

# Arts Professionals Survey **2023**



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# Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land we gather on, Mohkînsîstsis, is the ancestral territory of the Siksikaitsitapi — the Blackfoot people — comprising the Siksika, Kainai and Piikani Nations, as well as Treaty 7 signatories, the Tsuut'ina Nation and the Îyârhe Nakoda Bearspaw, Chiniki and Goodstoney First Nations. Today this land is home to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government Districts 5 and 6 as well as many First Nations and Inuit from across Turtle Island.

We acknowledge that there has been art, music, dance, storytelling and ceremony on this land since time immemorial and it is in the spirit of this land and its people that we do our work.



# Methodology

In October 2023, Calgary Arts Development conducted a survey of arts professionals to better understand their living and working conditions in Calgary. The online survey was an update to the **2020 Calgary Arts Professional Survey**, building upon past survey questions and findings as well as asking new questions relevant to harassment in the workplace.

The survey was made available to qualified respondents via social media, networks of various Canadian and Albertan arts service organizations, and individual artists who have existing relationships with Calgary Arts Development.

The survey asked 141 questions related to the following topics: individual's careers, finances, health and well-being, housing, spaces and resources for artistic practice, perceptions and participation in community, training and professional development, experiences of workplace harassment, as well as basic demographics. Survey questions sought to better understand how income, gender, ethnicity, and ability relate to their careers as arts professionals. A complete list of survey questions is available upon request.

The survey was fielded using a secure online survey platform. Respondents had the option to be entered to win one of 10 \$400 gift certificates to a retailer of their choice.

The survey data was cleaned to remove duplicate responses, fully anonymized, and then responses were analyzed using data analysis and visualization software. Of the 1,617 completed surveys, a total of 737 responses were removed through the cleaning process — types of responses removed included those from respondents who do not reside or work in the Calgary area, responses that were generated by bots, and duplicate responses.

The survey sample comprised individuals who self-identified as professional artists, arts administrators, arts educators, technicians, and/or other arts professionals. A total of 880 useable responses were submitted (a modest increase from 828 useable responses in 2020), resulting in a survey confidence level of 95%.

# Significance Testing

Significance tests were run on the survey results. In these tests, relationships identified as significant were tested to see if they were due to actual results in the surveyed population or simply the results of random chance. To test for this a series of z-tests were run to identify significant results. Tests were run with a confidence level of 95%. To ensure testing was conservative, strict data sufficiency rules were enforced and correction for Type 1 errors (false positives) were done in all comparisons.

## Definitions

Throughout this report the following definitions are used:

**"Artists"** refers to survey respondents who self-identified as artists.

**"Arts Professionals"** refers to individuals employed in the arts as arts administrators, arts educators, or as professional artists.

**"Earnings"** and **"income"** are used synonymously.

**"Grants"** refers to funds provided to an individual or organization by a funding agency.

**"Literary Arts"** includes fiction, non-fiction, memoir, poetry, and other forms of experimental writing.

**"Visual Arts"** includes art and craft production whose output is visible, i.e. painting, weaving, glass, sculpture, photography, etc.

Occasionally, individual disciplines are included in three larger categories: **Music, Performing Arts, and Presenting Arts.**

**"Music"** refers to the survey discipline categories of Music and Sound Arts, Opera, and Orchestra.

**"Performing Arts"** refers to the survey discipline categories of Circus Arts, Dance, Music and Sound Arts, Opera, Orchestra, and Theatre.

**"Presenting Arts"** refers to the survey discipline categories of Digital Arts, Film and Media Arts, Literary Arts, and Visual Arts.

# Key Findings

## COVID-19 has left a lasting impact.

The results of our 2020 survey illustrated just how destructive the pandemic was to the arts in Calgary. Many arts professionals experienced loss of employment and/or loss of income or found themselves unable to create or present their work as a result of the pandemic. Survey participants in 2020 had a much more negative perception of Calgary than in years prior.

In 2023, while the more immediate effects of the pandemic had eased, it was clear that Calgary's arts community was still recovering. 45% of arts professionals reported experiencing ongoing financial stress due to COVID-19, and 43% reported ongoing health-related stress. Financial conditions had improved since the pandemic, with a rise in individual incomes and a 45% drop in dependence on income support. Despite this fact, 60% of respondents still described the compensation they received for their arts work as insufficient, a slight increase from 2020.

While long-term monitoring of pandemic effects is still needed, arts professionals are evidently in need of better funding, more employment opportunities, and improved professional and creative conditions to fully recover from the damage done to the sector.

## Incomes are rising — but not fast enough.

Between 2020 and 2023, the number of arts professionals earning less than \$35,000 per year dropped to 39% from 57%; this shift was associated with growth across all other income brackets. Consequently, the number of respondents who earned an individual income below the Calgary median of \$65,500 dropped to 73% from 84%.

Although these figures represent notable growth, this still leaves almost three quarters of arts professionals in a less financially secure position than the average Calgarian. While individual incomes rose, the average household income among arts professionals did not change significantly, with 65% of households earning less than \$100,000 per year (the Calgary median being \$108,560) — this number remains essentially unchanged since 2017.

A growing number of arts professionals are having difficulty accumulating savings; only 43% reported being able to save over the year 2022. Among those who were not able to save, 83% cited the growing cost of living as a major barrier to doing so. 34% of respondents also reported that they were not saving for retirement, an increase of 12% since 2017.

## Arts professionals are feeling disconnected from Calgary's arts scene.

Survey respondents felt more positively about Calgary than they did during the pandemic, with 45% agreeing that Calgary is a good place to be an artist (30% in 2020). However, this reflects a lower regard for our city than arts professionals had in 2017, when 57% felt Calgary was a good place to be an artist. In 2023, 40% of artists felt that it was difficult to connect with their peers, and 54% found it difficult to receive knowledgeable, constructive feedback about their work. Community engagement has also declined, with a 10% drop in the number of arts professionals who reported volunteering in their community since 2017.

## Fewer arts professionals want to leave Calgary, but they are increasingly working outside the arts sector.

In 2020, 24% of respondents anticipated moving away from Calgary, a figure that fell to 16% in 2023. Information isn't available as to whether the number of respondents expressing an interest in leaving in 2020 actually left, which would account for a potential lower figure in 2023. In 2024, Calgary Arts Development began a five-year longitudinal survey to track if artists are leaving Calgary.

Even if arts professionals are not leaving Calgary, more are finding work outside the sector. Over three quarters (79%) reported engaging in non-arts labour, over twice as many as in 2020. Low incomes and rising disengagement may be causing arts professionals to seek more stable employment in other sectors.



**Artists are struggling.** Just 9% of professional artists were able to rely entirely on their artistic practice to earn a living, compared to 19% in 2019 and 12% in 2020. Artists reported the lowest incomes of any arts-based profession (compared to arts administrators, arts educators, and arts technicians), with just under a quarter of professional artists earning close to or above the median Calgary individual income – despite this, they were also the least likely to report qualifying for income support.

Artists face unique difficulties due to their work structure. In 2023, 83% reported being self-employed and just 7% were employed full time as an artist. Due to their inability to access the kind of benefits provided by traditional full-time employment, as well as their reliance on the gig economy, there is no doubt that artists were hit hard by the pandemic and have yet to fully recover.

### **There is a lack of opportunity in Calgary.**

Very few respondents were satisfied with the current number of available employment or funding opportunities. Among artists, 45% reported that they did not have many chances to present or showcase their work to the public. In addition to challenges finding basic information on available opportunities, many artists expressed that they felt the opportunities that do exist are becoming increasingly specific and are restricted based on theme, demographics, or other factors.

**It is difficult to secure appropriate working and presenting space.** 57% of arts professionals reported that they struggled to find an appropriate space for their practice. Many reported that even when they did have access to a space, this access had limited hours, the space was not equipped for their practice, or the space was simply not affordable.

### **Incidents of ableist, audist, gender, racial and sexual harassment in the workplace are extraordinarily high, with low rates of reporting these incidents within the organizations in which they take place.**

The 2020 Arts Professionals Survey revealed high rates of harassment. Following the 2020 Arts Professionals Survey, Calgary Arts Development explored best practices and alternative methods to report incidents of harassment in the 2023 survey. The revised survey asked individuals if they have experienced or witnessed a specific set of harassing behaviours, revealing:

- **63% of non-white survey respondents** reported experiencing harassment in the workplace, similar to 2020 results. 47% of all survey respondents reported witnessing harassment in the workplace.
- **23% of women and 74% of non-binary survey respondents** reported experiencing gender-based harassment in the workplace. 39% of all survey respondents reported witnessing at least one of these types of gender-based harassments in the workplace.
- **42% of women and 57% of non-binary survey respondents** reported experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace. 38% of all survey respondents reported witnessing sexual harassment in the workplace.
- **46% of those respondents who identify as Deaf/deaf or as having a disability** reported experiencing harassment in the workplace, similar to the 2020 survey results. 32% of all survey respondents reported witnessing ableist or audist forms of harassment in the workplace.

In only 30% of cases where harassment was experienced or witnessed was there a human resources staff to report the incident to, which likely contributed to only 25% to 38% of these incidents being reported.



# Demographic Information

Survey respondents came from across Calgary and represented a wide variety of artistic disciplines, professional working conditions, career stages, and demographic identities.

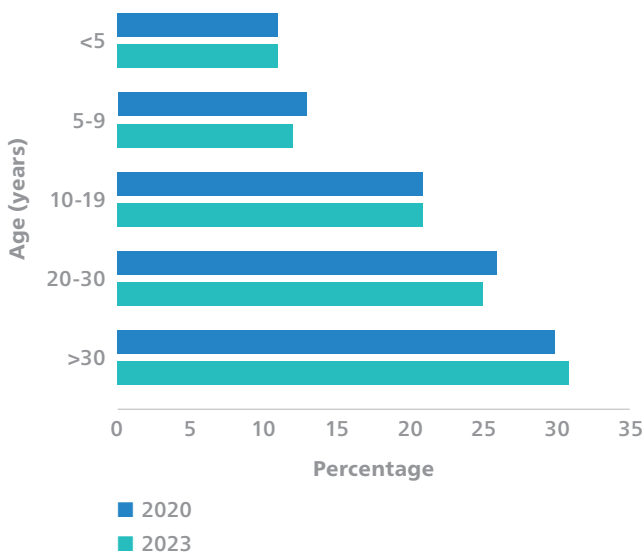
## Length of time in Calgary

Figure 1 illustrates the length of time survey respondents have lived in Calgary. In 2023, 56% of arts professionals have lived in Calgary for over 20 years, and 11% have lived in Calgary for under five years.

Given that Calgary's population has increased by 9.6% since 2020<sup>1</sup>, it is notable that the number of survey respondents who have lived less than five years in Calgary remained stagnant between 2020 and 2023. These results indicate that either arts professionals are not moving to Calgary at the same rates as those working in other fields, or there are other barriers new Calgarians may experience in entering the sector.

**Figure 1**

Percentage distribution of survey respondents' years to date spent living in Calgary.



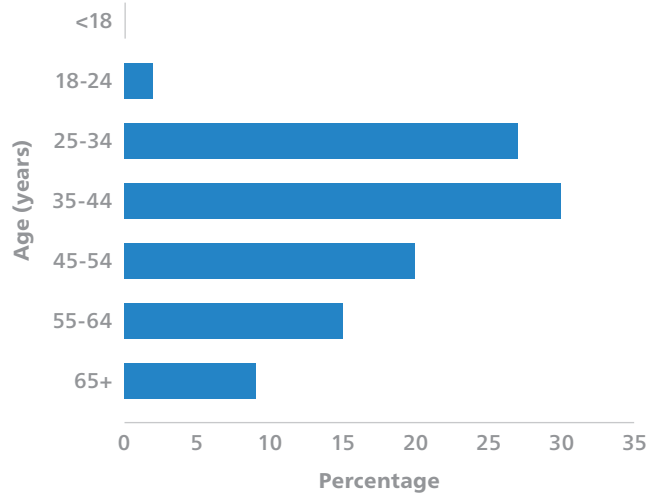
## Age Distribution

The age distribution reflects those individuals already working in the arts, so the low number of responses from ages under 25 is not surprising. The age distribution of survey respondents was otherwise similar to that of Calgary's general population<sup>2</sup>.

As shown in Figure 2, some survey respondents were under 24 and over the age of 55, but most respondents were between the ages of 25 and 54. This age distribution aligns with the national average labour force.

**Figure 2**

Age distribution of survey respondents by percentage.



<sup>1</sup> <https://open.alberta.ca/opendata/alberta-population-estimates-data-tables/resource/bc6ace82-9be4-404c-9d1c-995a392d2a5a>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0&DGUIDlist=2021A00054806016&SearchText=calgary>

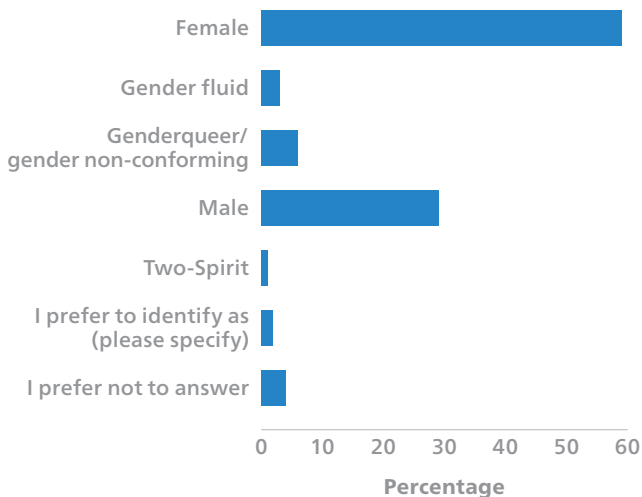
## Gender Identity

Of those who disclosed their gender identity, 59% identified as female and 29% as male. The next most common selections were 6% identified as genderqueer/gender non-conforming and 3% identified as genderfluid. Furthermore, 4% of survey respondents identified as transgender.

Gender representation in the sector has not changed significantly since the 2020 survey, with almost 60% of survey respondents continuing to identify as female. This continues to be significantly higher than the general population.

**Figure 3**

Disclosed gender identities of survey respondents.



## Race and Ethnic Identity

In keeping with the methodology used in Calgary Arts Development's other survey tools, demographic questions are asked related to both race and ethnicity in distinct questions.

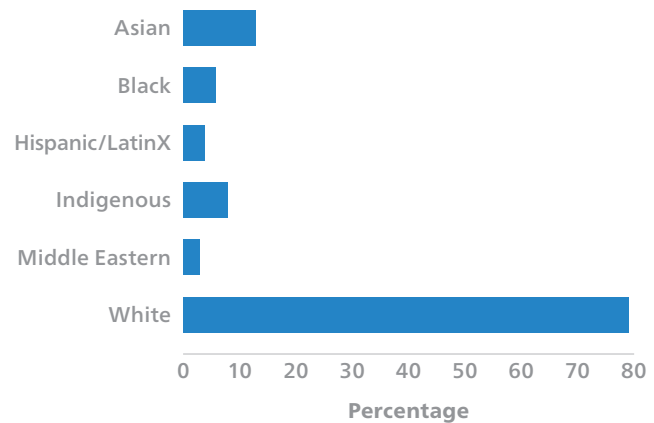
Of those who disclosed their racial and ethnic identity, the majority identified as white (79%, *Figure 4*) and of European descent (66%, *Figure 5*). This is similar to past survey results in 2020 (74% white respondents) and 2017 (83% white respondents).

It is important to note that this demographic distribution differs significantly from that of the general population of Calgary<sup>3</sup>. In 2021, 41% of Calgary's population identified as a visible minority — defined by Statistics

Canada as persons, other than Indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. The 2023 statistics align with past research (*2020 Arts Professional Survey* and *2021 Demographic Profile* of Operating Grant staff, artists, and board members) that found the arts community in Calgary to be less ethnically diverse than the Calgary general population.

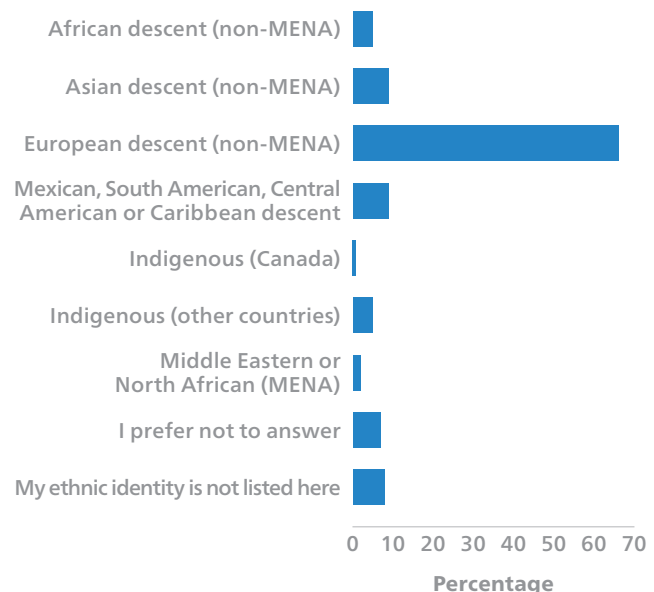
**Figure 4**

Racial identities of survey respondents distributed according to percentage.



**Figure 5**

Ethnic identities of survey respondents distributed according to percentage.



<sup>3</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0&DGUIDlist=2021A00054806016&SearchText=calgary>



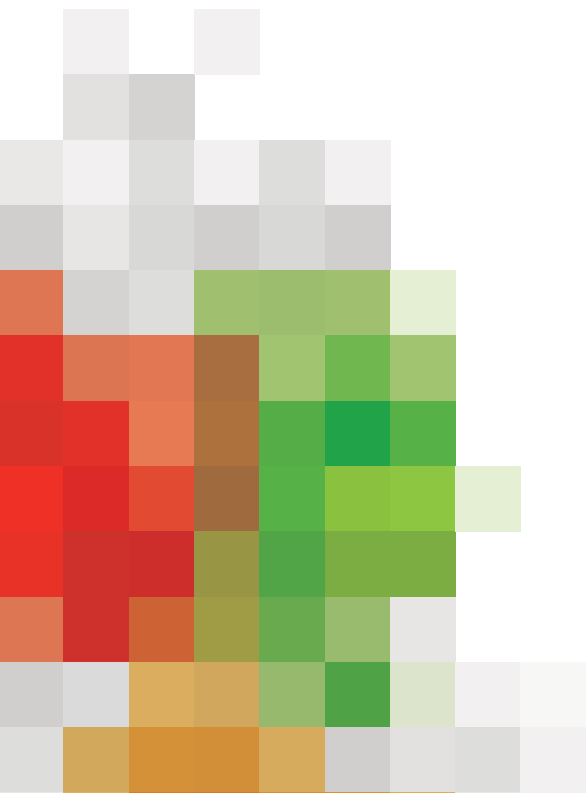
# Languages Spoken

English is the first language for most respondents at 79% (Figure 6). It should be noted the percentage of respondents with English as their first language in 2023 is less than in 2020 (91%) and 2017 (93%).

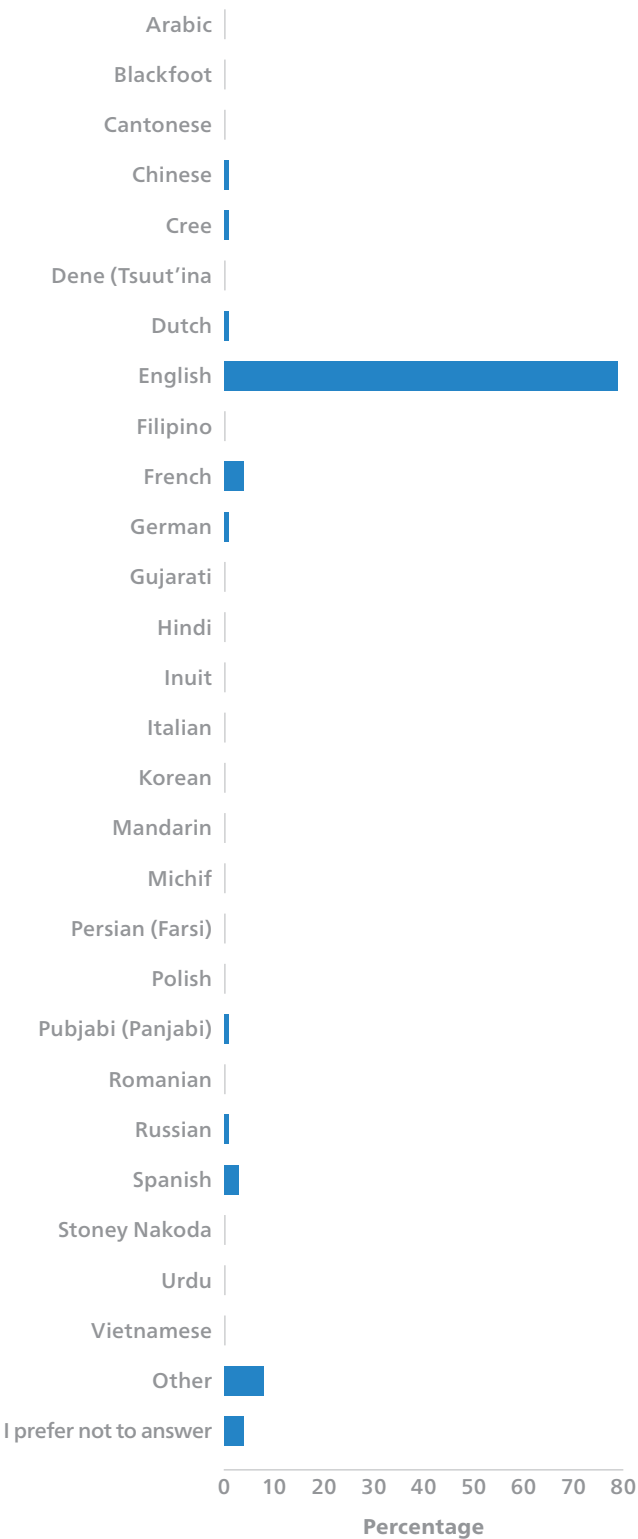
All survey respondents spoke English to a degree, yet many survey respondents reported speaking at least one other language. For other languages spoken, French was the highest at 28%, Spanish was 11%, and Italian was 4%. The remaining languages hovered around 1-3% of responses to this question.

