



Artist Trust

2016 Artist Survey

Summary Report

Prepared for Artist Trust by AdvisArts Consulting
Claudia Bach and Amanda Smart

January 2017

February 6, 2017

In the fall of 2016, Artist Trust launched an Annual Artist Survey of Washington State artists. Part census, part snapshot of current needs and trends, over 1,500 practicing artists completed the survey, from Seattle to Spokane, from Twisp to Walla Walla. (Many thanks to the artists who took part in the survey!)

Each artist offered thoughts on the kinds of support they need to be successful, the ways in which they'd like to receive that support, and key organizational strategies and programs. The survey also gathered demographic data, helping us understand the make-up of Washington State's arts communities and how needs may differ from city to city.

Based on the survey, we've compiled a report that provides a clear picture of our state's artists and their needs. The report will be used as a tool to support our strategic direction and develop responsive, forward-thinking programs and support for artists. We're sharing this report with arts organizations and communities around the state, so they can learn about the needs of artists in their own regions.

We invite you to read through the report and share with other artists and arts organizations in your community. We think you'll find the results as thought-provoking as we did.

Sincerely,



Shannon Halberstadt
CEO, Artist Trust



Pablo Schugurensky
President, Artist Trust Board of Trustees

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Introduction and Background

Artist Trust is a nonprofit dedicated to helping Washington State artists of all disciplines thrive. Founded in 1986, it was formed by a group of artists and arts lovers who came together to create support for art at its source: the artist. Since then, Artist Trust has invested over \$10 million in Washington State artists through funding, trainings, and resources and has provided programs that meet the changing needs of artists. Artist Trust is committed to being responsive to the changing needs and concerns of artists. In 2015 Artist Trust launched a preliminary survey to explore artists' needs, and in 2016, a new initiative to collect data from artists across the State.

The 2016 Annual Artist Survey was intended as the first iteration of a yearly research process that gathers information and feedback from artists in Washington State to inform the programs and direction of Artist Trust. Other tools are expected to supplement and expand on the survey data, and may include work with other artist-serving organizations, and a variety of qualitative and informal information gathering tools, from tracking of requests to staff to focus groups and convenings.

The Annual Artist Survey creates a baseline of data to demonstrate emerging changes and directions. A set of "core" questions provides this foundation and will stay essentially the same year over year. Changes will be tracked in subsequent years and can provide an evolving understanding of Washington State's artists. Additionally, a small number of "timely issues" questions will provide Artist Trust with input on specific programmatic directions and initiatives, and will be changed annually.

Highlights of the data collected from 1578 artists in 2016 are summarized in the next section, followed by more detailed exploration of the survey questions in two sections: *A Picture of Washington State Artists*, and *Washington State Artists' Needs*.

Highlights from the Findings

The 2016 Survey provides a wealth of information to Artist Trust as it carries out its mission. Some findings warrant tracking with future iterations of the Artist Survey, while others suggest opportunities to shift program resources, develop new approaches, or gather deeper insights through additional qualitative research.

It is important to keep in mind that the survey respondents self-selected to participate (see Methodology on following page) and so the data provides a valuable but not a statistically reliable picture of artists in Washington State. Artist Trust has defined five geographic regions

(see page 8) that have been used to examine the data, and that can help shape approaches to serving artists across Washington State. With these in mind, the following ten findings from the 2016 Artist Survey data offer insights that can serve as benchmarks for future survey research, and can guide near term decision-making as well as strategic directions.

A Picture of Washington State Artists

1. The most prevalent artistic discipline of survey respondents is visual art form (61%), and many artists identify that they work in more than one artistic discipline. [Click here to skip to this section.](#)
2. A large majority of respondents identified as White/European or White (79%), while more than one quarter (28%) of respondents identified as a race or ethnicity other than White/European. These identification categories were non-exclusive (that is, respondents could pick more than one answer; the total percent is therefore greater than 100). This is a higher percentage of non-white racial groups than the 19.3 percent of Washington's population in 2015. [Click here to skip to this section.](#)
3. Respondent artists reside overwhelmingly in counties that have the highest population density, with King County accounting for 55% of respondents. [Click here to skip to this section.](#)
4. Nearly a fifth of respondents (19%) earned all their personal income in the past year from their art. [Click here to skip to this section.](#)
5. Ninety percent (90%) of respondents indicated that their art was presented in some public fashion in the last 12 months. [Click here to skip to this section.](#)

