

# Assessment of Berkeley Arts & Culture Pandemic Relief and Recovery Funding

DECEMBER 2025





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# CONTEXT



Between 2020 and 2022, the City of Berkeley awarded over \$3 million in emergency relief and recovery grants to arts and culture organizations and individual artists in Berkeley facing severe financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As one of the first municipalities to mobilize comprehensive support for the cultural sector, Berkeley's intervention provides a unique case study in crisis response for arts ecosystems operating in high-cost environments. Drawing on financial data, organizational surveys, and demographic analyses, this assessment examines both the immediate stabilization effects and longer-term outcomes of the City's emergency relief and sustained recovery investments, offering evidence-based insights into the effectiveness of targeted cultural relief strategies and the fundamental challenges facing creative communities during periods of economic disruption.

When the COVID-19 pandemic brought the Bay Area to a standstill in March 2020, the region's vibrant arts and culture sector—from intimate theaters and galleries to

community festivals and independent artists—faced an unprecedented crisis as venues shutdown, events were cancelled, and revenue streams vanished overnight. Recognizing the essential role of arts and culture in the city's identity and economy, the City of Berkeley quickly mobilized a series of emergency grant programs to support local artists, nonprofit organizations, and cultural institutions facing acute financial strain. Over the course of three years, the City awarded \$2.5 million to 88 organizations and \$523,089 to 193 individual artists and cultural workers (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> The City directed resources with a focus on equity and accessibility to sustain creative work, preventing organizational closures and ensuring underrepresented communities remained at the center of recovery.

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<sup>1</sup> To view the original documentation for these grants, see City of Berkeley, "Business and Arts Organization Continuity Grant Awards" (Off Agenda Report), April 27, 2020, <https://newspack-berkeleyside-cityside.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Business-and-Arts-Organization-Continuity-Grant-Programs-042720.docx-1.pdf>; and City of Berkeley, "Civic Arts Grants Program—Improved Practices & Community Impact" (includes Berkeley Art Works Project and Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants,), March 21, 2023, <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2023-03-21%20WS%20Item%2001%20Civic%20Arts%20Grants%20Program.pdf>.



Figure 1: Summary of Berkeley Pandemic Relief Funding Programs

	PROGRAM YEAR	NUMBER OF GRANTEES	AVERAGE GRANT AWARDED	RECIPIENT TYPE	TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED
ARTS ORGANIZATION CONTINUITY GRANTS	2020	63	\$15,151 organization	Nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored arts and culture organizations	\$954,543
EAST BAY/OAKLAND RELIEF FUND FOR INDIVIDUALS IN THE ARTS*	2020	47	\$1,372 per individual	Individual artists and arts workers	\$64,500
BERKELEY ART WORKS PROJECT (BAWP)	2021	32	\$5,698 per individual	Individual artists, performers, and community members	\$182,339
BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS AND FESTIVALS	2022	74	\$20,707 per organization	Nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored arts and culture organizations and festivals	\$1,532,345
BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS	2022	114	\$2,423 per individual	Individual artists, culture bearers, teaching artists	\$276,250
<b>Total Amount Awarded to Arts &amp; Culture Individuals (2020-2022)</b>					<b>\$523,089</b>
<b>Total Amount Awarded to Arts &amp; Culture Organizations (2020-2022)</b>					<b>\$2,486,888</b>
<b>Total Berkeley Pandemic Relief and Recovery Funding (2020-2022)</b>					<b>\$3,009,977</b>

\* The East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund was a regional grant program administered by the Center for Cultural Innovation that provided grants to 515 artists and cultural workers across Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The table includes only the portion awarded to 47 individual Berkeley artist residents leveraged with City of Berkeley funds.

Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

These investments, totaling over \$3 million, were extraordinary in scale. By comparison, the City’s annual Civic Arts Grants program distributes nearly \$700,000 to arts and culture organizations, festivals, and individuals in a typical year. The pandemic-era funding programs for arts and culture organizations and individuals granted more than \$1 million in 2020 and over \$1.8 million in 2022, more than doubling its Civic Arts Grants investment in a typical year. For many Berkeley organizations and individual artists, the pandemic relief and recovery programs were more than simply helpful—they meant the difference between shuttering permanently and surviving long enough to rebuild.

## SCALE OF COVID-19 DISRUPTION

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a wave of regionally mandated closures that reshaped daily life and severely disrupted arts and cultural activity. Berkeley is just one of three cities in California that operates its own public health department separate from the county, with an independent Health Officer who has the authority to issue local health orders.<sup>2</sup> During the pandemic, this meant that while the City often issued orders in alignment with Alameda County, it also at times acted earlier, leaving city residents and businesses subject to mandates that on occasion differed from neighboring cities and counties.

On March 17, 2020, Berkeley joined Alameda County and five other Bay Area counties to issue shelter-in-place orders, two days before Governor Newsom's statewide order on March 19. Under these orders, residents were required to remain in their places of residence except to perform essential activities. All non-essential business—like retail, entertainment, cultural, and recreational facilities—had to close to the public. This marked the beginning of what would become one of the most disruptive periods of widespread closures and halted activity in recent history.

In this environment of sudden and prolonged shutdowns, the timing of Berkeley's pandemic support for arts organizations and individuals was especially critical (Figure 2). The first round of funding (Arts Organization Continuity Grants) for organizations distributed in May 2020 arrived at the height of shutdowns and, for many organizations, served as their first—and in some cases only—source of external aid. In parallel, the City also contributed to the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts, a regional effort launched in May 2020 to provide direct

cash assistance to artists and cultural workers. These local dollars often reached grantees before county, state, or federal relief programs such as the California Arts Council's Cultural Organizations Emergency Relief Fund, Shuttered Venue Operators Grants, Alameda County Arts Relief Grants, and the Paycheck Protection Program.

It wasn't until October 2020 that the City of Berkeley, along with Alameda County, cautiously began reopening a wider range of businesses and community spaces to the public under strict capacity limits. New health order protocols could now allow businesses like museums, galleries, personal care services, libraries, places of worship, restaurants, and movie theaters to operate indoors at 25% capacity. These steps marked the first time many cultural and social gathering spaces could invite the public back, albeit in highly restricted forms.

However, this momentum was short-lived. In December, a resurgence of COVID-19 cases strained intensive care unit capacity to below 15%, which in turn triggered a new regional stay-at-home order and the closure of nearly all indoor sectors across Berkeley and Alameda County once again. As cases eased in early 2021 and vaccines became widely available, cultural and recreational facilities were gradually permitted to return in stages: first at 25% capacity, then 50%, and by the spring of 2021 up to 75%. By May 2021, many museums, galleries, and other indoor spaces were operating under these expanded limits. It was not until June 15, 2021—fifteen months after the first shutdown—that nearly all restrictions were finally lifted, and businesses across California could fully reopen.

Recognizing the toll of lost work opportunities on local

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<sup>2</sup> Sara Kassabian, "Berkeley is unusual in having its own public health division. How does that work during a pandemic?" *Berkeleyside*, April 15, 2020, <https://www.berkeleyside.org/2020/04/15/berkeley-is-unusual-in-having-its-own-public-health-division-how-does-that-work-during-a-pandemic>.



artists throughout this period, the City of Berkeley launched the Berkeley Arts Works Project (BAWP) in 2021, funded through the City's Cultural Trust Fund (Fund 148).<sup>3</sup> Modeled in spirit after the New Deal-era Works Progress Administration, which employed artists during the Great Depression to create public works, the program provided paid opportunities for artists, performers, and community members to produce temporary public artworks. These projects not only offered much needed income, but also fostered community healing by addressing themes of public health, resilience, and belonging at a time when many cultural venues were only beginning to reopen.

While the statewide June 2021 reopening marked a turning point for most cultural and recreational facilities, performing arts venues had endured some of the longest closures. Classified as among the highest-risk settings, they were the last to reopen, allowed to return only when the rest of the economy was cleared to resume operations. The Berkeley Repertory Theatre offers a vivid example of just how long the road back was for performing arts institutions. Despite the state's reopening in June, Berkeley Rep remained dark until November 12, 2021, when it finally welcomed audiences back with its production of *Wintertime*—a nearly 20-month closure from March 2020.

The City's next major rounds of recovery funding came through the Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (BARG) two years later in 2022 (funded with American Rescue Plan Act dollars).<sup>4</sup> This program was available to both arts and culture organizations and individuals. The BARG program arrived at a moment when federal and state programs wound down and organizations were confronting new pressures: inflation, workforce shortages, and lower levels of consumer engagement that had not fully recovered since the pandemic.

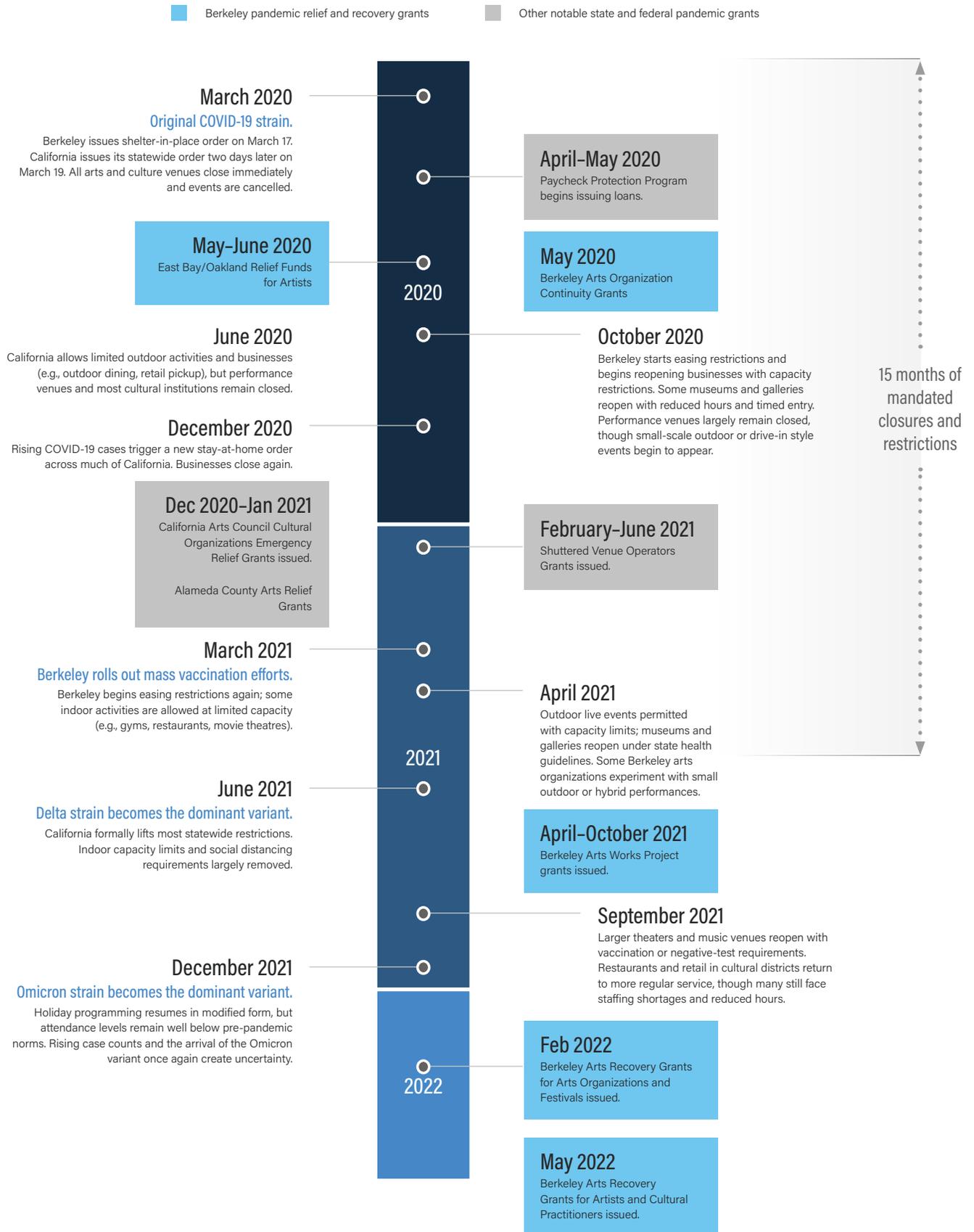
Together, the launch of these programs over three years created a phased response that moved from emergency relief to longer-term recovery. This approach helped preserve Berkeley's cultural ecosystem and sustain its creative workforce during one of the most disruptive periods in recent history.

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<sup>3</sup> The Cultural Trust Fund is a dedicated pool of City revenues that supports Berkeley's arts ecosystem through grants, public art, and cultural programming.

<sup>4</sup> The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a \$1.9 trillion federal stimulus package enacted in March 2021, provided local governments with flexible State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to address public health and economic impacts of the pandemic, with a focus on disproportionately impacted communities. The City of Berkeley allocated a portion of these funds to support arts and culture organizations and individual cultural practitioners.

Figure 2: Timeline of COVID-19 Pandemic Relief & Recovery Grant Distribution



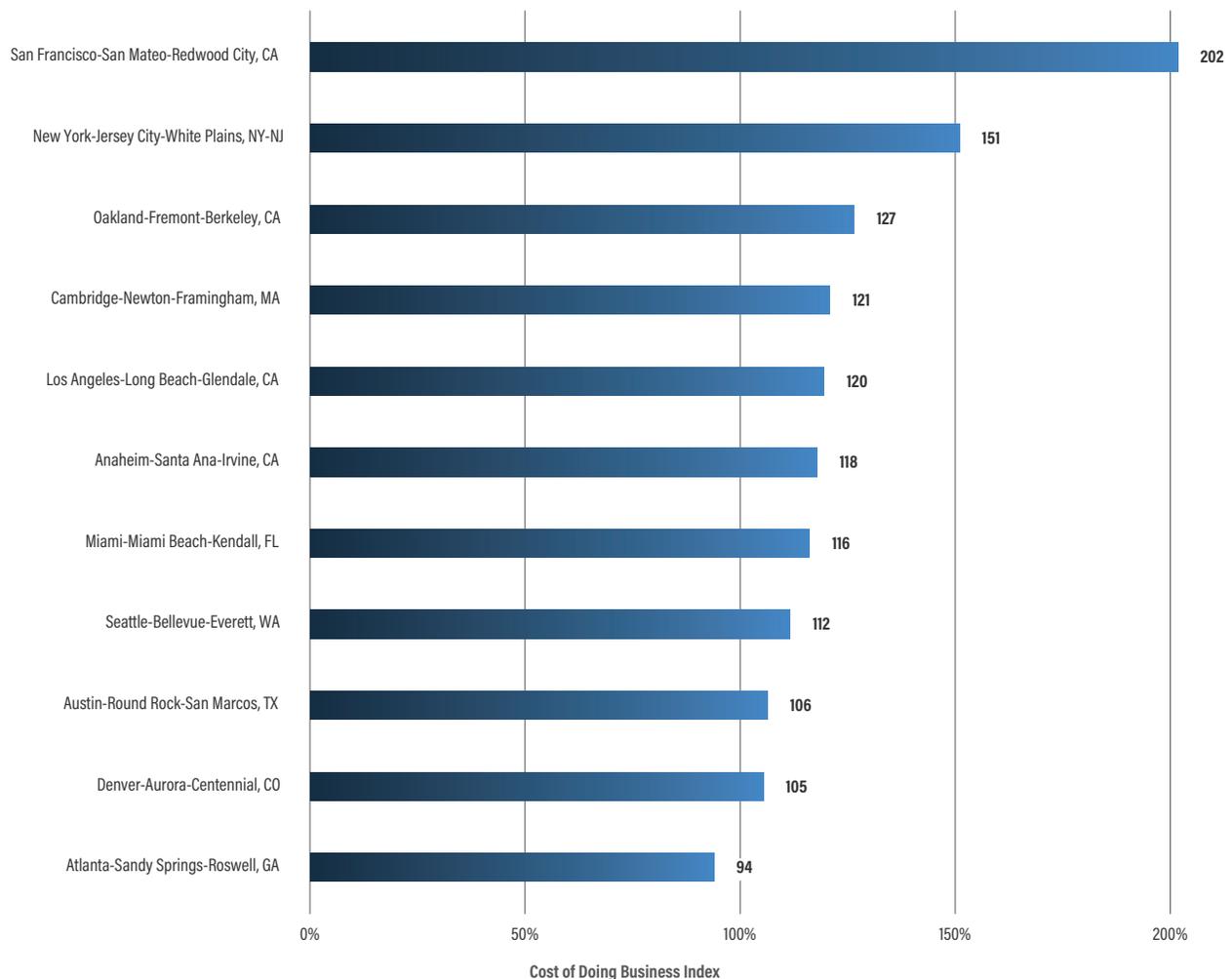
Source: CVL Economics.

At the same time, these prolonged closures exacerbated Berkeley's already exceptionally high-cost environment (Figure 3). The East Bay (comprising Alameda and Contra Costa counties, also known as the Oakland-Fremont-Berkeley metropolitan division) consistently ranks among the most expensive regions in the country—not just for households but also for employers. Berkeley arts and culture organizations must contend with some of the nation's highest commercial rents, utility costs, and taxes.

For nonprofit cultural organizations, the in-person experience is central to their survival. Earned income streams—such as ticket sales, performances, classes, festivals, gallery admissions, and space rentals—depend almost entirely on people gathering in shared physical

spaces. When COVID-19 forced those spaces to close, the entire business model of many arts groups collapsed overnight. Unlike some industries that could pivot to remote operations, much of Berkeley's arts and culture sector remained tied to in-person engagement. While many organizations worked hard to provide online content and cultural experiences, virtual substitutes could not replicate the community connection of live experiences nor meaningfully make up for revenue shortfalls. Moreover, many organizations continued to shoulder fixed costs, such as leases, insurance, and baseline staffing. The inability to shed these expenses during more than a year of shutdown meant reserves were rapidly depleted, forcing some organizations to suspend operations entirely.

**Figure 3: Cost of Doing Business Index by Metropolitan Division | 2022**



Note: The Cost of Doing Business Index is a Moody's Analytics calculation factoring in labor costs, energy costs, office rent, and tax burden in a given metropolitan division.

Source: Moody's Analytics, CVL Economics.

