



---

# Performing Arts Covid-19 Emergency Operational Funds Survey Results

Updated: 5/5/21

# Introduction

---

- Cullen Foundation established an “emergency fund” to support its Performing Arts grantees in April 2020.
- The purpose of the fund was to enable grantees the flexibility to address emerging, unforeseen needs caused by the pandemic.
- A total of **\$157,500** was distributed among 31 grantees on May 1, 2020.
- The funding targeted small and mid-sized performing arts grantees only and did not include our three largest grantees.

# Survey Notes

---

- A 16-question survey was sent out March 11, 2021 to all 31 Grantees that received *Covid-19 Emergency Operational Funds* in May 2020 from the Cullen Foundation.
- 30 of the 31 organizations responded to this survey (97% completion rate).
- The survey sought to gain feedback on how organizations utilized the emergency funds, what other types of financial support they've received throughout the pandemic and gather further information regarding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the organizations/sector to date.
- To mark the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and the state-wide shutdown of Performing Arts Organizations, the survey used the date of ***March 15, 2020.***

# Survey Participant Information

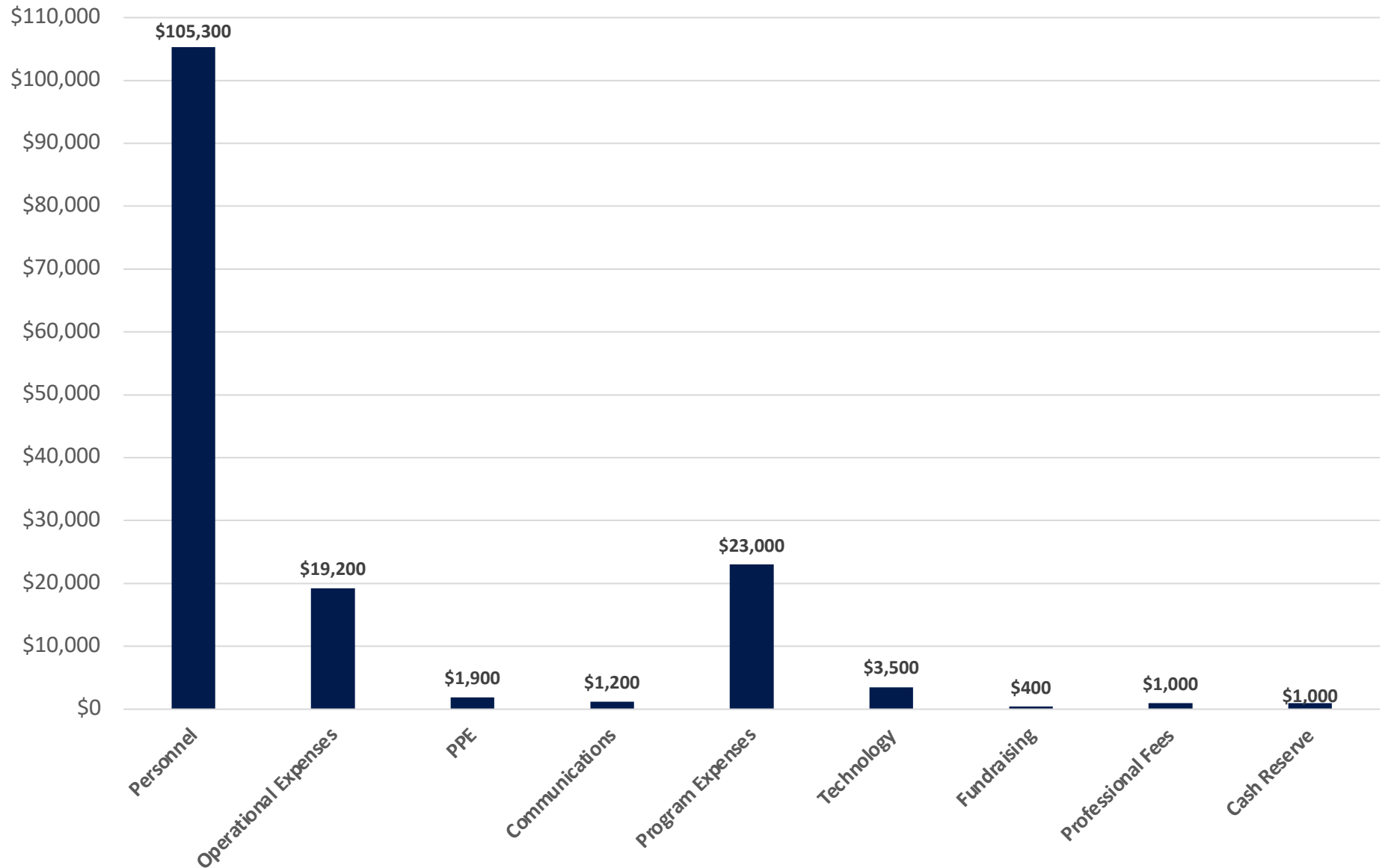
---

- All survey participants are past and/or current Cullen grantees.
- **26** Organizations in Erie County, **4** Organizations in Niagara County.
- 2019 Revenues range from **\$22,000** to **\$4,900,000**.
- It's relevant to note that 28 of 30 respondents have revenues under \$1,500,000. (The two organizations **WITH** revenues over \$1,500,000 will be referred to as organizations **X & Y**).
- Total 2019 revenues for all survey participants was **\$21,450,608**. Excluding organizations **X & Y**, the 2019 revenues for the survey participants was **\$14,696,763**.