**52 languages in total were spoken by survey respondents.**

Since 2024, Calgary Arts Development has adapted this question in most other surveys to better reflect all languages used by Calgarians including those languages that are not spoken. Future versions of the survey will use variations of the questions *Select all the language(s) you have learned and still understand with response options for American Sign Language (ASL), Indigenous Sign Language (ISL), and Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ).*

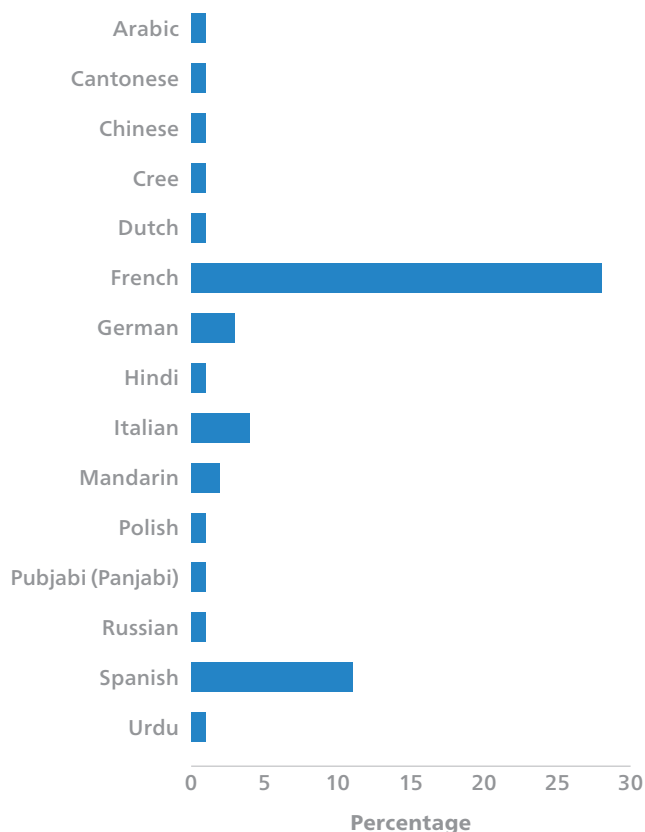


**Figure 6**  
First language of survey respondents in percentage distribution.



**Figure 7**

Percentage distribution of languages spoken regardless of skill level by survey respondents.



## Immigration Status

When asked about immigration status, 4.7% of all survey respondents reported immigrating to Canada recently — arrived after 2014. An additional 10.8% of survey respondents reported having immigrated to Canada before 2015.

## Disability Identity

Calgary Arts Development recognizes the Social Model of Disability, which states that “disability” is caused by how society is organized rather than a person’s impairment or difference. However, within the limits of this survey and in the interest of gathering the most complete data, respondents were asked to identify using the conventional medical model of disability. In this form of identification, individuals reported the following:

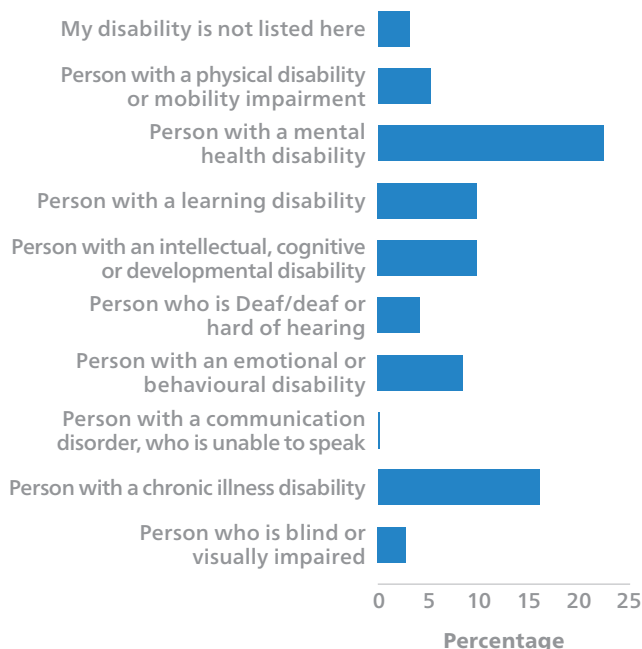
- (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual;
- (b) a record of such an impairment; or
- (c) being regarded as having such an impairment.

30% of all survey respondents identified as having a disability, a significant increase from 12% in 2020. The change may be in part a result of changes in how the question is presented in the survey.

The most common disabilities reported among survey respondents were related to mental health (22%), chronic illness (16%), learning (10%), and intellectual, cognitive, or developmental (10%). When asked how long they had/identified as having a disability, responses rates were comparable across groupings, with 35% for 0-5 years, 34% for 5-20 years, and 32% for 20+ years.

**Figure 8**

Disclosed disability status of survey respondents in percentage distribution.



# Professional and Artistic Identity

The Arts Professional Survey was targeted at a broad range of individuals engaged in the arts. As a result, survey respondents were asked to specify their occupations both in the arts and non-arts sectors. The aim of this question was to further understand the occupational make-up of individuals engaged in the arts — be it in a full-time, part-time, or casual capacity. This section of the report examined respondents with primary occupations in the arts.

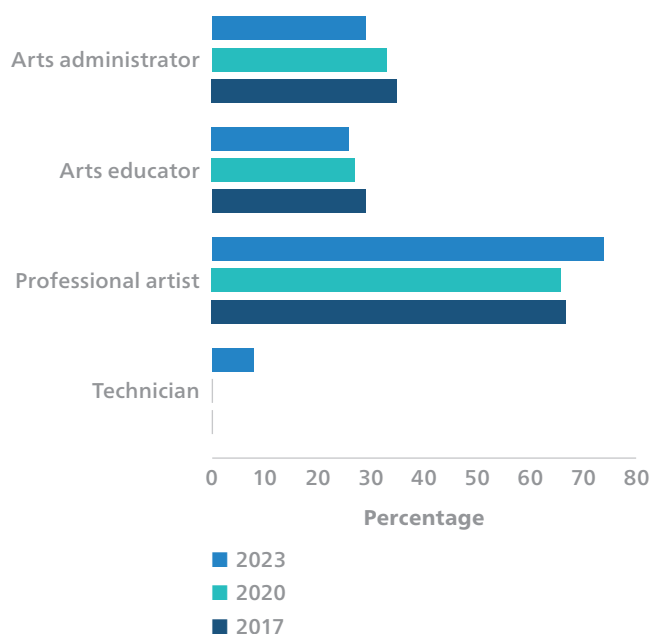
## Professional Identity

When asked to self-identify their occupations as arts professionals, the largest category of respondents continues to be professional artists (74%), followed by arts administrators (29%) and arts educators (26%). In 2023, arts professionals were also given the option to self-identify as technicians (8%) — a necessary addition to the survey to understand the unique working conditions of arts technicians.

Arts professionals continue to report high rates of concurrent employment in multiple professional arts capacities; survey results revealed that 41% of professional artists, 60% of arts administrators, 85% of arts educators, and 63% of technicians work across multiple professional identities. With that said, arts educators remain most likely to work across multiple identities, with only 15% working solely as educators; notably, this percentage has returned to pre-pandemic levels, as 9% reported working solely as arts educators in 2020 compared to 13% in 2017. For professional artists and arts educators, there was a decrease in the number of individuals working across multiple arts identities. This may be due to the significant increase in the number of arts professionals who are working concurrently in other non-arts industries, a phenomenon which is explored further in the section on *Non-Arts Labour*.

**Figure 9**

The arts professional identities of survey respondents by percentage, compared between 2017, 2020, and 2023.



# Artistic Discipline

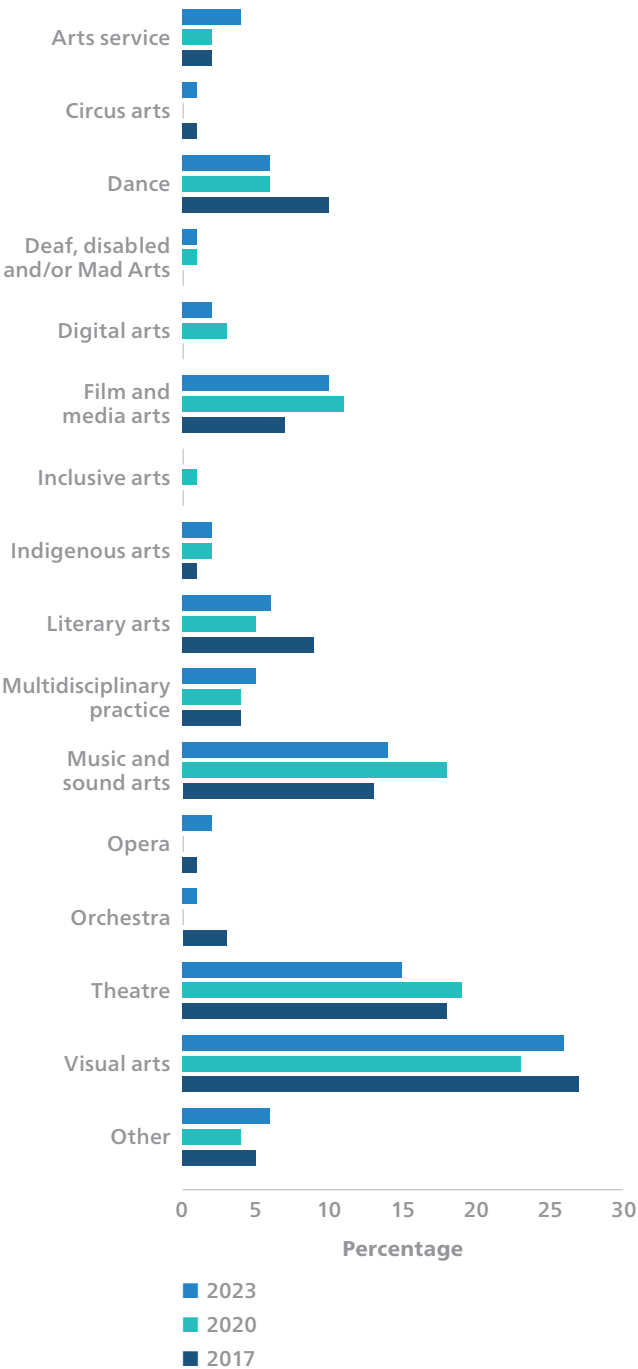
Survey respondents were asked to identify their primary artistic discipline and all other disciplines in which they work. The following section of the report deals with respondents' primary discipline(s).

In line with the past Arts Professionals surveys (2014, 2017, and 2020), Visual Arts remained the most represented discipline, with 26% of respondents identifying it as their primary artistic discipline in 2023. It should be noted that while 2020 results indicated a slight decrease in visual arts representation, it has returned to pre-pandemic levels (27% in 2017). Theatre remained the second highest represented discipline (15%), and Music and Sound Arts remained the third highest represented discipline (14%). However, these discipline categories also decreased the most from 2020 to 2023, which may be accounted for by the increase in 'Multidisciplinary' and 'Other' categories, as well as the addition of 'Orchestra' in 2023. The remaining disciplines remained stable between 2020 and 2023 with reported changes of 1 to 2% or no change at all.

Many arts professionals also work across multiple disciplines. When considering the multiple artistic identities held by arts professionals, 69% identified working in presenting arts<sup>4</sup>, 53% identified working in performing arts, and 30% identified working in music-related arts forms<sup>5</sup>.



**Figure 10**  
The primary artistic discipline, regardless of role (i.e. artist, administrator, educator) of survey respondents according to percentage and compared between 2017, 2020, and 2023.



<sup>4</sup> "Presenting Arts" refers to the survey discipline categories of Digital Arts, Film and Media Arts, Literary Arts, and Visual Arts.

<sup>5</sup> "Performing Arts" refers to the survey discipline categories of Circus Arts, Dance, Music and Sound Arts, Opera, Orchestra, and Theatre.

# Work Structure

Work structures changed significantly with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and 2020 results indicated that more individuals across all categories of employment were working in contract, freelance, or self-employed capacities as opposed to more traditional forms of employment (e.g. part-time or full-time work for an employer). This was likely the result of restrictions on social distancing and gathering. For our purposes, we wanted to understand how work patterns have shifted with the lifting of these restrictions, and how they compare to arts professionals' working structures prior to the pandemic.

## Structure of Employment

In 2023, arts administrators and educators reported returning to traditional work structures. 52% of arts administrators indicated working full-time for an employer (as opposed to 46% in 2020), while 17% of arts educators worked full-time for an employer (15% in 2020). Increases in traditional forms of employment were also associated with decreases in contract, freelance, and self-employed work for arts administrators and educators. On the other hand, more artists than ever are reporting self-employment, 83% in 2023 compared to 77% in 2020.

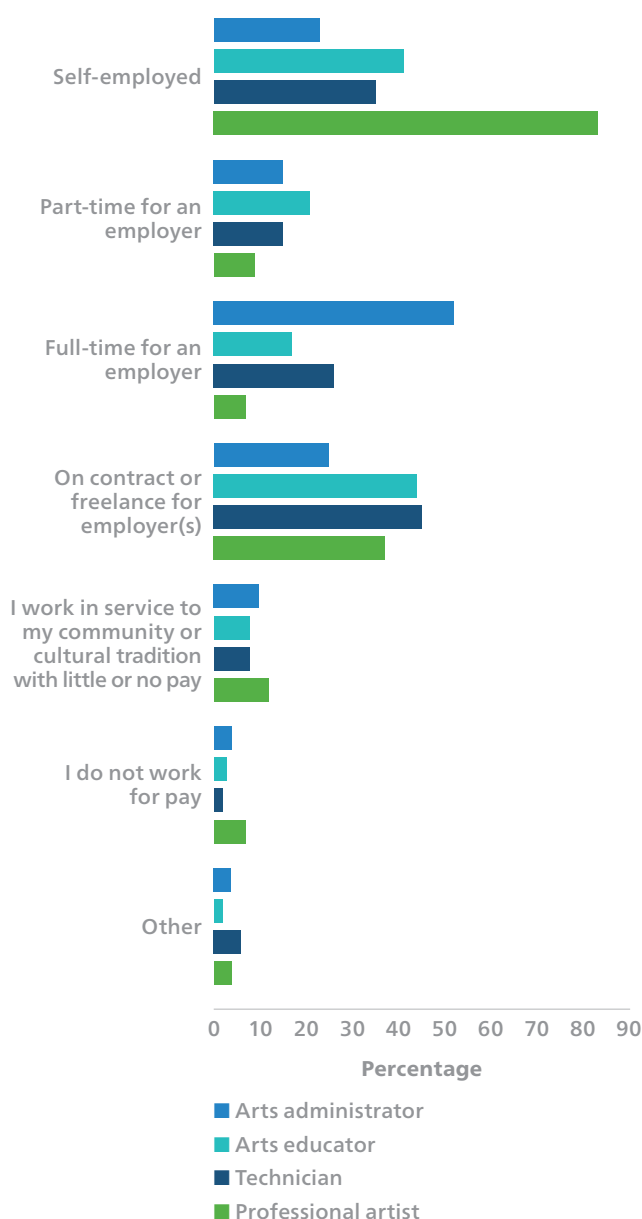
Survey results demonstrate a relationship between the identities of arts professionals and the terms of employment under which they are working. Arts administrators continued to be the most likely to report full-time employment (52%) followed by technicians (26%), whereas arts educators (17%) and professional artists (7%) were far less likely to experience this level of stability (*Figure 11*).

Past iterations of the Arts Professional Survey found that the traditional structure of employment skews toward men, whiteness, and native English speakers. These trends continue in 2023. Responses showed men were more likely to hold a 40-hour work week position in the arts than women, apart from arts administration roles where rates of full-time work are comparable.

Those who identified as white were more likely to work full-time for an employer than those who identified as indigenous, black, and people of colour (IBPOC). For instance, white arts professionals were more likely to hold work full-time as an arts administrator (54%) than IBPOC administrators (45%). While some of this difference may be due to the influx of new/young IBPOC arts professionals entering the field, racial discrimination continues to play a factor in the structure of employment of IBPOC arts professionals. Newcomer and immigrant artists face additional linguistic barriers in entering the workforce, as those with a first language other than English reported being likelier to work for no pay or under non-traditional structures.

**Figure 11**

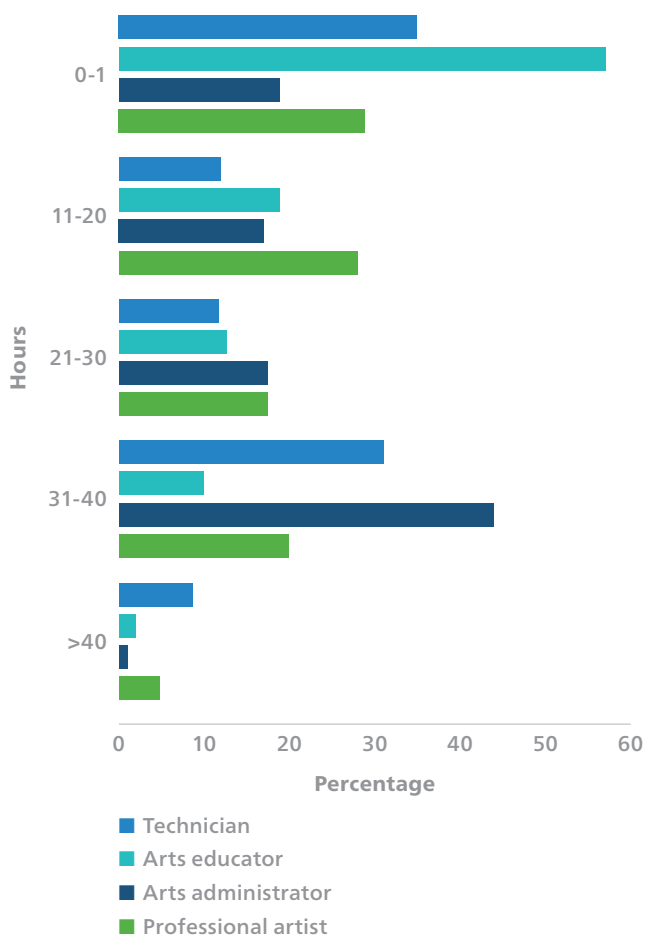
Work structure by professional identity.





**Figure 12**

Average hours worked per week according to arts profession.



## Years Worked in Arts Professions

The most common length of time for arts professionals to have been in their field was more than 15 years (35%), followed by five years or less (27%).

There was an influx of new workers (5 years or less) across all job categories, an increase of 14% in both new arts educators and arts administrators compared to 2020.

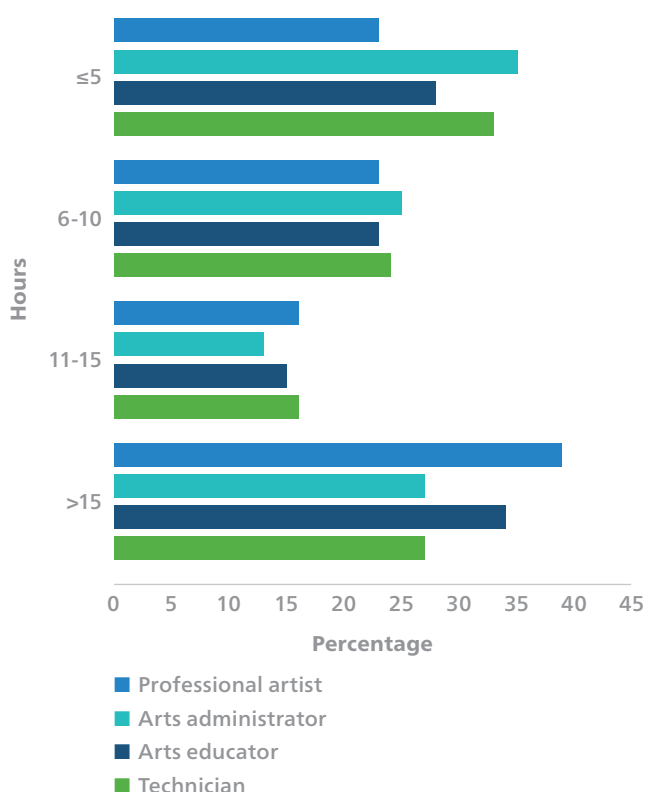
The profession that saw the least growth in new individuals were professional artists, experiencing only a 6% jump in new workers since 2020.

The professions with the most new entrants to the field — arts administrators and technicians — were also the two with the highest reported levels of income security (which is further explored in the

section on *Financial Conditions*). This influx in new professionals entering the arts likely reflects a return to more normal working structures post-pandemic and may also be associated with the population growth of Calgary since the last Arts Professionals Survey. It is also likely that young professionals who were delayed in finishing their education and/or entering the workforce due to the pandemic are now finding employment in the sector.

**Figure 13**

Years worked in respective arts professions.