# KEY FINDINGS

## IMPACT OF BERKELEY'S PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUNDING FOR ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

**Two rounds of Berkeley pandemic relief and recovery grant programs were administered to 88 arts and culture organizations, totaling almost \$2.5 million.**

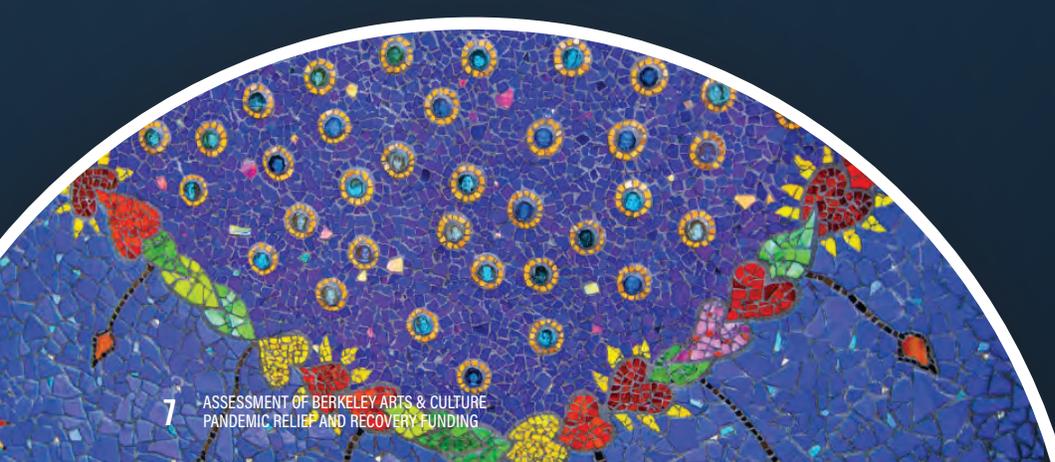
The two rounds were the Arts Organization Continuity Grants (\$954,543) in 2020 and the Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (BARG) for Arts Organizations and Festivals (\$1.5 million) in 2022.

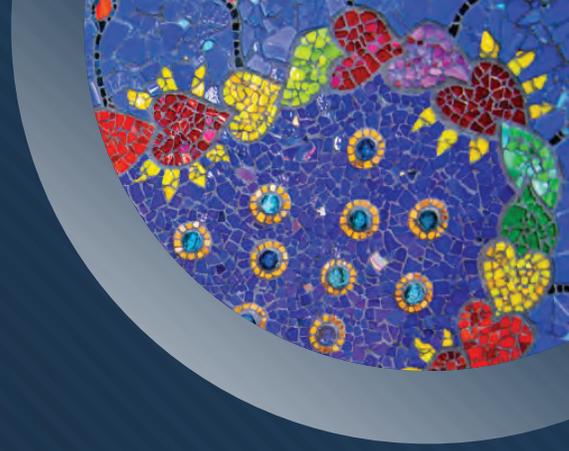
**Smaller organizations were the most vulnerable to initial pandemic disruptions.**

At the onset of the pandemic, organizations with annual budgets of \$500,000 or less saw their revenues drop by nearly 50% on average, compared to a 30% decline among mid-sized organizations (\$500k-\$1M) and about a 40% decline among large organizations (over \$1M). This sharper decline highlights how limited reserves and thinner margins left smaller organizations far more vulnerable to the initial shock.

**Relief and recovery funding was broadly seen as critical, helping most organizations avoid layoffs and business closure entirely.**

Nearly 83% of Arts Organization Continuity Grant (2020) and 90% of BARG (2022) recipients rated their Berkeley pandemic relief and recovery grant(s) as either "very helpful" or "essential." The remaining organizations, which were larger in size, described the funding as "moderately helpful." Importantly, the vast majority of grantees (up to 84%) credited the grants with preventing both organizational shutdowns and employee layoffs during the most acute months of the pandemic.





### **Arts Organization Continuity Grants (2020) served as an immediate lifeline.**

Issued at the height of uncertainty in May 2020, these grants kept doors open during the first wave of shutdowns. Arts Organization Continuity Grants reached organizations before many other federal, state, and local relief programs. However, their impact tended to be short-term: most grantees (84%) stated funds sustained operations for less than six months, 11% said funds lasted 6-12 months, and just 5% stated funds lasted a year or more. Even so, the immediacy of this funding was critical; more organizations attributed the Arts Organization Continuity Grant as helping them avoid layoffs (85%) and closures (84%) than the BARG (2022) program. Over half of the recipients stated the grants helped them survive the pandemic period but left no lasting impact.

### **Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (2022) offered stabilization and transformation.**

Distributed in a more stable but still challenging environment in 2022, BARG enabled longer-term planning and adaptation. 22% of recipients stated the funding lasted 6–12 months, and 11% reported funding lasting a year or more. Nearly one in five (19%) described the grants as transformative—compared to just 5% of Arts Organization Continuity grantees—and almost half (48%) credited the funds with helping them stabilize and make strategic changes. 70% of BARG recipients credited the grant for avoiding layoffs and 74% for avoiding business closure.

### **Many arts & culture organizations received both rounds of funding, which extended impact beyond any single cycle.**

A majority of grantees (49 of 88) benefited from receiving both the 2020 Arts Organization Continuity Grant and the 2022 BARG. This sequencing mattered: the first round provided a lifeline in the immediate aftermath of shutdowns, while the second arrived during a difficult reopening phase marked by inflation, workforce shifts, and lagging consumer engagement. Taken together, the two rounds of support compounded one another, allowing organizations not only to survive the immediate crisis but also to weather the prolonged and unpredictable recovery period. In this way, limited local dollars stretched across multiple years of disruption, amplifying their effect far beyond what a single grant cycle could have achieved.

# IMPACT OF BERKELEY'S PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUNDING FOR ARTS & CULTURE INDIVIDUALS<sup>5</sup>

## Three Berkeley pandemic relief and recovery grant programs were administered to arts and culture individuals residing and practicing in Berkeley, totaling over \$520,000.

The three programs were the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund (\$64,500 to Berkeley residents) in 2020, the Berkeley Art Works Project (BAWP; \$182,339) in 2021, and the BARG for Artists and Cultural Practitioners (\$276,250) in 2022.

While the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund (2020) and BARG (2022) programs provided unrestricted funds to Berkeley's arts and culture workers, BAWP (2021) supported paid temporary visual and performing arts projects in public spaces. Instead of serving as direct stimulus assistance, BAWP (inspired by the Depression-era Works Progress Administration) functioned more like traditional income, employing artists who might otherwise have been working locally in theaters or other cultural venues, and redirecting their talents into community-based creative projects.

## Individual grants covered the equivalent of up to nearly four months of housing costs.

Grants provided immediate relief for artists facing significant reductions in income, often covering essential living costs like rent, groceries, and medical bills. When measured against the median individual housing cost in Berkeley (\$1,100/month), the impact becomes clear: East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund awards covered over one month of housing, BARG awards covered more than two months, and BAWP awards stretched nearly four months. Even this short-term coverage of basic living expenses mattered enormously for artists, and in some cases represented the difference between staying in Berkeley or being displaced.

## Relief and recovery programs advanced equity and reached those most impacted.

Grants were mostly awarded to historically underrepresented artists, including Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and multi-racial cultural workers. More than half of grantees reported losing at least 50% of their arts-related income in 2020, with nearly one-quarter losing 90–100%, showing funding reached those in greatest need.

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<sup>5</sup> While pandemic relief funding supported both organizations and individuals, this assessment focuses primarily on organizations. Relief to individual artists in Berkeley was important, and a high-level assessment is included, however the anonymity of individual grant awards limited the availability of detailed data. In addition, organizations serve as anchors for artists and the community and are more deeply established within communities, making their stability a clearer lens into the overall health of the creative ecosystem.



## LONG-TERM OUTCOMES FOR ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

### **Every \$1 in City funding leveraged at least \$5.64 in ongoing arts and culture economic activity.**

The City's \$2.5 million investment in arts and culture organizations during the years spanning 2020 to 2022 helped safeguard more than \$12.9 million in arts and culture revenue that otherwise would have been lost. This translates to every \$1 of City pandemic emergency funding having leveraged at least \$5.64 in arts and culture economic activity. This return captures not only the direct operations of arts and culture organizations, but also the ripple effects through local suppliers, contractors, and service providers.

### **17 of the 88 grantee organizations or 19% (of both relief and recovery programs to arts and culture organizations) closed permanently between 2020–2024, the majority of which were very small organizations.**

Nine of the 28 grantee organizations with operating budgets under \$100,000 closed, the highest number of any group. But large organizations were also not immune; two of the 13 institutions with revenues between \$1M-\$2M also shut down, as did two of the 11 organizations with operating budgets over \$2 million. This pattern shows that while scale and resources provided some resilience, no segment of the sector was fully insulated. The loss of larger organizations—typically those with the broadest audiences or consumer base, most extensive programming, and greatest fundraising capacity—underscore the vulnerability of even the city's established cultural institutions.

### **Revenue for the 71 surviving grantees sits 9% below pre-pandemic levels, though the 62 smaller surviving organizations, with budgets less than \$2 million, fared relatively better over time.**

In 2024, grantee median revenue sat 9% below the 2019 benchmark. That said, smaller grantee organizations that are still operational have fared relatively better over time than their larger peers. For many of these groups, Berkeley's relief and recovery funds represented a substantial share of their annual budgets—sometimes covering the bulk of operating revenue in a given year. This scale of support often made the difference between survival and closure, allowing small organizations not only to stay afloat but also to begin rebuilding sooner than larger institutions, which in some cases remain more deeply destabilized.

### **The 9 larger organizations with budgets over \$2 million that received grant funding faced deeper structural challenges, with current revenues sitting 33% below pre-pandemic levels.**

For larger organizations, City relief and recovery grants accounted for a smaller share of overall budgets, limiting their ability to offset the steep financial shocks of the pandemic. As a result, for organizations with operating budgets over \$1 million, funding was often described as moderately helpful rather than transformative. By 2024, revenues at these larger organizations remained one-third below 2019 benchmarks—far below the average 9% decline across all grantees.

### **Broader economic challenges are compounding strain across Berkeley arts organizations of all sizes.**

Expenses have risen much faster than income, and earned revenue has been slow to rebound, leaving organizations more reliant on contributed income. Additionally, performing arts venues in particular continue to struggle with reduced attendance and shrinking subscriber bases. As a result of both of these factors, and a changed federal funding for the arts landscape, competition for public sector and philanthropic support has intensified, making recovery uneven, precarious, and difficult for arts organizations. Compounding these challenges, downtown revitalization struggles—including empty storefronts, reduced foot traffic, and heightened safety and transportation concerns—have made it more difficult for some arts venues to fully reestablish themselves as hubs of community life.

Together, these findings illustrate that while the pandemic-era grants were not sufficient in resolving every financial challenge for Berkeley's artists and arts organizations, they served as a lifeline. For many organizations, relief and recovery funding was the difference between survival and closure during unprecedented times, ensuring that Berkeley's arts and culture ecosystem remained intact long enough to begin navigating the long road to recovery.

# PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FOR ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

Eighty-eight arts and culture organizations received at least one of the two pandemic relief and recovery grants, with 49 organizations receiving both the Arts Organization Continuity Grant in 2020 and BARG in 2022 (Figure 4). Together, these programs directed nearly \$2.5 million in emergency support to the sector, which provided targeted financial assistance to help organizations weather immediate losses, retain staff, and adapt to rapidly changing conditions.

## ARTS ORGANIZATION CONTINUITY GRANTS (2020)

In response to the immediate financial crisis faced by arts organizations during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Berkeley launched the Arts Organization Continuity Grants program in March 2020. This program was funded directly by the City of Berkeley's General Fund Catastrophic Reserve. The program ultimately awarded \$954,53 in emergency funding to 63 local nonprofit arts organizations. Grants of up to \$25,000 (with an average award of approximately \$15,150) were distributed in May 2020 to organizations that demonstrated a loss of at least 25% in earned revenue, such as ticket sales, class fees, or venue rentals.

The program was designed as emergency gap funding to stabilize organizations experiencing acute financial hardship. Eligibility was limited to Berkeley-based organizations with a mission focused on the development or presentation of arts and culture, including fiscally sponsored entities. In keeping with the City's 2018 Arts & Culture Plan and commitment to cultural equity, applications were evaluated not only on financial need but also on equity-centered criteria, such as whether the organization worked primarily with artists from historically marginalized communities, served underrepresented audiences, operated in geographically underserved parts of Berkeley, or had a staff and board composition reflective of diverse communities.

## BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS AND FESTIVALS (2022)

In 2022, the City of Berkeley distributed over \$1.5 million in one-time Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (BARG) to 74 nonprofit arts organizations and recurring festivals as part of its broader pandemic recovery strategy. Funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, the BARG program was designed to support sustainable recovery for Berkeley's arts sector after nearly two years of widespread disruption in the sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Award amounts ranged from \$3,000 to \$33,000, with an average award of approximately \$20,700 per organization.

Eligible applicants included Berkeley-based nonprofit or fiscally sponsored arts organizations and recurring festivals that had experienced a decline in revenue between 2019 and 2020. Awards were determined through a scoring system that prioritized organizations serving or led by historically marginalized communities, with 70% of the evaluation focused on cultural equity factors such as programming by or for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, low-income, disabled, senior, or unhoused populations. Funds could be used to offset lost revenue, support safe reopening efforts, or invest in long-term sustainability through marketing, consulting, or business planning.

Figure 4: Summary of Berkeley Pandemic Relief and Recovery Grants for Arts & Culture Organizations

	PROGRAM YEAR	RECIPIENT TYPE	NUMBER OF GRANTEES	TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED	AVERAGE GRANT AWARDED
ARTS ORGANIZATION CONTINUITY GRANTS	2020	Nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored arts and culture organizations	63	\$954,543	\$15,151
BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS AND FESTIVALS	2022	Nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored arts and culture organizations and festivals	74	\$1,532,345	\$20,707

Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.



## PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY GRANT IMPACT FOR ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

Although grantees varied in focus, size, and diversity, all Berkeley organizations faced acute financial hardships resulting from the pandemic, and for many, this persists into the present day. The scale of these challenges is underscored by the grantees themselves, who reported widespread disruptions to programming, facilities, and core revenue streams as the pandemic unfolded.

To better understand how Berkeley's pandemic relief and recovery funding shaped the local arts ecosystem, CVL Economics surveyed grantee organizations. Of the 88 organizations that received support through the Arts Organization Continuity Grant (2020) or the Berkeley Arts Recovery Grant (BARG; 2022), 30 completed the survey, providing valuable insights into both the immediate and lasting effects of the City's investment.<sup>6</sup>

### COVID-19 Disruptions

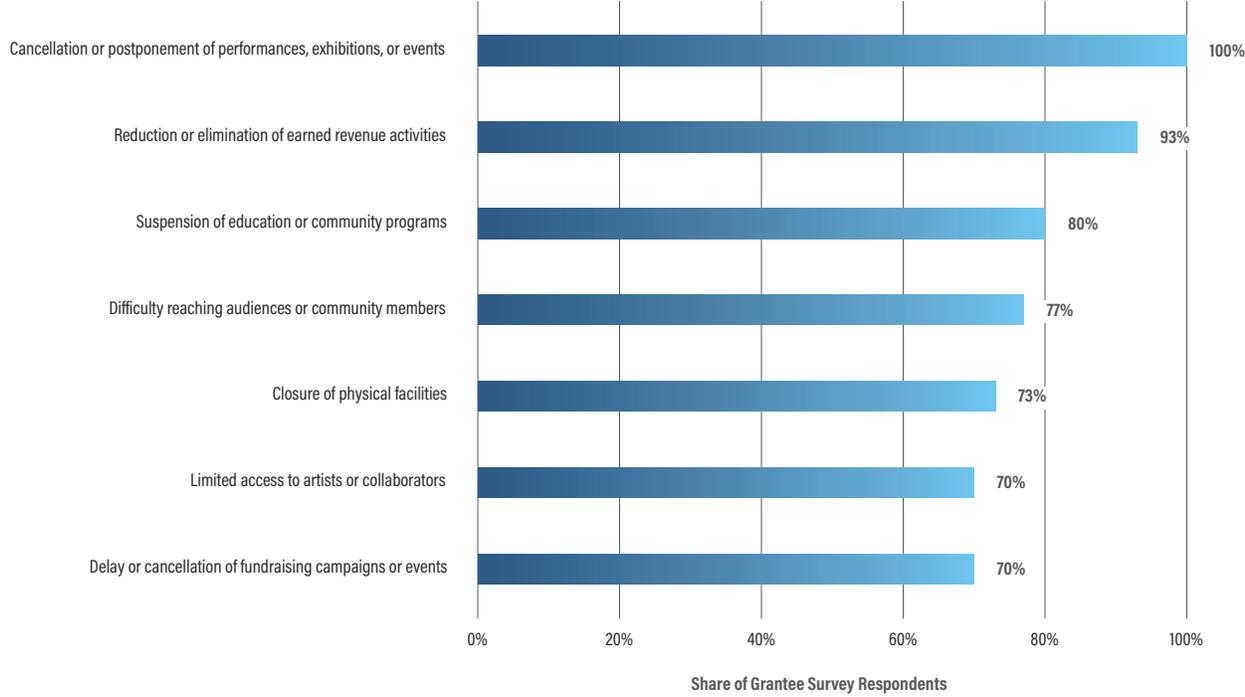
At the onset of the pandemic in mid-March 2020, every grantee organization had to cancel or postpone performances, exhibitions, or events. In a survey of grant recipients conducted five years later, in June 2025, 80% reported suspended education or community programs; and more than 73% were forced to close their physical facilities, resulting in the reduction or elimination of key earned revenue activities (Figure 5). Another 70% reported having to delay or cancel critical fundraising campaigns, cutting off vital revenue streams at a moment when operational expenses remained constant or, in some cases, increased due to safety measures.

Community connection was also severely disrupted by the pandemic in Berkeley. Nearly 77% of respondents reported difficulties reaching audiences or community members, a challenge compounded by the digital divide and the learning curve associated with pivoting to online programming. Limited access to artists, collaborators, and essential partners was cited by 70% of organizations, underscoring how the pandemic fractured the networks that sustain creative production.

The employment landscape in Berkeley in this sector shifted dramatically as well (Figure 6). Forty-three percent (43%) of arts organizations implemented temporary layoffs or furloughs, 40% imposed hiring freezes, and 13% faced permanent position eliminations. These staffing impacts not only affected the livelihoods of arts workers but also reduced organizational capacity, making recovery more difficult even after restrictions eased.