# Covid-19 Emergency Operational Funds

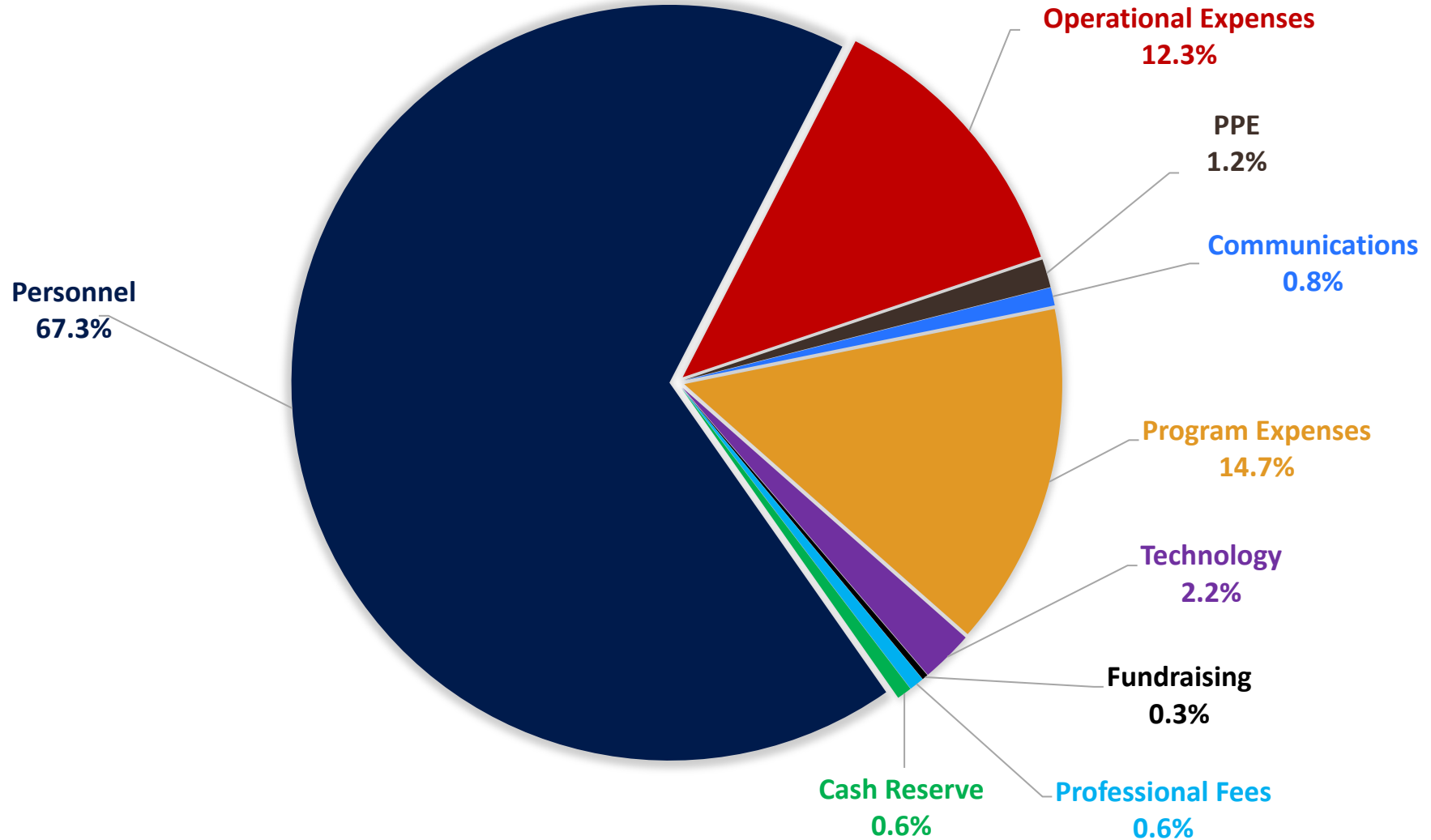
---

# Cullen Foundation Covid-19 Operational Funds Utilization By Category



- Total Funding: \$157,500
- N= 30

CULLEN FOUNDATION COVID-19 EMERGENCY OPERATIONAL FUND  
UTILIZATION BY CATEGORY



\* Total Funding: \$157,500

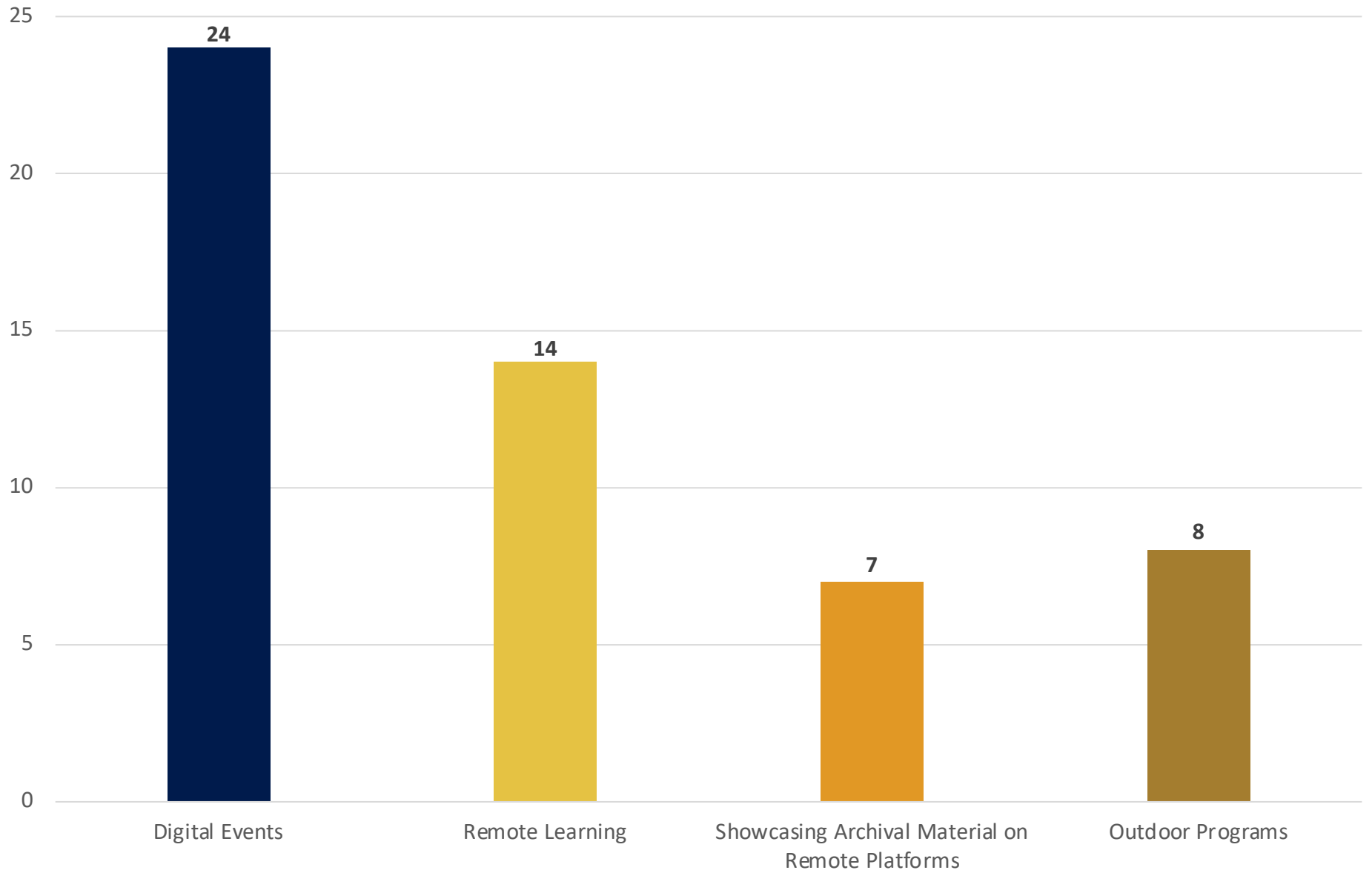
\* N= 30

# Programming/Activities During the Covid-19 Pandemic

---



Number of Performing Arts Organizations That Provided Activities/Programming Since 3/15/2020



# Respondents' Financial Data

---

# Payroll Protection Program

---

**22**

Organizations Received Payroll Protection Program (PPP) Loans

**\$1,773,637**

Total Amount in PPP Loans Received

**\$84,458**

Average Amount of PPP Loans

# Public Loans (Other SBA, EIDL)

*(Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) application was not yet open and funds were not distributed at time of survey)*

6

Organizations Received Public Loans  
Since 3/15/2020

\$585,000

Total Amount Received in  
Public Loans

\$97,500

Average Amount Received  
in Public Loans

# Other Covid-19 Emergency Funding

*(Outside of Cullen Support or Public Support)*

---

**18**

Organizations Received “Other” Covid-19  
Emergency Funding

**\$289,101**

Total Amount in “Other” Covid-  
19 Emergency Funding Received

**\$16,061**

Average Amount “Other” Covid-  
19 Emergency Funding Received

# Performing Arts Sector Estimated Revenue Loss

---

**\$12,333,042**

Estimated Total Revenue Loss Since  
3/15/2020; **WITH** organizations X & Y

**\$411,101**

Average Estimated Revenue Loss for PA  
Organizations Since 3/15/2020; **WITH** organizations X & Y