## Diversity of Income Sources

In 2022, only around 12% of arts professionals reported earning 100% of their income from their primary arts identity (educator, artist, administrator, technician). Additionally, only 29% reported earning all their income from arts work in general, indicating a rise in arts professionals working outside the arts sector. Across disciplines, those working in Music were the most likely to earn 100% of their income from arts work, while those working in the Presenting Arts were most likely to rely more on work outside of the arts for income.

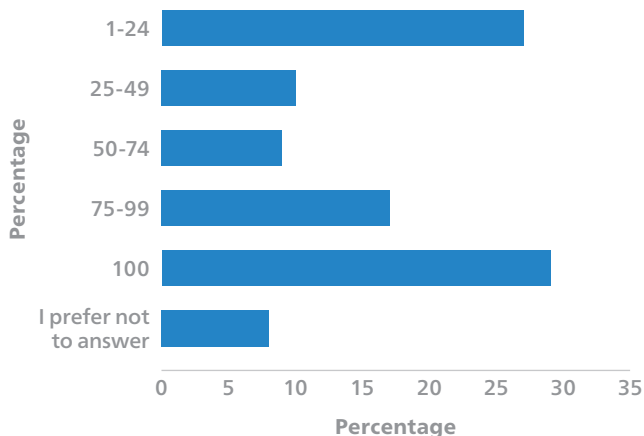
Arts administrators remained the most likely to earn most or all of their income from their primary profession, with 42% earning at least 90% of their income from arts administration. From 2019-2020, the number of arts administrators relying entirely on arts administration rose from 25 to 30%, likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the availability of other types of work. In 2022, this number dropped back down to 23%, suggesting that arts administrators have mostly returned to pre-pandemic work structures, but may be seeing a slight decrease in income stability.

Technicians were the second most likely group to earn all their income from their primary profession (13%) followed by professional artists (9%). Notably, the number of professional artists earning their entire income from their artistic practice has dropped from previous years (19% in 2019 and 12% in 2020). 47% of professional artists also reported earning 50% or more of their income from work outside the arts sector. This change in income structure may be due to effects of the pandemic which presented barriers to artists' ability to earn a living from their practice, such as venue closures, reduced work opportunities, and decreased arts funding.

Arts educators remained the least likely to earn all their income from their primary profession, with only 5% relying entirely on arts education. Arts educators continue to rely on a diverse mix of sources of income, particularly artistic practice, arts administration, and non-arts work.

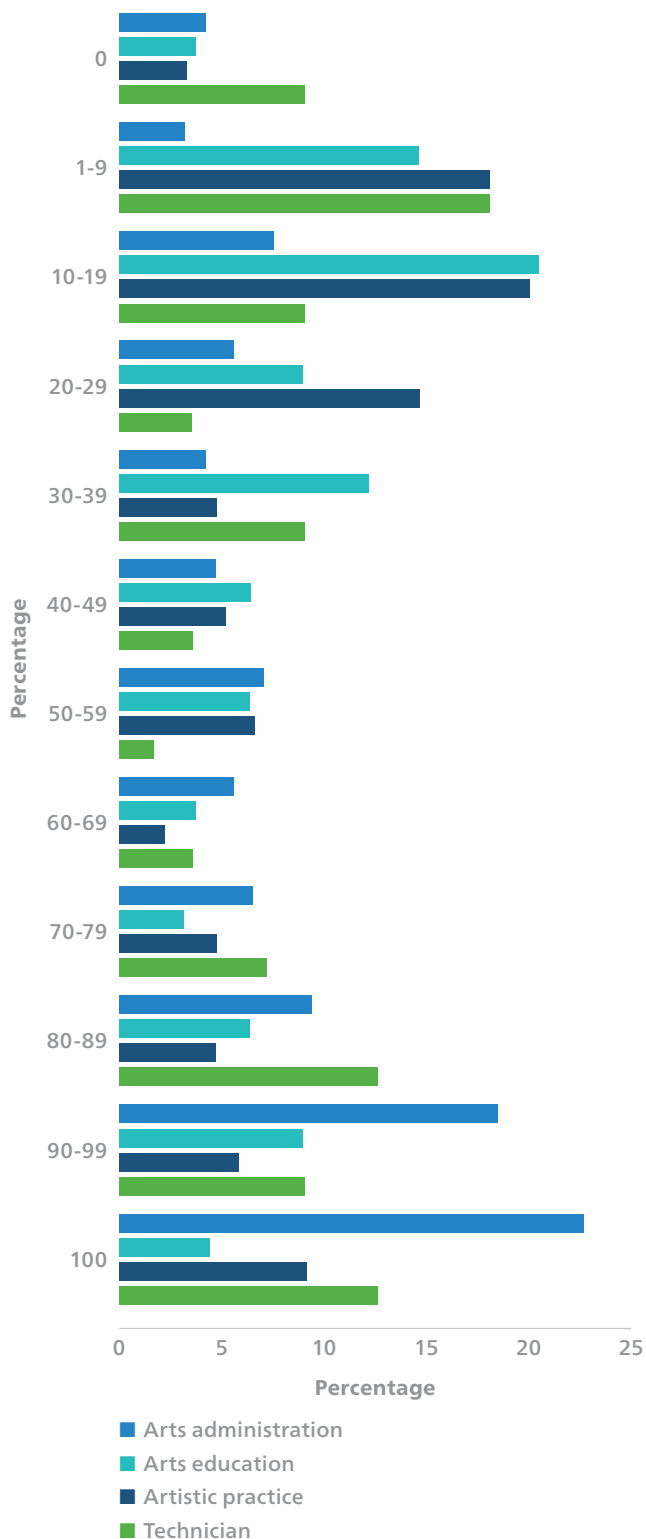
**Figure 14**

Amount of income earned from arts work, percentage distribution.



**Figure 15**

Percentage of income earned by primary artistic occupation.



# Additional Forms of Labour

## Non-Arts Labour

Arts professionals often rely on a diversity of income sources, and it appears that this increasingly includes employment in other industries. In 2020, 31% of arts professionals reported engaging in non-arts labour — this figure more than doubled in 2023 to 79%. In addition, 46% of those who held jobs in other sectors relied on their non-arts work for at least 50% of their income.

The majority of those who engage in non-arts labour reported doing so in a part-time capacity, with 78% working 20 hours or less per week outside the arts sector. Though some respondents indicated that they enjoy the variety provided by non-arts work or are in the midst of a career transition, 52% cited insufficient pay for arts work as their primary reason for working in other sectors. Professional artists were the most likely to report not earning a sufficient income from their arts work, as well as being significantly more likely to rely on non-arts work for substantial portion of their income.

The most common non-arts field that arts professionals worked in was education. Unsurprisingly, arts educators were the most likely to work concurrently in non-arts education, but this was also the most common form of non-arts labour for arts administrators. A significant number of respondents also selected “other,” making it the second most popular response. This indicates a need for a more detailed examination of non-arts occupations held by arts professionals in future iterations of the Arts Professionals Survey.

Demographic gaps in certain fields continued to be observed — men were more likely to work in business than women (28% compared to 18%), with women being more likely than men to work in education (35% compared to 28%). Those who self-identified as being outside the gender binary were more likely than both men and women to work in the service industry; they were also more likely to report not making a sufficient income from arts work.

Figure 21

Hours per week spent working in other sectors.

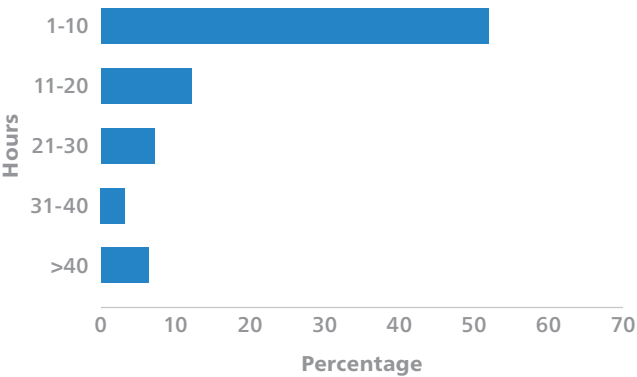
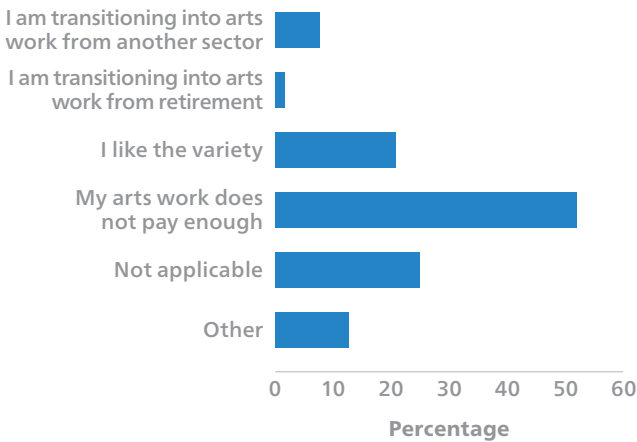


Figure 22

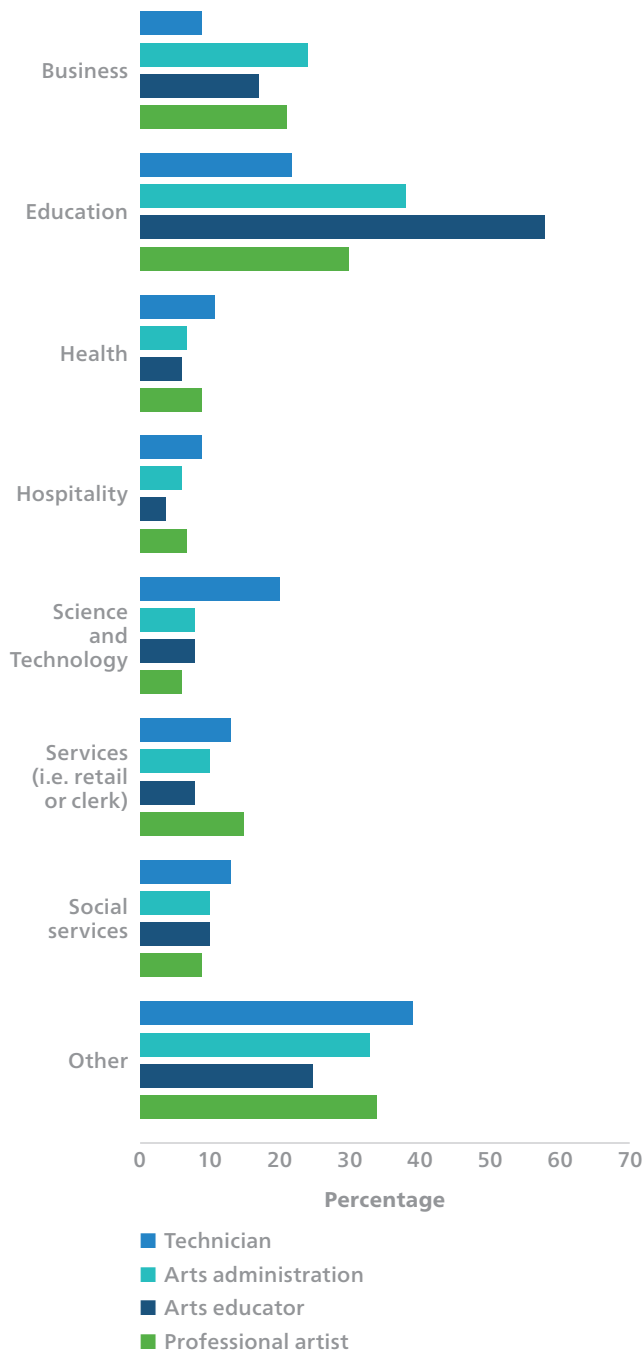
Reasons for working outside the arts sector.



## Volunteerism

**Figure 23**

Fields arts professionals work in aside from their primary arts occupation.



The decrease in volunteerism among arts professionals did not reverse direction in 2023. In 2017, 69% of survey respondents reported that they volunteer in the community in some way. In 2020, this number dropped to 59% and remained at 59% in 2023. Additionally, 25% of survey respondents reported feeling that they are not very involved with Calgary's community or civic life — a slight increase from 22% in 2020. Even though restrictions on gatherings have been lifted, many arts professionals are not returning to volunteer activities in the same way, and this may be reflective of the long-term impact of the pandemic. For further discussion of arts professionals' perceptions of Calgary's arts community, see the section *'Life in Calgary.'*

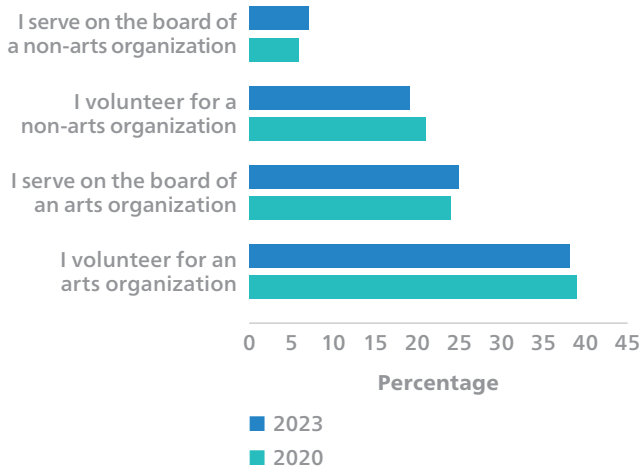
The most common way arts professionals volunteered continued to be as a general volunteer for an arts organization (38%) followed by serving on the board of an arts organization (25%).

Overwhelmingly, the most common amount of time spent volunteering across all categories was 20 hours or less per month, an unsurprising statistic considering that arts professionals are already struggling to find enough time for their own personal and professional development (see the section *'Time Poverty.'*)

Women continued to be more likely in general to volunteer than men, with men remaining more likely than women to hold positions on the board of both arts and non-arts organizations.

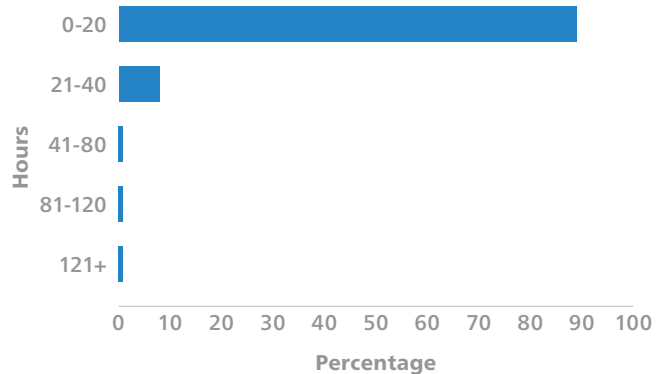
**Figure 19**

Participation of arts professionals in different types of volunteer activities, 2020 vs. 2023.



**Figure 20**

Hours per month spent volunteering among arts professionals.



# Working Conditions

The following section addresses the working conditions of arts professionals in Calgary. Though past versions of the Arts Professional Surveys investigated demographic impacts on working conditions, this year’s survey included an expanded set of questions specifically dealing with harassment in the workplace, with the aim of understanding the full scope of this issue.

## Time Poverty

“With limited time and energy, in order to share my work, I need to dedicate a lot of it towards production (from grant writing, through fundraising and general admin and production). In the end the amount of resources available for creation and performance are limited.”

“Time is the biggest factor. To work full time, volunteer and have a social life while trying to develop more professional skills feels untenable.”

A career in the arts sector can be rewarding in many ways, allowing professionals to contribute to Calgary’s deep-rooted artistic and cultural heritage. However, those working in the arts face unique challenges when it comes to maintaining a healthy

work-life balance. The prevalence of contracting, freelancing, part-time work, and self-employment means that arts professionals are often juggling multiple occupations as well as working long and/or irregular hours. Not only can this affect one’s ability



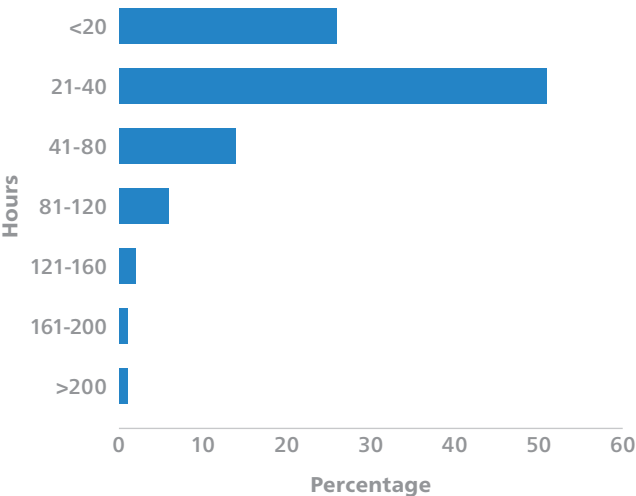
to care for their mental and physical wellbeing, but it can limit arts professionals’ ability to meaningfully pursue creative and professional development.

Maintaining an artistic practice requires individuals to divide their time between many tasks, often making it difficult to find enough time for art creation and production. Only a quarter of artists in 2023 were able to dedicate more than 20 hours per week to the creative process. 66% of respondents expressed feeling like they did not have enough time for creative reflection or incubation, and only 35% felt they had enough time to satisfactorily complete their work. 11% spent more than 20 hours per week on administrative tasks, and others spent significant time on areas like financial management and marketing. Very few reported being able to dedicate any substantial amount of time each week to professional development.

Consistent with previous years, time continued to be the most desired resource among arts professionals; 67% indicated wanting more time for artistic development, more than professional development opportunities (60%), money for supplies (55%), and public engagement opportunities (54%) (See the section ‘Artistic and Professional Conditions’ for further discussion of resources.) About half (51%) of respondents reported wishing they were able to spend an additional 20-40 hours per month on their development as an artist, and almost a quarter (24%) wished they could dedicate over 40 hours per month to artistic development.

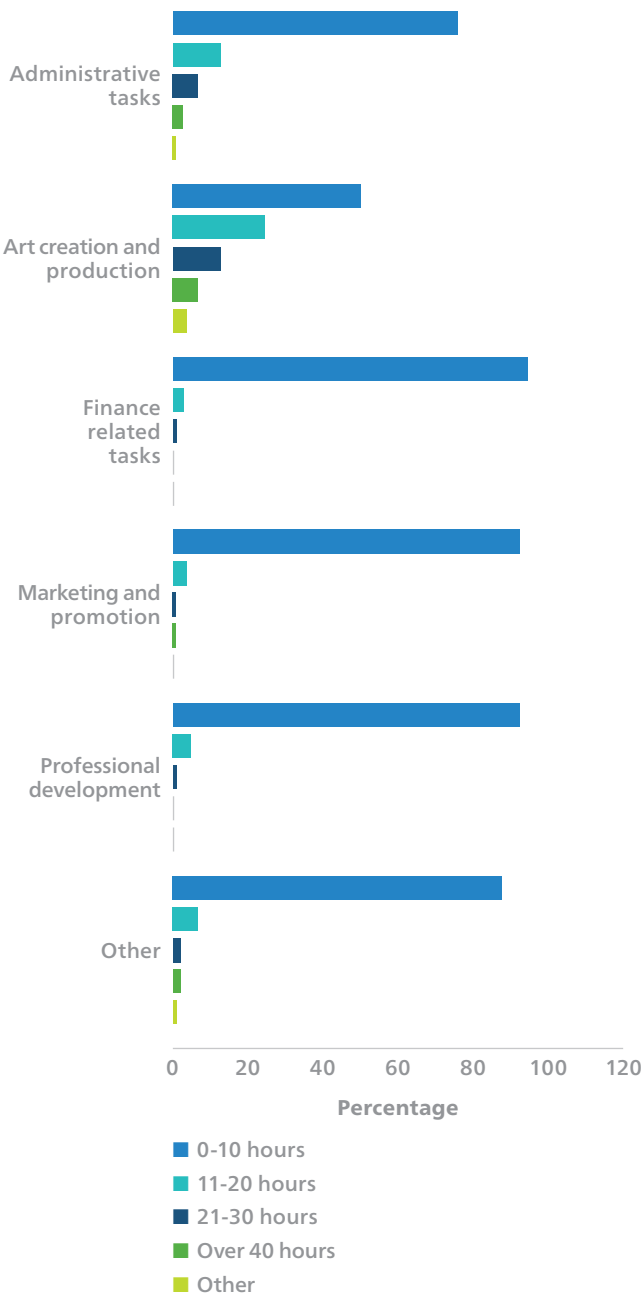
**Figure 25**

How many additional hours per month arts professionals wish to dedicate to their artistic development.



**Figure 24**

Distribution of hours spent on common tasks of an arts professional.



## Time During the Pandemic

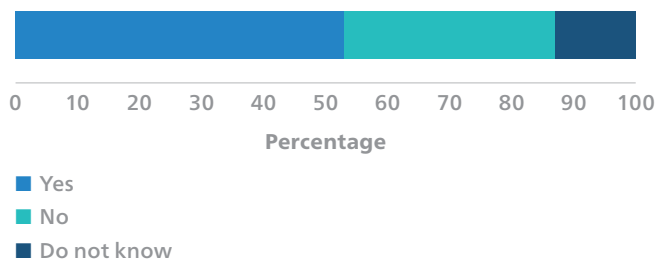
Though COVID-19 was devastating to the arts sector in many ways, some arts professionals unexpectedly saw the benefit of a sudden excess of time. Just over half (53%) of all survey respondents indicated that they had more time for their artistic practice during the pandemic compared to 2023. It seems that altered pandemic work structures may have provided some individuals with more time for creative reflection and incubation.