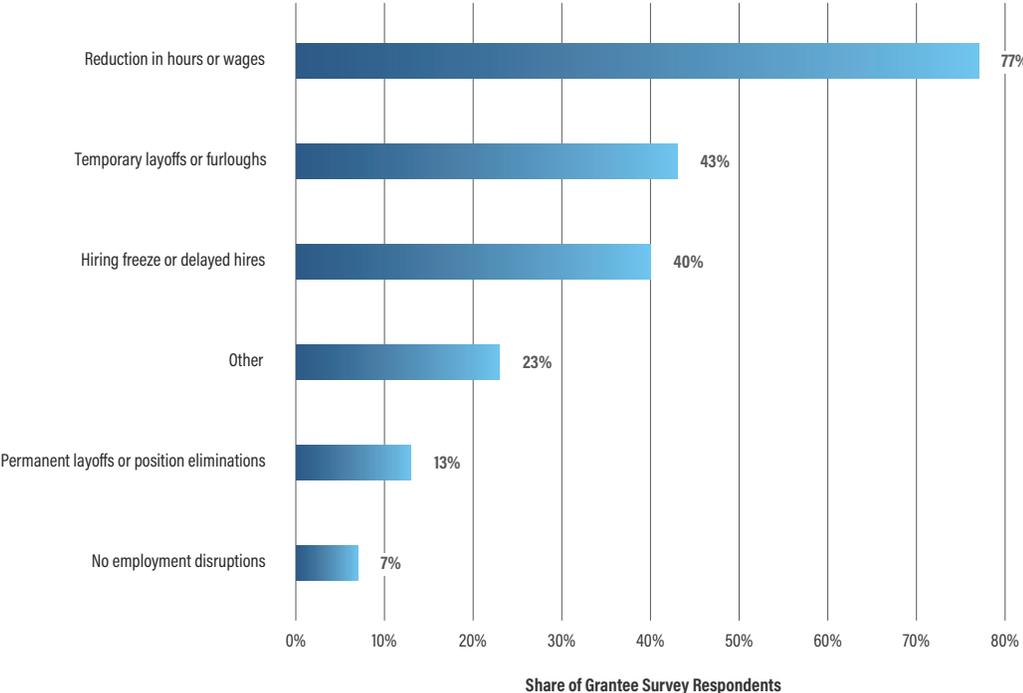
<sup>6</sup> See Appendix A.1 for more details on survey methodology.

Figure 5: Immediate COVID-19 Disruptions Experienced by Berkeley Arts Organizations



N=30  
 Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

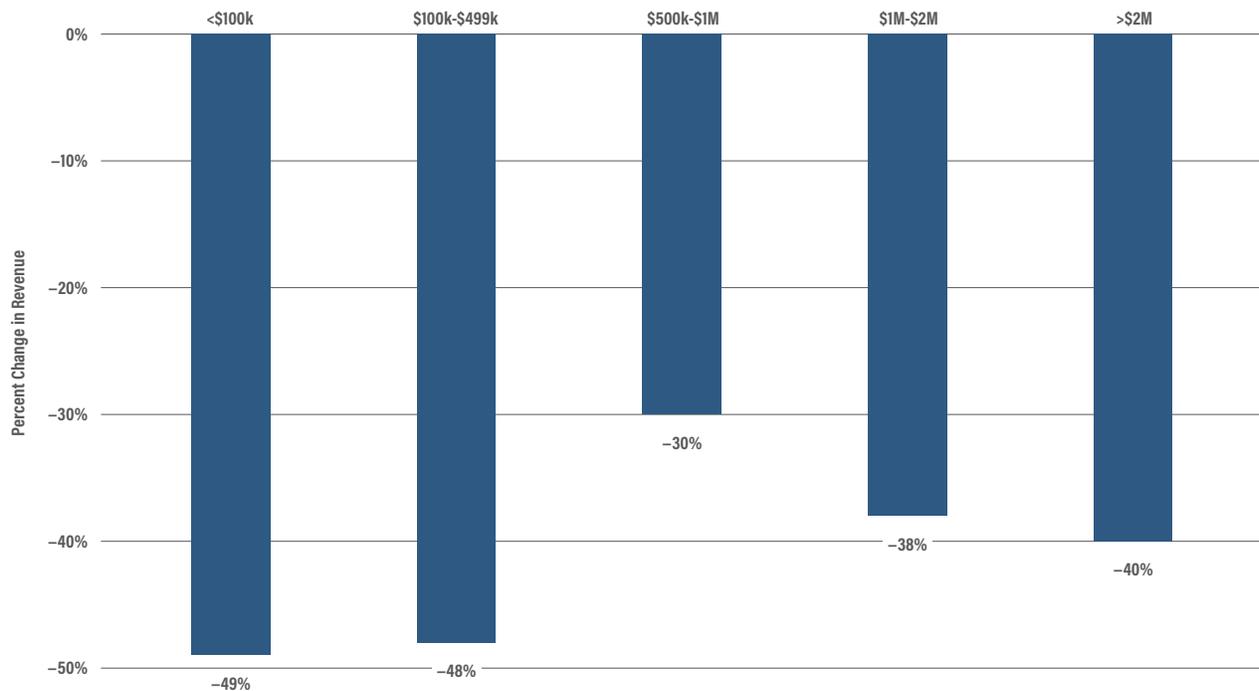
Figure 6: Immediate COVID-19 Employment Disruptions Experienced by Berkeley Arts Organizations



N=30  
 Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

The financial toll of these disruptions is reflected in the immediate revenue loss experienced by grantee organizations (Figure 7). Across the 74 BARG grantees, average revenue fell by 44% between 2019 and 2020. The depth of these losses varied significantly by organization size. The smallest organizations—those with annual budgets under \$100,000—were hit the hardest, with revenues dropping nearly 50% on average. Mid-sized organizations with budgets between \$500,000 and \$1 million saw the least severe declines, though they still averaged a 30% loss. Large organizations with budgets over \$2 million were not immune either, facing an average revenue reduction of 40% at the onset of the pandemic.

Figure 7: Grantee Revenue Loss by Organization Size | 2019–2020



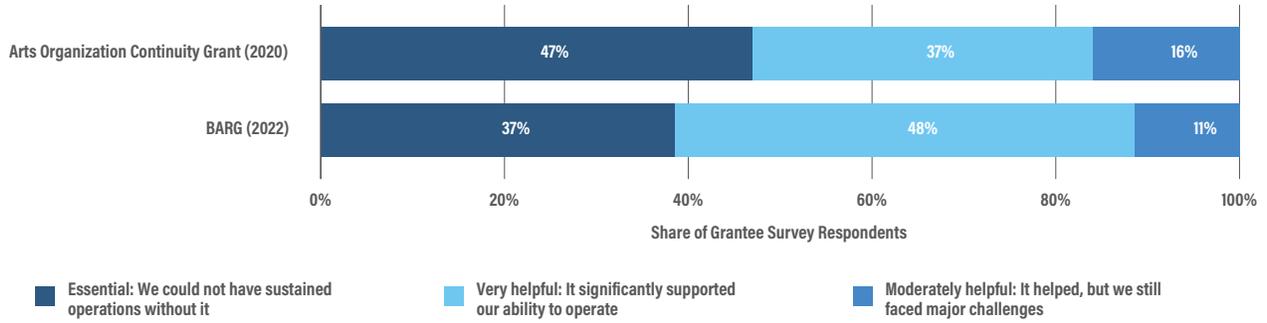
Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

## IMMEDIATE IMPACTS: ROLE OF PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUNDING

Berkeley’s pandemic relief and recovery grants for arts and cultural organizations were not just helpful but essential for many grantees (Figure 8). Nearly half of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients (47%) and more than a third of BARG recipients (37%) said they could not have sustained operations without the grant. Another 37% of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients and 48% of BARG grantees reported that the funding was very helpful, significantly supporting their ability to continue operating.

The grants played a pivotal role in preventing widespread layoffs and closures. Eighty-four percent (84%) of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients and 70% of BARG recipients said the grants helped them avoid workforce reductions, protecting jobs during the most precarious months of the pandemic (Figure 9). Similarly, 84% of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients and 74% of BARG recipients said the funding prevented them from permanently shutting down (Figure 10).

Figure 8: Extent to Which Pandemic Relief and Recovery Funding Was Essential Among Berkeley’s Grant Recipients

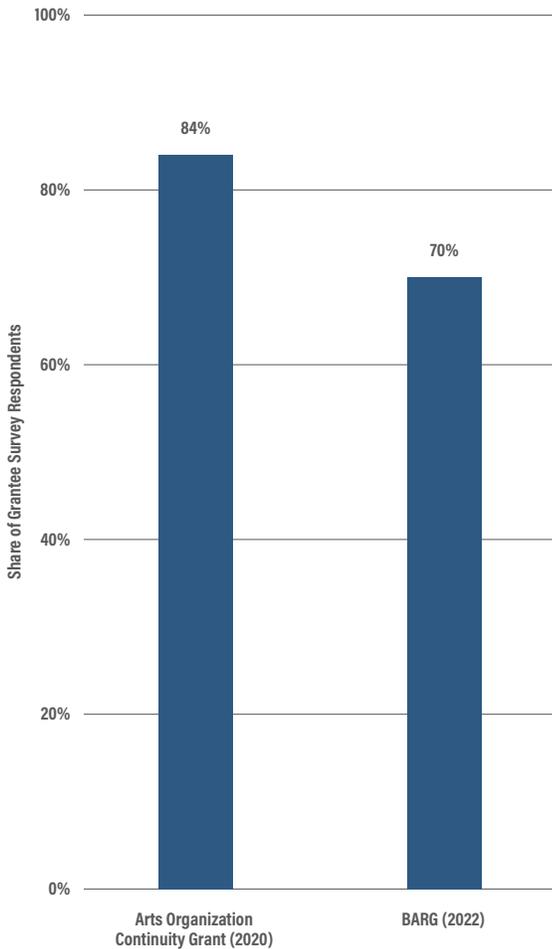


N=30

Note: Responses were measured on a five-point scale from “Not at all helpful” to “Essential.” No respondents selected either of the two ratings below “Moderately helpful.”

Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

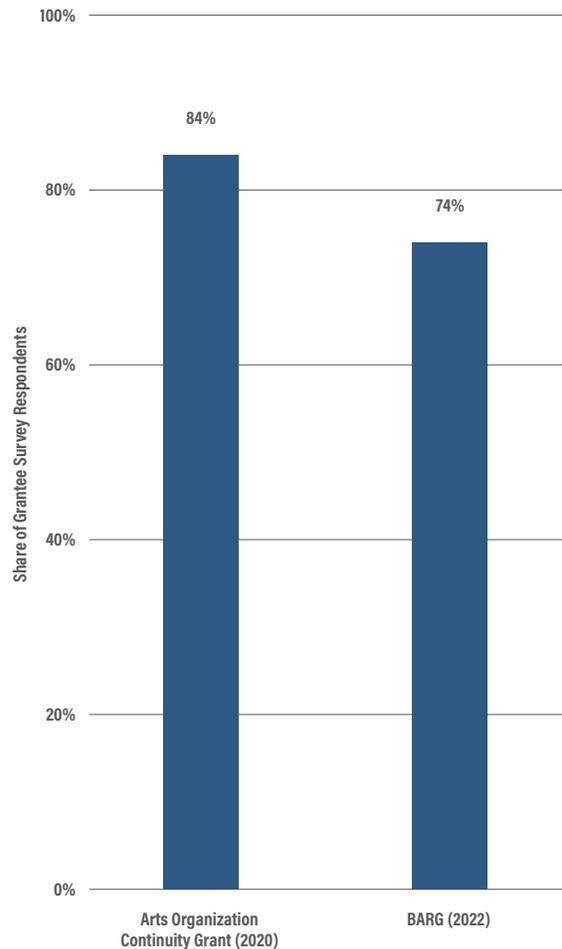
Figure 9: Share of Grantees That Avoided Layoffs Due to the Grants



N=30

Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

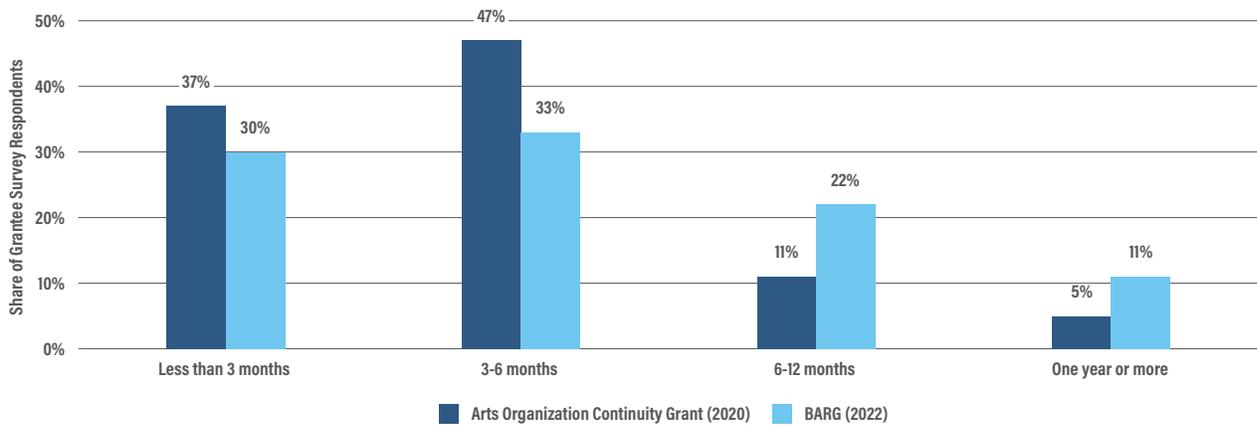
Figure 10: Share of Grantees That Avoided Closure Due to the Grants



Given their distribution in the earliest stages of the pandemic, the Arts Organization Continuity Grants provided critical short-term relief, serving as a bridge during the early days of the pandemic and sustaining arts organizations until other assistance programs became available. For many organizations, the funding was the difference between survival and immediate closure. That said, the support tended to last for a shorter duration and left fewer long-term organizational changes in place than the BARG program. Most (84%) Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients said the funding lasted less than 6 months (Figure 11). More than half (53%) of recipients reported that the funds helped them survive the pandemic but did not generate lasting impact, and only 5% described the funding as transformative (Figure 12).

By contrast, BARG—issued at a time when most organizations had transitioned from response to recovery phases— tended to have a broader effect. The grants were generally larger, conditions had shifted toward reopening, the “new normal” was settling in, and organizations were positioned to leverage fiscal support for longer-term stability. Reflecting this, nearly half of BARG recipients (48%) said the grants helped them stabilize and make strategic changes, and almost one in five (19%) reported transformative, lasting impacts. Even in terms of duration, BARG funding stretched further: a third of recipients reported that it sustained operations for six months or more.

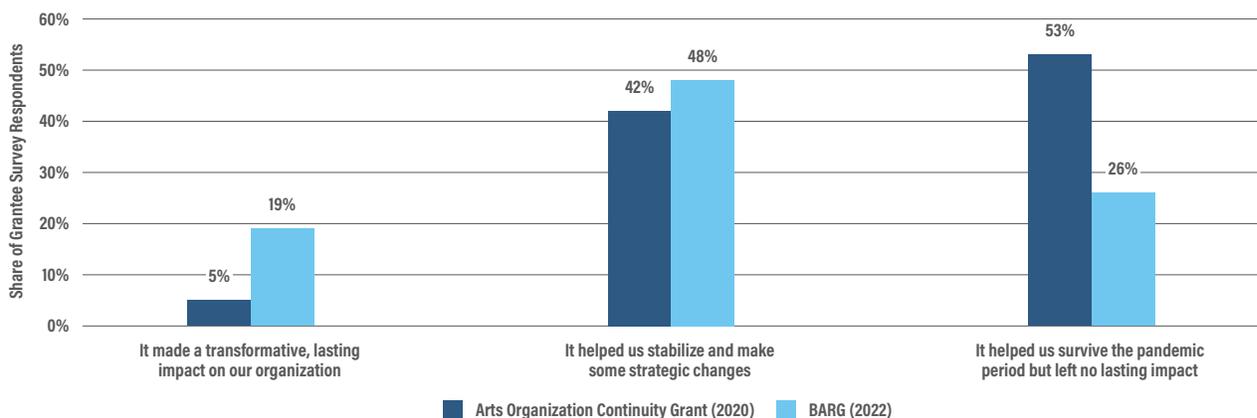
**Figure 11: Length of Time Grants Sustained Operations in Berkeley**



N=30

Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

**Figure 12: Scale of Grant Impact on Berkeley Arts and Culture Organizations**



N=30

Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

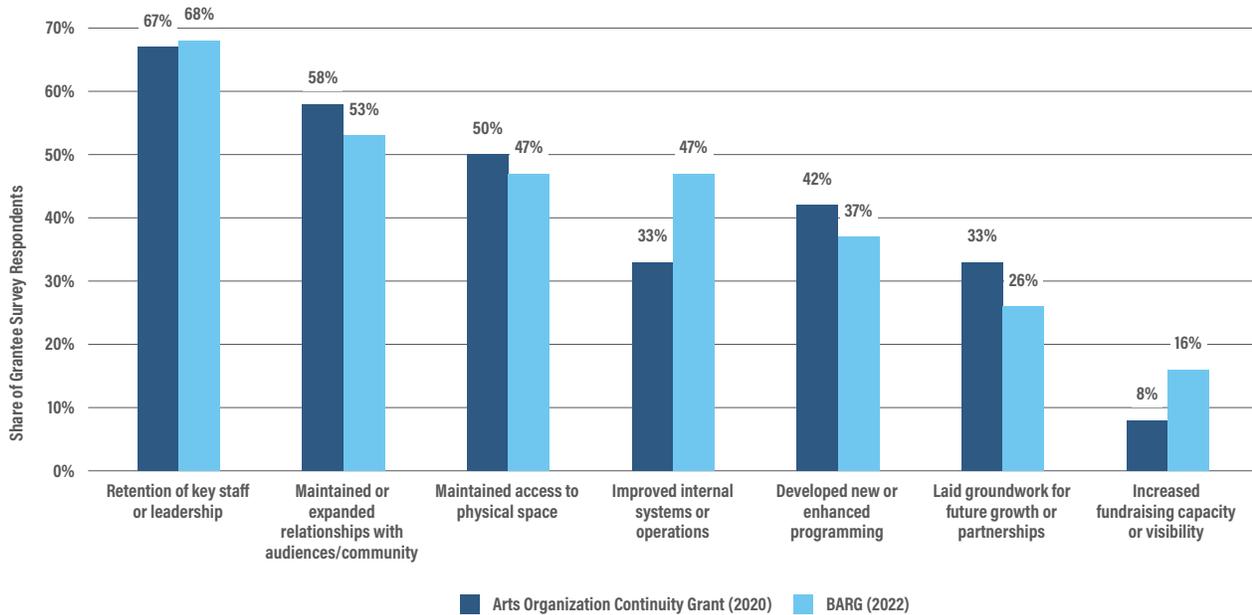
Organizations reported that relief and recovery funding helped them retain staff and leadership (67% of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients and 68% of BARG recipients) (Figure 13). More than half credited the grants with enabling them to maintain or expand relationships with their audiences and communities (58% and 53%, respectively), and nearly half of grantees noted that the funding allowed them to sustain access to physical spaces.

Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients were more likely than BARG recipients to report developing new or enhanced programming (42% vs. 37%). This difference likely reflects the urgent pivot many organizations were forced to make at the height of the pandemic crisis—rapidly adapting to online or hybrid formats, experimenting with digital content, and reimagining community

engagement in a socially distanced world. In other words, the Arts Organization Continuity Grant helped seed immediate programmatic adjustments that allowed organizations to stay connected with their audiences under extraordinary circumstances.

By contrast, the BARG program in 2022 was more about strengthening internal systems, fundraising, and longer-term stabilization as organizations adjusted to a new operating environment. Nearly half of BARG recipients (47%) reported using funds to improve internal systems and operations, compared to just a third of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients. Additionally, 16% of BARG grantees said the funds helped increase fundraising capacity or visibility, compared to 8% of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients.

**Figure 13: Detailed Impact of Relief and Recovery Grants for Berkeley Arts and Culture Organizations**



N=30

Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

The distinction between the two grant programs points to a critical shift in focus of the City's approach to pandemic relief and recovery across the arts and culture sector. While the earlier Arts Continuity Grant program was more focused on immediate survival, the BARG program was better positioned to help organizations adapt to a new normal by strengthening infrastructure and building capacity to generate new revenue. Notably, most organizations (49 out of the 88 grantees) were able to benefit from both rounds of relief and recovery funding. This compounded support allowed grantees not only to weather the initial crisis but also to remain afloat during the prolonged and unpredictable recovery period, extending the effect of the funding well beyond a single grant cycle.

## LONG-TERM OUTCOMES: WHERE GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS STAND IN 2025

Five years since the onset of the pandemic, we can begin to see the longer-term impacts on Berkeley's arts and culture ecosystem. The initial shock was compounded by rising costs for labor, rent, and production; challenges rebuilding and retaining staff; slower-than-expected audience and consumer engagement recovery; and changes in the funding landscape.

### Organizational Closures

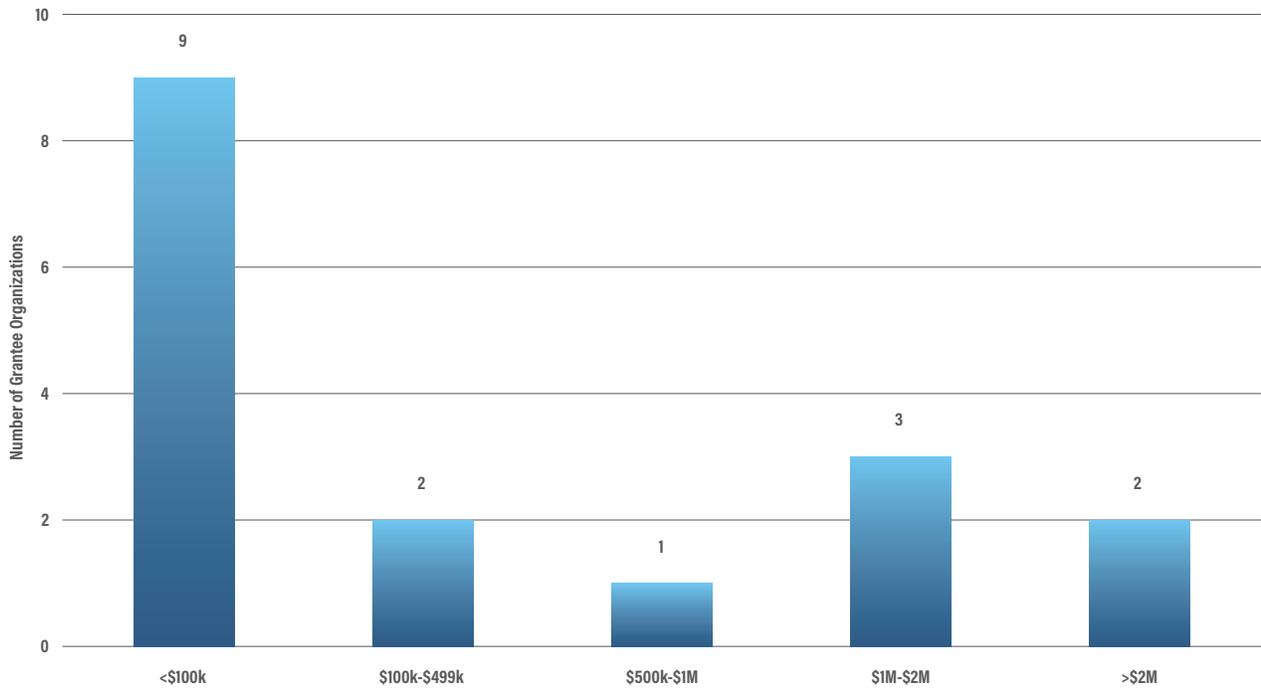
Despite the critical role of relief and recovery funding, not all grantee organizations were able to withstand the prolonged pressures of the pandemic and its aftermath. Between 2020 and 2024, 17 grantee organizations ultimately closed. Of those 17 organizations, the vast majority were small (Figure 14). The steepest losses were among grantees with annual budgets under \$100,000: nine organizations of this size were unable to continue operating. Mid-sized organizations fared better, with only one organization closing with a budget between \$500,000 and \$1 million. Larger organizations also experienced notable losses: five organizations with budgets over \$1 million closed during this period. Among the closures were two of Berkeley's established and well-known institutions: the Bay Area Children's Theatre in 2023 (which had an operating budget exceeding \$3 million) and the Aurora Theatre Company in 2025.<sup>7</sup>

This pattern shows that while scale and resources provided some resilience, no segment of the sector was fully insulated. For larger organizations—typically those with the broadest audiences or consumer base, most extensive programming, and greatest fundraising capacity—such losses underscore the vulnerability of even the city's most established cultural institutions.

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<sup>7</sup> At the time of writing, Aurora Theatre Company has not officially announced a permanent closure, but it has announced staff layoffs and the closure of its venue; for the purposes of this analysis, we are considering it closed. See: Lily Janiak, "Bay Area Theater Moves to Lay Off Staff, Vacate Downtown Berkeley Venue," August 12, 2025, San Francisco Chronicle, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/entertainment/article/aurora-theatre-layoffs-venue-vacate-20813096.php>.

Figure 14: Closures Among Berkeley Arts Relief and Recovery Grantee Organizations by Revenue Size



Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

While small organizations were more likely than larger ones to face permanent closure, those that survived often reported that pandemic relief and recovery funding was especially critical to their survival. For organizations with annual budgets under \$100,000, the grants represented a larger share of their total operating revenue (Figure 15).

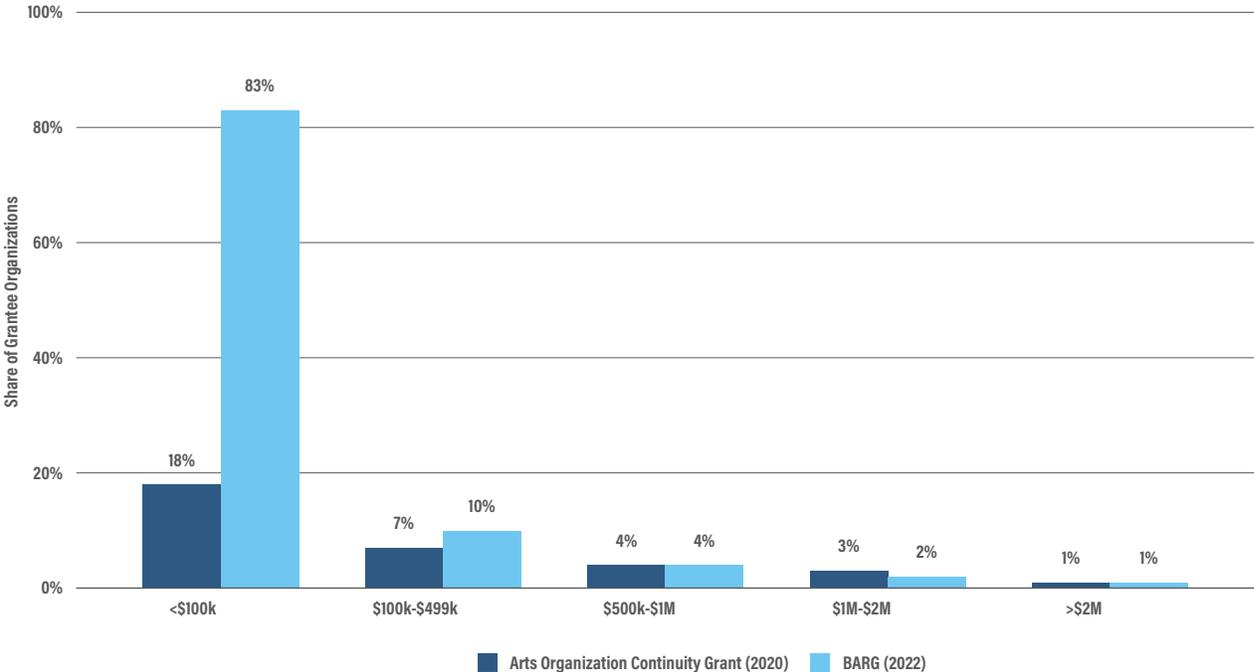
By contrast, larger organizations tended to view the grants as moderately helpful—providing short-term relief without fundamentally altering their financial trajectory. For institutions with budgets exceeding \$2 million, the grants made up less than 1% of annual revenue. Notably, because award criteria emphasized equity and demonstrated revenue loss rather than organizational size, some of the smallest organizations received equal or even greater funding amounts than their much larger counterparts. This approach magnified the impact of relief

and recovery funds for smaller organizations, and it aligned with the intent of the American Rescue Plan Act (the BARG program leveraged ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds dollars), which explicitly recognized the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities of color and sought to direct resources toward advancing equity in recovery.<sup>8</sup>

The significance of this support comes in light of the fact that more than one-quarter (28%) of grantee organizations reported receiving no other forms of pandemic-related financial assistance (Figure 16). For these organizations, the City of Berkeley's grants meant the difference between survival and closure, particularly for smaller organizations that may have lacked the capacity or access to other federal, state, or county-level programs.

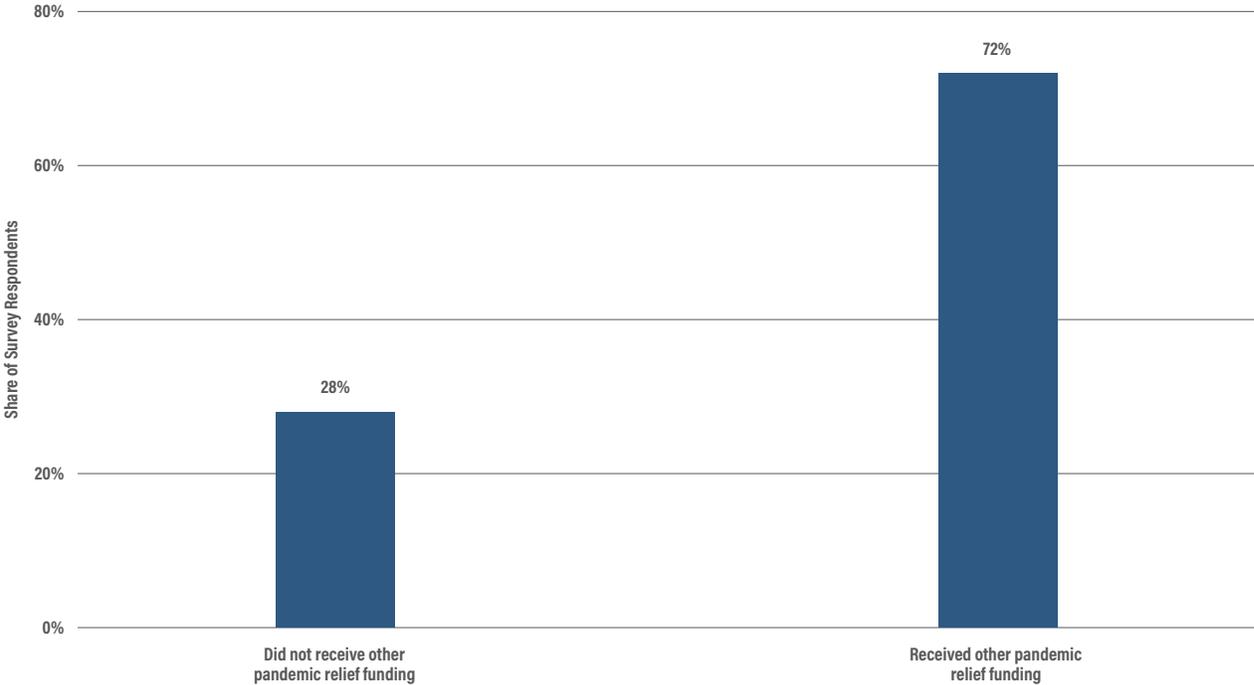
<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Interim Final Rule, Federal Register, 86(93), 26786–26861 (2021), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/05/17/2021-10283/coronavirus-state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds>.

Figure 15: Average Size of Grant in Proportion to Total Operating Budget by Organization Size



Source: City of Berkeley, Internal Revenue Service, CVL Economics.

Figure 16: Share of Respondents that Received Other Pandemic Relief Support

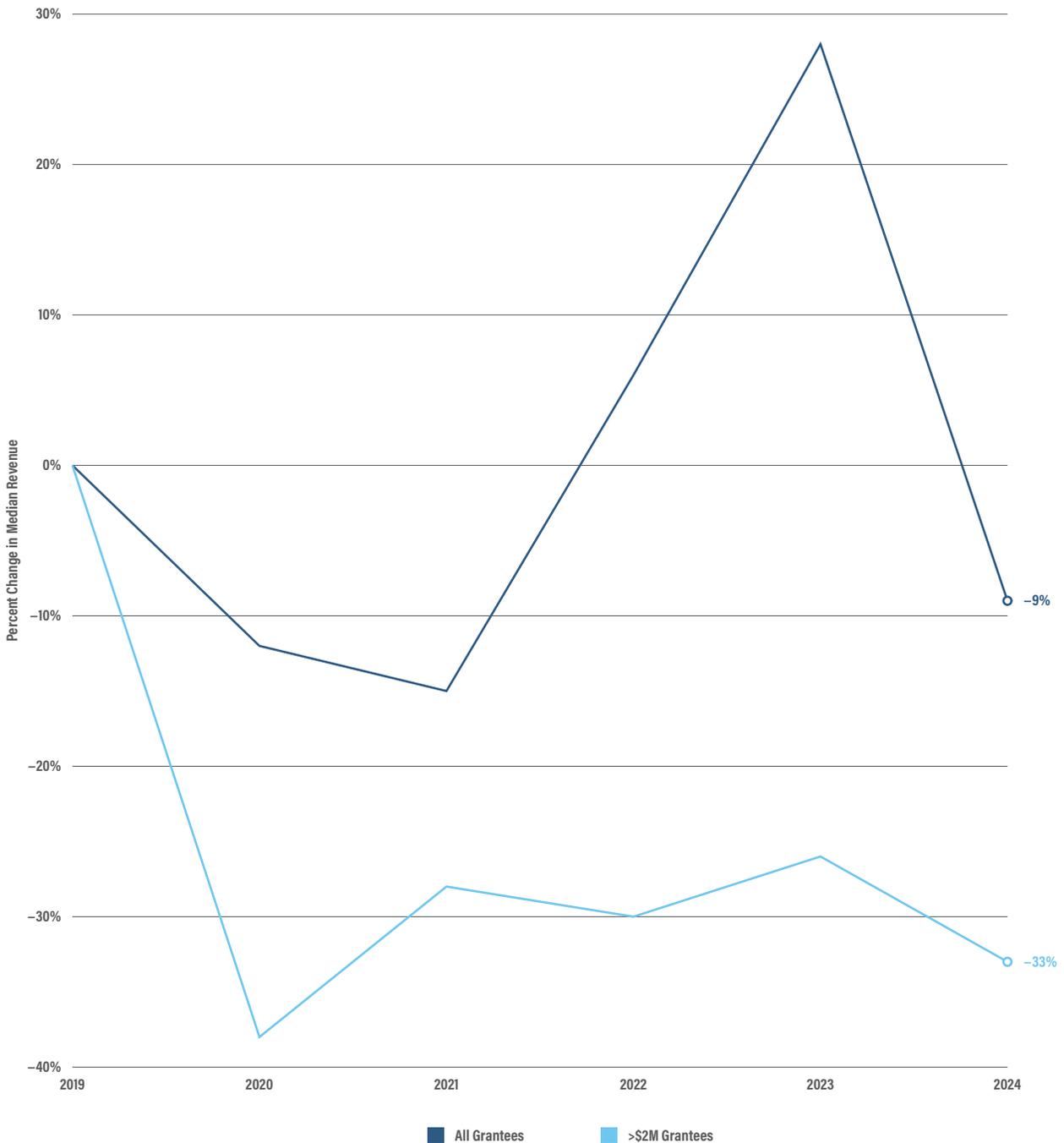


N=30  
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

### Evolving Revenue Streams and Rising Costs

By 2024, the median revenue across all surviving grantees was still 9% below pre-pandemic levels—although this was still an improvement from the sector’s low point in 2021, when the median revenue had fallen 15% from 2019 (Figure 17). While smaller organizations were far more likely to close their doors permanently, those that survived fared relatively better than the largest organizations over time; the median revenue for grantee organizations with budgets above \$2 million, on the other hand, is still one-third below 2019 benchmarks.