Washington State Artists' Needs

6. Marketing, and the related element of building audiences nearby and further afield, remains the greatest challenge for artists in Washington State. [Click here to skip to this section.](#)
7. Online methods are valued for career trainings, and access to information and resources for artists (68%) in this State. The Artist Trust website is an important tool. Artists indicated a preference for short videos on the Artist Trust website (48%) and articles or blog posts on the Artist Trust website (48%). [Click here to skip to this section.](#)
8. There continues to be interest in face-to-face workshop (57%), though less interest in intensive multi-day trainings (37%). [Click here to skip to this section.](#)
9. Challenges and concerns shift slightly depending on where artists reside in Washington State. Respondents from regions with the greatest population density expressed relatively more concern over issues of affordable housing and respondents from less populous regions of the state expressed relatively more concern over building community support for the artists/the arts. [Click here to skip to this section.](#)
10. Respondents indicated that Artist Trust's proposed initiatives to address racial equity can have an impact and saw the greatest value in engaging people of color as panelists and strengthening voices of color in Artist Trust's communications, presentations and trainings. [Click here to skip to this section.](#)

Methodology

All self-identified artists in Washington State were welcome to participate in the 2016 Annual Artist Survey. This is a self-selected sample, with the intention of including as many artists as possible. Artist Trust's email distribution lists of over 16,000 individual artists served as the foundation, with artists encouraged to share the link with other artists. Organizations throughout the state were contacted and actively encouraged to share the survey link with their communities. Efforts were made to include organizations serving a broad range of artistic disciplines, race and ethnic background, and geographic communities. This sampling method fits Artist Trust's desire to be as inclusive as possible in hearing from individuals who self-identify as artists, however, it does not permit analysis to be based on statistical significance.

Simplicity of data collection, data analysis, and confidentiality are important in making this an annual survey, both for the responding artists, and in acknowledgment of the administrative capacities of Artist Trust. SurveyMonkey was determined to be the most appropriate online survey tool. The 2016 survey contained eleven "core" questions that will be repeated in following years, and four "timely issues" questions that will change in subsequent surveys.

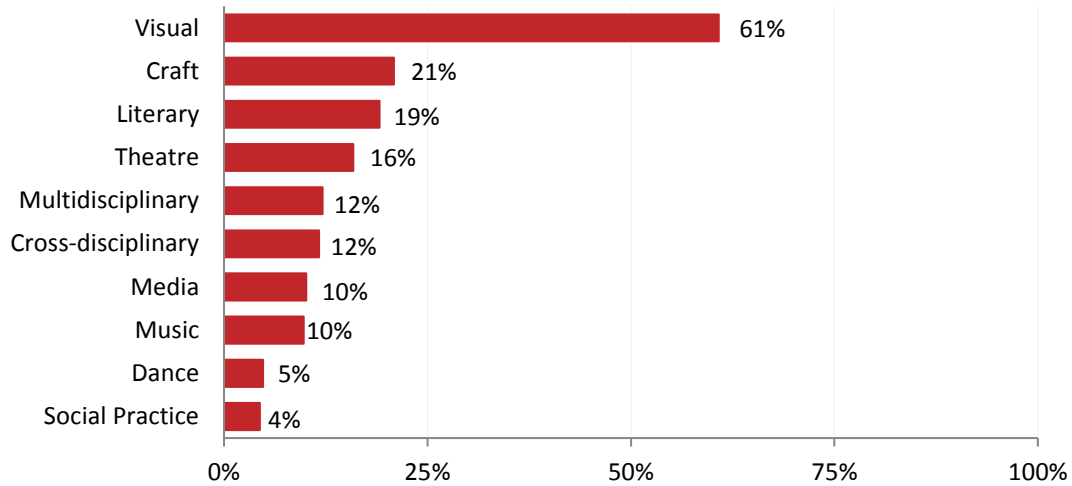
Data from SurveyMonkey was downloaded to Excel for additional analysis. A template for data analysis was developed, and will serve to assist in reporting and tracking year-to-year changes. Respondents were offered the opportunity to be entered in a drawing to receive a \$200 gift certificate for supplies relevant to their artistic discipline, and a winner was selected and notified in late November. Confidentiality of all responses was maintained, and a policy for data confidentiality was developed and implemented by Artist Trust. The 2016 Survey launched on October 11, 2016 and closed on November 15, 2016.