Between 2017 and 2020, the number of professional artists who reported working over 30 hours per week jumped from 27% to 40% — this percentage fell back to 25% in 2023. On the other hand, individuals who rely on traditional models of employment (typically arts administrators and educators) may not have benefited from an increase in free time; though CERB (or the ability to work from home) provided financial stability for many through the pandemic, the lack of in-person connection undoubtedly meant that some professionals found it difficult to advance their careers during this time.

**Figure 26**

Responses to the question:

“Did you have more time for your artistic practice during the pandemic compared to 2023?”



## Harassment in the Workplace

Results from the 2020, Arts Professionals Survey showed high levels of reported harassment for those who did not identify as white, able-bodied, or male. Following the completion of the 2017 survey, Calgary Arts Development was committed to better understanding the working conditions of arts professionals with non-dominant identities.

In 2020, a single question related to harassment was asked of those survey respondents who identified as a gender other than male, a racial or ethnic identity other than white, and for those who report having a physical or cognitive disability using the conventional medical model of disability.

In 2021, the [After Me Too report](#) came out, developing an alternate methodology to explore harassment in the arts sector. This report focussed on identifying specific behaviours that indicate harassment, rather than just asking whether an individual feels they have been harassed. Building off this methodology, the 2023 Calgary Arts Development survey created a list of questions about experiences of harassment related to gender, race, disability, and instances of sexual harassment rather than relying on a single question defining the many ways harassment takes place.

The revised survey method also asked survey respondents to identify whether they were witnesses to any of these forms of harassment in the workplace.

### Racialized Identity

The 2020 Arts Professionals Survey asked *When working with (i.e. contract/project based) an organization, or for an organization (a hired permanent employee), have you experienced race-based workplace harassment?* For those individuals who reported having a racialized identity, 66% reported having experienced racism.

The 2023 Arts Professionals Survey presented individuals with different forms of harassment related to racism and asked whether they have personally experienced or witnessed them in the workplace.

The specific forms of harassment were:

- Microaggressions (insults, assumptions made about your capability based on stereotypes, backhanded comments).
- Direct racism (racial slurs).
- Assault or intimidation.

- Othering based on race (i.e. bringing food to work and it being deemed “smelly,” or being intentionally left out of gatherings).
- Unwanted comments about where someone comes from.
- Unequal treatment between white staff and non-white staff.
- Being overlooked for advancement opportunities based on race.
- Unwanted and unnecessary over-supervision from white staff (i.e. crowding personal space to check your work, or not trusting you to do the work effectively and rechecking the work).
- Assumptions of your citizenship based on the colour of your skin.

63% of non-white survey respondents reported experiencing harassment in the workplace. 47% of all survey respondents reported witnessing harassment in the workplace. Despite the change in methodology, these are similar results to 2020.

## Gender-Based Harassment

The 2020 Arts Professionals Survey asked *When working with (i.e. contract/project based) an organization, or for an organization (a hired permanent employee), have you experienced gender-based workplace harassment?* Of those who did not identify as male, 51.5% reported that when working with an organization either as an employee or on a contract they had experienced gender-based workplace harassment.

The 2023 Arts Professionals Survey presented individuals with different forms of harassment related to gender and asked whether survey respondents had personally experienced or witnessed them in the workplace.

The specific forms of harassment were:

- Being misgendered.
- Use of derogatory or unprofessional terms related to a person’s gender.
- Unwelcome looks or gestures based on gender expression.
- Making gender-related comments about someone’s physical characteristics.
- Making comments or treating someone badly because they do not conform with sex-role stereotypes.

- Acting paternally in a way that someone thinks undermines their self-respect or position of responsibility.

23% of women and 74% of non-binary survey respondents reported experiencing gender-based harassment in the workplace. 39% of all survey respondents reported witnessing at least one of these types of gender-based harassment at work.

## Sexual Harassment

The 2020 Arts Professionals Survey did not ask any specific questions related to sexual harassment in the workplace.

The 2023 Arts Professionals Survey presented individuals with the following forms of sexual harassment and asked whether survey respondents had personally experienced or witnessed them in the workplace:

- Unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, comments, or questions.
- Unwelcome invasion of personal space (i.e. crowding or leaning over).
- Unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures.
- Unwelcome communications of a sexual nature.
- Use of derogatory or unprofessional terms related to a person’s sex/gender.
- Pressure for dates and/or sexual favours.
- The presence of sexually oriented material of any kind.
- Sexual assault (sexual contact without consent).
- Stalking (unwanted intrusion either physical or electronic into someone’s life).
- Offering preferential treatment in exchange for sexual favours (for example someone offering to give better artistic space for sex).

42% of women and 57% of non-binary survey respondents reported experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace. While sexual harassment is different than gender-based harassment, survey results show a clear relationship between gender identity and the likelihood of being sexually harassed.

38% of all survey respondents report witnessing sexual harassment in the workplace.

## Ableist and Audist Harassment

For those individuals who reported either being Deaf/deaf or having a medical disability, the 2020 Arts Professionals Survey asked *Have you ever experienced ableism in any part (work, presenting, trying to access resources, etc) of your work as an arts professional?* Over half (51%) reported having experienced ableism during some part of their work as an arts professional, including when presenting their work or trying to access resources. This was most reported for those working in music, where 57% reported having experienced ableism.

The 2023 Arts Professionals Survey presented individuals with the following forms of ableist or audist harassment and asked whether survey respondents had personally experienced or witnessed them in the workplace:

- Microaggressions (assumptions based on stereotypes, paternalistic or demeaning attitudes).
- Overt ableism/anti-deafness (slurs, name-calling or pejorative nicknames based on disability).
- Assault or intimidation.
- Social isolation based on ability (exclusion from activities and being ignored).
- Inappropriate or thoughtless use of space.
- Unwanted or unnecessary help (without asking or needing it).
- Expressions of pity from co-workers.
- Being overlooked for opportunities based on disability.
- Intrusive questions or remarks about someone's disability.
- Inappropriately disclosing someone's disability to others.

46% of those respondents who identify as Deaf/deaf or as having a disability reported experiencing harassment in the workplace, similar to the 2020 survey results despite the changes in methodology.

Those who self-describe having a visible disability were less likely to report experiencing these forms of ableism than those who self-describe as having an invisible disability. Recent surveys have begun to explore this concept further by asking to identify how aware co-workers are of an individual's disability, which should shed further light on this gap in future iterations of this survey.

32% of all survey respondents report witnessing ableist or audist forms of harassment in the workplace.

## Reporting

Only 30% of those who experienced or witnessed some form of harassment responded that there was a Human Resources individual at the organization where these incidents occurred.

38% of those who experienced or witnessed race-based harassment reported the incident, indicating that even when there was not a formal human resources staff to report to, individuals found someone within organizations to make aware of what happened.

Similarly, 38% of those who experienced or witnessed sexual harassment reported the incident, again indicating that even when there was not a formal human resources staff, arts workers found someone within organizations to make aware of incidents.

Of those who experienced or witnessed gender-based harassment, only 28% reported the incident to anyone, and of those who experienced or witnessed ableist or audist harassment, only 25% reported the incident. Even when human resources staff were available within organizations, many of these incidents were unreported.



# Financial Conditions

A primary aim of the Arts Professionals Survey is to monitor the financial conditions of those working in Calgary's arts sector. The following section will address individual and household finances, as well as the availability and quality of public and private funding for arts professionals in Calgary.

## Individual Income

Nearly three quarters (73%) of arts professionals continued to report an average individual income of less than \$65,000 per year — putting them below the average Calgary annual income of \$65,500 (according to the 2021 census<sup>6</sup>). However, the average individual income across all arts professions has increased significantly from previous years. In both 2017 and 2020, over half of all survey respondents reported annual earnings under \$35,000. From 2020-2023, the number of arts professionals earning less than \$35,000 fell to 39% from 57%, associated with growth across all other income brackets — for example, the number of respondents who reported earning \$100,000 or more nearly doubled to 9% from 5%. These reported earnings also reflected a significant increase from pre-pandemic levels, hopefully a sign that incomes are rising to meet the growing cost of living in Calgary.

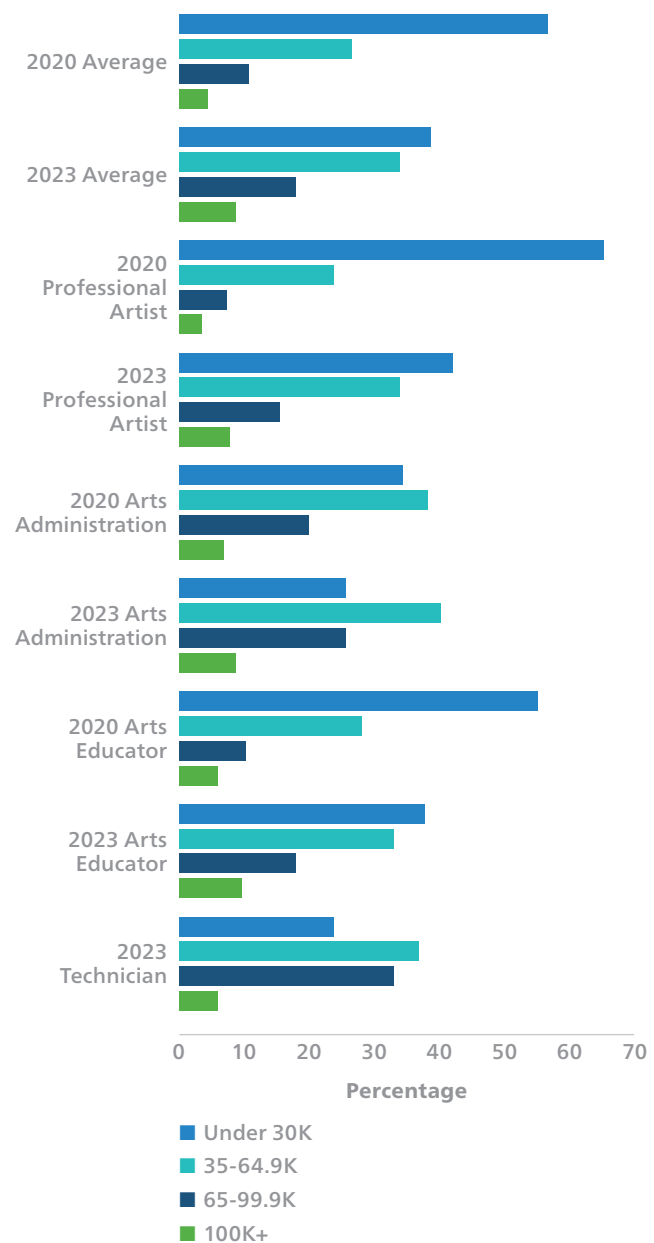
Part of the increase in average income may be reflective of survey respondents. Technicians — a newly added category to this year's survey — had the highest reported individual income, with 39% of technicians earning over \$65,000 per year, and only 24% earning less than \$35,000. Arts administrators had the second highest reported annual income, with 35% earning above \$65,000, followed by 28% of arts educators and 24% of professional artists. Arts administration also experienced slightly less dramatic shifts in income since 2017 than other professions, indicating a more stable yearly increase that may have been less affected by the pandemic.

Within disciplines, Music continued to have the highest mean annual income (\$56,684), slightly higher than the mean for those working in Performing Arts (\$54,283). The mean annual income for Presenting Arts was the lowest at \$49,649. Only a quarter of those in the Presenting Arts earned an income comparable to or higher than the Calgary average.

In line with previous iterations of this survey, the ability to earn a higher income continues to skew toward men, whiteness, and native English speakers.

**Figure 27**

The self-reported average annual individual income of arts professionals across years and positions.



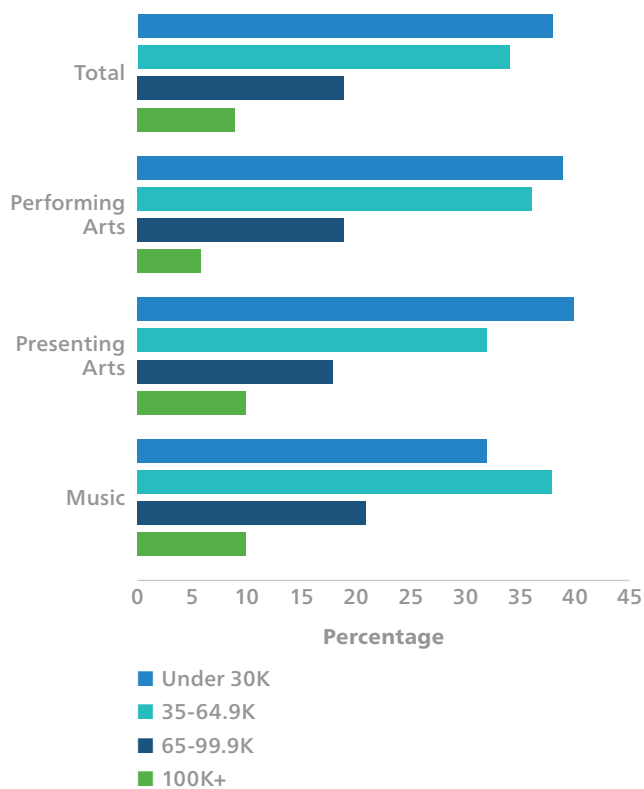
<sup>6</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?DGUIDlist=2021S05004830&GENDERlist=1%2C2%2C3&HEADERlist=0&Lang=E&STATISTIClist=1&SearchText=Calgary>



75% of women reported earning less than \$65,000 per year compared to 64% of men. Men were also nearly three times as likely as women to earn \$100,000 or more (15% compared to 6%). This wage gap between genders is especially problematic in arts-related fields given that the arts sector is largely female-dominated — 59% of survey respondents identified as female, and 29% as male. The remaining 12% either identified outside the gender binary or preferred not to say.

**Figure 28**

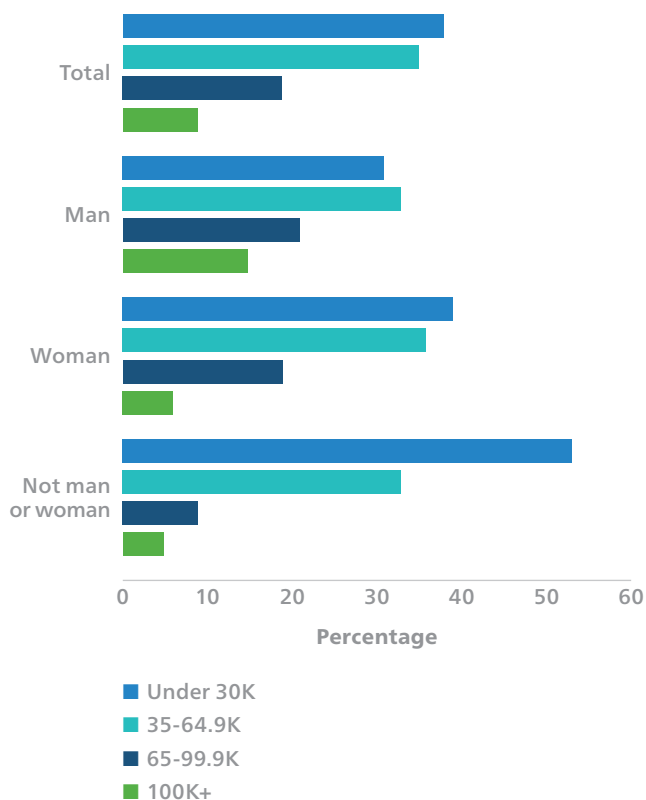
Income brackets of arts professionals according to primary discipline.



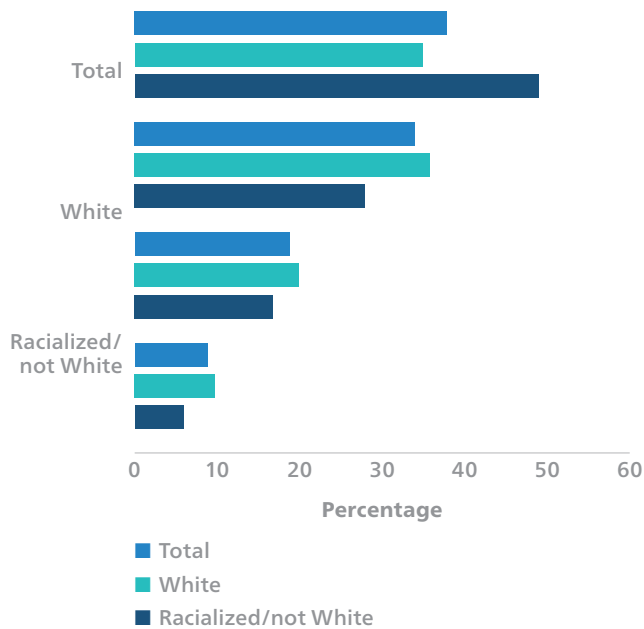
Those who identified as IBPOC remained more likely than those who identified as white to earn less than \$35,000 annually (49% compared to 35%), and less likely to earn over \$100,000 (6% compared to 10%). Of those who did not speak English as a first language, 57% earned less than \$35,000. Though incomes in 2023 rose across all demographic categories, this growth has not compensated for income gaps based on historic discrimination that continue to affect the ability of women and IBPOC to make a living in the arts.

**Figure 29**

Income brackets of arts professionals according to gender identity.



**Figure 30**  
Average income of arts professionals according to racial identity.



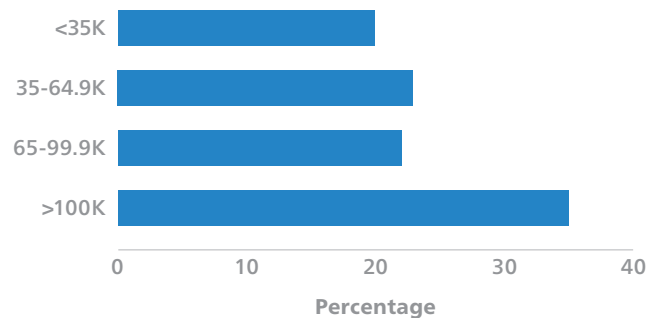
## Household Income

According to Statistics Canada, the median annual household income for Calgary in 2021 was \$108,560. In 2023, roughly two thirds of arts professionals' family incomes were below the median, with 65% of households making less than \$100,000 per year. This is consistent with survey data collected in years before the pandemic; 66% of arts professionals in 2017 and 67% in 2019 were earning below the median for that time. In 2020 this number jumped temporarily to 75% but has come back down more in line with previous years. It seems that, for those working in the arts, family incomes have stabilized after major impacts from the pandemic but have not risen in the way individual incomes have.

Arts administrators reported the highest annual household incomes, with 65% earning over \$65,000, although they were equally likely as technicians to earn \$100,000 or more (40%). Professional artists were the least likely to earn a household income close to the Calgary median, with only 33% earning \$100,000 or more.

Those who identified as IBPOC were more likely to report a lower household income, with 50% earning less than \$65,000 compared to 38% of those who identified as white.

**Figure 31**  
Average annual household income brackets of arts professionals in 2023.



## Perception of Income

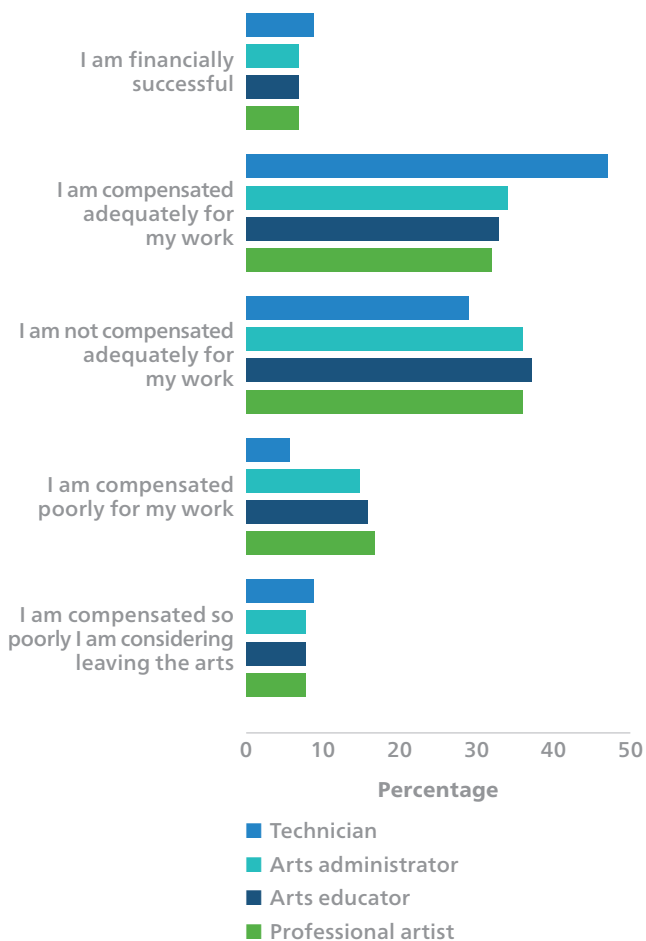
**“My primary concern is the ability to make a living working in the arts in Calgary. This has not been possible due to financial constraints and the overall lack of funding and financial support for the arts and for artists.”**

Although individual incomes for arts professionals have risen substantially in 2023, 60% still described the compensation they receive for their arts work as inadequate. This marks a slight increase from 57% in 2020, indicating that incomes may not be rising fast enough to catch up to the rapidly increasing cost of living.

Within professions, technicians had the most positive view of their financial compensation — 56% reported their income to be at least satisfactory, which is roughly 15% higher than all other professions.

**Figure 32**

Arts professionals' perceptions of their income according to primary profession.