Figure 17: Percent Change in Median Surviving Berkeley Grantee Revenue Since 2019



Note: Based on the median inflation-adjusted (2024 dollars) revenue across the 71 surviving grantee organizations.  
Source: Internal Revenue Service, CVL Economics.

These patterns map onto broader regional trends: smaller organizations tended to show greater resiliency in recovery than their larger counterparts. A 2024 report on the sustainability of Bay Area performing arts organizations post-pandemic found that micro-organizations (defined as very small organizations, often characterized as those with fewer than 10 employees)—despite being largely excluded from federal relief programs—remained nimble by expanding programs and attendance, maintaining or growing their artistic workforce, and prioritizing community engagement and mission-focused recovery, even as expenses outpaced revenue growth.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, while larger organizations experienced the highest increase in government funding during the pandemic and exceptional federal relief programs kept many of these institutions afloat, those temporary funds are now waning, leaving structural financial gaps behind.

Across the Bay Area, arts organization expenses have risen much faster than income. Between 2022 and 2023, total expenses for regional arts organizations increased by 21% while revenues fell 12%. Earned revenue rebounded by 42% in 2023 but remained 26% below pre-pandemic levels after adjusting for inflation. In-person attendance more than doubled between 2022 and 2023, yet still sat 42% below 2019 levels. As a result, organizations have grown increasingly dependent on contributed income.<sup>10</sup>

These local trends reflect broader national patterns in the nonprofit performing arts sector. Nationwide, total income dropped sharply during the pandemic and, while it has begun to recover, expenses have risen at a much faster pace since 2021 (Figure 18). Regional theaters also report losing 20–30% of subscribers since 2019, eroding a dependable source of earned revenue and compounding these financial pressures.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, the funding mix has shifted: as earned income has struggled to rebound, contributed income now accounts for a larger share of organizational budgets (Figure 19). Even so, recent budget cycles have become more challenging, with heightened competition for contributed dollars. Many foundations are shifting priorities

away from the arts, while federal uncertainty has created a chilling effect nationwide. Proposals from the executive branch to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, to condition or cancel awarded grants, and to impose new ideological restrictions on future eligibility have further undermined confidence for arts organizations across the country.

Locally, these trends are echoed by the experiences of the grantee organizations in Berkeley. Over 81% reported that financial stability remains their most pressing challenge today, followed closely by rising costs (74%) (Figure 20). Nearly half cited the intensifying competition for limited public and private funding as a major barrier and 30% reported access to affordable space as a top challenge. Some organizations also included rebuilding audience engagement and attendance, difficulty retaining or hiring qualified staff, and limited capacity for grant writing or fundraising as top challenges. Understanding these specific challenges helps inform local grantmaking by highlighting where support is most urgently needed—not only in covering rising operating costs, but also in building organizational capacity, sustaining workforce pipelines, and ensuring that cultural offerings remain accessible in Berkeley.

Feedback from stakeholder outreach reinforced these findings. As one organization leader put it, “It’s more expensive than ever to operate in the Bay Area. Meanwhile, federal and state support is drying up and audiences have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.” This illustrates the compounding pressures organizations now face: not only are operating costs escalating, but audience behavior has shifted in ways that directly affect earned revenue and long-term sustainability.

For many, this includes challenges rebuilding traditional subscriber bases. While theatre subscribers had already been in steady decline over a long horizon, the pandemic accelerated this trend—leaving older and more risk-averse audiences slower to return and making it increasingly difficult to rely on subscription revenue as a notable income stream. Berkeley Rep illustrates this shift: at its

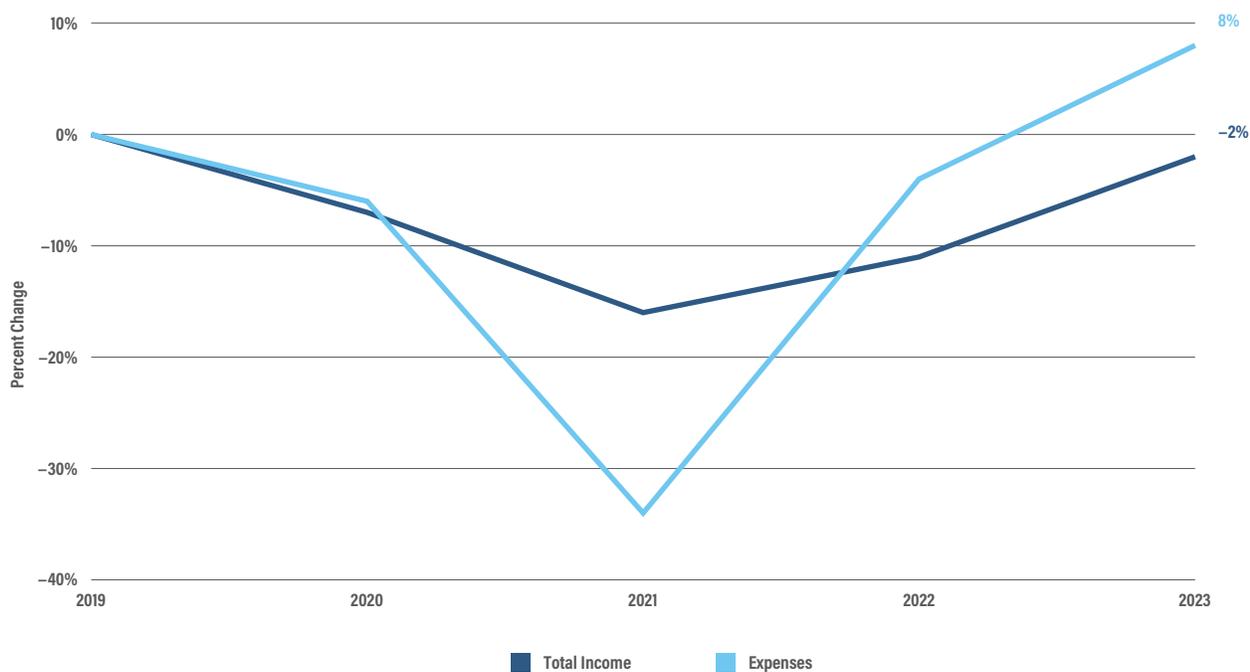
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<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Rainin Foundation & SMU DataArts at Southern Methodist University, Bay Area Arts and Culture Organizational Sustainability Survey Report: Top line findings, 2019–2023 (2024), <https://culturaldata.org/learn/data-at-work/2025/kenneth-rainin-foundation-smu-dataarts-bay-area-sustainability-assessment>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

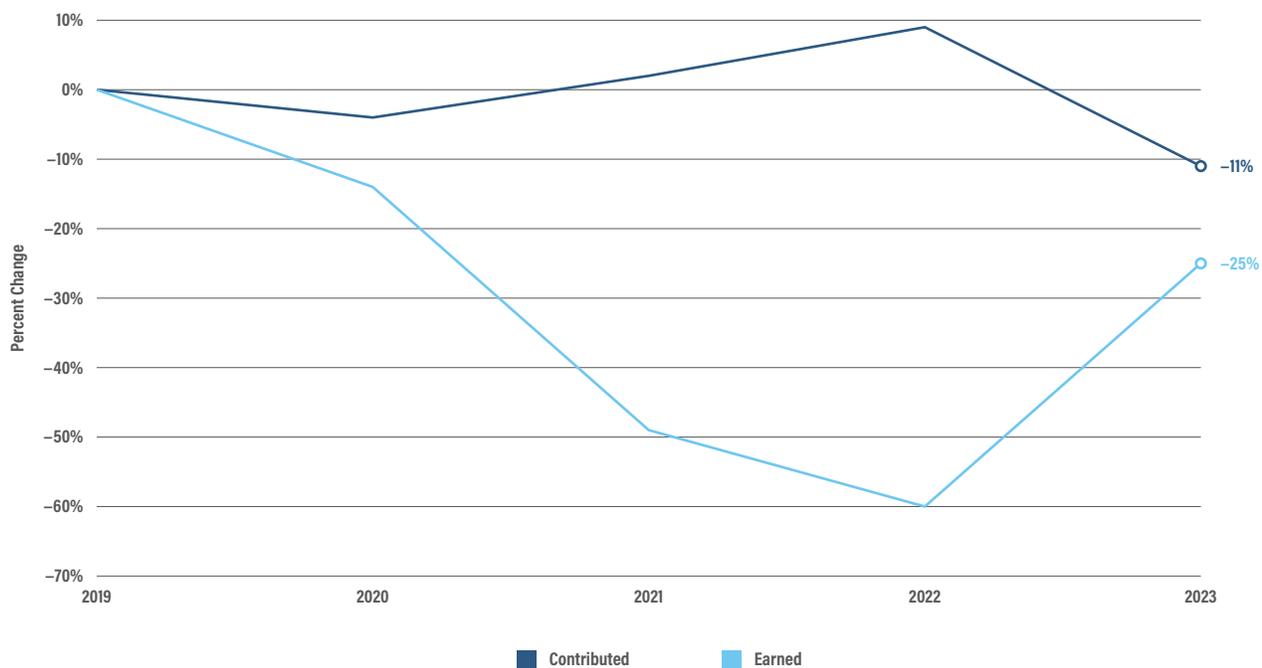
<sup>11</sup> Michael Paulson, “A Crisis in America’s Theaters Leaves Prestigious Stages Dark,” *The New York Times*, July 23, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/23/theater/regional-theater-crisis.html>.

Figure 18: Percent Change in Total Income and Expenses of Nationwide Nonprofit Performing Arts Organizations Since 2019



Source: Theatre Communications Group, CVL Economics.

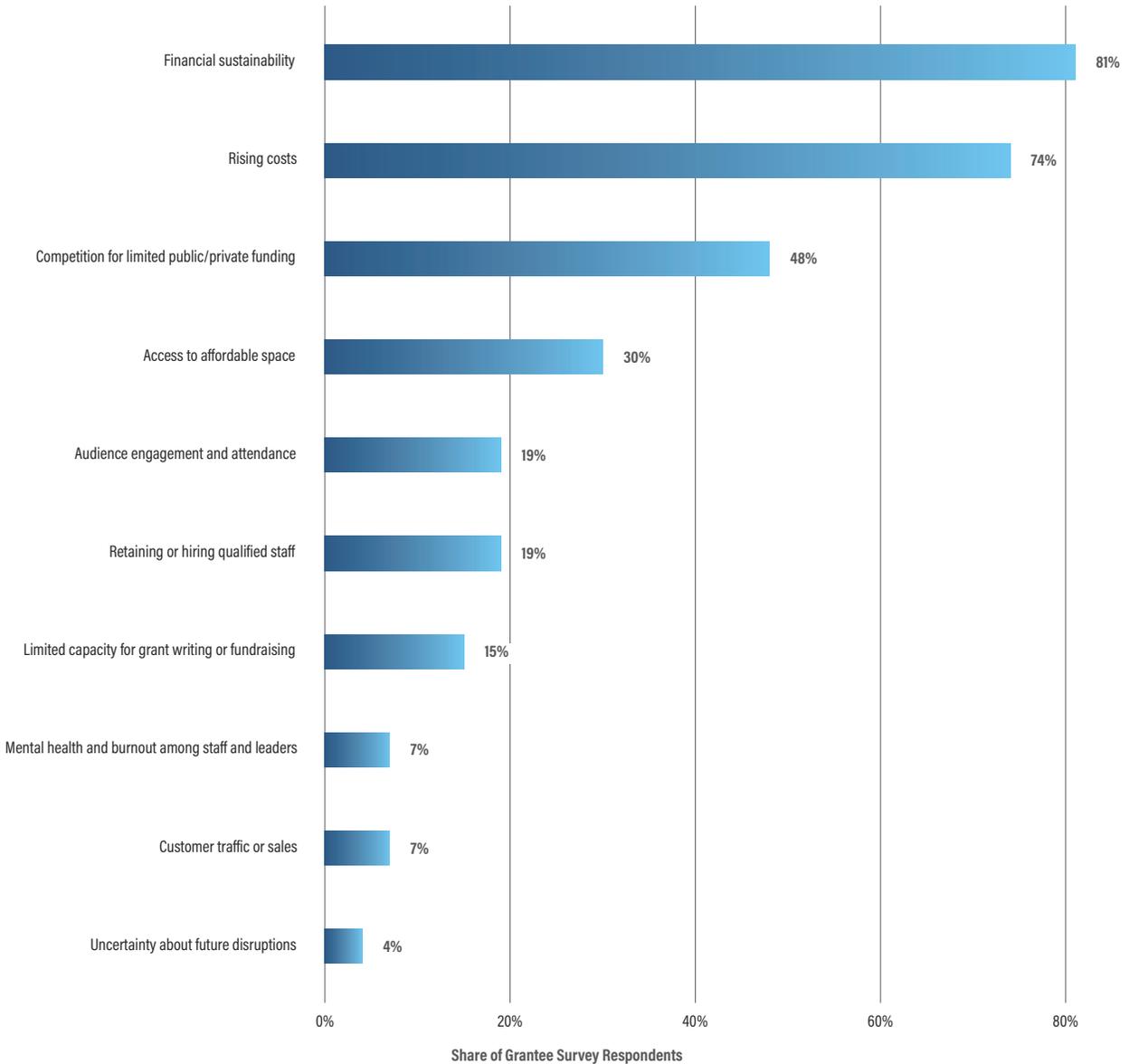
Figure 19: Percent Change in Income Type of Nonprofit Performing Arts Organizations Nationwide since 2019



Source: Theatre Communications Group, CVL Economics.

peak the theatre had about 22,000 season ticket holders, compared to roughly 12,000 just before the pandemic; today subscriptions hover closer to 9,000, with the goal of stabilizing around 10,000—acknowledging it is unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels. While subscriptions rarely make up the majority of a theatre company’s revenue, they serve as a critical pipeline for cultivating individual donors—a major source of contributed income. A shrinking subscriber base not only reduces reliable ticket revenue but also weakens the sense of loyalty that often leads patrons to become long-term donors, making fundraising even more difficult.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 20: Top Challenges Berkeley Art and Culture Organization Grantees Face Today**



N=30

Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

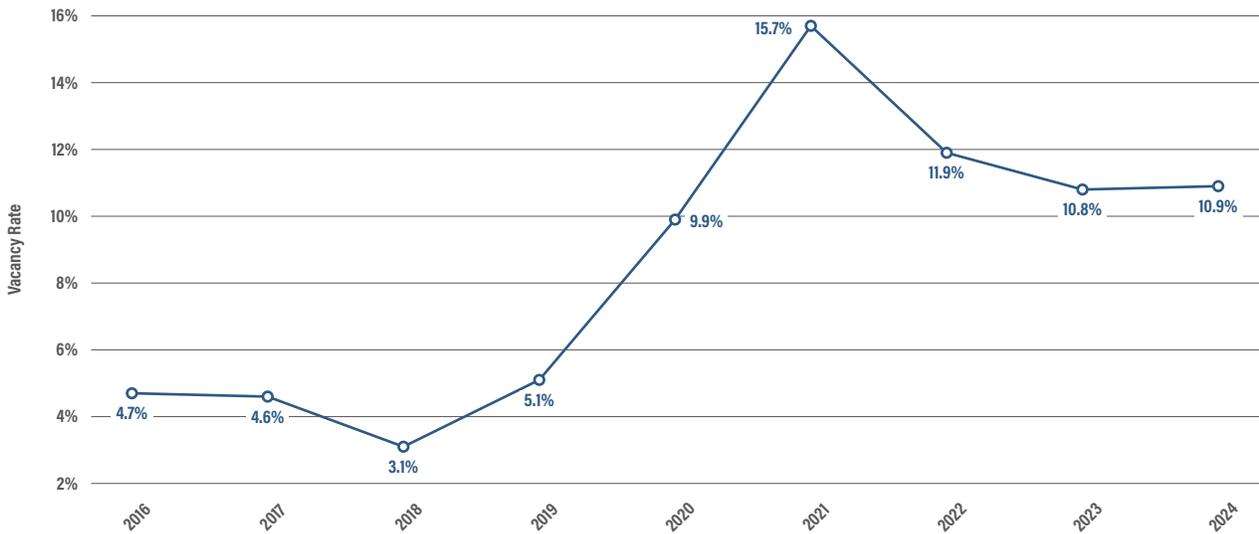
<sup>12</sup> Lily Janiak. “Can Bay Area Theaters Make Subscriptions Sexy Again? A Quick Survey Shows Subscription Declines of 23% to 61% Since the Pandemic.” Datebook/San Francisco Chronicle, July 26, 2023. <https://datebook.sfchronicle.com/theater/bay-area-theater-subscription-18197863>.

## Ecosystem Challenges

These financial and audience pressures are compounded by the broader struggles facing Berkeley's urban environment. Empty storefronts, shuttered restaurants, and declining foot traffic have weakened the vibrancy that cultural districts depend on to attract and sustain audiences. As one stakeholder noted, "The Downtown area, like many downtown areas, is visibly struggling to retain tenants and drive foot traffic, which is concerning." "In 2024, Downtown Berkeley's ground floor commercial vacancy rate sat well above pre-pandemic levels (Figure 21). At 10.9%, the vacancy rate was more than double its 3.1% rate in 2019 — driven in large part by the enduring shift to remote and hybrid work, which has sharply reduced demand for traditional office space across the Bay Area. Fewer daily office workers have also meant fewer customers to nearby restaurants, cafés, and shops, which has in turn contributed to a rise in retail vacancies. These economic pressures are compounded by heightened safety concerns and ongoing transportation limitations, which have further reduced accessibility. The result is a more difficult operating environment for cultural organizations: even well-resourced institutions face added headwinds, while smaller and midsize groups struggle most to regain stability.

Across all of these challenges, the recent suspension of Aurora Theatre Company activities in mid-2025 exemplifies how these pressures converge: leadership has pointed to attendance never fully recovering from the pandemic, skyrocketing costs, and shifting philanthropic priorities as factors threatening its future.<sup>13</sup> The theatre joins a growing list of Berkeley organizations that have already closed or gone dormant—including the Bay Area Children's Theatre, TheatreFirst, and the Youth Musical Theatre Company. The precarity extends to the city's remaining flagship organizations as well: Berkeley Repertory Theatre faces a \$5 million deficit, Berkeley Symphony is operating with a reported \$500,000 structural deficit, and Freight & Salvage has a \$200,000 deficit—illustrating how fragile the ecosystem remains.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 21: Downtown Berkeley Groundfloor Commercial Vacancy Rate | 2016–2024



Note: Includes office and retail properties.