A Picture of Washington State Artists

The Artist Trust 2016 Artist Survey was filled out by 1578 individuals. This exceeds by 183 the 1395 responses received for the 2015 Artist Needs Survey. Respondents provide a picture of self-identified artists in Washington State today. Responses to these core questions will be tracked annually, and future Summary Reports will offer comparative data.

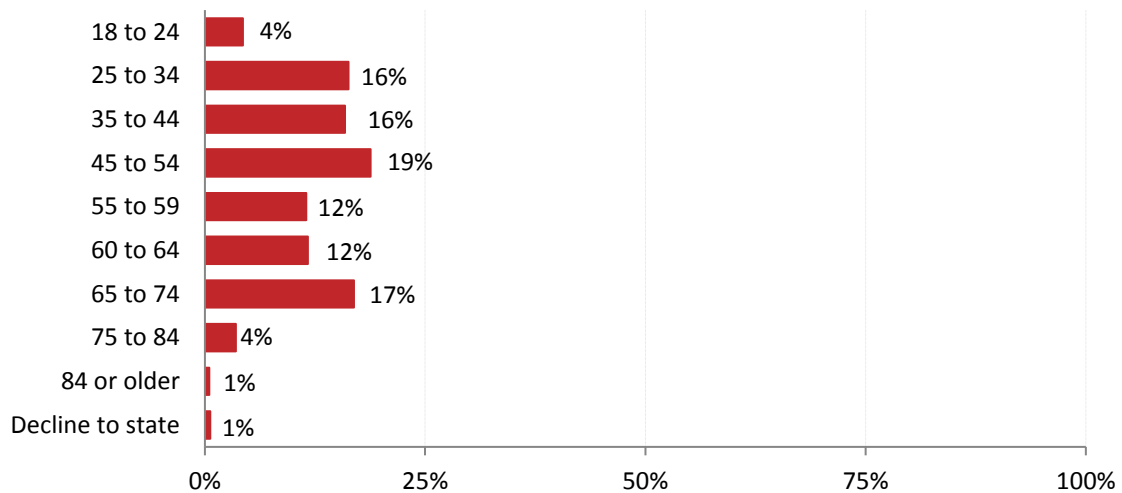
Artistic Disciplines

- The majority (61%) of respondents identified the visual arts as their artistic discipline.
- The combined performing arts – theatre, music and dance – accounted for 31% of responses.
- More than 2/3rd of respondents indicated that they are active in more than one artistic discipline, pointing to the prevalence of artists working in multiple disciplines.



