

Recovery funds have helped our members and the Oregon economy thrive!

CULTURAL
ADVOCACY
COALITION
OF OREGON



70%

of our members represent arts organizations; 13% culture; 11% historic preservation; and the rest a combination

of our member organizations are in northwestern Oregon or the Willamette Valley; 13% from eastern, 11% from central, and 11% from coastal parts of the state



57%

of our organizations serve 1-15K people; 13% serve 15-50K; 11% serve 50-100K; 8% serve 100k+; and 11% serve 1k or fewer

have budgets less than \$500K

63%



94%

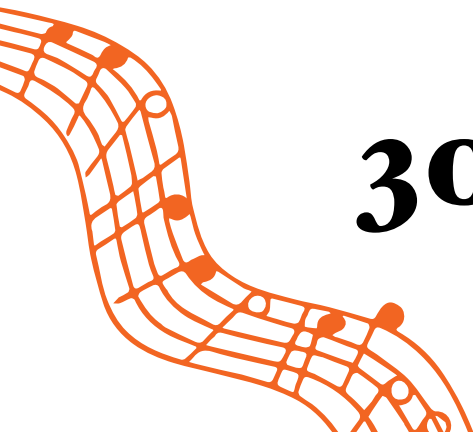
received state or federal recovery funds

spent the funds to pay staff; 10% on new programs; 9% spent on rent/mortgage

57%

30%

of our members are not confident about surviving if the pandemic continues unabated for another 6 months; another 56 percent say they will probably survive, but with difficulty



Our members have put their creativity to work!

Reinventing the ways they deliver services:

- Taking out into the community
- Delivering digital content and live streaming performances (which costs more \$)
- Serving our community in smaller groups and distancing (which costs more money with reduced capacity)
- Going completely virtual
- Becoming more nimble to make changes easily
- Delivering thousands of boxes of art supplies to children facing medical challenges
- Adopting a virtual service delivery model, enabling teachers to continue uninterrupted throughout school closures and distance learning and expanding our programs to serve our underserved students in regions we would not have reached before the pandemic
- Made space available to community partners; invested deeply in artists and community as they needed space and money to make new work
- Expanded to include an international digital programming stream; reimagined theatre and season to be more financially sustainable
- Filming every concert and distribute to patrons
- Provide virtual platforms for teaching and musical events
- Conducted most our programming virtually using Zoom; kept our audience engaged
- Reduced audience size for covid safety, which has affected revenues while costs have gone way up
- Expanded programming for children throughout the pandemic
- Pivoted from in-person to virtual programs to offer state-wide professional development programs for museum professionals
- Using online presentations, webinars, curriculum delivery, partnership development and delivery, alternative outreach development for in-person programs
- Thinking out of the box
- Partnering with other organizations to offer programming rather than have our own dedicated space
- Paying for access to performing art venues; offering virtual concert programs for band educators and students to play from home
- Put on musical cast of 43 children by keeping them in tested bubbles of 4 & wearing face shields during rehearsals & performance; contact tracing; and sanitizing and masking and audience had to sanitize & mask
- Got a bus to bring programs out to underserved communities
- Funded commissioning series of new works by 6 playwrights; now building this company and our audiences remotely and solely during the pandemic; partnered with 6 businesses to tell stories and will partner with 3 more by the end of 2022; also granted the rights to perform plays as podcasts
- More online services, moving towards more accessible classes for youth (free programs/sattelite locations)
- Had a 15 episode happy hour on Zoom where artists shared video works
- Grew our digital reach by 25% and engaging with more than we would be able to accommodate in-person
- Providing lesson plans for teachers, online learning opportunities, and distributing 1,000 free art kits
- Hosted outdoor pop-up performances and built a drive-in movie theater
- Developed an artist relief grant program to support working artists whose projects were canceled in the wake of the pandemic; prioritized funding BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, neuro-diverse individuals, and individuals with disabilities
- Embracing new forms of filmmaking and going beyond traditional live action genres
- Produced three digital works of theatre in lieu of live theatre productions
- Many more outdoor concerts and events
- Provided greater access to historical records, research assistance, and information, to aid increased number of people doing research in quarantine

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Why do Oregon cultural workers need more funding?