Source: City of Berkeley Office of Economic Development, CVL Economics.

<sup>13</sup> Lily Janiak, "Bay Area theater moves to lay off staff, vacate downtown Berkeley venue," San Francisco Chronicle, August 12, 2025, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/entertainment/article/aurora-theatre-layoffs-venue-vacate-20813096.php>

<sup>14</sup> Stakeholder interviews.

## THE CITY OF BERKELEY'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY DURING THE PANDEMIC (2020-2022)



While revenues across Berkeley's arts and culture ecosystem remain below pre-pandemic levels, it is important to consider not only what was lost but also what was preserved. Every organization that received Arts Organization Continuity Grant or BARG funding was required to demonstrate clear financial hardship as a condition of eligibility. In the case of Arts Organization Continuity Grants, for example, applicants had to show at least a 25% decline in earned revenue. Half of the grantee organizations experienced revenue loss of over 40%, and some organizations experienced a 100% decline in earned revenue.

Survey results highlight the critical role of the City of Berkeley's funding intervention. More than one-quarter of grantees (28%) reported receiving no other pandemic relief. For these organizations, the City's programs were their only source of external support. Without this funding, it is reasonable to assume that many would have been unable to sustain operations in Berkeley—likely joining the 17 organizations that ultimately closed between 2020 and 2024.

Over a five-year period (2020–2024), **the absence of City relief and recovery support would have resulted in an estimated additional \$12.9 million in revenue losses across the local arts and culture ecosystem by 2024.<sup>15</sup> As such, the preservation effect of the City of Berkeley's \$2.5 million investment in pandemic relief and recovery support to arts and culture organizations in Berkeley extended far beyond the immediate crisis.**

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<sup>15</sup> CVL Economics quantified the value of organizations preserved by City funding using organizational operating revenue as the basis, drawing from a master grantee revenue dataset compiled by our firm. This dataset integrates IRS Form 990 filings for each organization and supplementing with revenue data from the City of Berkeley's grant application database and grantee survey responses to fill in gaps. Applying the 28% figure of Berkeley grantees who reported receiving no other pandemic relief to the revenue data as a baseline, and weighting by organizational size (since smaller groups found Berkeley's funds more impactful), \$12.9 million is the estimated total revenue value of the at-risk organizations.



When taking into account direct and ripple effects across the local supply chain, **every \$1 in City funding leveraged at least \$5.64 in ongoing arts and culture economic activity.** This figure was derived using IMPLAN (Impact Analysis for Planning) input-output modeling, which captures not only the direct impacts on grantee organizations and their employees, but also the supply chain effects on local vendors, contractors, and service providers, as well as the induced effects of household spending by arts and related workers.<sup>16</sup> In this way, the estimate reflects the broader ecosystem value preserved by the City’s relief and recovery efforts—

extending beyond the prevention of immediate closures to safeguarding a network of organizations that continue to generate jobs, sustain community programming, and contribute to local tax revenues today.

While emergency relief and recovery support alone cannot address the sector’s long-term structural challenges—particularly around rising costs and audience recovery—the City of Berkeley’s intervention illustrates how targeted municipal support can serve as an effective bridge during periods of acute disruption, maintaining cultural capacity that might otherwise be permanently lost.

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix A.2 for more details on return on investment methodology.



# PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FOR ARTS & CULTURE INDIVIDUALS

In addition to pandemic relief and recovery grants awarded to arts and culture organizations, the City of Berkeley awarded \$523,089 across three grant programs between 2020 and 2022 for Berkeley-based individuals engaged in the arts (Figure 22).

These programs aimed to sustain the livelihoods of artists, performers, and cultural practitioners who faced significant income loss due to COVID-19 disruptions. In particular, they prioritized support for lower-income individuals and those from historically underrepresented communities, providing direct financial assistance at a time when creative work opportunities were severely limited.

## THE EAST BAY/OAKLAND RELIEF FUND FOR INDIVIDUALS IN THE ARTS (2020)

This program was a regional emergency grant launched in May 2020 to support artists and cultural workers in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Administered by the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI), the fund included \$49,000 directly from the City of Berkeley, which ultimately leveraged a total of \$64,500 in awards to Berkeley artists. The additional dollars came from unrestricted contributions by local foundations,<sup>17</sup> meaning Berkeley's participation drew in more resources to benefit the local community than the City invested directly. In total, 515 individuals received grants of up to \$1,500—including 47 Berkeley artists. The program prioritized BIPOC, immigrant, disabled, and trans individuals and was designed to provide fast, non-taxable relief without requiring tax or citizenship documentation.

## THE BERKELEY ART WORKS PROJECTS GRANTS (2021)

First launched in 2021 by the City's Civic Arts Program, the Berkeley Art Works Projects (BAWP) grants awarded nearly \$182,339 in grants to 32 Berkeley-based artists, performers, and community members to create temporary public art projects. These works addressed themes of public health, economic resilience, and community belonging. The program's name was a deliberate play on the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the New Deal-era initiative that employed artists to create public works during the Great Depression. In a similar spirit, BAWP was designed not simply as relief funding but as an employment initiative—providing income to artists while generating public benefit through new creative works.

Funded through the City's Cultural Trust Fund (Fund 148) BAWP supported creative responses to the emotional and social toll of the pandemic and produced public artworks across the city. Unlike the other pandemic grant programs for individual artists and cultural workers, these awards functioned more like compensation for services rendered, including related material costs—ensuring that artists were paid to create projects that directly engaged and benefitted the Berkeley community.

## BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS (2022)

Aimed at supporting individual artists and cultural practitioners impacted by the pandemic, this program was administered in partnership with the CCI and funded through ARPA. In 2022, it awarded \$276,250 to 114 Berkeley-based recipients, with grant amounts ranging from \$1,250 to \$8,000. Priority was given to those experiencing significant financial hardship, particularly from historically marginalized communities, and applicants were evaluated based on income loss from arts-related work, geographic distribution, and residence in underserved neighborhoods. Grants were unrestricted and designed to sustain creative practitioners during a period of prolonged economic instability.

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<sup>17</sup> Berkeley Relief Fund, "About the Berkeley Relief Fund," <https://berkeleyrelieffund.org/about/>.

Figure 22: Summary of Berkeley Pandemic Relief and Recovery Grants for Individuals in Berkeley

	PROGRAM YEAR	RECIPIENT TYPE	NUMBER OF GRANTEES	TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED	AVERAGE GRANT AWARDED
EAST BAY/OAKLAND RELIEF FUND FOR INDIVIDUALS IN THE ARTS*	2020	Individual artists and arts workers	47	\$64,500	\$1,372
BERKELEY ART WORKS PROJECT (BAWP)	2021	Individual artists, performers, and community members	32	\$182,339	\$5,698
BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS	2022	Individual artists, culture bearers, teaching artists	114	\$276,250	\$2,423

\*Table includes only the program's Berkeley allocations.  
Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

### Pandemic Relief and Recovery Grant Impact for Arts & Culture Individuals in Berkeley

These awards reached artists across a wide range of creative disciplines spanning visual and performing arts, literary arts, design, digital media, education, and folk/traditional practices. This diversity highlights how the relief and recovery programs not only sustained individual incomes, but also helped preserve the city's rich and multifaceted cultural landscape during a time of widespread disruption.

Direct-to-artist pandemic support played a vital role in stabilizing household budgets during an unprecedented crisis. The awards—ranging from an average of \$1,372 through the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund to \$5,698 through the Berkeley Art Works Projects—provided a critical bridge for individual artists, teaching artists, and culture bearers to cover essential living costs. For many, this meant helping to cover essential household expenses, such as rent or mortgage payments, groceries, utilities, or medical bills, at a time when other income sources had collapsed. In this way, relief and recovery dollars not only stabilized artists and their families but also circulated quickly back into Berkeley's local economy, sustaining neighborhood grocery stores, restaurants, landlords, and service providers during a broader period of contraction.

To put their value into context, the scale of the grants becomes especially clear when measured against local housing costs. The median monthly individual housing payment (including renters and owners) for Berkeley arts and culture workers is \$1,100.<sup>18</sup> Housing is often the single largest expense for artists and cultural workers, and in the context of widespread income loss, even short-term support provided critical stability.

In May 2020, the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund arrived during the immediate aftermath of shutdowns when uncertainty was at its peak. The average \$1,372 awarded to each individual



<sup>18</sup> This is the median per capita housing payment for Berkeley arts and culture workers, which adjusts for household size. This figure is calculated from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), which averages data collected between 2019 and 2023.

represented the equivalent of just over one month of rent (Figure 23). Although smaller in size than the other individual grants, this was a meaningful bridge for artists facing a sudden collapse of earned income, helping them cover essential living expenses when opportunities were limited.

The Berkeley Art Works Projects (2021) provided the most substantial lifeline for awarded individuals, with average grants of \$5,698. Assuming 25% of each grant was allocated toward material costs, the BAWP grant covered nearly four months of average individual housing costs. At a moment when the sector was still struggling with

extended closures, this level of support allowed artists to stabilize their personal circumstances while working on their creative practice and benefiting the general Berkeley public by improving the public realm with works of art and performances.

Finally, the Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (2022) offered average awards of \$2,423, or the equivalent of more than two months of rent. While smaller than the BAWP program, this support was still critical in providing paid opportunities for artists at a time when many venues remained closed and other sources of work were scarce.

**Figure 23: Average Grant Value in Terms of Individual Housing Costs**

	AVERAGE GRANT AWARD	EQUIVALENT MONTHS OF INDIVIDUAL HOUSING COSTS *
EAST BAY/OAKLAND RELIEF FUND FOR INDIVIDUALS IN THE ARTS**	\$1,372	1.3 Months
BERKELEY ART WORKS PROJECTS (BAWP)	\$5,698	3.9 Months***
BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS	\$2,423	2.2 Months

\* Based on the median monthly per capita housing payment for Berkeley arts and culture workers, averaged across 2019–2023.

\*\*Table includes only the program's Berkeley allocations.

\*\*\* Since BAWP grants covered paid public art projects, this reflects the assumption that 25% of the grant covered material costs for the project.

Source: City of Berkeley, U.S. Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey Public-Use Microdata Sample (2023), CVL Economics.

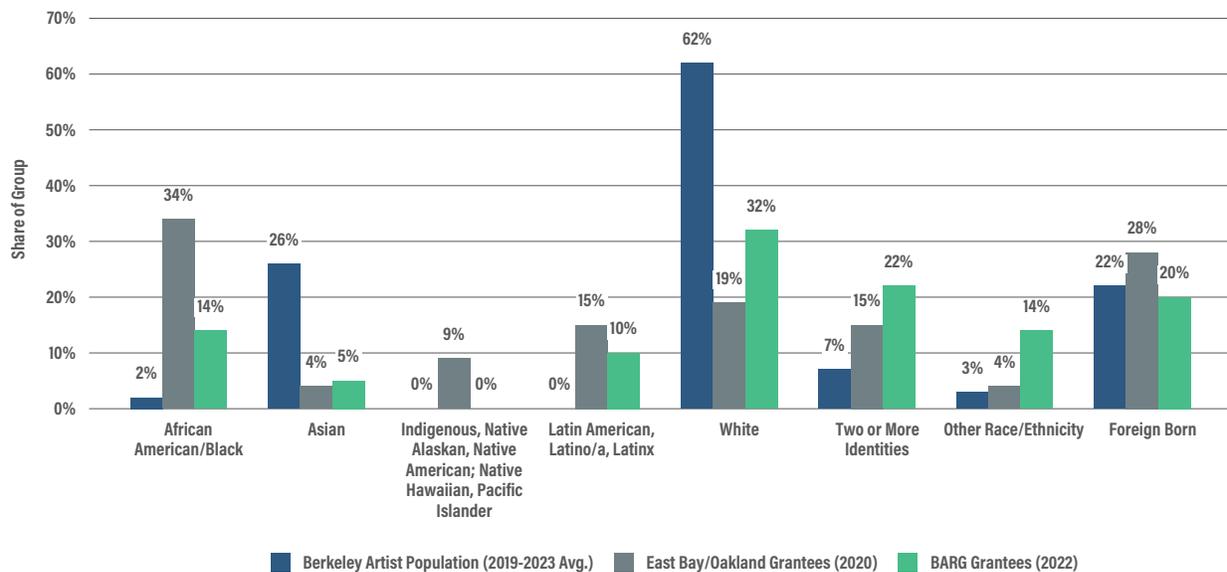
## AN EQUITABLE FUNDING APPROACH

The demographic makeup of individual artist grantees in Berkeley reflects the City of Berkeley's commitment to cultural equity and inclusion in its pandemic relief and recovery efforts. In terms of race and ethnicity distribution, while African American or Black residents make up just 2% of Berkeley's artist population,<sup>19</sup> they represented 14% of BARG grantees and 34% of East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund grantees (Figure 24). Similarly, individuals identifying as Latinx, Indigenous or Native, and those of two or more racial identities were represented at significantly higher rates than their proportions in the general population, suggesting that relief and recovery funds were effectively prioritized for historically marginalized communities.

Although Asian residents comprised only 5% of BARG and 4% of East Bay/Oakland grantees while accounting for 26% of Berkeley's general population, this disparity reflects the composition of the applicant pool, and awards largely mirrored the share of Asian-identifying applicants. Additionally, foreign-born individuals made up 28% of East Bay/Oakland grantees and 20% of BARG grantees, compared to 22% of Berkeley's artist population.

These trends highlight how the City of Berkeley's cultural relief and recovery programs for individual artists during the pandemic not only addressed economic precarity, but also advanced racial and cultural equity by investing in artists who have been historically excluded from opportunities and in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

**Figure 24: Demographic Distribution of Pandemic-Era Grantees Compared to Berkeley's Total Artist Population | 2019–2023**



Note: Includes grantee data for the BARG and East Bay/Oakland programs; these were the two largest programs in terms of number of grant recipients. See Appendix A.3 for detailed methodology on defining the Berkeley artist population.

Source: City of Berkeley, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (2023), CVL Economics.

<sup>18</sup> The Berkeley artist population is defined as individuals working in selected occupations identified by the federal Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes, which includes jobs in visual arts and design; media and communications; performing arts; film, television, and digital media; and other creative technical roles. See Appendix A.3 for a detailed methodology and list of SOC codes.



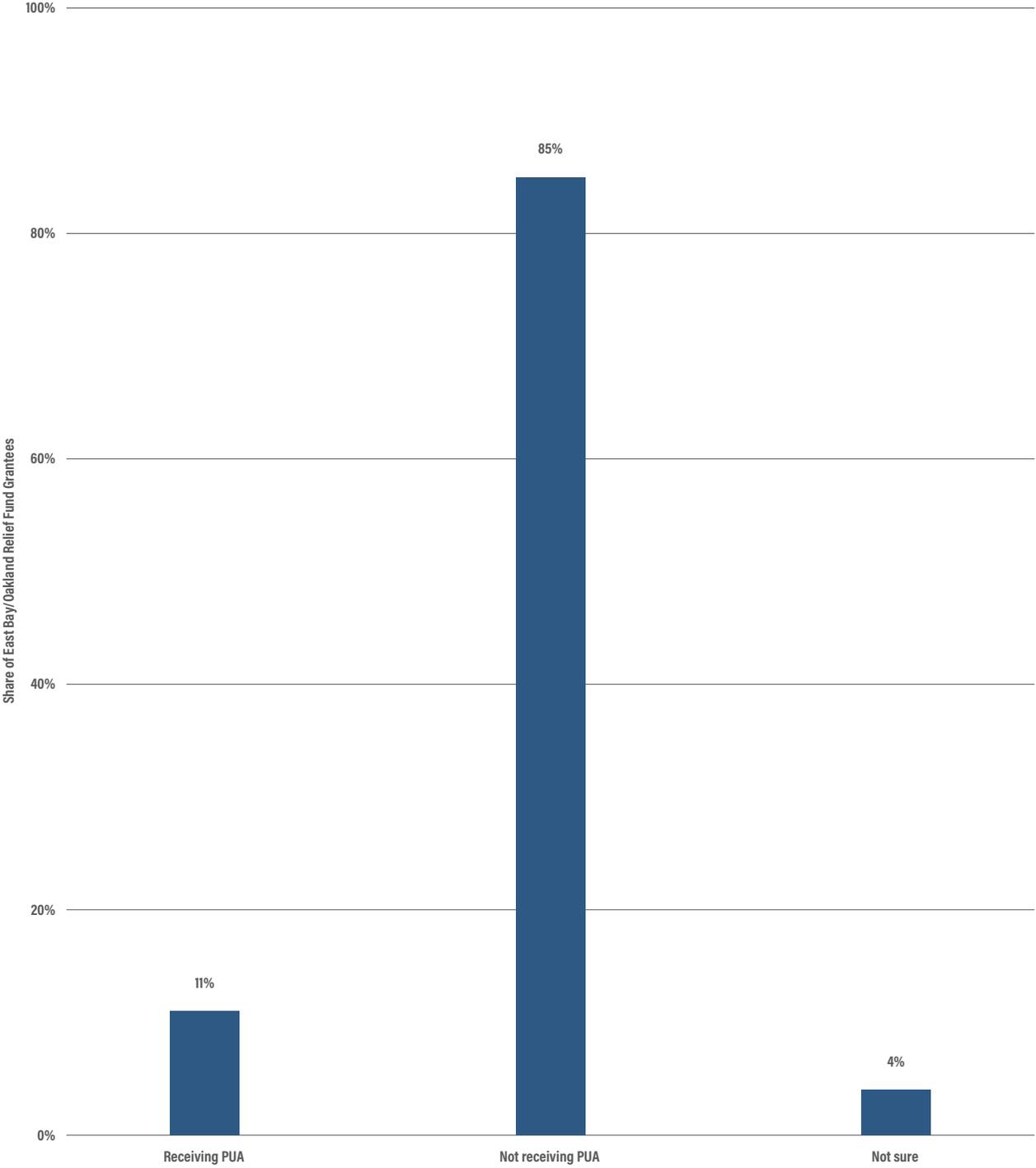
### **Understanding Artist Needs**

Creative work is often characterized by freelance, gig-based, or self-directed employment—forms of labor that typically fall outside traditional systems of worker protections and public benefits. During the pandemic, federal programs like Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) were created to extend eligibility to independent contractors and self-employed workers, offering critical relief for many in the arts. Yet in the earliest months of the shutdown, PUA was slow to roll out and many applicants faced delays or administrative hurdles before receiving payments.