**\$4,848,831**

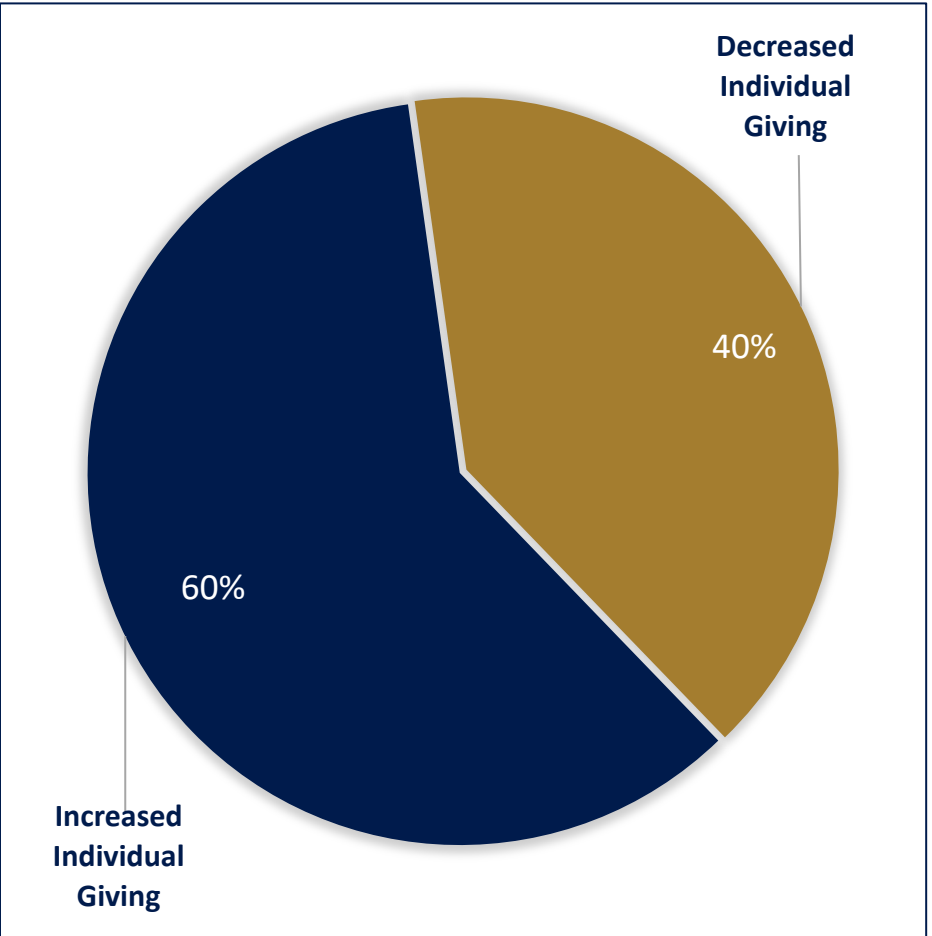
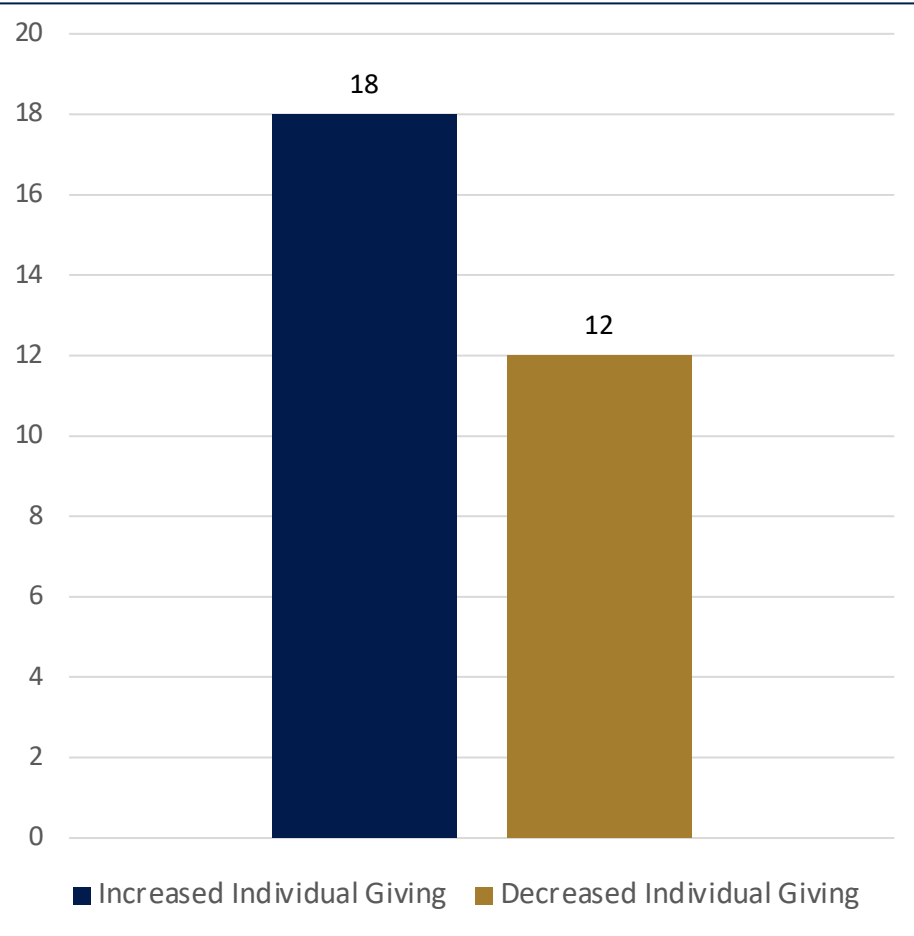
Estimated Total Revenue Loss Since  
3/15/2020; **WITHOUT** organizations X & Y

**\$173,173**

Average Estimated Revenue Loss for PA  
Organizations Since 3/15/2020; **WITHOUT**  
organizations X & Y

