

I. INTRODUCTION

Americans for the Arts is pleased to present a statistical report about the programs of the Arts Education Network. The Network is a segment of the professional members of Americans for the Arts who have an interest in arts education.

The purpose of the survey is to grow understanding at Americans for the Arts of the specific activities of the Arts Education Network. This survey is designed to be a first, exploratory step and will be followed by additional information and services.

This report begins with a description of the survey methodology, followed by a summary of the findings. Appendices to the report include a copy of the survey instrument and a compilation of the responses. Complete information about arts education at Americans for the Arts is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/ArtsEducation.

II. METHODOLOGY

In March 2006, Americans for the Arts e-mailed the Arts Education Coordinator Survey—a web-based survey document—to members of Americans for the Arts who were designated as “arts education coordinator” for their organizations. The questions in the survey were designed by Americans for the Arts research and program staff and vetted with external advisors. Questions sought top-level information about staffing, budgeting, funding models, partners, and constituencies served. Open-ended questions sought information about policy-level arts education work and the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on Network members. The survey was administered March 20–May 8, 2006. Nonrespondents and those who only partially completed the web-based survey were sent a series of reminder e-mails to obtain a maximum number of completed surveys.

Out of 168 requests for response, 42 e-mails bounced back, leaving 126 viable survey receipts. Americans for the Arts received 50 responses, which constitutes a **40 percent rate of compliance**. Thirty-one people responded to the open answer question regarding No Child Left Behind; 34 responded to a question about “biggest challenges”; 33 responded to a question about their current arts education policy work; and 25 responded to the question, “What do you want to say about your organization's arts education efforts that we haven't asked here in the survey?”

III. RESULTS

Survey results indicated a breadth of knowledge and impact on community and K–12 arts education by Network members. Responses included information about Network members' influence on local education decision-makers, experience with public education infrastructure, as well as descriptions of systemic advancement of arts education. Trends are discussed in detail below.

Of note, organizations with large budgets are well represented in the survey responses compared to those of small and midsize organizations. Future Network surveys will use additional methods to capture information from small and midsize organizations.

40 percent identify as local arts agency (LAA), council, or commission
28 percent identify as state arts agency (SAA)

Americans for the Arts defines a local arts agency as a private nonprofit organization or an agency of local government that presents programming to the public, provides services to artists and arts organizations, manages cultural facilities, awards grants to artists or arts organizations, and/or participates in community cultural planning. The selected list of survey recipients favored this subset of the Arts Education Network.

The range in arts education funding sources is broad

Public funding for the programs surveyed averaged 65 percent of total funding—more than twice that of private support, with an average of 30 percent. Earned income averaged 16 percent of funding sources. However, both public and private funding were reported within a maximum range (0–100 percent of budget), implying great diversity in funding profiles. Additionally, “other” funding sources averaged 22 percent, indicating a need for more detailed research on additional funding sources.

Most employees work exclusively in arts education, and most are full time

Of those working in arts education for their organizations, 76 percent are full-time employees, and 69 percent dedicate all working hours to arts education. While some treatment of arts education is programmatic within a larger arts organization, the vast majority of Network members identify themselves exclusively as arts education staff.

Network members work in a broad array of arts education services, disciplines, instructor types, and partners

Network members offer multiple programs and services that work with artistic disciplines broadly, as indicated by respondents’ answers to questions six and seven to the survey (below).

6. Which of the following arts education services do you supply?

#	% of 212 responses	
35	17	Professional development for instructors
31	15	Education experiences for youth
30	14	Curriculum-related work
29	14	Grantmaking to others
26	12	Programs related to arts presenting, such as exhibitions or performances
24	11	Education experiences for adults
23	11	Policy-related work
13	6	Other (specify)
1	0	Professional development for artists and organizations

7. What arts disciplines are addressed through your arts education services?

#	% of 262 responses	
42	16	Theatre
41	16	Dance
40	15	Visual arts
39	15	Music
36	14	Writing
31	12	Folk, traditional or crafts
27	10	Film or digital arts
6	2	Other

Among respondents that employ or contract instructors, teaching artists ranked highest (30 percent), followed closely by a similar type of instructor, the professional artist-in-residence (22 percent). Arts administrators (16 percent) and public school teachers (14 percent art teachers; 10 percent generalists) follow closely.

The No Child Left Behind Act has hindered LAA arts education

When asked to “briefly describe the impact of NCLB on your programming efforts,” respondents noted the challenges of garnering resources—including human resources, time, and discretionary funding—from the school or school district they serve. The following answers exemplify NCLB’s impact as reported.

- We are seeing fewer schools with the flexibility to schedule long-term residencies, because of the time and focus required for the tested subjects in NCLB... We are seeing more schools attempting to make up for their reduced arts curricula with one-day artist visits or short arts field trips.
- Depending on the administrator at particular schools and their interpretation of the legislation, some instances have resulted in a decrease in our services.
- More difficult for administrators to justify arts programming; more difficult for teachers to take time away from classes/programs directly affected via assessments/tests through NCLB.
- County-wide, our arts programs are struggling for time during the school day.
- It is more difficult for artists to work in schools due to the emphasis on testing and accountability.
- Fewer schools applying for Artists in Schools residencies due to time/budget constraints and due to constant testing.
- The pressures in terms of reading & writing instructional time in the schools has made it more difficult to schedule and maintain residencies and school partnerships.

The following answers noted a small trend toward leveraging arts education services to meet the needs of public education testing standards and No Child Left Behind. One LAA representative noted that he made his training of teaching artists more “marketable” to public school teachers by teaching the artists to meet the goals, however directed, of public schools.