This made the City of Berkeley's early intervention in funding this population all the more vital. Nearly 85% of East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund grantees reported they had not yet received PUA at the time of their City of Berkeley grant application (Figure 25). By moving quickly, Berkeley's contribution to this regional relief effort ensured that artists received immediate support when other aid was not yet available. These local grants filled a critical gap, helping to cover housing, food, and other essentials at the peak of uncertainty, and allowing many artists to remain in Berkeley when displacement was a real risk.

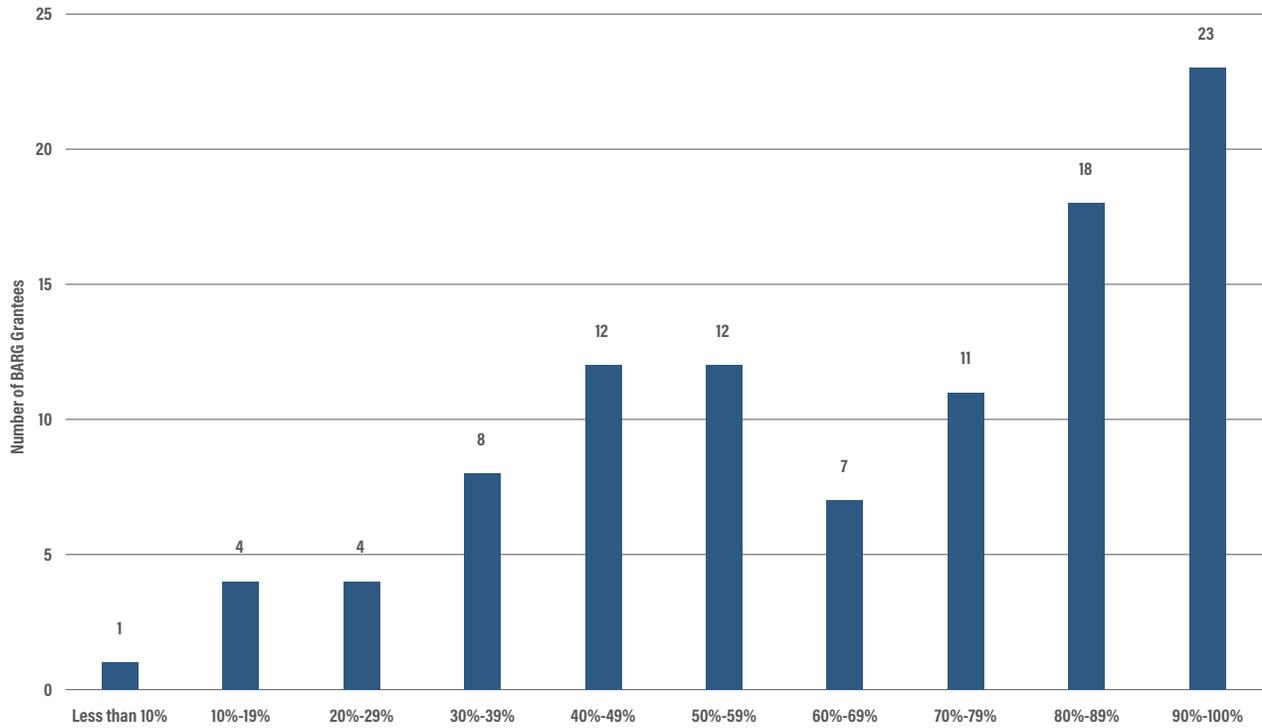
Berkeley's pandemic relief and recovery grants reached artists who were among the hardest hit by the crisis. More than half of all grantees experienced a loss of 50% or more in their arts-related income between 2019 and 2020, including nearly one-quarter who lost 90% to 100% of their income during that period (Figure 26). Indeed, two-thirds of grantees reported making less than \$10,000 in arts-related income in 2020, and over 90% earned under \$30,000 that year (Figure 27).

**Figure 25: Share of Grantees Receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Benefits at Time of Grant Application | May–June 2020**



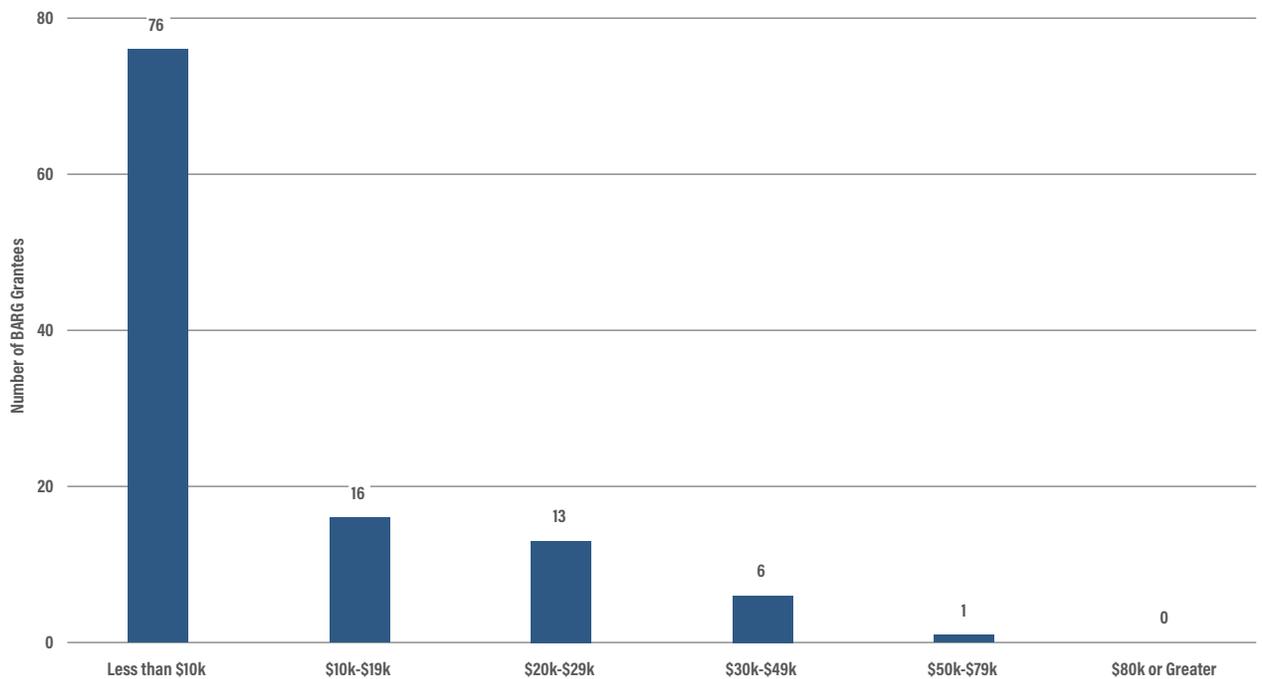
Note: Includes grantee data for the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund program.  
Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

Figure 26: Number of BARG Grantees by Percentage of Arts-Related Income Lost between 2019-2020



Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

Figure 27: Number of BARG Grantees by 2020 Arts-Related Income Bracket



Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

# CONCLUSION: SUSTAINING BERKELEY'S ARTS & CULTURE ECOSYSTEM

Arts and culture form a vital part of Berkeley's community life—shaping the city's identity, enriching public spaces, and providing opportunities for connection, creativity, and expression.

A thriving cultural ecosystem depends on many interlocking parts from individual artists and small collectives to established organizations and major venues. When this ecosystem is under strain, the effects ripple outward, limiting opportunities for participation, weakening creative networks, and eroding the cultural vibrancy that defines the city.

The stability of cornerstone cultural institutions is critical not just for their own survival, but for the vitality of the entire artistic ecosystem. When even established organizations are at risk, it threatens Berkeley's identity as a cultural center and sends discouraging signals to smaller companies and emerging artists working to establish themselves. Protecting these institutions is therefore about more than sustaining current programming—it is about safeguarding pathways for future generations and ensuring that the region continues to foster creativity, innovation, and community engagement.

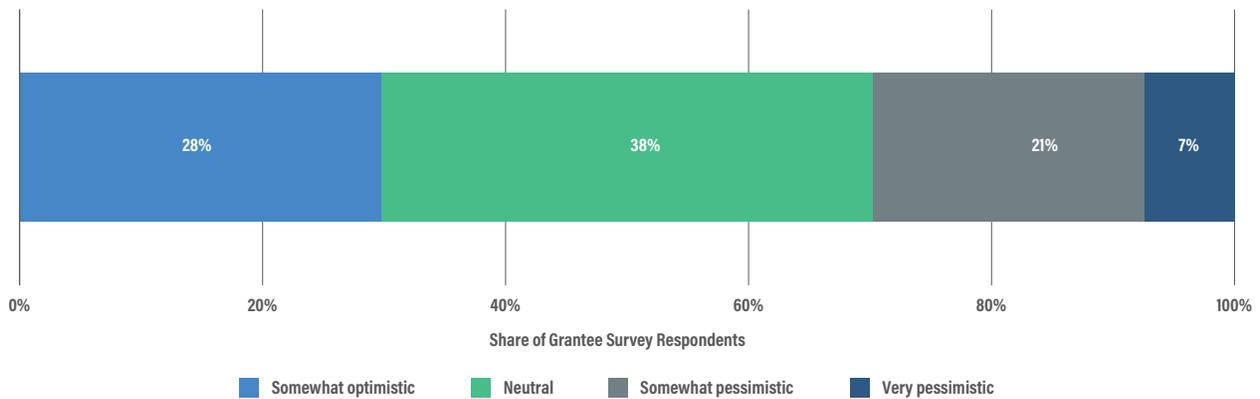
Berkeley's pandemic relief and recovery efforts were extraordinary in both scale and impact. By mobilizing more than \$3 million for both individuals and organizations in emergency grants, the City provided lifelines to dozens of arts and culture organizations and nearly 200 individual artists during one of the most disruptive crises in modern history. These funds helped prevent permanent closures, sustained creative practices, and ultimately enabled Berkeley to prevent its creative fabric from completely fraying.

Yet the road ahead remains uncertain. One-time relief and recovery funding helped many organizations and artists survive the immediate crisis, but long-term sustainability will require ongoing attention and investment. High operating costs—commercial rents, wages, utilities, insurance—remain a persistent burden. At the same time, philanthropic support is tightening and public funding sources remain limited and highly competitive.

Survey responses reflect both resilience and fragility on the outlook of Berkeley’s arts & culture sector (Figure 28 and Figure 29). Many see renewed energy, community

demand, and resilience across Berkeley’s cultural landscape. At the same time, others remain deeply concerned about financial sustainability, affordability, and the slow pace of recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020. This split outlook underscores the importance of funding continuity: without sustained support, hard-won gains may erode, but with targeted continued investment, the City of Berkeley can solidify its reputation as a cultural hub while ensuring equitable access to arts for future generations.

Figure 28: Outlook on Berkeley’s Arts & Culture Sector from Grant Recipients | June 2025



N = 30

Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure 29: Detailed Outlook on Berkeley’s Arts & Culture Sector from Grant Recipients | June 2025

OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOKS	UNCERTAIN OUTLOOKS
Strong interest and engagement in the arts; hopeful audiences are returning.	Many feel it’s “too early to tell” which direction things are headed.
Community demand and momentum despite challenges.	Concerned about long-term sustainability, closures, and diminished philanthropy.
Commitment from City of Berkeley and collaborative spirit cited as positive drivers.	Rising Bay Area costs, lack of viable performance space, and drying up of public support noted as major risks.
Seeing demand for mid-size venues and opportunities for new spaces.	Downtown struggles (e.g., reduced foot traffic, empty storefronts, crime) hurting recovery.
Confidence in sector resilience, innovation, and interdependence.	Audiences slower to return; uncertain policy environment and ongoing affordability crisis.

N = 30

Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

# APPENDIX

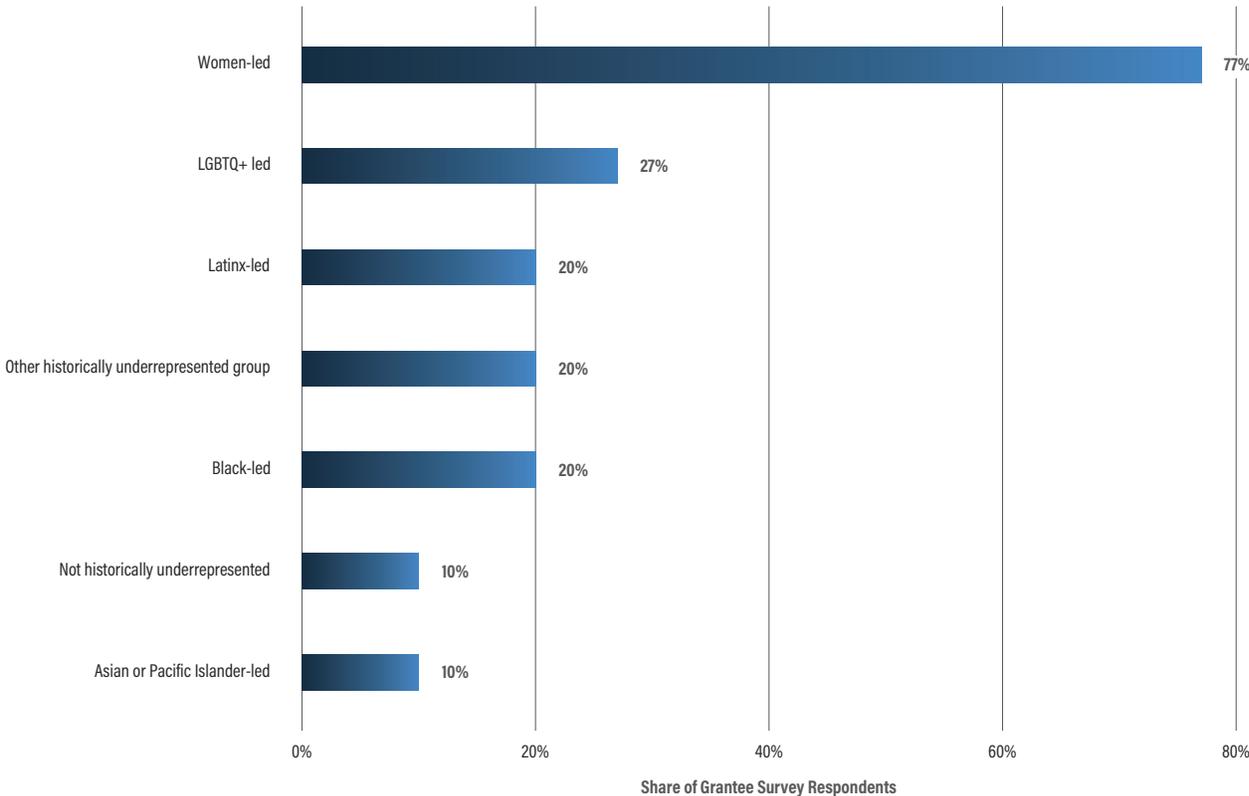
## A.1: SURVEY OF BERKELEY ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATION GRANT RECIPIENTS

To better understand how Berkeley’s pandemic relief and recovery funding shaped the local arts ecosystem, CVL Economics surveyed grantee organizations. Of the 88 organizations that received support through the Arts Organization Continuity Grants (2020) or the Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (BARG, 2022), 30 (34%) completed the survey, providing valuable insights into both the immediate and lasting effects of the City’s investment.

The survey captured a diverse mix of organizations in terms of size, discipline, and leadership demographics. Respondents ranged from very small, community-based nonprofits with annual budgets under \$100,000 to larger institutions with multimillion-dollar operations. Disciplines represented included performing arts, visual arts, festivals, and educational organizations, reflecting the broad spectrum of Berkeley’s creative ecosystem. Responses also included organizations led by people of color, LGBTQ+ leaders, and women, ensuring that a range of perspectives and experiences were reflected in the findings.

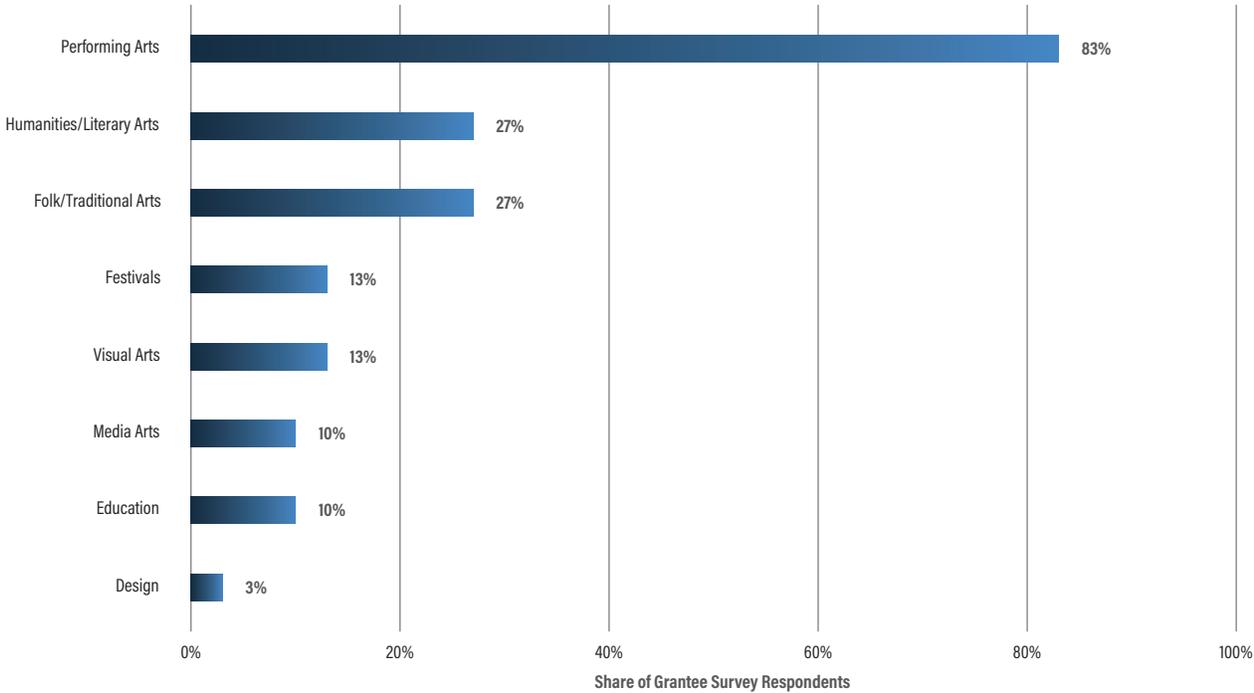
Additional survey responses can be found below.