- The majority of our expenses go to performing artists. Many of these artists rely on us for a substantial portion of their livelihood. The focus of our programming is targeted at school age children, many of whom have limited access to the arts. Without our organization, that access would be even more limited. We are dedicated to making sure that does not happen!
- We need funds to adapt our technology to keep up with changing needs.
- There is a great longing among our patrons for the soul-enhancing and spirit-restoring quality of our music, a collective balm for our traumatized community.
- The arts, with weddings, has been a difficult business to be in now. Funding could help the arts survive.
- Journalist: What do you think of Western civilization? Gandhi: I think it would be a good idea. Outside the Frame trains homeless and marginalized youth to be directors of their own films and lives by providing a creative outlet, job skills, an audience, and a sense of dignity and possibility through filmmaking. If homeless youth can make films, they can do anything, including work in the creative professions and pay taxes.
- It will take 3 years for performing arts organizations to recover audiences post-pandemic, and it will be expensive to do so.
- We were one of the first industries shut down with the onset of the pandemic and well be one of the last to fully reopen. Customer returns will also follow slowly. Additional support will help stave off additional losses and possible permanent closures.
- Funds are so desperately needed and they need to be delivered quickly!
- We deliver cultural, ecological, & educational programs and cultural & ecological preservation, first foods, and internships for work with ecological companies & programs throughout the Portland metro region.
- We provide the healing power of art to children and families facing medical challenges. This is crucial right now! A growing body of research demonstrates that incorporating arts experiences into healthcare and treatment plans can play an instrumental role in the healing process and improve overall quality of life and quality of care for children and their families. Research shows that art experiences promote physical, mental and emotional recovery, decrease pain, and help children cope with anxiety. It can also reduce the use of pain medication and shorten hospital stays. A study on the visual arts for children fighting cancer suggests that this art form is an effective way for children to cope with pain and help them regain a sense of control--which is a key factor in reducing stress to associated with cancer treatment. Arts programs also encourage and support family members and caregivers by reducing anxiety and can promote family bonding and unity.
- The population we serve -- students with disabilities -- was underserved before the pandemic. Before the spring of 2020, only 40% of students with disabilities graduated from high school on time with a standard diploma. COVID has deepened these historical inequities, putting over 80,000 of Oregon's children and youth at risk. The Shadow Project partners with special education teachers to build students' reading and social emotional skills so they can achieve to their full potential. They get access to specialized reading technology that opens the world of reading, exposing them to culture, ideas, and worlds they never knew before. Without access to our program, students struggling to read and engage in school due to autism, dyslexia, and ADHD give up on learning, and on themselves. Continued support means we can support schools in a time when the need is greater than ever.
- Funding has been transformative and has literally saved our organization. We have been equipped to completely transform the way we serve (pivoting over and over again) and respond to unprecedented need in the Oregon Equity Framework communities we serve. We urgently need funding to continue, as the uncertainty has been terrifying and production costs are higher than ever. Thank you for all you do.

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Why do Oregon cultural workers need more funding?

