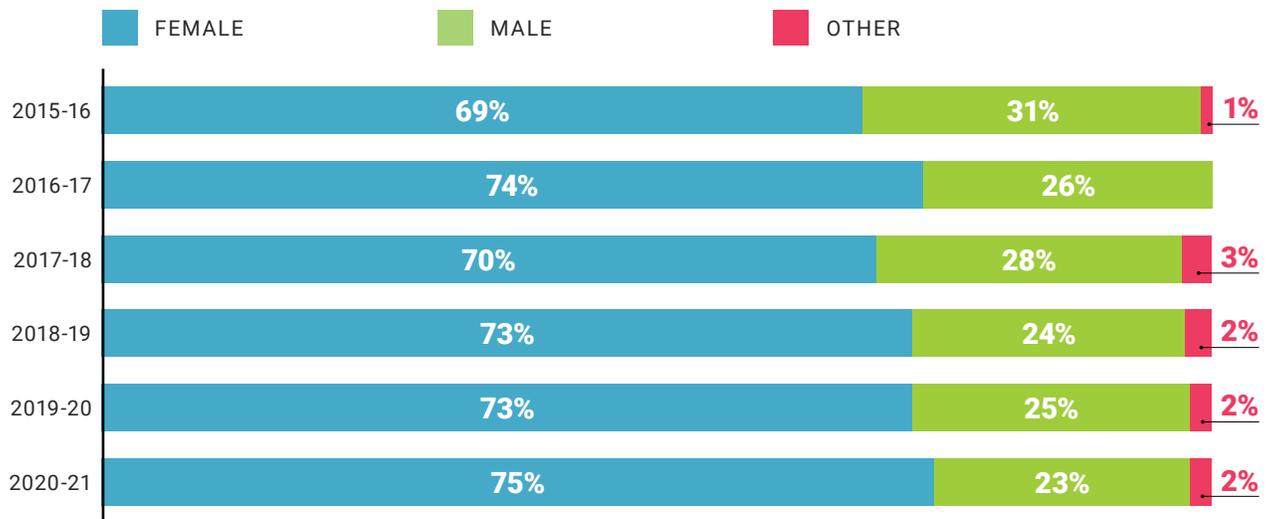
As Figure 1 shows on the next page, the percent of PD/TA participants identifying as White decreased from 2016-17 through 2019-20. Their share of the total participation increased by nearly one-third the following year. The percent of participants who were Hispanic or Latino also rose from 2015-16 to 2019-20. The share of participants who were Hispanic or Latino, or Black or African American, both declined from 2019-20 to 2020-21.

FIGURE 1: ATTENDEES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



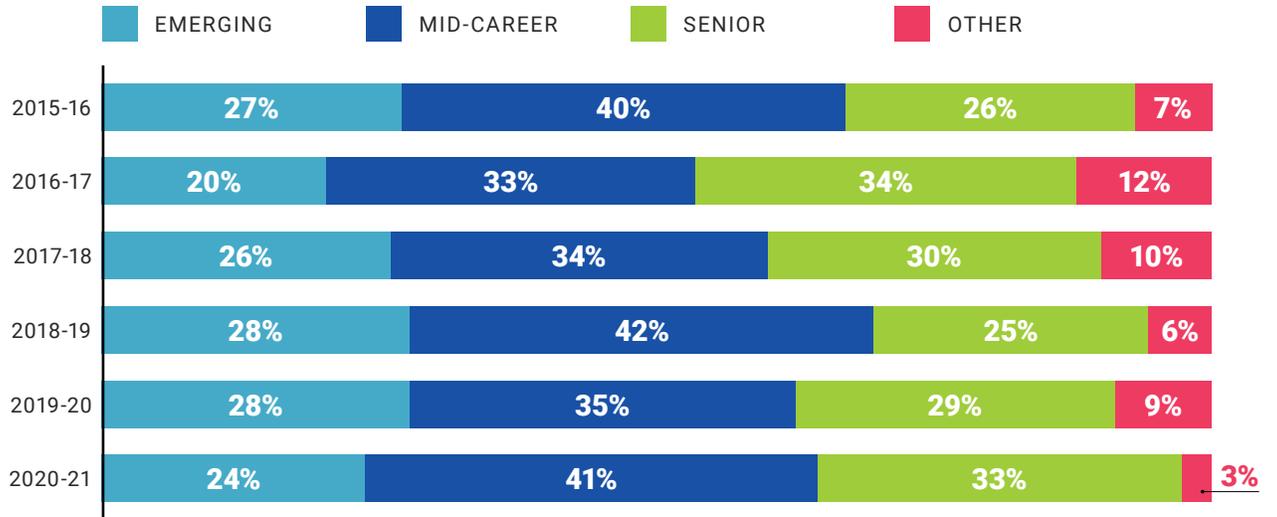
Participation in PD/TA events grew slightly more Female and less Male over time, as Figure 2 shows. The share of participants who selected an identity other than Female or Male has remained fairly constant since 2017-18.