Figure A.1.1 Share of Respondents by Leadership Demographics



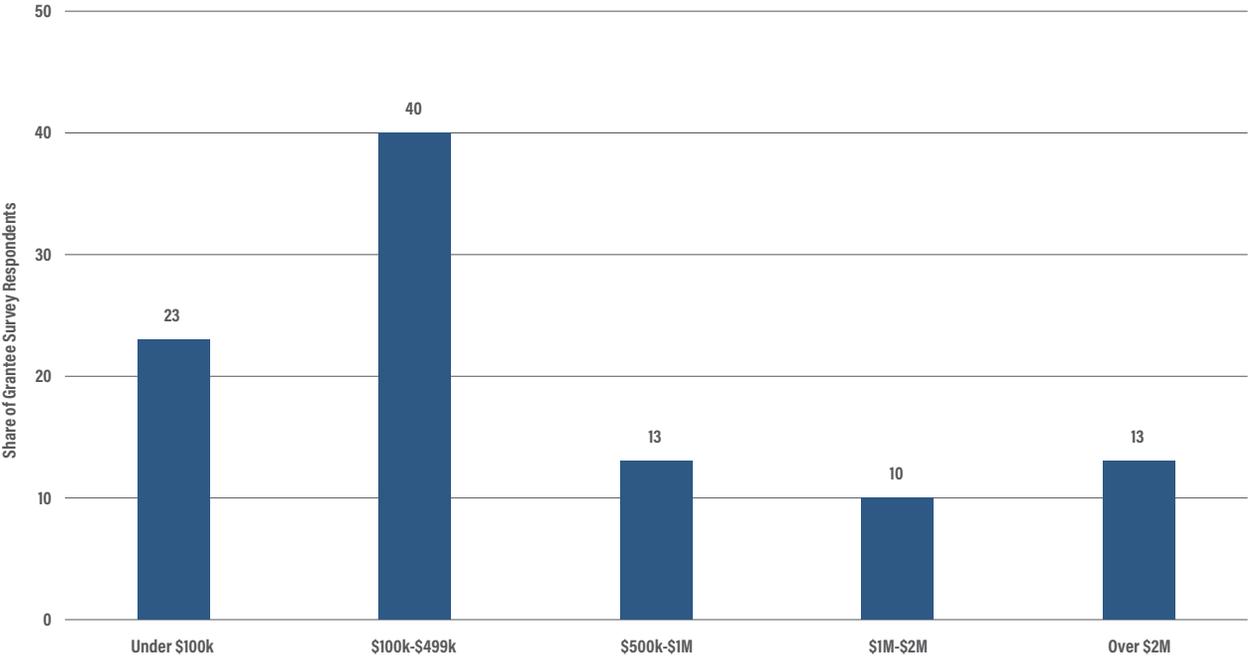
N = 30  
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure A.1.2 Share of Respondents by Arts & Culture Discipline (Multi-Choice)



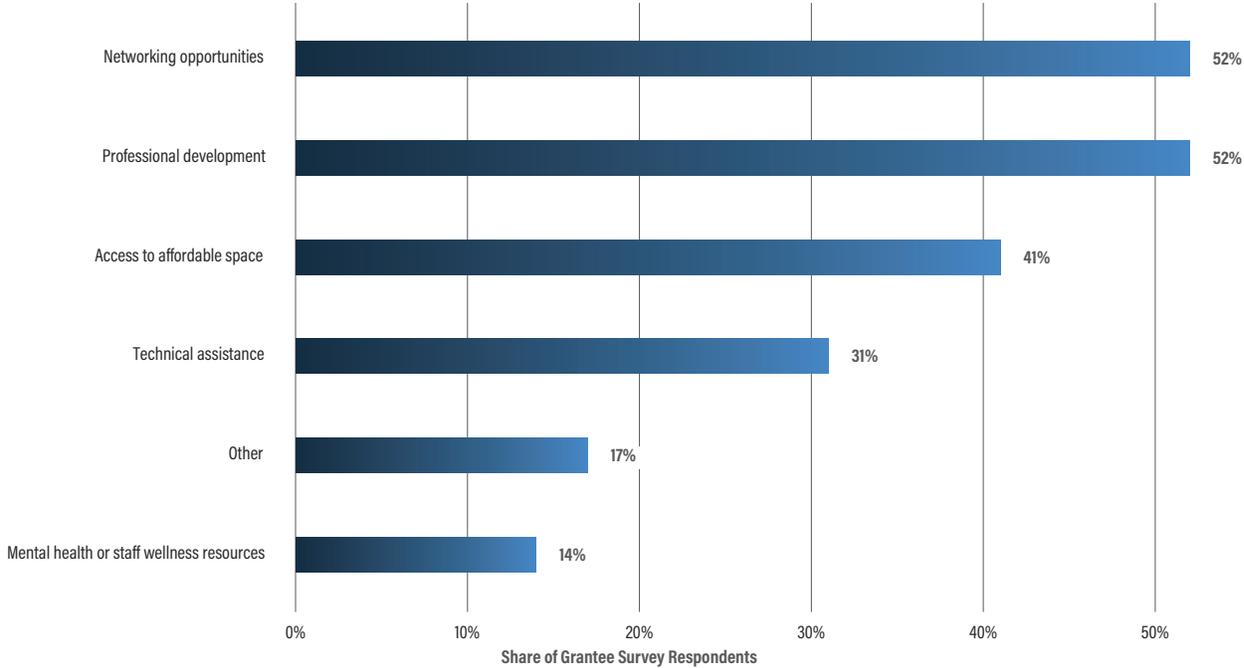
N = 30  
 Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure A.1.3 Share of Respondents by Organization Size



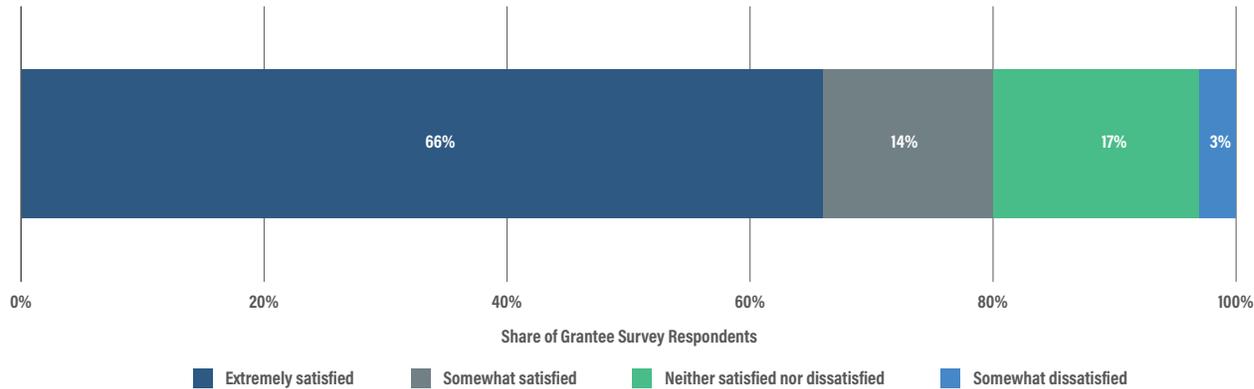
N = 30  
 Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure A.1.4 Top Organizational Support Needs Beyond Funding for 2025–2030



N = 30  
 Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure A.1.5 Degree of Satisfaction with Administration of Pandemic Relief and Recovery Grants in Berkeley | 2020–2022



N = 30  
 Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

## A.2: BERKELEY'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT ON PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUNDING TO ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

The City of Berkeley's relief and recovery funding for arts and culture organizations was evaluated through a return on investment (ROI) framework, designed to measure not only immediate stabilization but also the longer-term value preserved in the local economy.

The first step was to define the scope of the creative economy in order to capture impacts across the entire creative ecosystem. Economic data are reported using the standardized North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which allows for consistency and comparability across datasets. Because no single NAICS code fully captures this sector, CVL Economics developed a curated set of industries spanning performing arts, visual arts, film, media, design, and related support services (see below for a detailed list of NAICS codes).

We quantified the value of organizations preserved by City funding using organizational revenue as the basis, drawing from a master grantee revenue dataset compiled by CVL Economics. This dataset integrates IRS Form 990 filings for each organization and supplementing with revenue data from the City of Berkeley's grant application database and grantee survey responses to fill in gaps. Grantee surveys and applications also established a baseline of financial hardship: all recipients of Arts Organization Continuity Grants and Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (BARG) documented significant revenue losses. Survey results further revealed that 28% of grantees received no other

pandemic relief, making the City of Berkeley's support their sole external lifeline.

Using the master revenue dataset and the 28% figure as a baseline for the additional organizations that would have closed without funding (and weighting by organizational size to reflect the greater impact of funding on smaller groups), we estimate that the combined annual revenues of these at-risk organizations totaled \$12.9 million.

To translate these preserved revenues into economic ROI, we employed IMPLAN's input-output modeling system. IMPLAN is widely used by governments and researchers to quantify the total value of an investment, capturing not only the direct benefits to grantees, but also the indirect benefits to vendors, contractors, and service providers, as well as the induced effects from household spending by arts workers. This analysis found that these preserved arts organizations generated a total of \$14 million in economic output in the City of Berkeley, reflecting the full ripple effects across the local economy.

Through this framework, we estimate that every \$1 invested by the City leveraged at least \$5.64 in ongoing arts and culture economic activity. This ratio represents the ROI of Berkeley's \$2.5 million in relief and recovery funding to arts and culture organizations.

Figure A.2 Creative Economy Industry Classification Codes

INDUSTRY CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION	NAICS
<b>ARCHITECTURE &amp; DESIGN</b>	
Ornamental and Architectural Metal Work Manufacturing	332323
Architectural Services	541310
Landscape Architectural Services	541320
Drafting Services	541340
Interior Design Services	541410
Industrial Design Services	541420
<b>COMMUNICATION DESIGN</b>	
Graphic Design Services	541430
Advertising Agencies	541810
Photography Studios, Portrait	541921
Commercial Photography	541922
<b>ENTERTAINMENT &amp; DIGITAL MEDIA</b>	
Motion Picture and Video Production	512110
Motion Picture and Video Distribution	512120
Teleproduction and Other Postproduction Services	512191
Sound Recording Studios	512240
Software Publishers	513210
Radio Broadcasting Stations	516110
Television Broadcasting Stations	516120
Media Streaming Distribution Services, Social Networks, Other Media Networks and Content Providers	516210

INDUSTRY CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION	NAICS
<b>FASHION</b>	
Fiber, Yarn, and Thread Mills	313110
Broadwoven Fabric Mills	313210
Narrow Fabric Mills and Schifflli Machine Embroidery	313220
Nonwoven Fabric Mills	313230
Knit Fabric Mills	313240
Textile and Fabric Finishing Mills	313310
Fabric Coating Mills	313320
Apparel Knitting Mills	315120
Cut and Sew Apparel Contractors	315210
Cut and Sew Apparel Manufacturing (except Contractors)	315250
Apparel Accessories and Other Apparel Manufacturing	315990
Footwear Manufacturing	316210
Other Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	316990
Toilet Preparation Manufacturing	325620
Jewelry and Silverware Manufacturing	339910
Jewelry, Watch, Precious Stone, and Precious Metal Merchant Wholesalers	423940
Piece Goods, Notions, and Other Dry Goods Merchant Wholesalers	424310
Footwear Merchant Wholesalers	424340
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Merchant Wholesalers	424350
Other Specialized Design Services	541490
<b>FINE ARTS SCHOOLS</b>	
Fine Arts Schools	611610
<b>FURNITURE, TOYS &amp; DECORATIVE ARTS</b>	
Carpet and Rug Mills	314110
Curtain and Linen Mills	314120
Textile Bag and Canvas Mills	314910
Rope, Cordage, Twine, Tire Cord, and Tire Fabric Mills	314994
All Other Miscellaneous Textile Product Mills	314999
Pottery, Ceramics, and Plumbing Fixture Manufacturing	327110
Other Pressed and Blown Glass and Glassware Manufacturing	327212
All Other Miscellaneous Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	327999
Wood Kitchen Cabinet and Countertop Manufacturing	337110
Upholstered Household Furniture Manufacturing	337121
Nonupholstered Wood Household Furniture Manufacturing	337122
Household Furniture (except Wood and Upholstered) Manufacturing	337126
Institutional Furniture Manufacturing	337127

INDUSTRY CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION	NAICS
Wood Office Furniture Manufacturing	337211
Custom Architectural Woodwork and Millwork Manufacturing	337212
Office Furniture (except Wood) Manufacturing	337214
Showcase, Partition, Shelving, and Locker Manufacturing	337215
Mattress Manufacturing	337910
Blind and Shade Manufacturing	337920
Doll, Toy, and Game Manufacturing	339930
Furniture Merchant Wholesalers	423210
Home Furnishing Merchant Wholesalers	423220
Toy and Hobby Goods and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	423920
<b>PUBLISHING &amp; PRINTING</b>	
Commercial Printing (except Screen and Books)	323111
Commercial Screen Printing	323113
Books Printing	323117
Support Activities for Printing	323120
Book, Periodical, and Newspaper Merchant Wholesalers	424920
Newspaper Publishers	513110
Periodical Publishers	513120
Book Publishers	513130
Directory and Mailing List Publishers	513140
Greeting Card Publishers	513191
All Other Publishers	513199
Libraries and Archives	519210
<b>VISUAL &amp; PERFORMING ARTS</b>	
Musical Instrument Manufacturing	339992
Art Dealers	459920
Theater Companies and Dinner Theaters	711110
Dance Companies	711120
Musical Groups and Artists	711130
Other Performing Arts Companies	711190
Agents and Managers for Artists, Athletes, Entertainers, and Other Public Figures	711410
Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers	711510
Museums	712110

## A.3: DEFINING BERKELEY'S ARTIST POPULATION

To analyze Berkeley's artist workforce, we defined an "artist population" within the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) based on occupational classifications. Specifically, we restricted the dataset to individuals whose Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes align with creative, cultural, and artistic work.

The SOC codes were used to capture a wide spectrum of artistic and creative occupations, including:

- **Visual arts and design fields** (e.g., art directors, fine artists, designers, animators, architects)
- **Media and communication occupations** (e.g., writers, editors, reporters, broadcasters, public relations specialists)
- **Performing arts and entertainment** (e.g., performers, dancers, musicians)
- **Film, television, and digital media production** (e.g., producers, directors, camera operators, sound technicians, editors)
- **Other creative technical roles** (e.g., computer occupations in visual effects/animation, printing workers, sound engineering, lighting technicians).

The following SOC codes were included in our definition:

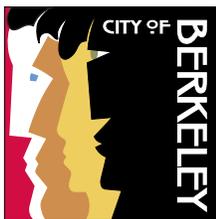
- **112011** – Advertising and Promotions Managers
- **112021** – Marketing Managers
- **112030** – Public Relations and Fundraising Managers
- **119041** – Architectural and Engineering Managers
- **131011** – Agents and Business Managers of Artists, Performers, and Athletes
- **151251** – Software Developers, Applications
- **151252** – Software Developers, Systems Software
- **151253** – Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers
- **151254** – Web Developers
- **151255** – Web and Digital Interface Designers
- **171011** – Architects (Except Landscape and Naval)
- **171012** – Landscape Architects
- **171020** – Surveyors, Cartographers, and Photogrammetrists
- **173011** – Architectural and Civil Drafters
- **254010** – Postsecondary Teachers, Art, Drama, and Music
- **271010** – Artists and Related Workers
- **271021** – Animators and Special Effects Artists
- **271022** – Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators
- **271024** – Graphic Designers
- **271025** – Industrial Designers
- **271026** – Fashion Designers
- **272011** – Actors
- **272012** – Producers and Directors
- **272030** – Dancers and Choreographers
- **272041** – Music Directors and Composers
- **272042** – Musicians and Singers
- **272099** – Entertainers and Performers, All Other
- **273011** – Broadcast Announcers and Radio Disc Jockeys
- **273031** – News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists
- **273042** – Media and Communication Workers, All Other
- **273043** – Public Relations Specialists

- **273099** – Media and Communication Occupations, All Other
- **274021** – Photographers
- **274022** – Camera Operators, Television, Video, and Film
- **274023** – Film and Video Editors
- **274024** – Audio and Video Technicians
- **274025** – Lighting Technicians
- **274026** – Sound Engineering Technicians
- **274027** – Broadcast, Sound, and Lighting Technicians, All Other
- **274028** – Motion Picture Projectionists
- **274029** – Media Equipment Workers, All Other
- **274030** – Television, Video, and Film Camera Operators and Editors
- **393011** – Motion Picture Projectionists
- **393012** – Ushers, Lobby Attendants, and Ticket Takers
- **393013** – Entertainment Attendants and Related Workers, All Other
- **393019** – Miscellaneous Entertainment Attendants and Related Workers
- **515111** – News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists
- **515112** – Editors
- **515113** – Technical Writers
- **516021** – Commercial and Industrial Designers
- **516031** – Floral Designers
- **516040** – Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers
- **516050** – Set and Exhibit Designers
- **516093** – Costume Attendants
- **516099** – Media and Communication Equipment Workers, All Other
- **517011** – Radio Operators
- **517021** – Sound Engineering Technicians
- **517031** – Broadcast Technicians
- **517041** – Media and Communication Equipment Workers, All Other
- **517099** – Media and Communication Workers, All Other
- **519071** – Jewelers and Precious Stone and Metal Workers
- **519194** – Musical Instrument Repairers and Tuners

# Assessment of Berkeley Arts & Culture Pandemic Relief and Recovery Funding

DECEMBER 2025

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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## PREPARED BY:



CVL Economics is an economic consulting firm that takes a data-driven, human-centric approach to equitable development and sustainable growth. Founded in 2021, CVL Economics partners with communities, municipalities, organizations, and institutions to address today's most complex challenges and foster bold action. Coupling robust economic models with innovative research methodologies, we provide decision-makers with the actionable insights needed to effect change, expand opportunity, and improve economic well-being.