- Our organization is in a deficit budget in 2022 and that was assuming in-person event revenue -- now not happening. We will have to consider layoffs by mid-year. We lost 50% of our donations in 2021 vs 2020 (already down from 2019) because we've not had in-person events to ask for support. We lost all income from events (35% of our budget) which is not just ticket sales but donations, sponsorships, etc. We kept staff in 2021 ONLY because of the PPP loan was able to partially offset these revenue losses. General operating support is critical at this point in time. Funds to help us weather the loss of ticket revenue will ensure that we can continue to work through the pandemic, keep our small staff intact, and emerge on the other side with the organizational continuity needed to return to live performances.
- Recovery is 3 times more expensive than getting through the disaster. We are at the beginning of this, so if people are interested in thriving economies in Oregon they need to continue to invest in our recovery. We were lucky to receive federal funding, but those only bridged the gap until now. Recovery is where the expense will be and without this funding, fewer people will be employed in the state.
- We have 100 part-time employees. We could sustain our full-time employees during the pandemic but not our part-time employees and they suffered greatly. Many left music altogether. Combine that with the Alameda fires and we were all traumatized and having difficulty finding reason in survival.
- Our situation remains challenging in a cautiously optimistic way but the current infection rates have once again affected us negatively financially.
- Our organization serves schools through arts education and training. The pandemic has drastically increased the need for arts services that meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of young people, but we are struggling to serve these audiences. Schools' capacity for scheduling and planning arts experiences for students is very low, and many still have restrictions on visiting artists. We are doing 20% of the work we did in 2019, but know that our services will be in demand when doors open again, so we need to keep investing in our staff and artist capacity. Relief funding has been crucial in maintaining our readiness and capacity, as well as adapting our programs for on-line delivery, but that relief has dried up and if nothing changes, we cannot keep going in this way indefinitely.
- I am desperate for affordable and safe studio space (or living/work space). There are countless empty offices, homes, apartments, etc, but the rents are outrageous for anyone not already highly successful. So these spaces stay empty and creatives like me do without... In the end this is a loss to the state, both in state tax revenue and quality of life for Oregonians who benefit greatly from all this creative work.
- Cultural services industry plays an important role in keeping communities together through shared in-person experiences. Virtual communication plays a role in our modern society, but if the pandemic and shutdown has taught us anything it is that being together in community is essential for healthy living. Those of us who can are working to keep upright and are having some success; others haven't been as successful. We all need an extra hand at this time.
- Operations and other unrestricted funding should continue beyond the pandemic! It's unreasonable to expect organizations to be able to pay their people fairly if they don't get funding to do so.
- Although most museums throughout Oregon are back open, many are experiencing extremely low visitation rates and operating in the red. We choose to be open as a benefit to our community and fulfill our missions, regardless of how many people are walking in the doors.
- We need more affordable housing to attract qualified and skilled working in rural NE Oregon. We invite lawmakers to visit and talk about our future, to understand the breath of our legacy work and vision.
- Arts and culture are what sustained us in these dark times.

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Why do Oregon cultural workers need more funding?

- We have great needs in arts education throughout our state. Having arts educators available for kids will help them start to heal with the trauma over the last 2 years. When we started opening back up in March 2021, it was clear our kids had lost so much. They had to relearn how to socialize & interact with teachers, each other, and art mediums. Extra space, funding, and supports are needed to help them.
- The dramatic cost increases for sets, props, costumes, etc. mean we need to spend way more than pre-COVID. Dealing with those cost increases at the same time we are trying to recover from two years without ticket income is scary. There is little-to-no margin for error: one unexpected expense could be devastating. Additional support would help ensure our sector can move forward.
- The arts are important for the community. They give insight, joy, laughter, knowledge, and much more. Our staff and volunteers are very dedicated to bringing the arts to all Oregonians.
- Interest is lagging, students are disengaged, people cannot attend concerts, and we lack rehearsal facilities since schools and many churches are closed to outside entities. There is a huge need for capital \$ to build outside open-air covered pavilions of which there are none in the PDX area.
- The world we are returning to is not the world we left. Labor is roughly 50% of our budget, and labor costs have gone up as much as 20% in some parts of our company. We are raising prices to compensate, but this is not sustainable. We need sustained government funding until we are fully re-opened and ride out this wave of inflation and supply chain difficulties.
- We would have had to start over with a new rental, losing all the labor spent creating a truly functional theater space. We are very grateful to have survived.
- We are in the business of experiences and connecting with community members who right now are experiencing serious social and emotional challenges. The very nature of that kind of work has been dramatically impacted; revenues down, volunteerism down, fundraising capabilities down, staffing down - all as a direct result of COVID. This rescue funding is critically needed by our arts and culture sector.
- We are extremely grateful for the support we have received. Without it we, as a volunteer organization, would not still be in existence and able to continue offering our live programming.
- To my knowledge, support and opportunities for large grant funds have gone to organizations that have been in business since before 2019. The only relief funding we received, because we had 2 people on staff and we don't own or rent one venue due to how we make theatre, was \$1,000 of PPP funding. It has been incredibly difficult to build something completely new with community excitement but no real chance at support financially or any resource for guidance because no one knew how to navigate their business the past 2 years. It has been incredibly difficult to learn how to build something sustainable and of quality when people are losing everything. Still, I am proud at all the work we have accomplished, that we have paid each person who worked with us comparative union wages. And that we took the opportunity to build our community up with a national network of collaborators. I have also applied for 9 grants over 2021 and received 1 for \$3000 from RACC. We have been working at the same intensity of a lot of other theaters and we have a current staff of 1 being me, and my board.
- We are not only an arts and culture center; we are a community gathering place for adult and youth suffering from the effects of the pandemic.
- If you, or any of your friends, colleagues and family turned to any type of arts and culture to help survive the pandemic and quarantines, you've now witnessed first-hand how those arts actually do inspire, educate, entertain, motivate, and connect us. It's time to belatedly say "thank you" to all those artists and organizations by making sustainability and operational efficiencies state and local funding priorities.
- Our sector needs support to uphold the commitment to culture that Oregon has always held.
- Preservation funding is becoming more scarce generally, but preservation is important to our community's identity and cultural options.