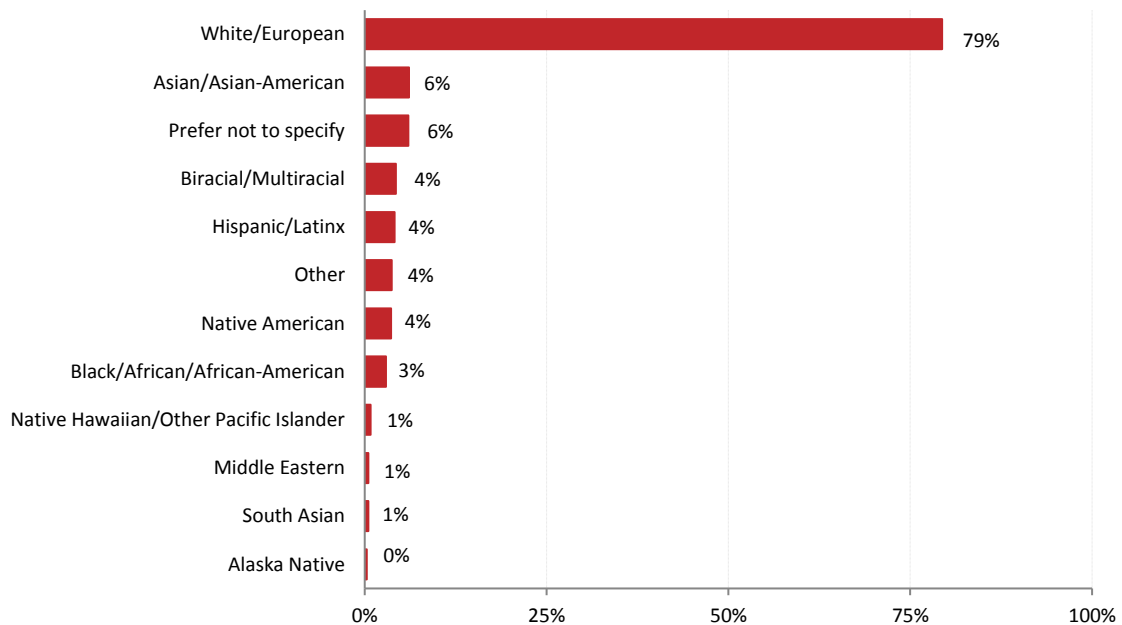
Age and Gender

- Respondents were fairly evenly distributed between 25 and 74 years of age, the most active work years.
- The most populous groups of respondents were ages 45 to 54 (19%) and ages 65 to 74 (17%) followed closely by ages 25 to 34, and 35 to 44 (both at 16%).
- More than two-thirds of respondents identified as female (71%) and 26% identified as male, and 1% identified as transgender. This reflects a preponderance of female artists but may also align with research that shows that women are more likely than men to complete online surveys.



Race and Ethnicity

- Respondents had the option to select more than one identifier, and some did so.
- Nearly four-fifths (79%) of respondents identified as White/European, or include this in the way they defined their race or ethnicity.
- Of the 1576 respondents who answered, 334 indicated a race or ethnicity other than white (21%). By comparison, non-white racial groups represented 19.3 percent of Washington's population in 2015 (Source: [Washington State Office of Financial Management, Population Estimates](#)).
- Only 6% choose to not specify their race or ethnicity.



Geographic Distribution

Artist Trust has designated five regions of Washington State, and uses these regions for planning and program purposes. These five regions are: East, North Central, Puget Sound, South Central, and West. They are indicated in the map on the following page.

Each of the five regions was analyzed by *Race and Ethnicity*. King County was also analyzed separately from the larger Puget Sound region. ¹

- Respondents in King County/Puget Sound region were slightly more likely to identify as non-white than were those in other regions. However, the regions are not markedly different from one another insofar as respondents’ racial identity is concerned.
- Respondents residing the North Central and South Central regions were more likely to prefer not to specify their race and ethnicity (13% and 10% respectively), and were generally less likely to choose more than one racial identification than were respondents in other regions.
- The South Central region had the highest number of respondents to identify as Hispanic/Latinx (7%).
- The West and North Central regions had the highest number of respondents to identify as Native American (8% and 7% of response, respectively).
- The Puget Sound region had the highest number of respondents to identify as Black/African American (3%; 4% of King County responses).
- Differences between King County and Puget Sound region respondents were negligible, with 299 respondents in the Puget Sound region residing outside of King County

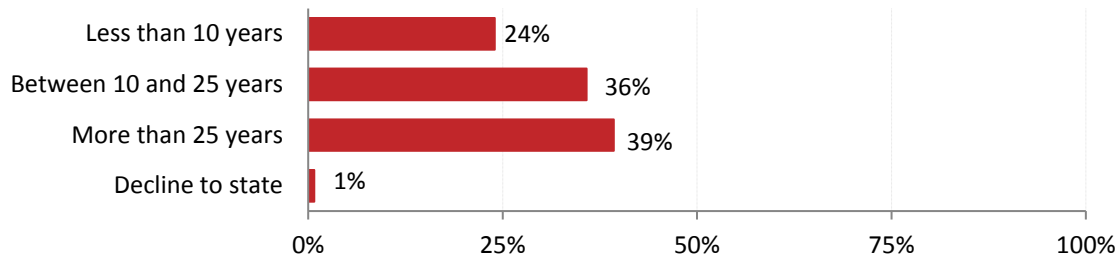
	King, n=862	West, n=164	Puget Sound, n=1161	N. Central, n=15	S. Central, n=84	East, n=130
White/European	78%	82%	78%	87%	79%	85%
Asian/Asian-American	7%	3%	7%	0%	2%	7%
Prefer not to specify	5%	7%	6%	13%	10%	5%
Biracial/Multiracial	5%	2%	5%	0%	1%	3%
Hispanic/Latinx	5%	2%	4%	0%	7%	2%
Other	4%	5%	4%	0%	5%	3%
Native American	3%	8%	3%	7%	0%	5%
Black/African/African-American	4%	1%	4%	0%	0%	2%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%
Middle Eastern	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
South Asian	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%
Alaska Native	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%