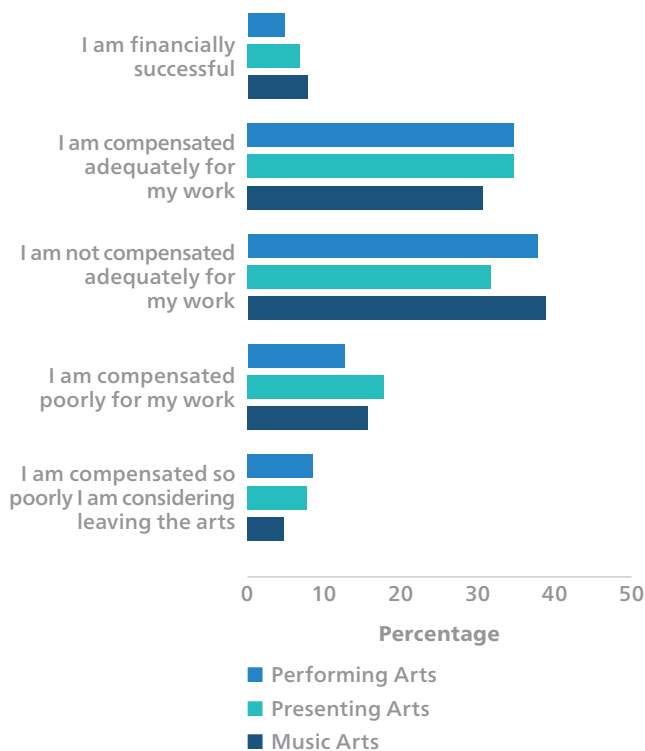


Those working in Performing and Presenting Arts were most likely to feel that their compensation is so poor that they are considering leaving the arts, and those working in Music were most likely to feel financially successful.

In line with reported income statistics for 2023, men were more likely to perceive their income as satisfactory than women (46% compared to 39%), and those who identified as white were more likely to be satisfied than those who identified as IBPOC (44% compared to 37%).

**Figure 33**

Arts professionals' perceptions of their income according to discipline.



## Income Support

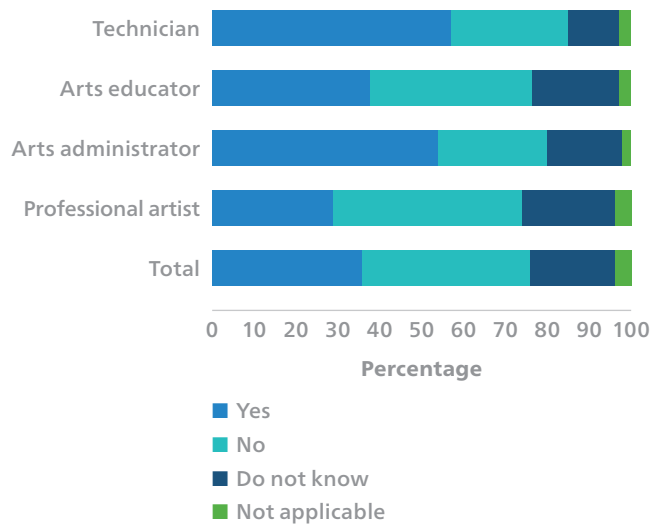
Around one third (36%) of arts professionals reported being eligible to earn income support in 2023. This figure is comparable to the number of respondents who were eligible in 2017 (34%) and has decreased from 44% in 2020, likely due to the cessation of CERB benefits in fall of that year.<sup>7</sup> Technicians were the most likely to report eligibility (57%), followed by arts administrators (54%). Meanwhile, less than half of all professional artists (29%) and arts educators (38%) met the criteria to receive income support. 20% of respondents did not know if they were eligible to receive support, a slight increase from 2020; this indicates that a portion of arts professionals are not being reached when it comes to awareness about available income support options.

13% of arts professionals received employment insurance or income support for the year 2022. This is an unsurprising drop from 2020, when 58% received support — out of this group, 52% received CERB or other COVID-19 related support. The number of individuals who accessed support in 2022 is comparable to the 11% who did so prior to the pandemic in 2019.

Of those who received assistance, 40% received support with income caps (i.e. Alberta Works or AISH). Professional artists reported the lowest incomes out of the professions surveyed, and yet were the most likely to be ineligible for income support. During the pandemic, artists were the most likely to access CERB, but in 2022 were among the least likely to receive any form of income support — only 11% reported doing so. Only 9% of arts administrators received support in 2022, although this may be due to the profession having better employment stability. The ability to access income support is impacted by employment structure, making it harder for those working on a freelance or contract basis to receive the support they need.

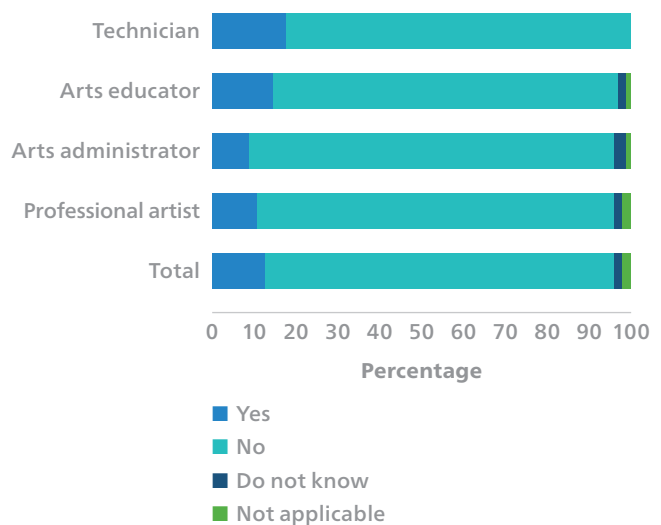
**Figure 34**

Responses to the question  
“Are you eligible to receive income support?”



**Figure 35**

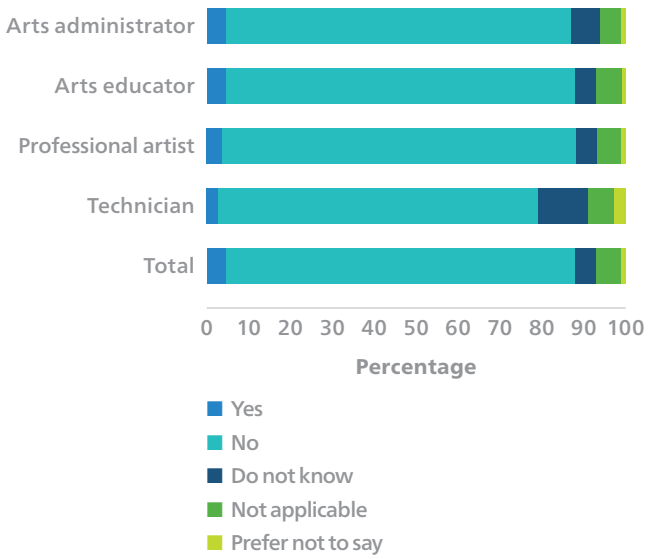
Responses to the question  
“Did you receive any employment insurance or income support in 2022?”



<sup>7</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application/transition-2.html>

**Figure 36**

Responses to the question  
“Did you receive any income supports  
that have income caps?”



## Savings

Only 43% of arts professionals reported being able to accumulate personal savings over the year 2022. This marks a 10% decrease from 2020, as well as a decrease from the 50% who were able to save in 2017. When this question was broken into income brackets, there was a clear relationship between income and the ability to save; those earning less than \$35,000 per year were far less likely to be able to accumulate savings (only 34%) than those who earned close to or above the median income.

Technicians and arts administrators—the two professions with the highest reported incomes—were more likely to accumulate personal savings (52% and 50%) than arts educators (47%) or professional artists (42%).

Since before the pandemic, there has been an uptick in respondents who report not putting away savings for retirement. In 2017, only 22% were not saving for retirement. This number nearly doubled to 40% in 2020 and fell slightly to 34% in 2023. Those newer to Calgary or the arts sector (10 years or less), those who identified as IBPOC or spoke English as a second language, and those with a disability were among the least likely to be saving for retirement. Still, retirement remained the most common reason for arts professionals to save. Of those who did save for this reason, 44% did so through an RRSP, and 39% used a personal savings account or TFSA. 45% of arts professionals also saved for a rainy-day fund, 32% for a major purchase, and 30% for living expenses in between contracts.

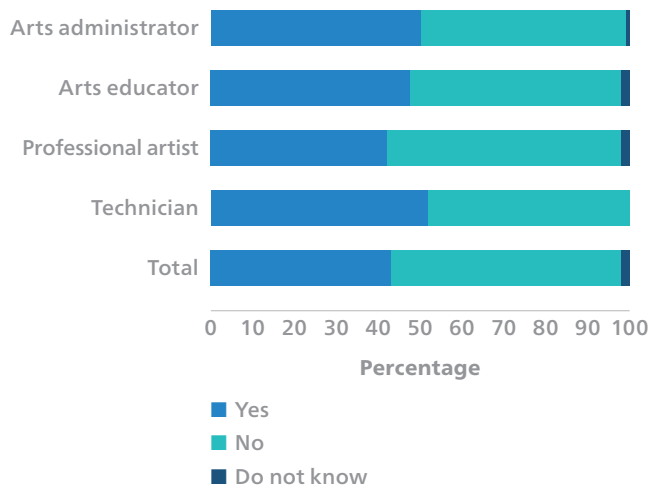
This decrease in respondents’ ability to accumulate savings serves to further illustrate the financial difficulties that arts professionals are facing after COVID-19. Besides those who lost their main source of income entirely during the pandemic, many incurred debts or took a substantial pay cut due to lack of available work. Supplementing these financial losses, CERB and other financial aid during the pandemic proved to be the most stable income some arts professionals had ever received.<sup>8</sup> Though CERB may have contributed to some individuals being able to pay off a portion of their debt or invest in their career, it is likely that the ending of these benefits in 2020 left some professionals struggling to regain a steady source of income. In 2023, 52% cited low pay for arts work and 46% cited unavailability of arts work as barriers to their ability to accumulate savings. 83% of respondents cited the cost of living as a major reason for their inability to save.

<sup>8</sup> [https://calgaryartsdevelopment.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ASP-Summaries\\_Savings-and-CERB\\_Final.pdf](https://calgaryartsdevelopment.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ASP-Summaries_Savings-and-CERB_Final.pdf)



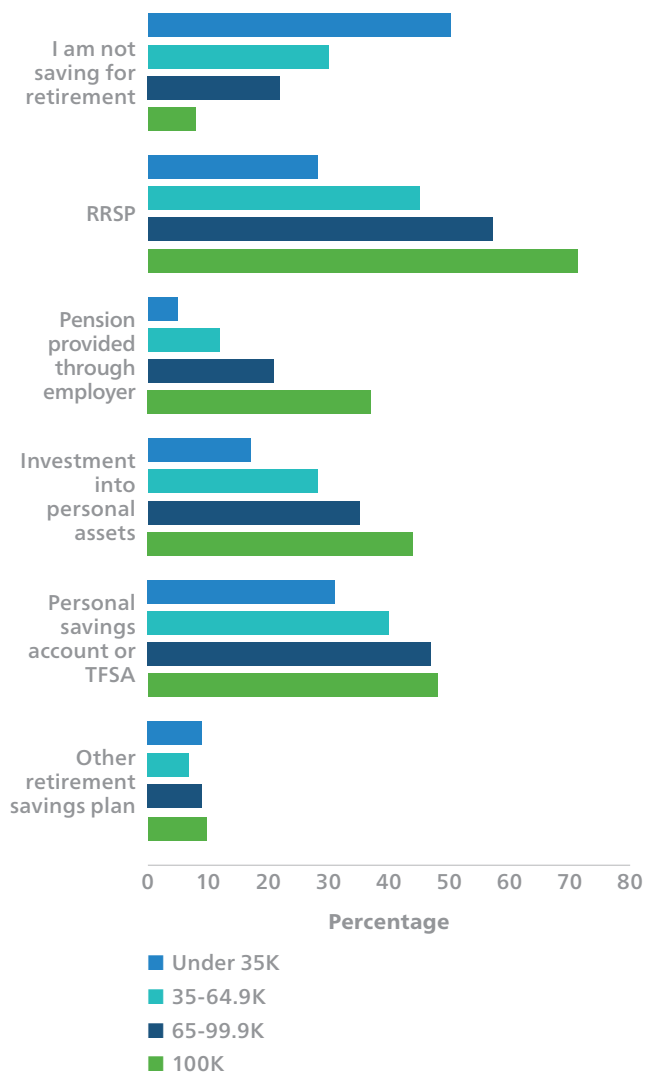
**Figure 37**

Responses to the question  
“Were you able to accumulate personal  
savings in 2022?” by profession.



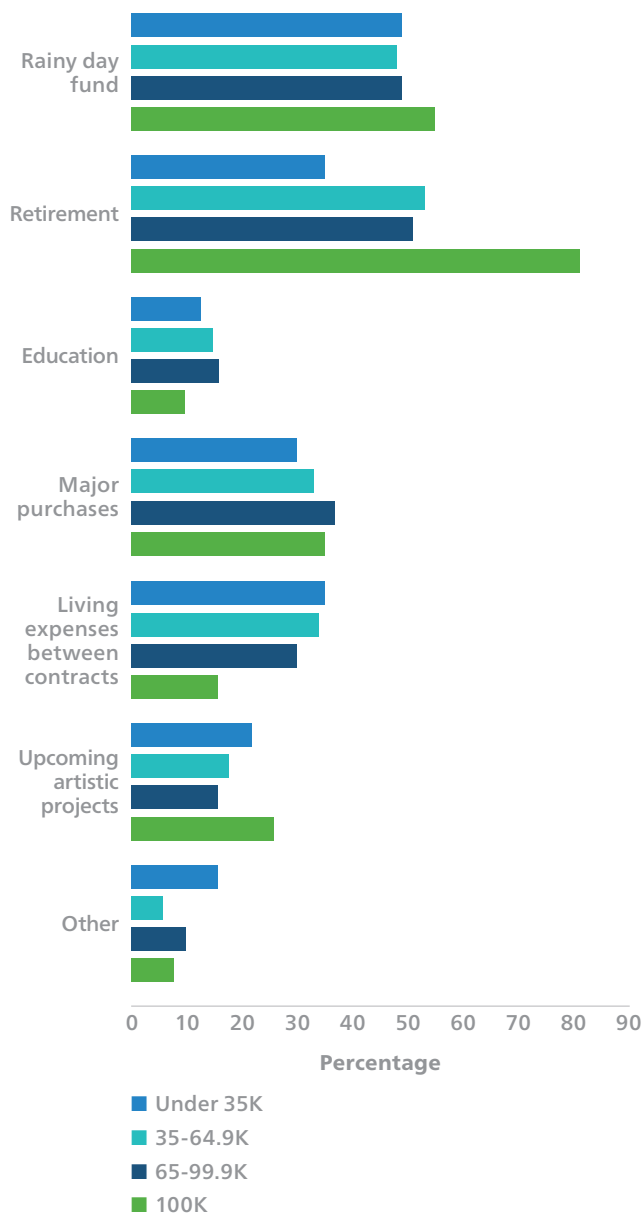
**Figure 38**

Methods arts professionals use to  
save for retirement, by income bracket.



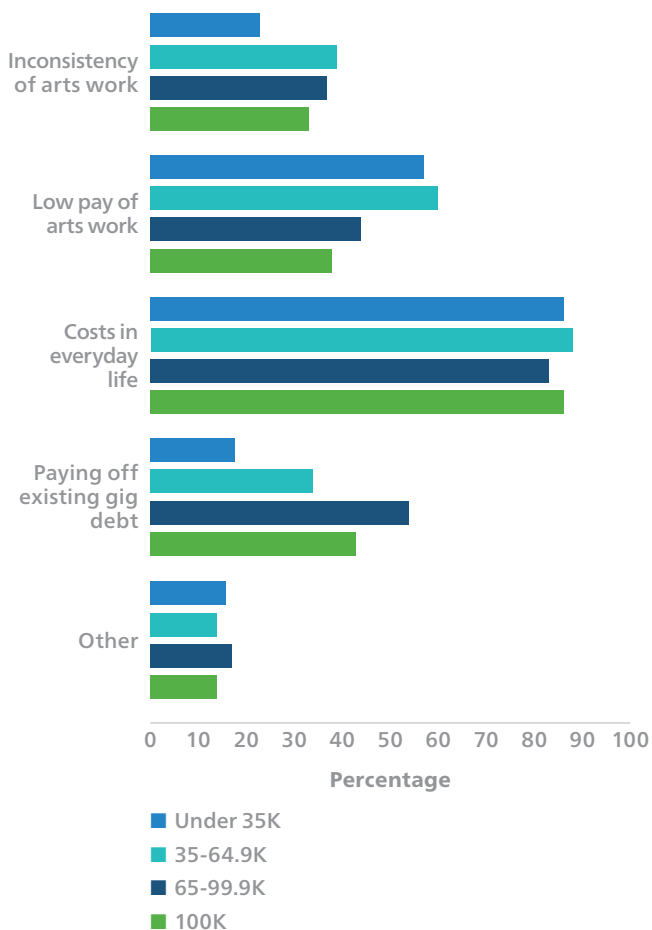
**Figure 39**

What arts professionals are saving for, by income bracket.



**Figure 40**

Barriers to saving, by income bracket.



# Public Funding

## Availability and Effectiveness of Funding

“[There is a need for] accessible granting and funding opportunities. Right now, the methodologies we apply to creating a grant application are limiting and inaccessible to many who would greatly benefit from them.”

Survey participants were asked to reflect on the quality and availability of public funding over the last three years. Three quarters of arts professionals reported that they find the number of opportunities to apply for grants and awards to be insufficient — this number remains essentially unchanged since 2020.

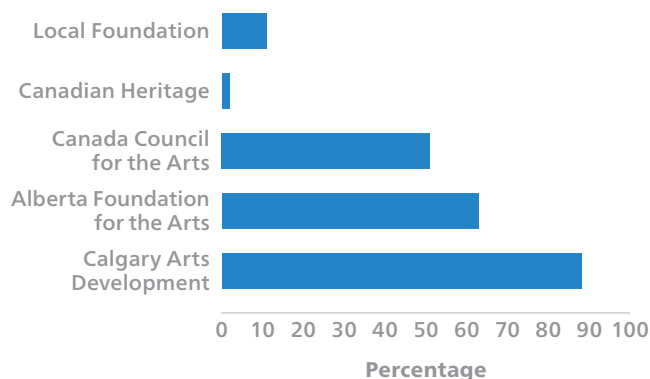
When considering the different organizations that offer grants for individual artists, Calgary Arts Development saw the highest number of applications by far; 88% of respondents reported applying for grants from this organization, a marked increase from 61% in 2020. The number of grant applications to programs for individual artists has increased substantially each year at Calgary Arts Development, making those opportunities that are available more competitive. The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (63%) and Canada Council for the Arts (51%) also saw an increased number of applicants, though applications to local foundations dropped from 15% to just 11% in 2023.

Grant applicants found the highest rate of success with Canadian Heritage grants (75%), although only 2% of respondents reported applying for such a grant, likely because they are often targeted towards organizations rather than individuals. Over half of those who applied to a local foundation or Calgary Arts Development and 45% who applied to Canada Council for the Arts were able to secure funding. The Alberta Foundation for the Arts had the lowest success rate at 38%.

Around three quarters of respondents did not use any supports in writing their grant applications. Of those who did report using grant-writing supports, 37% used a grant writer or editor and 25% used AI (e.g. ChatGPT).

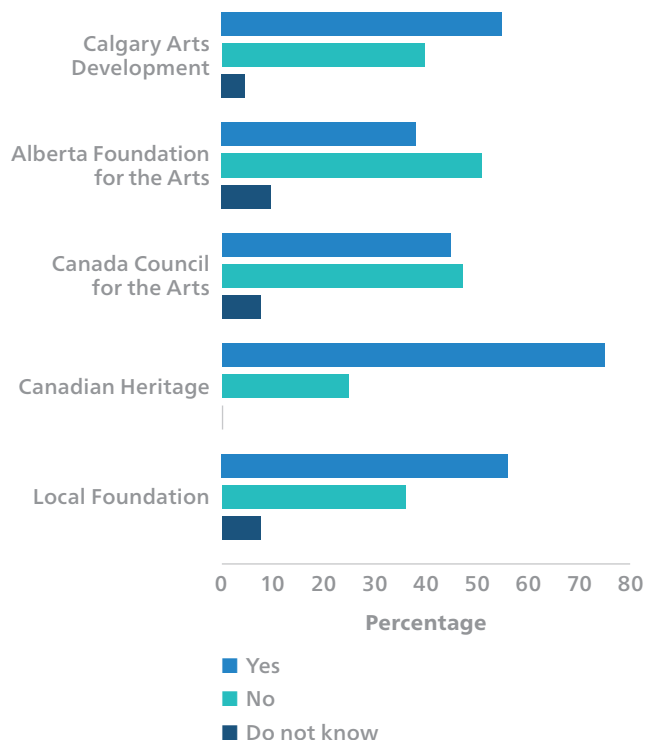
**Figure 41**

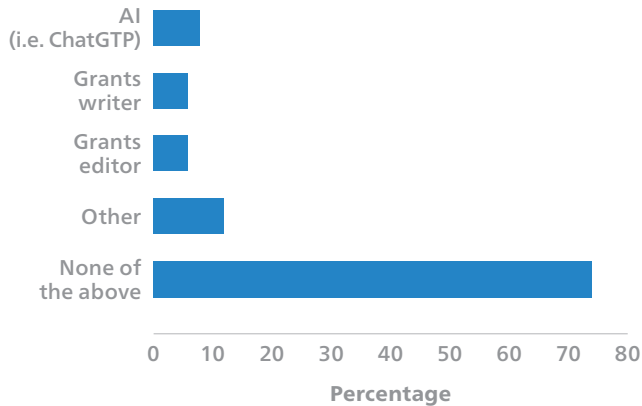
Percentage of respondents who applied for individual artist grants, by organization



**Figure 42**

Success rates of grant applicants, by organization



**Figure 43****Writing supports used by grant applicants****Perceptions of Funding**

When grant recipients were asked to describe the funding they received, most had a positive perception of the support, reporting that it was at least moderately helpful. Over half of all recipients of grants from Calgary Arts Development (64%), Canada Council for the Arts (60%), and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (55%) found the support to be extremely helpful.