FIGURE 2: ATTENDEES BY GENDER



Midcareer professionals constituted the largest share of PD/TA participants every year except 2016-17, as Figure 3 shows.

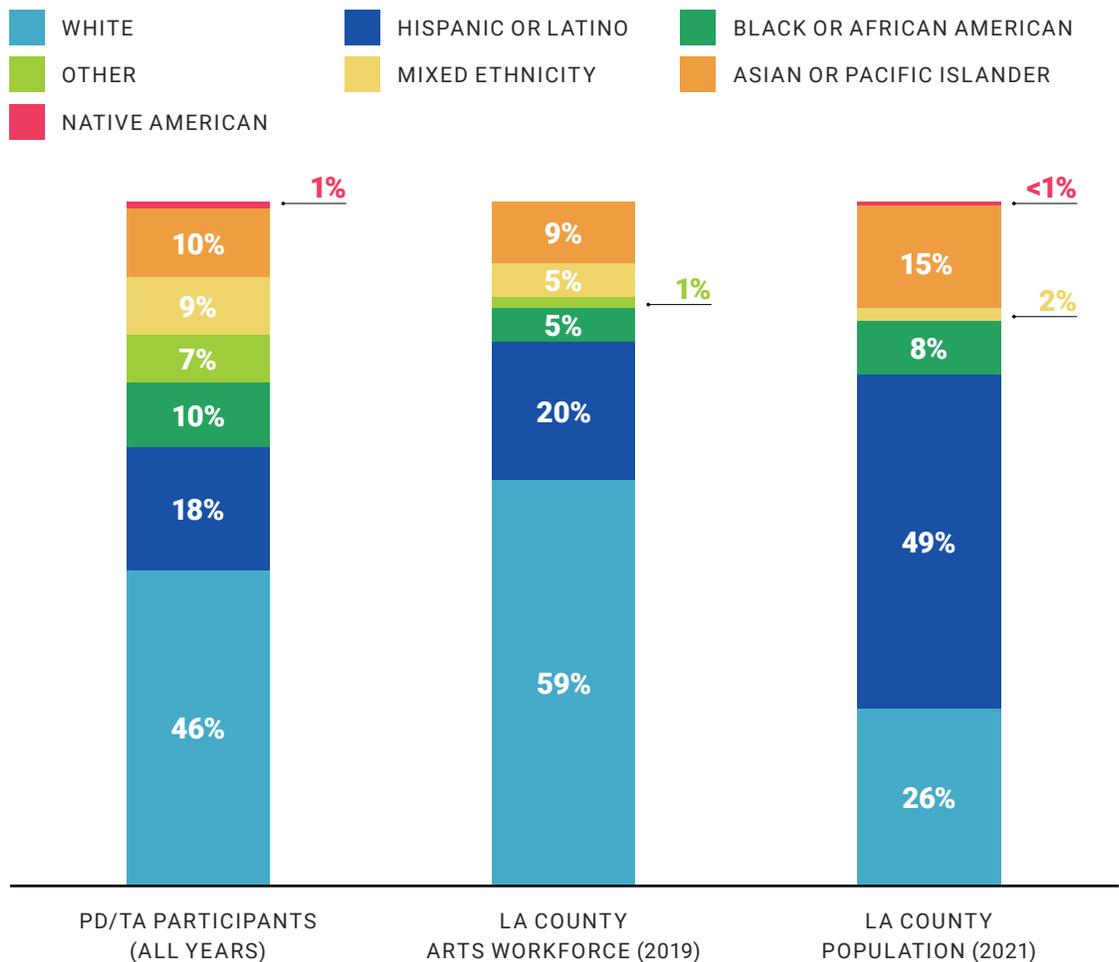
FIGURE 3: ATTENDEES BY CAREER LEVEL, ALL DIVISIONS



Representation and Change Over Time

Data collected prior to the pandemic in 2019 found that the LA County arts and culture workforce – primarily made up of nonprofit arts organizations and municipal arts agencies – is more homogenous than the overall population.³ Specifically, the arts and culture workforce is 59 percent non-Hispanic White compared to 26 percent of the county population. Figure 4 compares participants in PD/TA events and workshops in 2015-2021 to the arts and culture workforce, and to the LA County population as a whole.