- It has prompted us to work more closely with our partner schools to ensure that we are helping them meet the NCLB accountability requirements through our activities.
- NCLB has impacted our organization in creating more effort on our part to adhere to the needs of additional materials needed by schools, such as study guides.
- NCLB creates the state benchmarks to which the schools have to adhere. Therefore, our priorities ... must enhance the schools’ efforts for our work to be relevant. Simply, our programs must help them meet these standards, therefore our programs and our evaluation standards are impacted greatly.

The biggest challenge is lack of school-based advocates for arts programs

When asked to describe the “biggest challenge” to arts education work, the most common response was that the arts are not prioritized among education staff. Respondents noted a lack of priority among budget-makers (school board and superintendent), among school leaders (principals), and among teachers as they choose pedagogy, professional development, and to some degree curricula. Network members also noted the need for a school-based advocate, such as a principal, who values arts experiences in the school. For example, one respondent wrote:

- The biggest challenge I face is getting school administration on board to understand the benefits of arts education, and financially support its efforts within their district.

Despite disparity in respondents’ policy-level work, field members work in systematically organized fashion

Responses illustrated a diversity of policy work, as well as key differences in the levels of engagement in policy issues. For example, these two responses suggest a breadth of approach to arts education policy:

- In 2002, there was a move to further reduce music and visual art classes in many of Duval County elementary schools. As the facilitator of Jacksonville’s ACE Coalition, the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville joined with the Duval County School Board and local citizens to express concern. ACE Jacksonville organized an effective campaign to support the school board’s plan to mandate a minimum requirement of visual art and music classes for every elementary student. By garnering support from all areas of our community, ACE Jacksonville developed a positive working relationship with the School Board and in the end the Board committed to a 3-year plan for achieving a minimum of visual art (1 hour every two weeks) and music (1/2 hour every week) for 100% of Duval Elementary students.

In the second year of this roll-out plan the Board received a great deal of pressure to divert the money designated for additional arts teachers to other areas of the budget. ACE Jacksonville stood in support of the Board which again expressed the importance of a balanced education which includes the arts and of their commitment to the 3-year roll-out plan. As the third year of the roll-out plan commenced in fall of 2006, there was no opposition to its implementation. Funding has been provided for the additional teachers needed for the plan. At this date, many schools have the third year plan in place while others are working out the details for full implementation.

- We have not had any experience shaping education policy within the school districts. We are currently preparing to conduct a survey... of arts in education programming within the school districts in the county in the next year.

Additionally, respondents named several important local education decision-makers or advocates, but typically targeted only one key group. Among the answers, the following groups were mentioned:

- PTA or parents
- Superintendent(s)
- Principals
- Curriculum planning personnel
- Arts coordinators
- County or other municipal agencies
- State Department of Public Instruction (also known as Department of Education; also including specific programs within these agencies)
- Institutions of higher education

Network members expressed a need for knowledge of how to advance arts education

When asked for any information Americans for the Arts did not expressly request or for ideas about how Americans for the Arts can support field work, respondents stated two related needs: networking and information.

Respondents noted a need to inform community-level providers and supporters of arts education about how they can best improve the status, access, and quality of local arts education. Respondents also highlighted the need for communication among themselves and their peers in order to share experiences relevant to local work. Individuals called for specific information about influencing public education, as well as gatherings that will share information and provide community consensus. Sample suggestions included:

- We have the passion and the means to provide the arts education programs to our community but how can we convince the teachers and principals to include the arts? Training to help us convey our passion and convince the reluctant to include the arts would provide great support.
- We are fortunate that our Performing Arts Center includes education as part of its mission, and that our board and president are supportive of our work... We have also been fortunate to receive a significant amount of state and national funding... but we are not receiving as much local support as we would like. The local environment is very "political" and competitive, with over a dozen providers of arts education programs and services, many of which have been around for decades.
- I am concerned too many funders are looking at short-term and high visibility projects at the expense of longer term investments in systemic change. We need to bolster the policy and funding infrastructure at the state and school district levels.
- Development of clear policy/role for the city in relation to arts education. Forward thinking & planning.
- More communication, mini-conferences, presenting opportunities for best practices, national advocacy.
- Additional support needed is a roundtable for [multiple counties]. It is often frustrating attending roundtables [in urban metro areas] as the issues and challenges are not always the same, and sometimes we feel they are not relevant to our geographic area.
- Needs: network support of like-minded arts-educational organizations (conference, symposium, etc)! Information about funding/granting

IV. CONCLUSION

This survey provides more information about the field of professionals responsible for promoting and providing arts education for public schools. The responses to this survey suggest the following areas of continued interest.

- The Arts Education Network contains diverse funding models, arts education services, and disciplines. Additional inquiry is needed to understand trends in each area.
- Teaching artists are an important part of the local arts education community. Future assessments could further explore the professional needs and concerns of teaching artists.

- The majority of Network members have arts education as a specific professional focus. Future inquiry could assess the professional needs and concerns of arts education staff.
- Future surveys could track the impact of NCLB on members as well as specific needs of the Network regarding working with and modifying NCLB.
- Arts Education Network members have identified local arts education policy work as important. Future information gathering could focus on identifying models of success in, as well as needs of, the Network members.

These findings provide a good starting point for Americans for the Arts to continue to provide useful information and services in support of arts education as a vital component of community development. In the words of one respondent,

“Arts Education is essential... It is about building audiences and more importantly about building our community... We have a unique role to fill and one that is extremely important for engaging youth and sustaining their interest in the arts and, ultimately, in school and their community.”