# Individual Giving Since 3/15/2020

*("Individual Giving" includes donations, donated tickets/membership refunds, appeals, etc.)*



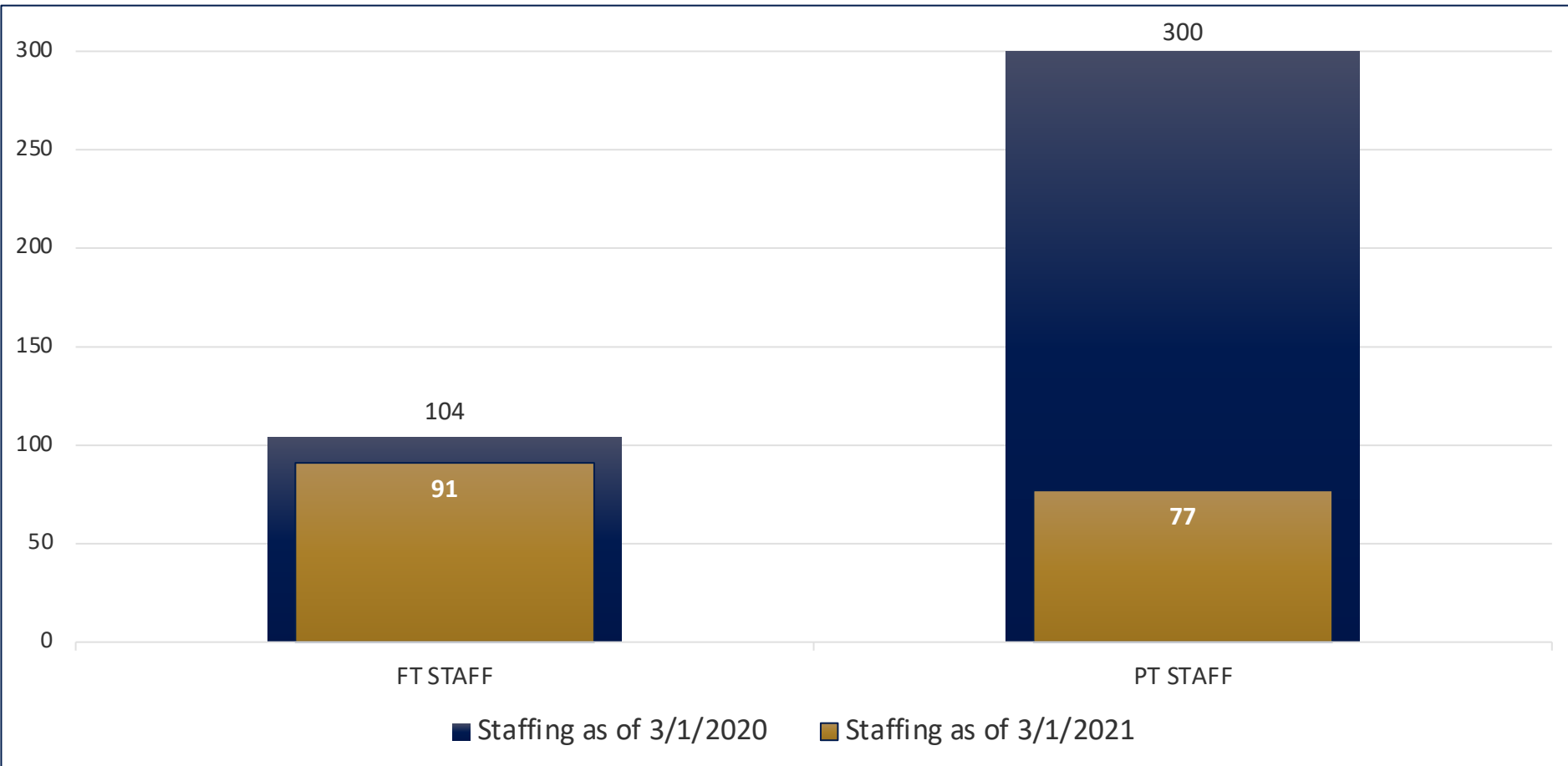
- N= 30
- All Data as of 4/5/2021

# Employment & Return to In-Person Programming

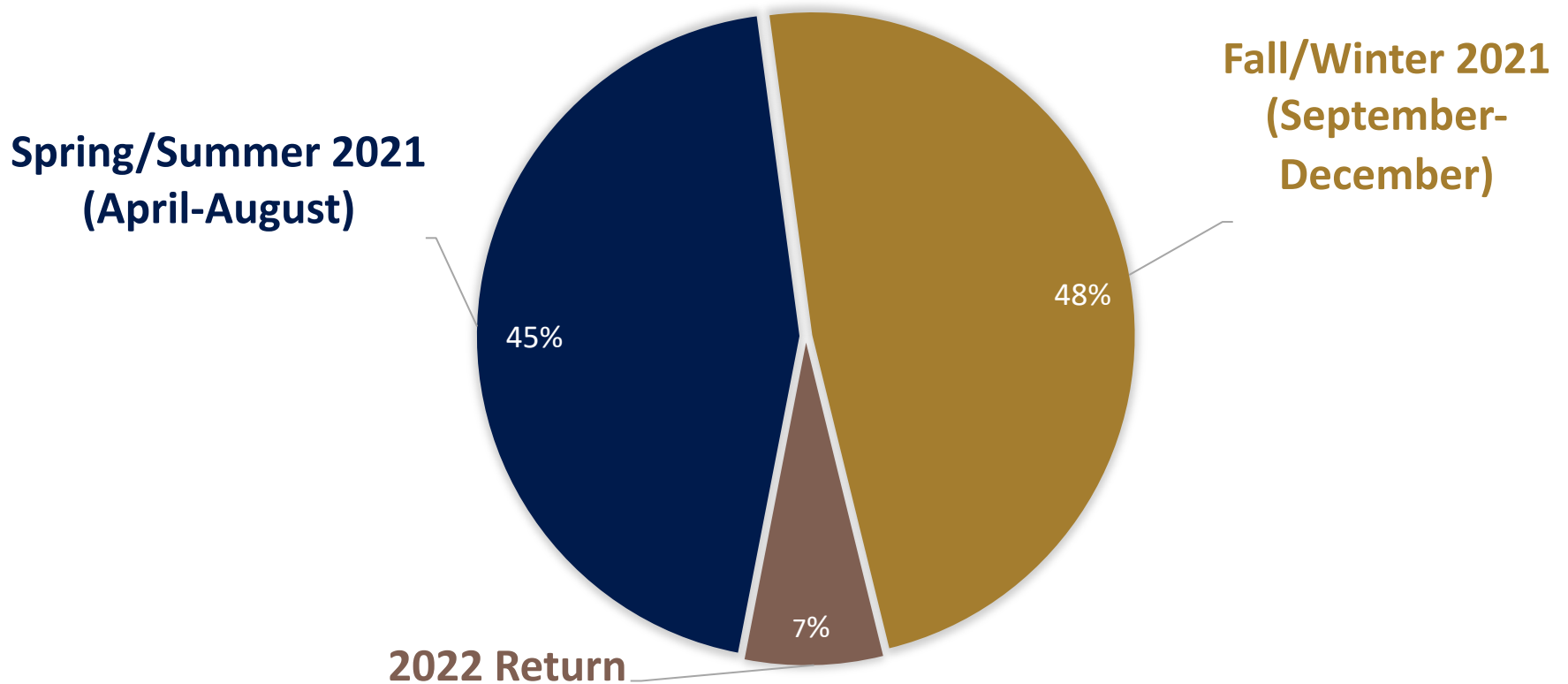
---



# Employment Across The Performing Arts Sector Since 3/15/2020



# Estimated Return To In-Person Programming



# Summary of Greatest Needs as Stated by Survey Respondents

---

- Operational Support: Salary Support, Utilities, Rent Costs
- Program Support/“Restart Funding”
- Support for Artistic, Production & Marketing/Promotional Costs
- Support to Replenish Cash Reserves
- Diversify Revenue Sources
- Performance Space & Guidance on Capacity Restrictions on Indoor/Outdoor Space
- Addressing Ticket Liabilities & Season Ticket Credits
- Data on WNY Audience Readiness to Return to In-Person Performances
- Guidance/Guidelines For Reopening
- Rebuild Audience Engagement in Performances & Programming
- Rehire/Recruits Staff, Artists, Production Crews

# Appendix

---

*“WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU LIKE US TO KNOW REGARDING  
YOUR ORGANIZATION AT THIS TIME?”*

# Resilience

---

We are strong and committed. We've just been on hold for the past year.