FIGURE 4: COMPARISON BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



Arts and Culture’s PD/TA events and workshops draw primarily from the arts and culture workforce in LA County. Are the people who attend them representative of the demographics of that workforce? Is the difference between participants and the arts workforce statistically significant, or is it simply by chance? In other words, are some groups systematically over- or underrepresented?

As Table 2 shows, participants who identified as Hispanic or Latino were underrepresented at Arts and Culture PD/TA events compared to their share of the arts and culture workforce, and this difference was statistically significant. The share of Asian and Pacific Islander participants was greater than their representation in the arts and culture workforce, but the difference was not statistically significant. The share of Black or African American participants was almost double their share in the arts and culture workforce and this difference was statistically significant.

TABLE 2: REPRESENTATIVENESS OF ATTENDEES COMPARED TO ARTS AND CULTURE WORKFORCE

Race or Ethnicity	LA County Arts and Culture Workforce	PD/TA Event Attendees*	PD/TA share compared to arts and culture workforce?	Statistically significant?
White	59%	48%	Less	Yes (p<.0001) ⁴
Hispanic or Latino	20%	18%	Less	Yes (p<.01)
Asian or Pacific Islander	9%	10%	More	No
Black or African American	5%	10%	More	Yes (p<.0001)
Mixed Ethnicity	5%	8%	More	Yes (p<.0001)
Other**	1%	6%	More	Yes (p<.0001)
Native American	<1%	0.6%	Unknown	n/a

*These figures differ slightly from Figure 4 because all attendees were included in this analysis (not unduplicated) and 183 “Decline to State” responses were removed. N=4,914

**“Some other race” in SMU DataArts, 2019

Participation in Arts and Culture’s PD/TA events have varied over time, as has the share of participants in each of the self-identified race and ethnic background categories. As Figure 1 showed, the share of PD/TA participants who were Hispanic or Latino and Black or African American increased between 2016-17 to 2019-20 with some year-to-year variation, then each declined by several percentage points in 2020-21, even though total participation increased significantly that year. The share of Asian and Pacific Islander participants was the same in 2020-21 as it was in 2015-16, while the share of participants who identified as Mixed Ethnicity declined. It is worth noting

that the share of participants who declined to state their race or ethnicity increased over the years, with a high point in 2019-20.

When the statistical significance of year-over-year change for both total participation and for the share of participants who did not identify as White as a group was tested, we found that in all years except 2017-18 to 2018-19, the change in total number of participants of color is statistically significant. This indicates to Arts and Culture that structural issues should be investigated in order to identify what is causing the differences.

Reflection and Next Steps

Among the findings in this study, seven stand out as perhaps the most salient:

- Arts and Culture is reaching arts administrators who identify as people of color at a higher rate than their presence in the arts and culture workforce overall
- Arts administrators who identify as Hispanic or Latino have been consistently underrepresented in Arts and Culture's PD/TA events
- The transition to online-only PD/TA events and the addition of new topics related to the COVID-19 pandemic were accompanied by a notable increase in total participation
- That increase in participation was accompanied by a significant increase in the share of White participants and decline in participants of color
- Midcareer professionals consistently made up the largest share of participants
- Indigenous people were made invisible by the data collection and analysis methods used for this study

Prior research has found that people who identify as Hispanic or Latino are significantly underrepresented in the LA County arts and culture workforce. This study finds that they were further underrepresented among participants in Arts and Culture's PD/TA events. This was true despite the fact that overall, attendees of color participated in these events at a higher rate than their share of the arts and culture workforce. The participation of arts administrators who are Hispanic or Latino increased each year through 2019-20, and in that year their participation in these PD/TA events exceeded their representation in the workforce.

All PD/TA events transitioned from in-person to online in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was accompanied by a dramatic increase in the share of White participation in 2020-21 and a concomitant decrease in participation by arts administrators of color. That decrease appears to be explained by substantial decreases in participation by Hispanic or Latino and Black or African American arts administrators.