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Why do Oregon cultural workers need more funding?

- We need something like the WPA.
- Arts are sometimes the last in line for help - and yet, arts are so important in times of difficulties.
- General op funds needed more than ever. Programs cost the same or more (because of adding livestream for example) but still keeping audience numbers limited.
- The past two years have affected us all but our communities are with us. We now know what it would be like to lose live performance. Fortunately, we don't need to lose it but supporting it is still critical.
- Over the past two years, federal and state relief dollars allowed arts organizations like the Portland Art Museum to remain solvent, but the recapitalization of our museum and the larger arts sector will require additional state investment in jobs and core arts programs that will help our community heal and reconnect. We need to rehire staff and build back programs, which made up 26% of our budget. Our prudence has ensured we can continue to be a foundational resource to the sector. Too many organizations have gone out of business or are struggling. As we begin to rehire and rebuild, we face a \$1.5M deficit in our budget. We need a major investment from the state to rebuild our team, reintroduce access programs, and continue to prioritize community partnerships and artist services. To emerge stronger we need flexible general operating funding to help us regrow and reprioritize programs.
- We need more financial support to keep free and low-cost programs going for our community. We want to reach a wider audience and need funds to host events in other locations.
- Continued funding is needed to keep Eastern Oregon tourism and accessibility moving forward. We have come a long way with many incredible volunteers, but there is a long way to go.
- It would be wonderful to receive this type of operating support during normal times. Being able to focus on serving the community instead of spending our time fundraising is the reason we started a non-profit.
- We are all a part of a complicated ecosystem. We need each other in order to grow and thrive.
- **FUND THE ARTS ALWAYS AND FOREVER!!!!**
- Public education has had reasonable support from the federal and state programs, but the need was high before COVID and these funds do not do enough to help build the programs needed for students to thrive.
- It is vital to recognize that arts and culture organizations are in a continuous state of evolution. It has been hard to make advanced programming plans/strategies because we don't know if funding (grants or other) will continue to support operating expenses or if they will require project outcomes.
- HB 4040 restricts eligible organizations to "venues, performing arts and museums." Many cultural organizations do not fit into these categories but contribute to the vibrancy of Oregon's cultural life. We encourage broadening this language to encompass the diverse organizations who together serve the cultural sector. The determination of relief funding based on loss of "earned revenue" disadvantages nonprofits that may not rely on revenue from ticket sales but have experienced substantial losses.
- Relief funding made a tremendous difference to us. Rather than worrying if we could pay the bills, we were able to get creative, generate new ideas for serving our community, and actually pull it off. The funds were a terrific example of state government doing the right thing, quickly. Thank you!
- The most important thing during the pandemic was having operational support available without restrictions. For the past 30 years, philanthropic giving has become more restricted by organizations that will only pay for hard costs of new programming, but not for the operational costs of running a cultural non-profit, particularly staffing. This has had a snowballing negative effect on non-profits for decades. COVID relief offered non-profits access to funding for staffing, giving us freedom to create to respond to the moment. We were allowed to focus solely on our missions during the crisis and how we could serve our communities. Many rose to the moment with groundbreaking programming. There is simply nothing more important than operating support that frees organizations to create to meet their mission.
- State COVID restrictions eliminated our only event and only revenue source. We need financial relief due to the state forced financial hardship.