Arts professionals maintained a less positive outlook on the future of public funding; the source that respondents were most optimistic about was municipal funding, with 15% believing that it would increase in the upcoming year. Despite a lack of faith that funding would improve, it does appear that arts professionals are more optimistic about funding opportunities at least remaining stable; in 2020, 81% believed provincial funding would decrease in the next year, a figure which dropped by 20% in 2023. There were similar

drops in the belief that funding would decrease across all categories. The higher rate of uncertainty about arts funding in 2020 undoubtedly stemmed from the volatile economic climate of the pandemic, during which public funding efforts were largely focused on emergency financial relief.

Participants were also asked to describe the kind of public funding that they felt would be most helpful. By far, the most consistent theme among responses was the desire for increased financial support, whether through expanded grants and funding, more employment opportunities, or general investment from all levels of government. In particular, many respondents expressed a frustration with the accessibility of financial support, feeling that current funding opportunities are often limited based on age, experience, or other demographic factors.

When asked what specific amount of funding would be required annually for artistic development, just over a quarter of respondents reported needing between \$10,000-\$20,000 per year, and an equal number reported needing more than \$20,000 per year. Only 5% reported needing \$1,000 or less. Some expressed a desire for subsistence granting such as a Universal Basic Income.

Another commonly cited issue was the need for better access to creative space in Calgary — many perceived a lack of affordable, accessible space to create, rehearse, exhibit, perform, and collaborate (for a more detailed look at the issue of access to space, see the section '*Artistic Space, Tools, and Resources*.')

Some respondents wanted to see more resources dedicated to public engagement and education surrounding the arts to develop a more arts receptive public.



Figure 44

Satisfaction with financial support among grant recipients, by organization.

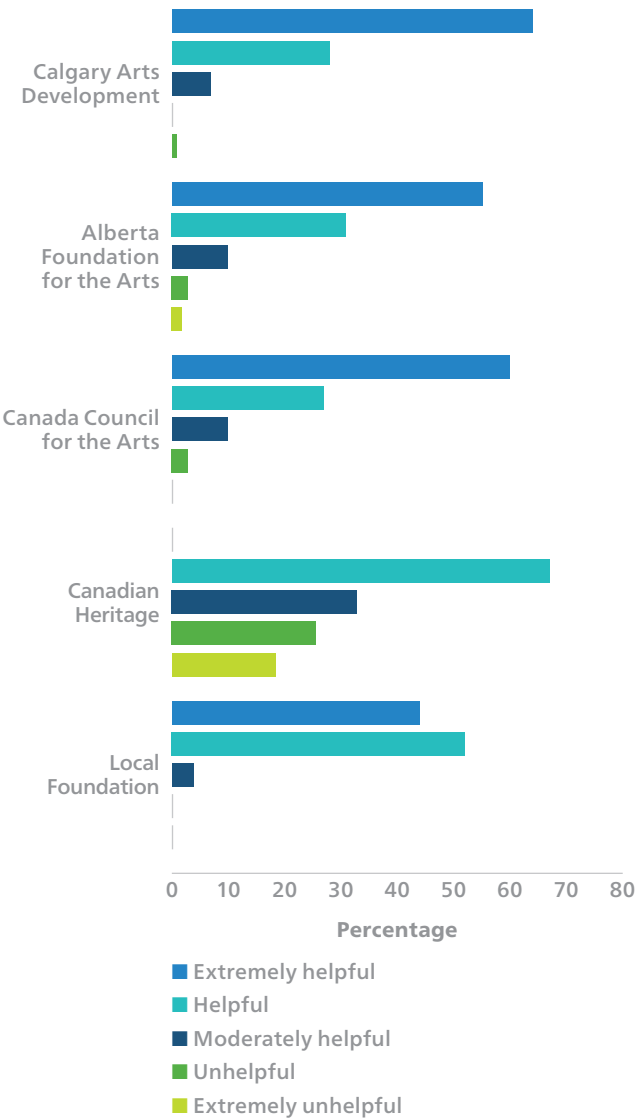
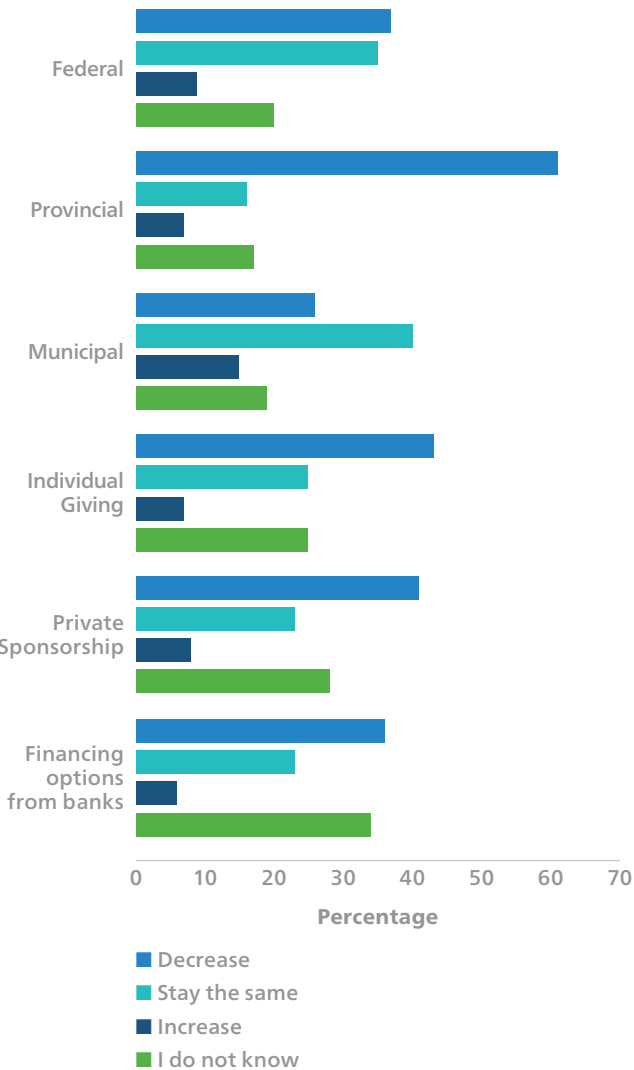


Figure 45

Arts professionals' perceptions of the availability of public funding over the next year.



# Living Conditions

Due to the low incomes and precarious working structures that are typical in the arts sector, arts professionals often face barriers to maintaining a basic standard of living. While accessing appropriate housing and health care is challenging for many Calgarians in our current moment, we wanted to understand the specific conditions that arts professionals face in this regard.

## Health

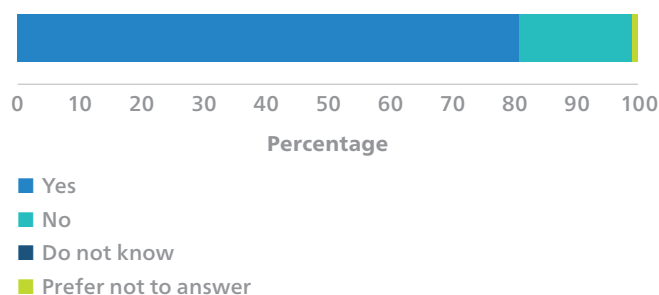
### Access to Health Care

The majority of arts professionals continue to report that they are able to access regular health care: 80% of respondents reported having a family doctor. Consistent with 2020, 81% agreed that they could see health care professionals when needed. Still, this represents a drop from 2017 when 92% could access health care when needed.

Those having lived in Calgary for a shorter period (10 years or less) were more likely to have trouble accessing health care if needed and were also less likely to have a family doctor.

**Figure 46**

Answers to the question  
“Do you have a family doctor?”



### Health Insurance

59% of arts professionals in 2023 reported having extended health insurance in addition to the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP). This figure remains unchanged since 2020 and marks a decrease from the 64% who were insured in 2017. Also consistent with 2020, arts administrators were the most likely to be covered by extended insurance (71%). Meanwhile, only 55% of both technicians and professional artists and 66% of arts educators reported having this coverage.

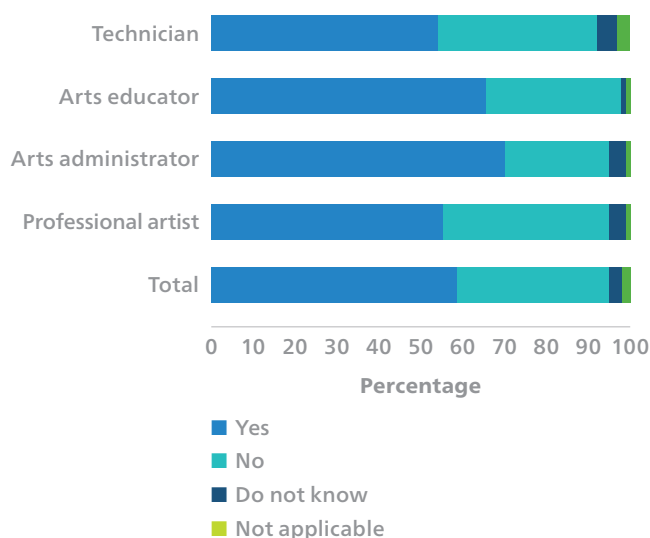
Of those who do not have extended healthcare coverage, 61% cited the primary reason to be the cost of insurance. An additional 16% of respondents did not know what coverage options were available to them.

Previous iterations of this survey have found that level of income is a predictor for one's ability to receive regular health care, and the data collected through the 2023 survey continued to support this conclusion. The most common way that arts professionals accessed extended coverage was by paying out of pocket, followed by getting partial or full coverage from an employer. Those earning at least \$65,000 per year (near Calgary's median income) more commonly received some form of coverage from an employer (62-63%), whereas those earning less than \$35,000 were more likely to pay for their own insurance in full or receive support from their partner/spouse's employer.

When asked about workers compensation board coverage, a little under half of respondents (48%) reported that they either did not have Workers' Compensation Board or were unsure if they did.

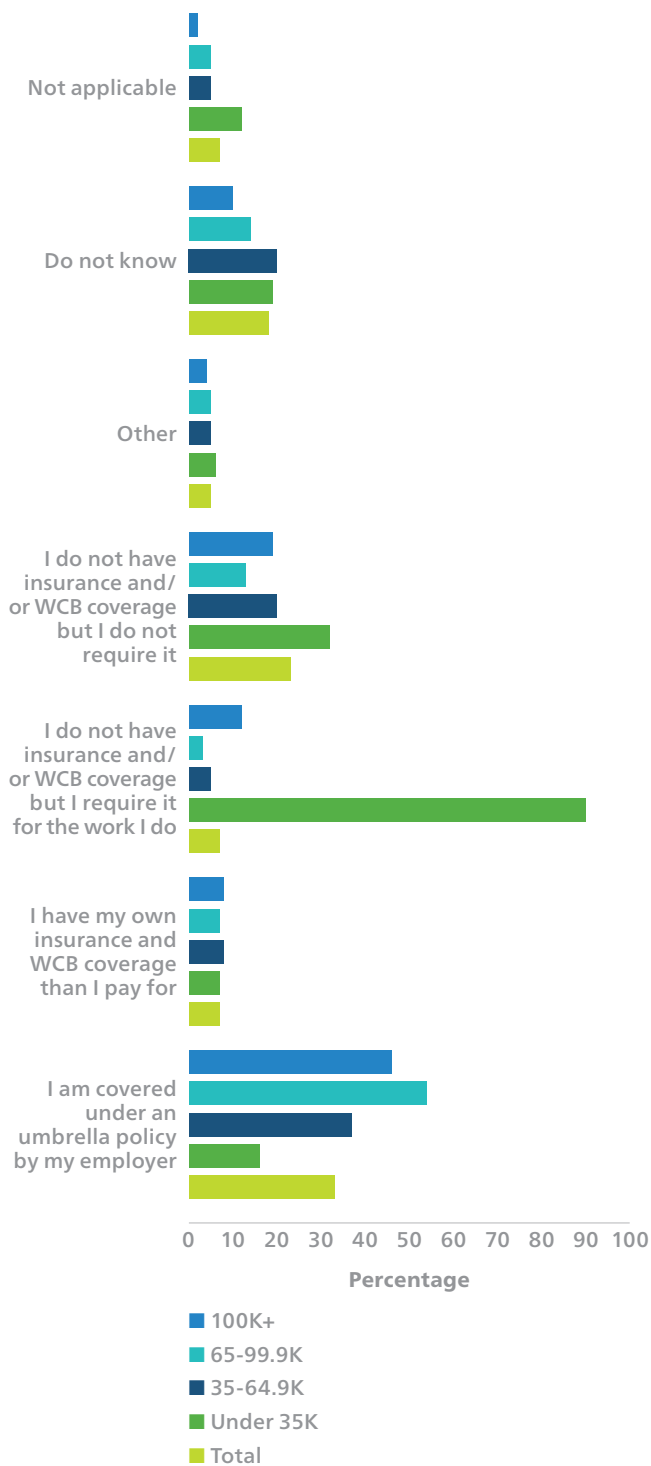
**Figure 47**

Responses to the question  
“Are you currently covered by extended health insurance in addition to the AHCIP?”



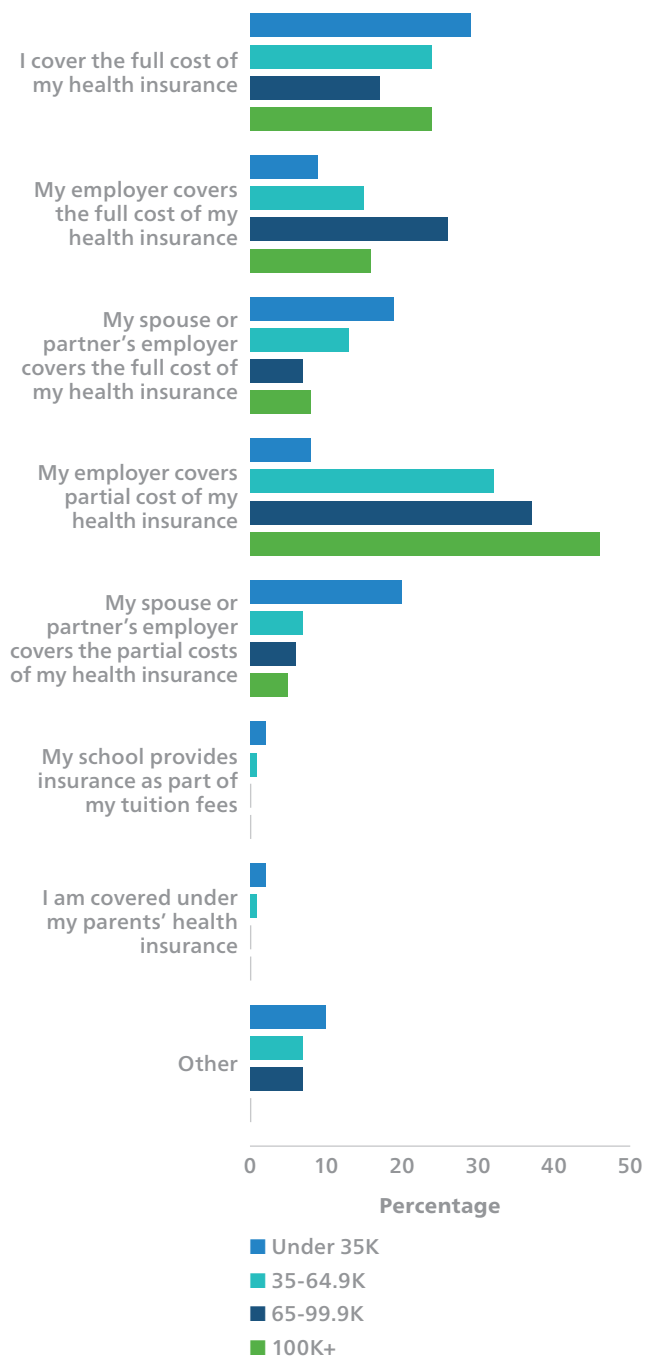
**Figure 49**

Source of insurance and WCB coverage, by income bracket.



**Figure 48**

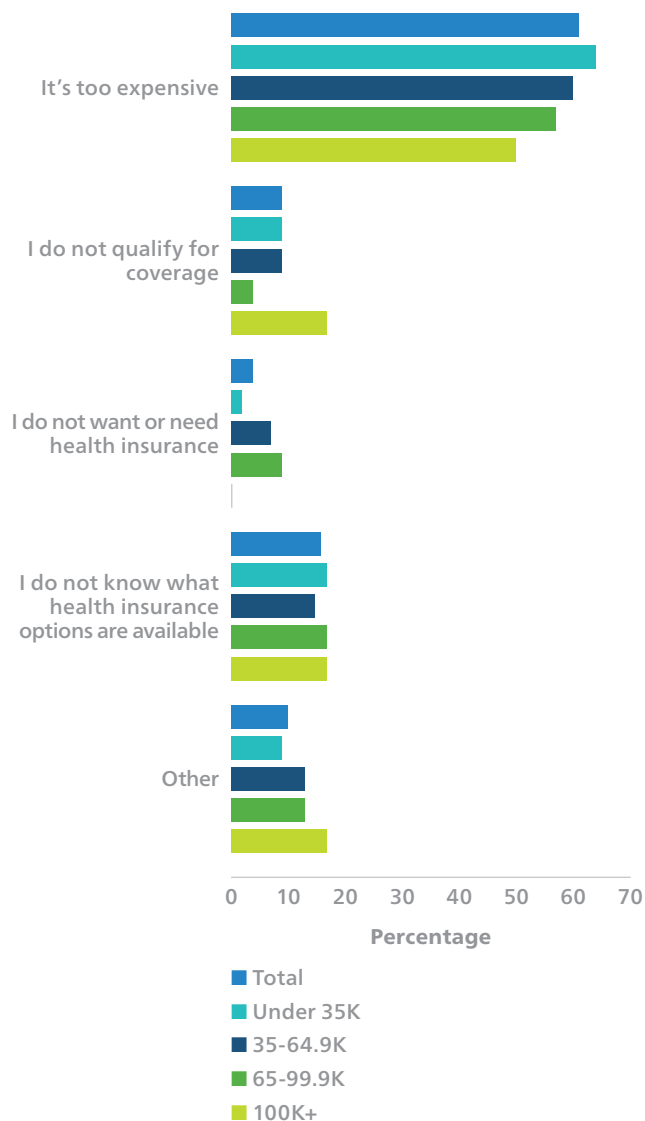
Methods of payment for arts professionals with extended healthcare coverage, by income bracket.





**Figure 50**

Reasons that arts professionals do not have extended healthcare coverage, by income bracket.



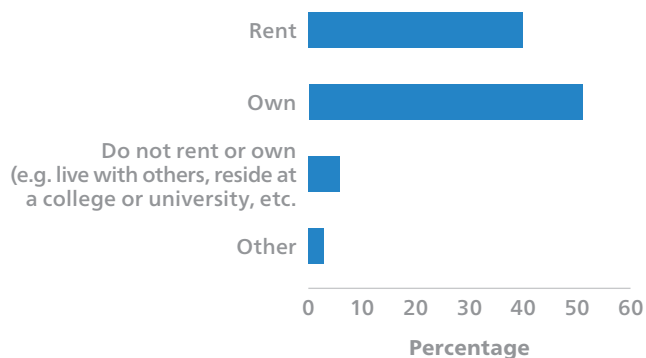
## Housing

### Home Ownership

According to the 2021 census,<sup>9</sup> 68.8% of Calgarians owned their own home. In 2023, just over half (51%) of arts professionals reported being homeowners, while the remainder either rented or had another type of living situation (e.g. college or university residence). Age and income were both consistent predictors of the ability to own a home, but other demographic factors were also observed to have an effect. For example, only 36% of those who identified as a visible minority reported owning a home compared to 57% of those who identified as white. Similarly, only 38% of those with a disability were homeowners compared to 56% of those without a disability.

**Figure 51**

Home ownership among arts professionals.