¹ In the table, the ‘n’ refers to the overall number of responses originating from that region, per our external calculation in Excel. We then used that number to calculate the response percent for each racial group.

A series of survey questions explored issues of career stage and career development for artists and provide a picture of these dimensions for Washington State artists.

Years as a Practicing Artist

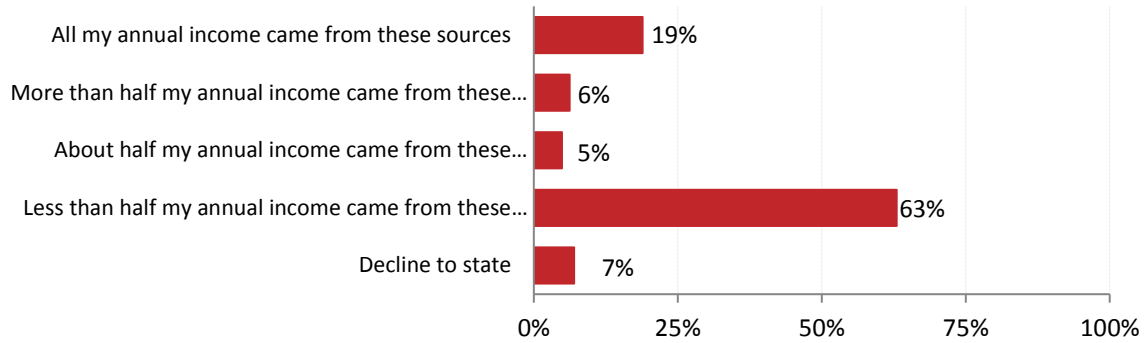
- Respondents were fairly evenly distributed among the time frames of *less than 10 years*, *between 10 and 25 years*, and *more than 25 years*.
- Responses do not include time spent in full time schooling or training.
- Seventy-five percent (75%) had been practicing for more than 10 years or more, with the highest representation of artists with more than 25 years of practice (39%).



Art and Art Related Income

Artists were asked about their personal (not household) income related to their art, including grants, teaching and activities in the past twelve months.

- Nearly 20% of respondents earned all their annual income from art-related sources in the past year.
- Thirty percent (30%) of respondents earned about half or more of their income from their art and related sources in the past year.
- Analysis of income by age groupings shows little difference.
- Those 55 and over were slightly more likely to decline to answer; those under 55 were slightly more likely to answer that more than half or all their income came from their art-making.
- Analysis of income by Race and Ethnicity shows little difference between White/European identified, and respondents identifying as artists of color.



Income was analyzed in relationship to artistic discipline.

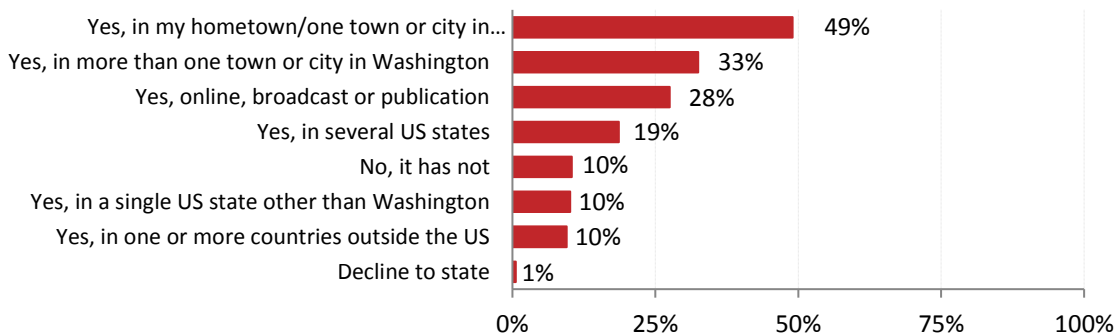
- “Less than half” was most common in all fields.
- More than a quarter of those engaging in Social Practice (27%) and/or in Music (26%) reported earning all their income from their artistic endeavors in the past year.
- Just under half (49%) of respondents engaging in Music reported earning less than half their income from art sources, and 43% reported earning about half or more of their income from art sources, making music the most lucrative among the disciplines.
- Literary arts was the least lucrative, with nearly 3/4^{ths} of respondents reporting that they earned less than half their income from art sources and only 13% reporting earning all their income from art sources in the past year.