Since the pandemic forced a large share of arts and culture events in LA County online, there has been much discussion of whether those events are more or less accessible, and to whom. These findings suggest that Arts and Culture's PD/TA events were less

accessible to arts administrators of color compared to their White counterparts. What we do not know — and should investigate more deeply — is why. Was their reduced participation due to less access to technology tools, or did they see the content provided as less relevant to them? Was the format less comfortable or appealing than in-person events? Was our outreach less effective to those communities? Communities of color were hardest hit by the pandemic, both in terms of health and economics.⁵ Did other priorities require their attention and prevent them from participating in Arts and Culture PD/TA events? Did they experience greater layoffs in the arts and culture workforce? Recent evidence shows that unemployment in the arts during COVID-19 closures doubled that of the total US workforce, and that people of color working in the arts and culture sector saw even higher rates.⁶

One factor that may play a role in these findings is the career level of attendees. Midcareer professionals made up the largest group of participants in nearly every year, and their participation increased from 2019-20 to 2020-21. Prior research has found that the share of non-supervisory staff who identify as people of color is greater than the arts and culture workforce as a whole.⁷ PD/TA events specifically designed for emerging professionals may be one way to address this gap, but there are likely other tools available as well.

According to the US Census, 1.4 percent of the LA County population is American Indian or Alaska Native.⁸ Our prior study found this community to be underrepresented at less than one percent of the arts and culture workforce. As a result, we were unable to include them in the statistical analysis of participation, which in effect makes them invisible in our study. In addition, there are Indigenous people living and working in LA County who do not identify as American Indian or Alaska Native. Other methods are needed to ensure the visibility of Indigenous people both as arts administrators and as participants in Arts and Culture's PD/TA programs.

It has been six years since these data collection tools were developed, and conceptions of personal identity as defined by demographic categories have continued to evolve in that time. The PD Task Force at Arts and Culture is reconvening to review our data collection practices, in order to ensure alignment with the County's new Cultural Policy⁹ and its Anti-Racism and Diversity Initiative (ARDI).¹⁰ We will review and incorporate emerging practices for demographic data collection and analysis that are relevant to this work. This includes factors not included in our current tool, such as disability and LGBTQ+ status. Furthermore, we will continue to share information like this with the communities we serve, in the spirit of transparency and our ongoing efforts toward greater equity, inclusion, and justice.

Appendix A

Counts of professional development and technical assistance participation by year

	Number of events	Total attendance	Unduplicated attendance	Participated in 2 events	Participated in 3 events	Participated in 4 or more events
2015-16	60	1,333	1,041	126	39	28
2016-17	43	1,029	781	93	27	28
2017-18	41	1,104	871	96	24	24
2018-19	36	980	838	99	17	3
2019-20	34	571	467	34	16	10
2020-21	50	1,577	1,196	163	55	29

Appendix B

Demographic questions from the PD/TA events data collection instrument

Indicate your career level (multiple choice)

- Emerging
- Midcareer
- Senior
- Other (please specify)

Using US Census definitions, which of these best describes your ethnic background? We collect demographic data to better understand who we serve. We adhere to strict data protocols and never shares individual responses [NOTE: Allows for multiple checkboxes]

- Hispanic or Latino
- Native American
- Black or African American
- White
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Mixed Ethnicity
- Other
- Decline to State

How do you describe your ethnic background or cultural identity? [single textbox]

Your gender: (multiple choice)

- Male
- Female
- Other (please specify)

References

- 1 Arts and Culture uses the terms “professional development” and “technical assistance” to describe programs intended to develop human capital by equipping individuals and organizations with the knowledge and skills needed to perform more effectively. This is sometimes also referred to as “capacity building.”
- 2 Also as a result of this project, we published an online toolkit designed to help other organizations assess their own professional development, technical assistance, and/or capacity building programs, which is available online: <https://www.lacountyarts.org/learning/research-evaluation/capacity-building>.
- 3 SMU DataArts. *Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture 2019 Workforce Demographics Study Results*. LA County Department of Arts and Culture, October 2019. https://www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/lacounty_2019_workforcedemographicsstudy_final.pdf.
- 4 “P-value” is the specific level, or confidence, one can assert that a difference or relationship between two values or variables is not due to random chance.
- 5 Race Counts, *How Race, Class and Place Fuel a Pandemic*, updated March 29, 2021, <https://www.racecounts.org/covid>.
- 6 Daniel Fonner and Rebecca Roscoe, SMU DataArts, *Pandemic Priorities: Exploring unemployment and demographic characteristics of arts and culture workforces and artists across the U.S.*, March 2022, <https://culturaldata.org/media/2555/covid-era-employment-report-final.pdf>.
- 7 SMU DataArts, 2019.
- 8 See <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/losangelescountycalifornia>.
- 9 See <https://www.lacountyarts.org/CEIICulturalPolicy>.
- 10 See <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ardi>.