<sup>9</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?LANG=E&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&DGUIDlist=2021A00054806016&HEADERlist=0&SearchText=calgary>

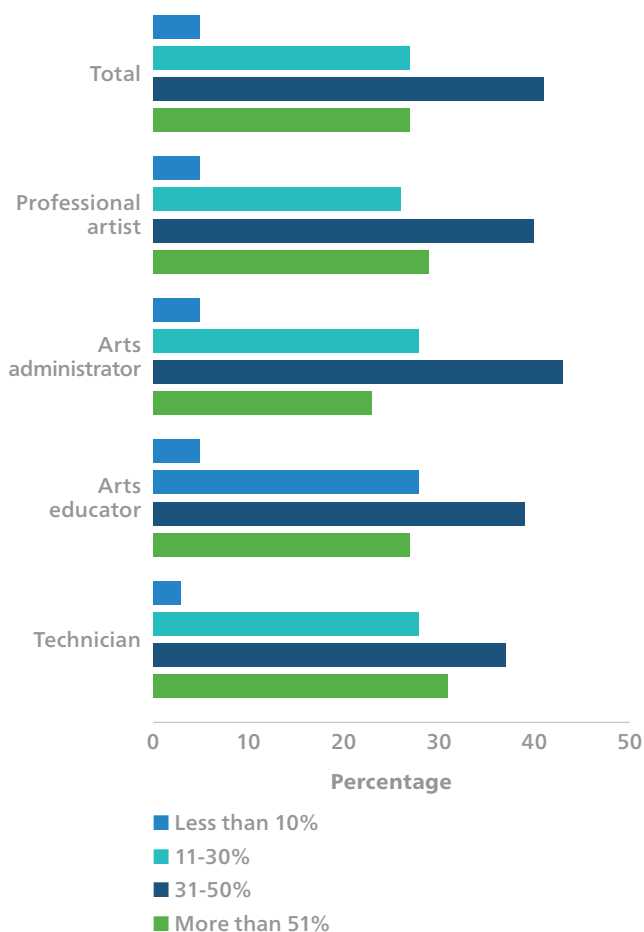
## Housing Cost and Suitability

68% of arts professionals exceeded the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) maximum recommended spending of no more than 32% of monthly income on housing costs. Additionally, 66% have experienced housing cost increases over the past year, with 14% seeing increases of over 30%. 4% indicated living in affordable housing.

Just under half of respondents (45%) felt that their residence is kept in good repair through regular maintenance, while 37% reported needing minor repairs to their residence. An additional 13% live in a

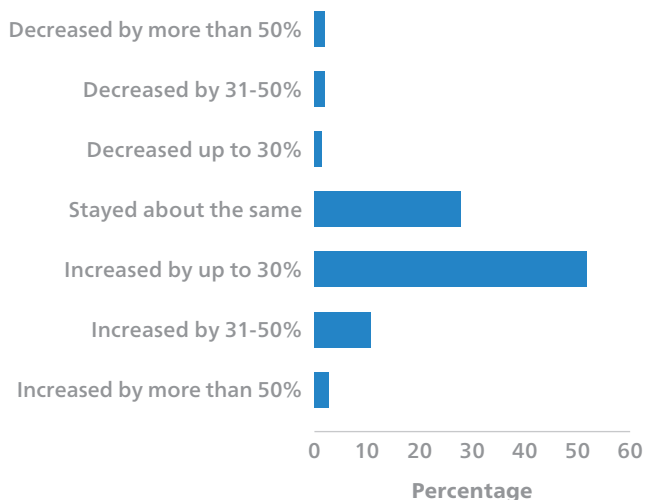
**Figure 52**

Percentage of income spent on housing costs, monthly.



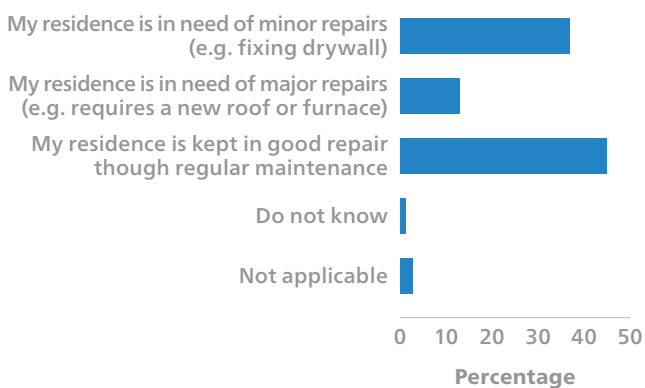
**Figure 53**

Housing cost changes experienced by arts professionals over the past year.



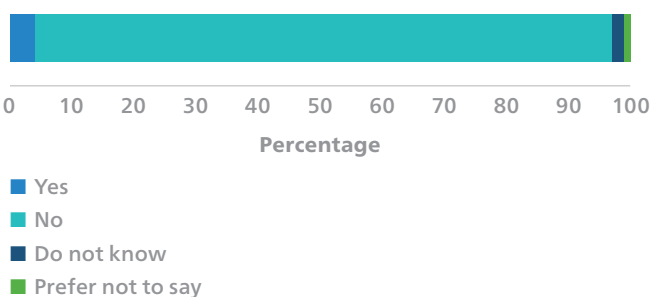
**Figure 54**

Answers to the question "What is the state/condition of your residence?"



**Figure 55**

Whether or not arts professionals live in affordable housing.



## Life in Calgary

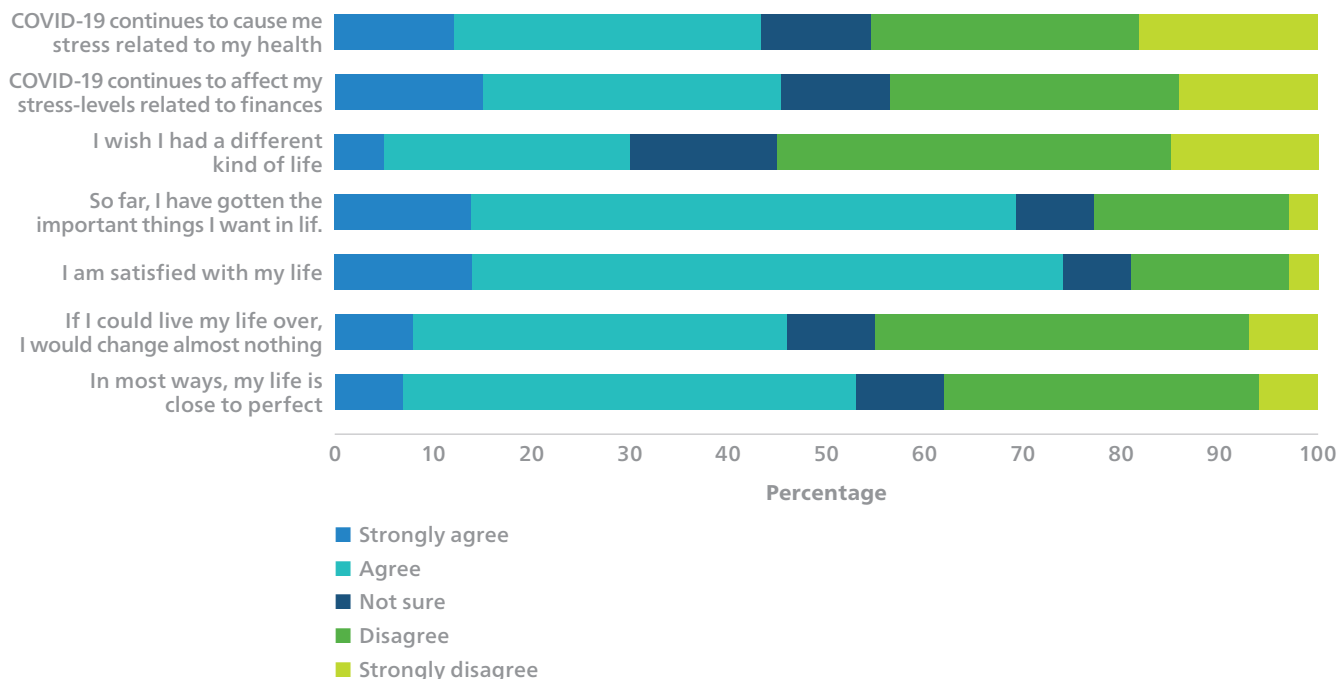
### Perceptions of Quality of Life

Participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed with a series of perception statements about their quality of life. Between the 2017 and 2020 surveys, the number of respondents who agreed that their life was “close to perfect” dropped dramatically to 32% from 57% — in 2023, this number rose to 52%. 64% reported feeling a general satisfaction from their life, and 70% felt that they had achieved

the important things they wanted in life. Comparing these responses to those from previous years, it seems that arts professionals are more optimistic overall about their quality of life as than in 2020, but slightly less so than in 2017. Those with higher incomes, especially those who earned \$100,000 per year or more, typically had a positive perception of their life.

**Figure 56**

Perceptions of various statements about quality of life.



### Perceptions of the Arts in Calgary

**“My practice was disrupted greatly during the pandemic ... I think we still need funds and initiatives that would help artists re-engage with their practice and recover from debt and disruption brought on by the pandemic.”**

In 2017, data collected in the survey indicated that Calgary arts professionals held a generally positive view of the city’s arts scene. After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the collective perception of Calgary as a place for artists declined significantly, undoubtedly due to the negative effects of the shutdown on the mental, physical, social, and financial

well-being of the population. In 2017, over three quarters (77%) of those surveyed felt that Calgary had a strong and vibrant arts scene. In 2020, this number dropped to less than half (49%). At the time of the most recent survey, over a year had passed since the lifting of all COVID-19 restrictions in Alberta, and the views expressed by survey participants reflected

an improved outlook on life in the city – in 2023, 63% agreed that Calgary’s arts scene is strong and vibrant. However, overall, these answers are still low when compared to views expressed by participants in 2017. 43% of arts professionals indicated that they experienced lasting negative health-related stress due to COVID-19, and an additional 45% reported experiencing ongoing financial stress. Clearly, our city and arts community are still recovering from the damage done by the pandemic.

57% of arts professionals in 2017 and 30% in 2020 felt that Calgary was a good place to be an artist. 45% of respondents agreed with this statement in 2023, an increase from 2020 but not yet at 2017 levels. Over a quarter (27%) actively disagreed that Calgary was a good place to be an artist.

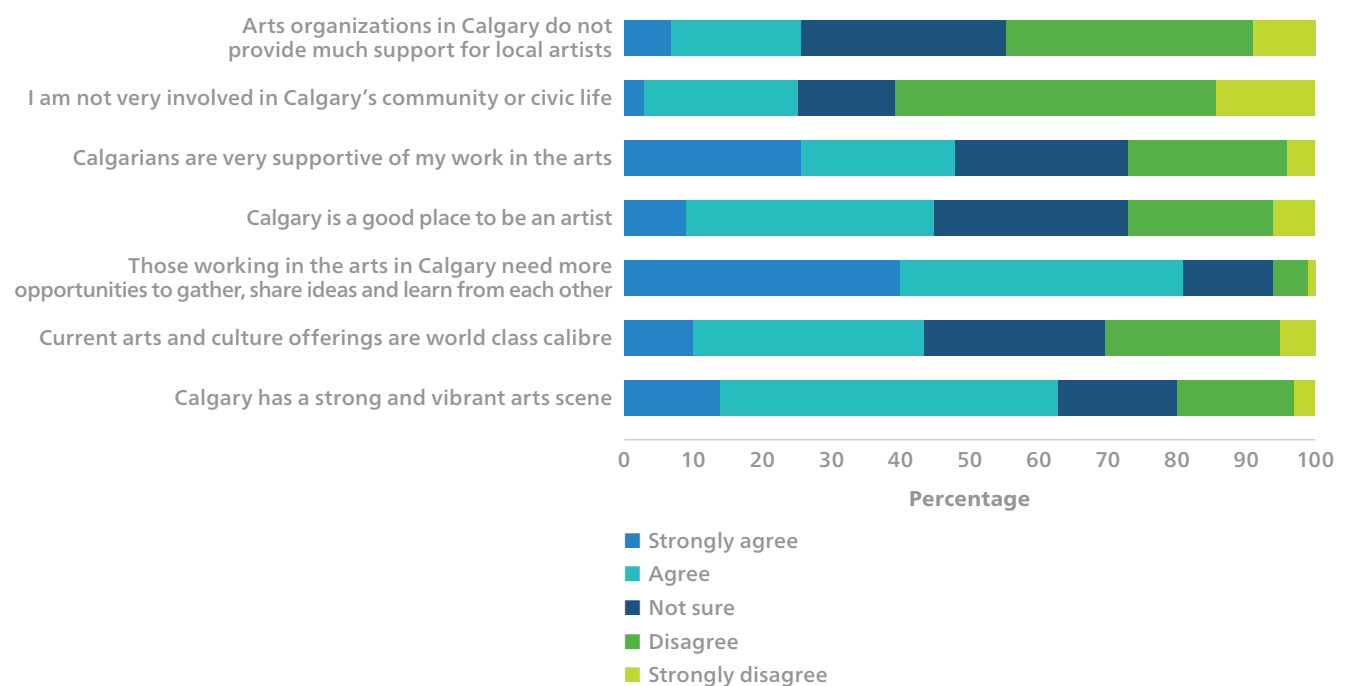
43% agreed that Calgary’s arts and culture offerings are of world-class caliber, a drop compared to 55% in 2017.

81% of respondents felt that those working in the arts need more opportunities to gather, share knowledge, and learn from one another’s practice. After the isolating experience of the shutdown, which also forced the closures of many businesses which might have served as community gathering spaces, it is no surprise that the arts community is feeling disconnected.

When asked whether they felt that arts organizations in Calgary provide enough support to local artists, 45% felt that the support was sufficient and 26% found it insufficient. An additional 30% were unsure.

**Figure 57**

Perceptions of various statements about Calgary’s arts scene.



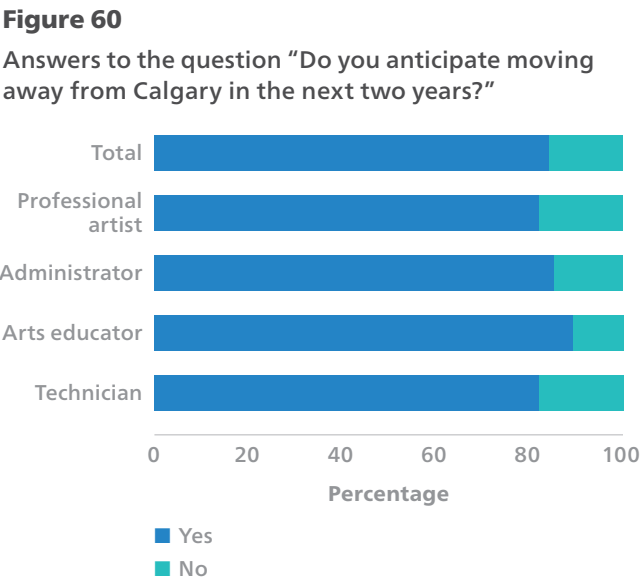
Migration Away from Calgary

“I love Calgary arts and I miss it. Leaving the city was the wrong choice.”

In 2020, almost a quarter of arts professionals reported that they anticipated moving away from Calgary in the next two years. In 2023, the desire to leave Calgary decreased, with only 16% anticipating moving away. An additional 17% reported that they had recently moved out of Calgary.

When those who expressed the desire to leave the city were asked why they intended to move, the most common reason cited (31%) was a lack of opportunity (or better opportunities elsewhere). 27% also cited the cost of living as a major cause of their desire to move, and 14% expressed feeling a disconnection from Calgary’s arts scene or the city at large. Some respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with the political climate of Calgary and/or the provincial government. Among those who had already moved away, cost of living was often a reason for doing so.

To better understand whether or not artists are leaving Calgary, CADA has launched a five-year longitudinal study of artists. A short survey will be sent twice a year for five years to 500 professional artists to understand more about the geographic movement of artists in our community, as well as the impact financial support makes in the lives of artists. Unlike other surveys by Calgary Arts Development that use the random sample method, this survey is intended to track the same 500 artists for the next five years. We hope to understand when choices are made to leave Calgary, what has motivated these decisions, and whether or not artists return to Calgary once they have left.



# Artistic and Professional Conditions

Survey respondents were asked about the availability and quality of key resources that support their artistic/professional practice, such as workspace, artistic tools or development opportunities. This section aims to provide a picture of how conditions in Calgary either promote or hinder arts professionals' ability to develop their skill sets and careers.

## Artistic Space, Tools, and Resources

89% of all respondents had a primary artistic space in Calgary, and 11% had a space outside the city. 16% reported that their primary artistic space had moved in the last six months, with technicians being the most likely to have moved spaces — most likely due to the transitory nature of tech work.

### Securing a Workspace

**"I strongly support operational dollars for facilities ... especially rehearsal spaces and small performances venues. As hard costs relating to operations of infrastructure continue to increase, artistic practice will continue to decrease."**

Arts professionals continued to report issues with the accessibility and suitability of creation space (e.g. performance, rehearsal, or studio space). 49% cited space for creation as a resource that would help them develop as an artist, but over half (57%) found it difficult to secure an appropriate long-term space for their practice. 30% of respondents reported that even though their practice requires a dedicated space, they did not have access to one. Additionally, many expressed that even though they did have access to a dedicated space, it was not well suited to their needs. More than half (56%) of those who did have a dedicated space reported that they needed more room for their practice than was currently available to them. Consequently, 32% reported that they were currently seeking a more suitable workspace. An additional 19% did not need a designated space for their practice.

Even when space is secured, access to the space is often unstable, with nearly a quarter (22%) feeling that they may lose access to their space on short notice, and 33% feeling that they may lose access within the next three years. Overall, 57% reported that they would benefit from more predictable access to their workspace. Those who earned above the Calgary median income were more likely to find it easy to access a suitable workspace and were also more likely to feel more secure in their access to this space.

Those who identified as having a racialized identity were less likely than those who identified as white to feel secure in their access to space. Women were also more likely than men to find it difficult to secure a suitable long-term workspace, and less likely to feel that they had access to necessary artistic tools, equipment, and facilities.

Studio space was the most commonly desired kind of creative space, followed by rehearsal space. Artists working in more specialized areas of practice face greater challenges when it comes to securing an appropriate space; for example, those working in film or digital arts require specialized equipment, those working in dance or circus arts require specific ceiling heights and flooring.

## Accessibility and Safety

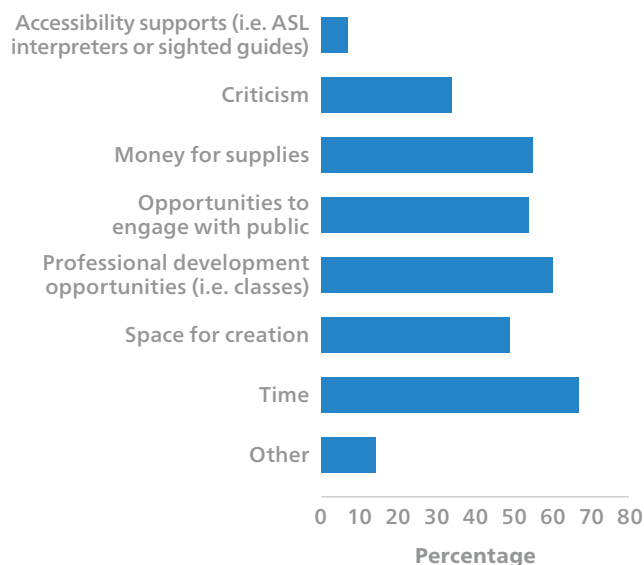
**“Most artist spaces are made for painters or non-toxic practices. I weld, melt glass, sandblast, paint, and work with all sorts of chemicals. My projects also require large open space to work. When most spaces charge by square foot this becomes challenging. I think we need collaborative spaces that allow industrial size work.”**

The number of arts professionals who reported having a space within their home dedicated to their practice stayed essentially unchanged from 2020 at 79%. 38% had a workspace within the same neighbourhood as their home, and 15% used their space for interaction with the public. When asked about their satisfaction with the location of their current space, 41% expressed that they would prefer a different location.

When working from home, artists often face issues with the suitability of their space. A home studio is not often purpose-built or renovated for creative practice, and this can mean not having enough room, not having appropriate safety features or equipment, or having to share the space with others (dealing with noise/disruptions). Some respondents also indicated that working and living in the same space had a negative effect on their mental health.

**Figure 63**

Additional resources needed to support artistic development according to perspectives of survey respondents.



Since 2017, there has been a decline in the number of arts professionals who report being able to easily access their workspace via public transportation (down to 47% from 64%). There was also a slight decline in respondents who felt that their space was in a safe location (down to 79% from 84%).

Between 2017 and 2020, the number of respondents whose workspaces were equipped with adequate safety features dropped down to 72% from 65%, perhaps due to the increase in professionals working from home during the pandemic. This number rose back to 72% in 2023.

A quarter of respondents reported that their space is fully accessible to those with mobility aids, representing no significant change from previous years. 7% also reported that they would personally benefit from having more accessibility supports related to their artistic practice.

## Affordability

In 2020, 61% of arts professionals felt that their workspace was affordable for them. In 2023, this number dropped to 53%. When asked to describe their ideal workspace (not specifically in relation to cost), 10% of respondents raised the issue of affordability. This may be one incentive for artists to share a workspace with multiple people, along with the desire to foster creative relationships with others — although, the number of respondents who reported sharing a space with others decreased down to 24% from 35% between 2017 and 2023. Of those that utilized a space outside of their home, 10% owned their workspace, 18% rented or leased their space annually, and 22% rented or leased on a month-to-month or short-term basis. An additional 12% reported having access to a workspace free of charge. 55% reported that they need more money for the supplies and tools necessary for their artistic practice. 40% of respondents indicated that they make use of non-financial ways of supporting their artistic practice.