We have kept in contact with our patrons through monthly videos and snail mail. This has resulted in our 2019/2020 annual campaign setting an all-time record... Our current annual campaign is on pace to shatter that record...

We increased giving to our Annual Campaign... and pivoted successfully from live to virtual for fundraising events.

We're coming out fighting but badly bruised.

# People

---

Thanks to ... COVID relief grants and PPP loans ... we have kept our entire staff working steadily and off unemployment and kept up with rent...

We are very proud that we have been able to keep our full-time staff on salary throughout the pandemic. (Most went to 4-day work week beginning January 2021)

Providing artists and cultural sector professionals with jobs ensures their survival ... At the same time, their work will deliver new art new work and work to the community.

We are very fortunate to have a small but mighty staff.

# Programming

---

We have expanded and deepened our programming throughout the pandemic.

Through this period, [our organization] was a community leader in digital programming.

We considered the last year as an opportunity to gain new insight into what live performance can be and how digital offerings can support the mission of our organization.

We produced 30 short plays from 3/13/2020 - 12/31/2020, employing over 100 artists from local actors to Tony Award nominees.

I am proud of the work that our staff and members put into creating the online events.... Even though there was little financial benefit ... the feedback from both members and patrons was rewarding and positive.

There is a great deal of "screen fatigue" and the magic of being in person cannot be replicated.

# New Audiences

---

Our productions were seen in 37 states and 5 countries, to critical acclaim.

We are in discussions with WNED TV about their broadcasting [our performances] as an alternative to in-person performances...

We are currently finalizing plans for an alternative season that includes a larger scale touring production and a new immersive performance of selected scenes ... to expand our reach and engage with audience members in more accessible format.



# Collaboration and Community

---

The theatre's membership in the *National New Play Network* and *Theatre Communications Group* have offered national networking and collaboration possibilities impossible in years past.

We are working with *UB School of Medicine* regarding safe rehearsal and performance practices.

We partnered with the *Health Department* to give COVID vaccinations [at our site]. To date, more than 14,486 people have been vaccinated.

# Reopening

---

Our number one priority is the safety of our staff and patrons.

The company is confident in both the artistic and financial success of our future... However, it is impossible to invest in the future when we are cautiously pinching pennies just to survive.

We are reaching a point of needing support to help us get back to the level that we were at prior to the pandemic.

We are looking forward to outdoor performances late this summer and continue to plan for concerts as venues begin to open.

It is our goal to return to live in-person programming in the manner that is the safest and most sound for our Patrons, Artists, and Staff.

We have kept busy and present in the meantime but anxiously await returning to what we do best: creating quality theatre.

# Many Needs to Fill & Things To Do

---

Staff is now heavier on the programming side (not a bad thing) but [we're] very nervous about sustaining everything...The slow transition to performances is going to be agonizing - financially and for staff morale.

We continue to have large repair and maintenance projects which are coming up that we have to find ways to finance and impact the use of the building.

Board and staff are moving forward with the strategic plan adopted in 2019... current focus is on fund development and organizational succession planning.

We have been able to accomplish other projects we've talked about in the past but did not have enough time for.

# Optimism

---

Staff and the company stepped up and performed incredible work ... opportunities lay ahead, and the more we work towards completing and actualizing the plan, the better we feel.

The past twelve months have been incredibly challenging yet have provided a rare opportunity for self-reflection, thinking about our organizational values, and strengthening relationships with our audience and community. We are optimistic for the return to a new "normal" and to once again provide the much-needed balm the arts bring to our community.

We are re-launching a marketing strategy with greater emphasis on video and the visual. We spent much of the past year completing our most recent capital improvements.

Earned revenue was reduced by over 90%, we're confident that, once we are able to get through the future cash crunch ... our work during this pandemic will have prepared us for future success.

We are dedicated to our organization and determined to succeed. We have had great support from our students, families, donors and local foundations. We are lucky!

We will be back better than ever.

Q & A

---