## Presentation and Creation Opportunities

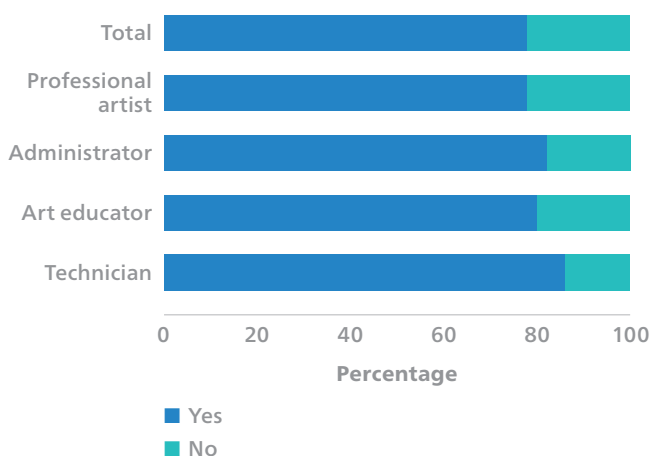
Almost a quarter of arts professionals (22%) reported that they had no opportunity to publicly share their work in 2022. Those working in the Presenting Arts reported having less opportunity to share their work than other disciplines, with only 72% having done so in 2022 compared to 86% of those in Performing Arts and 88% of those in Music.

Those who were able to share their work reported that they utilized multiple avenues to access artistic opportunities. Non-profit arts organizations appeared to play a large role in giving artists a platform to share their work, and for-profit enterprises also contributed to a lesser extent. Many artists reported that they frequently or primarily self-produced opportunities to showcase their work publicly. Informal community groups, non-arts non-profit organizations, and private individuals played a smaller but still notable role in the provision of artistic opportunities.

In previous years, men reported having more opportunities to share their work than women, despite the arts being a female-dominated sector. In 2023, there was no recorded difference in the percentage of men and women who were able to share their work.

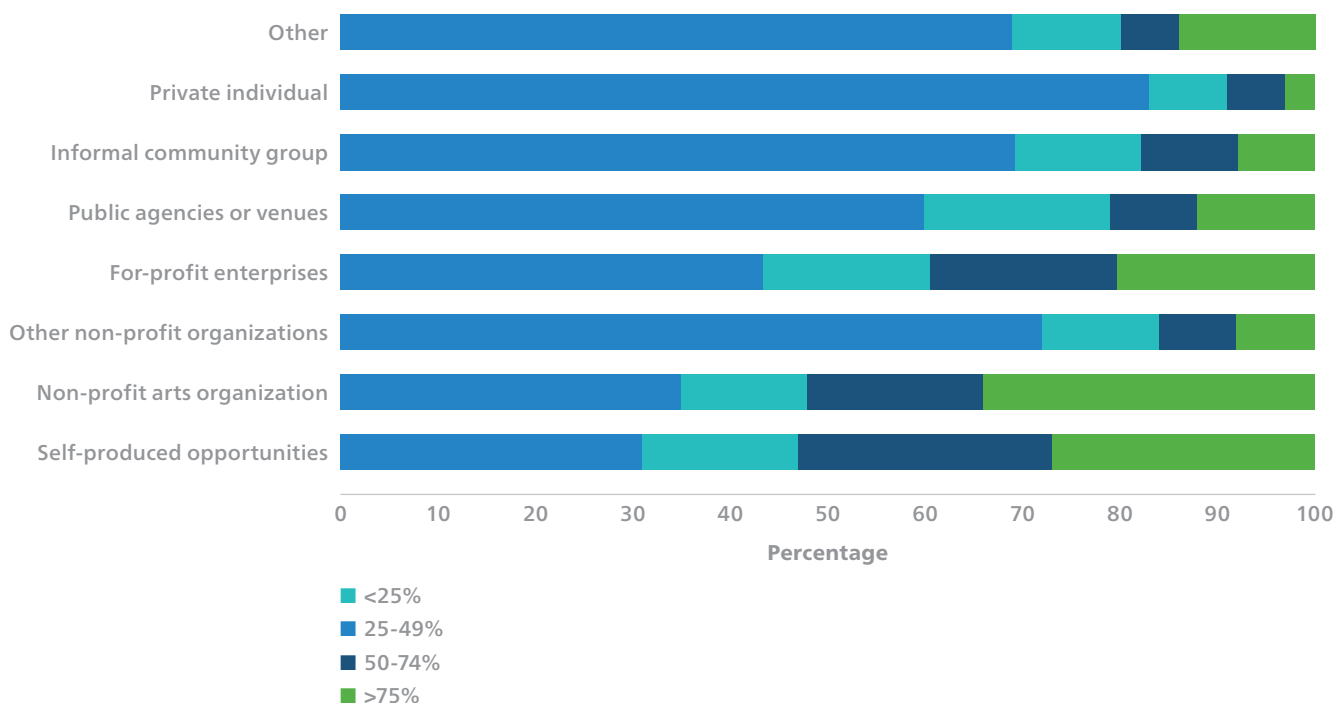
**Figure 65**

Answers to the question “Did you have the opportunity to share your work publicly in 2022?”



**Figure 66**

To what extent arts professionals rely on various sources for opportunities to publicly present their work, percentage distribution.



# Arts Training and Professional Development

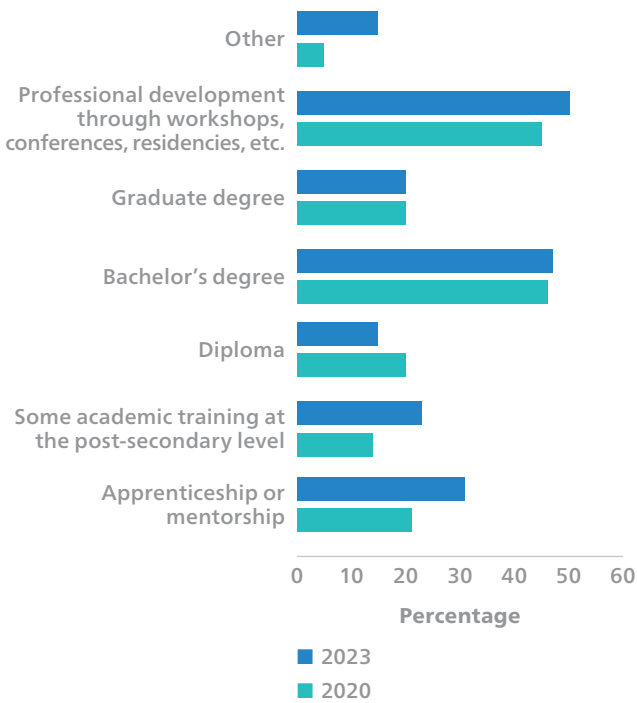
## Initial Training

There are many pathways to a career in the arts, and arts professionals continue to identify various types of training that led to their current professional identity. Because the arts offer many kinds of work opportunities, those training to enter the sector utilize a variety of learning methods and pathways to employment. When asked to indicate what types of education they underwent during their initial career training, half of all respondents reported that they took part in professional development opportunities (e.g. workshops, conferences, or residencies), making them the most common form of primary training. A little under half (47%) reported having a bachelor's degree, and 31% took part in an apprenticeship or mentorship.

The popularity of different types of education varied across professions. Arts administrators were the most likely to hold a bachelor's degree (57%), followed by arts educators (50%). However, arts educators were the most likely to hold a graduate degree (27%), and most likely to engage in workshops, conferences, or residencies (60%). Technicians were the most likely to have undergone an apprenticeship or mentorship, with 42% having done so. Within disciplines, those working in Music were the least likely to hold a bachelor's degree (39% compared to 52% of those in Performing Arts and 47% of those in Presenting Arts). However, a quarter of those in Music reported having a graduate degree, more than any other discipline.

Income and age were both predictors of the likelihood of holding a post-secondary degree; those earning above the Calgary median income were more likely to hold a graduate degree than those who earned less than the median, and those aged 25-44 were more likely than those aged 45 or older to hold a bachelor's degree.

**Figure 68**  
Methods used by arts professionals for their primary arts training, by year.



## Continuing Training

**“Workshops and development seminars are cool, but if one is expected to put a lot of time into these (primarily) unpaid or pay-to-participate opportunities they have to take time off work to do so. That’s not a good sell in the current economy.”**

Most arts professionals engage in some form of training throughout their career. However, barriers exist for individuals who want to develop their abilities; when asked about the availability of opportunities for artistic growth, 42% of respondents felt there were not enough opportunities available. Money and time presented the greatest barriers to continual development, with 71% stating they did not have the funds and 54% stating they did not have the time necessary to advance their artistic skills.

Continuing training most commonly occurred through workshops, conferences, or residencies, with over three quarters (77%) of arts professionals

taking part in these development activities. Still, 60% reported a need for more opportunities of this kind. Over a quarter (27%) reported taking part in an apprenticeship or mentorship, an increase from 15% who engaged in a mentoring relationship in 2020.

An additional 40% reported being members of an association or guild which supports their work and the work of their peers. Technicians and arts educators, as well as those who have been in the industry for longer than 10 years, were more likely to be members of an association or guild.



## Community and Criticism

**“As the executive director of a non-profit organization in Calgary, I often find myself quite lonely in dealing with various issues my organization is facing. I don’t have many relationships with people in similar positions, which is a challenge for me.”**

Continuing development also occurs through the maintenance of a healthy community of artists. In 2023, 40% of respondents felt that it was hard to connect with their artistic peers, and 54% felt that they had very few opportunities to receive knowledgeable, constructive feedback about their work. This increasing disconnection results in fewer opportunities for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and networking opportunities for artists. Peer-to-peer criticism is one of the most accessible forms of artistic development for those who are unable to access higher education or formal training, and it is evident that more opportunities are needed for artists to connect; 13% of respondents specifically cited peer-to-peer feedback as a resource they need better access to. One way that artists did interact was via the internet, with almost three quarters indicating that they regularly communicate with other artists online.

34% of survey respondents indicated that they needed better access to artistic criticism. When asked to describe the kind of criticism they needed, 31% felt that there was a lack of discipline-specific criticism available, and 13% wanted to see more written criticism from industry professionals/professional critics. Artists commonly cited that they found it difficult to access criticism that was honest, fair, and constructive.

### Career Perceptions

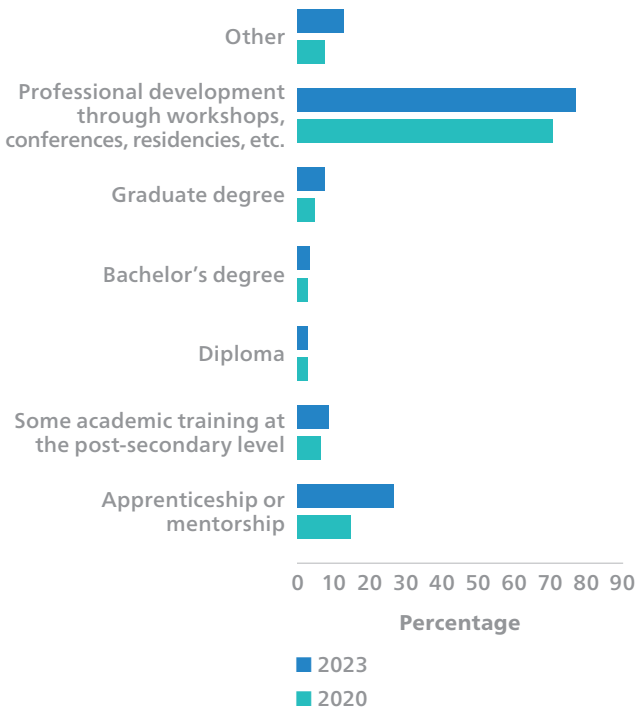
In 2023, 41% of artists felt that they were not fully in control of their career. Only 10% felt strongly that they were fully in control, and 31% felt somewhat in control; those under the age of 55, women, and individuals with a disability were among the least likely to feel secure in their career.

The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that more employment opportunities for artists are needed, with only 3% feeling satisfied with the current number of job offerings in Calgary. Additionally, 46% found it difficult to get information on the employment opportunities that existed. A commonly cited frustration among respondents was the feeling

that career opportunities were often geared towards emerging artists/professionals, leaving many mid or late-career individuals feeling like their dedication to Calgary was not rewarded with opportunities for advancement. Additionally, some felt that arts organizations in Calgary too often bypassed local talent in favour of hiring candidates from outside the city.

Almost half of all artists (48%) felt that they had very few opportunities to perform, exhibit, publish, or sell their work, whereas 41% felt they had many opportunities to do so. When it came to promoting their work, only a quarter of artists felt that they had good access to marketing opportunities.

**Figure 69**  
Methods used by arts professionals for their continuing arts training, by year.



# Limitations and Future Directions

With this survey, and other research efforts, Calgary Arts Development works to better understand the living and working conditions of artists and the systems in which they work. As soon as surveys are commissioned and results are being collected, questions are already being raised for how to improve survey tools and identify what new stand-alone research is necessary.

## Timing of Release Findings/The Rise of AI Responses

Of the 1,617 completed surveys, a total of 737 responses were removed through the cleaning process, marking the first time over half of survey responses were excluded. The majority of responses removed were bot responses, not submitted by Calgary arts professionals. The rise of AI technology makes these responses increasingly difficult and time consuming to identify. Much work is needed to protect the integrity of the survey and to reduce the amount of time needed to remove these responses.

While several factors resulted in a significant lag between the collection of survey responses and the release of the final report, the most significant lag came from the time taken to remove bot response. Each survey response had to be individually verified by research staff using a multi-stage review. New technology will hopefully allow better protection against invasive responses.

In the future the report may be broken into segments to speed up the release of the most timely information for those who may use findings for decision making and strategic planning.

This survey is conducted every three years. One way to address the lag created as a result of both the data cleaning process, as well as the time between surveys, is to conduct shorter surveys more frequently. Calgary Arts Development has created a pool of 500 artists who will be surveyed twice a year for the next five years to get more frequent community snapshots.

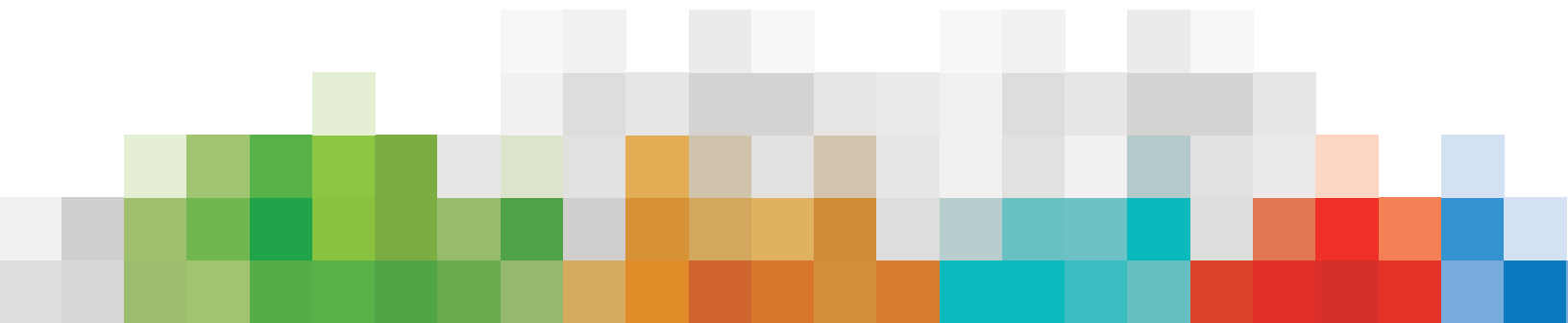
## Harassment

The 2020 Arts Professionals Survey revealed high rates of harassment. Following the 2020 Arts Professionals Survey, Calgary Arts Development explored best practices and alternative methods to report incidents of harassment in the 2023 survey. The revised survey asked individuals if they have experienced or witnessed a set of behaviours, but more work needs to be done in the development of specific identifiers of harassment.

More work also needs to be done regarding the language individuals use to self-identify within demographic categories. One way future surveys can explore this is to identify audist forms of harassment as differentiated from ableist.

## Space

57% of arts professionals reported that they struggled to find an appropriate space for their practice. In 2024, Calgary Arts Development hired AEA Consulting to update its [Strategic Report on Cultural Spaces in Calgary](#). The purpose is to help ensure that the needs and preferences of Calgarians for cultural space are addressed over the next 10 years through development of a more responsive, coordinated and effective 'infrastructure' of partnerships, policies, granting and other space-related programs. Future versions of the Arts Professionals Survey will explore space needs in more detail to better inform cultural infrastructure strategies.

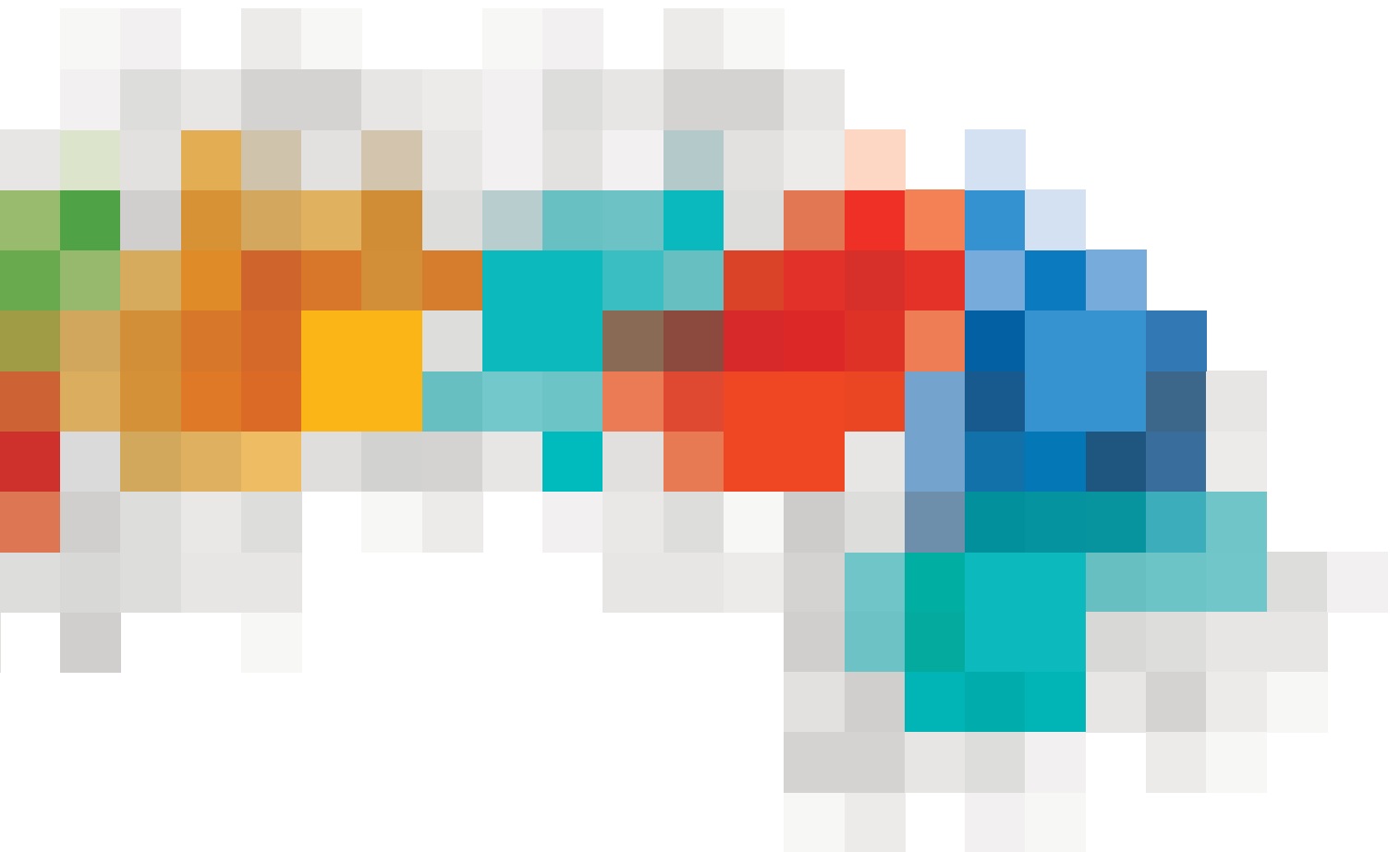


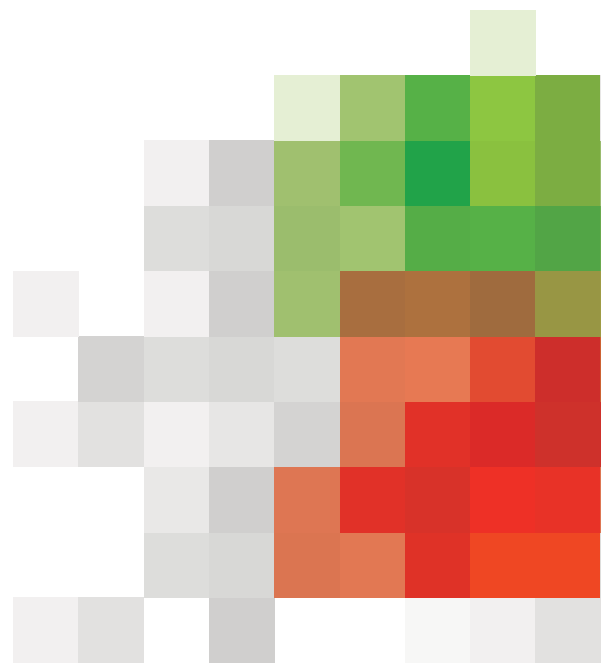
# Open Data

Calgary Arts Development is committed to providing open data. Aggregated data from this survey is available upon request at [impact@calgaryartsdevelopment.com](mailto:impact@calgaryartsdevelopment.com).

## Thanks

Calgary Arts Development acknowledges and appreciates the participation of all the arts professionals who participated in this survey. While time-consuming, the responses help provide a better understanding of the conditions for arts professionals in Calgary and information on how best to serve them, enabling all Calgarians to live full and creative lives.





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