	Craft, n=328	Cross- disciplin- ary, n=181	Dance, n=75	Literary, n=299	Media, n=159	Multi- disciplin- ary, n=188	Music, n=154	Social Practice, n=68	Theatre, n=250	Visual, n=954
All my annual income came from these sources	18%	21%	19%	13%	19%	19%	27%	26%	17%	19%
More than half my annual income came from these sources	5%	7%	7%	5%	6%	9%	10%	3%	9%	5%
About half my annual income came from these sources	5%	8%	12%	5%	7%	5%	6%	4%	4%	5%
Less than half my annual income came from these sources	64%	60%	56%	71%	58%	61%	49%	59%	67%	64%
Decline to state	7%	3%	7%	7%	10%	6%	9%	7%	3%	7%

Public Presentation of Artistic Work

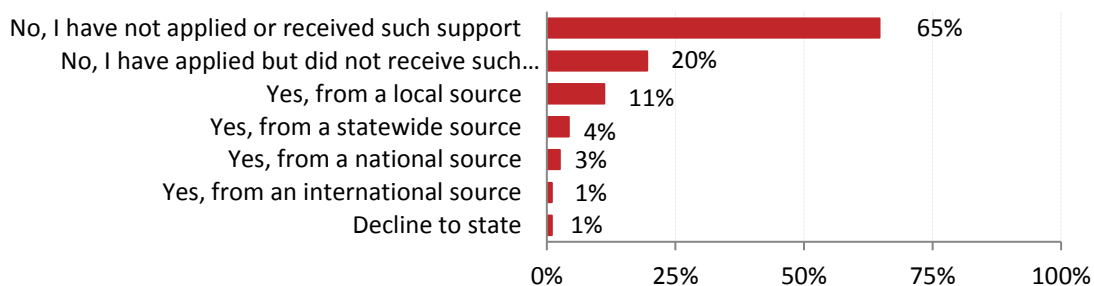
Respondents were asked if their artistic work had been publicly presented in any way in the last 12 months. This might include exhibitions, readings, publication, viewing or listening parties, shows, presentations, performances, or other methods, and they were free to select all that applied to the previous 12 months.

- Nearly 50% of respondents indicated that their work has been publicly presented at least in their hometown/one town or city in Washington in the past year, the most common location of presentation.
- More than a quarter (28%) indicated that their work has been presented online, via broadcast, or publication in the past year.
- Ninety percent (90%) of respondents indicated that their art was presented in some public fashion in the last 12 months.
- Many artists indicated that they participated in more than one form of presentation of their work.



Grant and Funding Support

- Eighty-five percent (85%) of responses indicated that the respondent had either not applied, or applied and not received funding support in the last year.
- For those that received funding support in the last year, the most common source was local (11%) with 4% noting a statewide source.
- While artists could select all that applied, few selected more than one response.



Grant and Funding Support was examined by geographic region.

- Puget Sound Region and King County data are very similar, reflecting the fact that the majority of Puget Sound residents live in King County; respondents in those areas were more likely to report that they had applied for but not received support. Respondents in regions other than Puget Sounds were more likely to report that they had not applied for such support.

	King, n=862	West, n=164	Puget Sound, n=1161	North Central, n=15	South Central, n=84	East, n=130
No, I have not applied or received such support	58%	70%	61%	93%	71%	77%
No, I have applied but did not receive such support	23%	19%	21%	0%	13%	12%
Yes, from a local source	14%	4%	13%	0%	11%	6%
Yes, from a statewide source	5%	4%	4%	7%	1%	5%
Yes, from a national source	3%	2%	2%	0%	6%	2%
Yes, from an international source	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Decline to state	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%

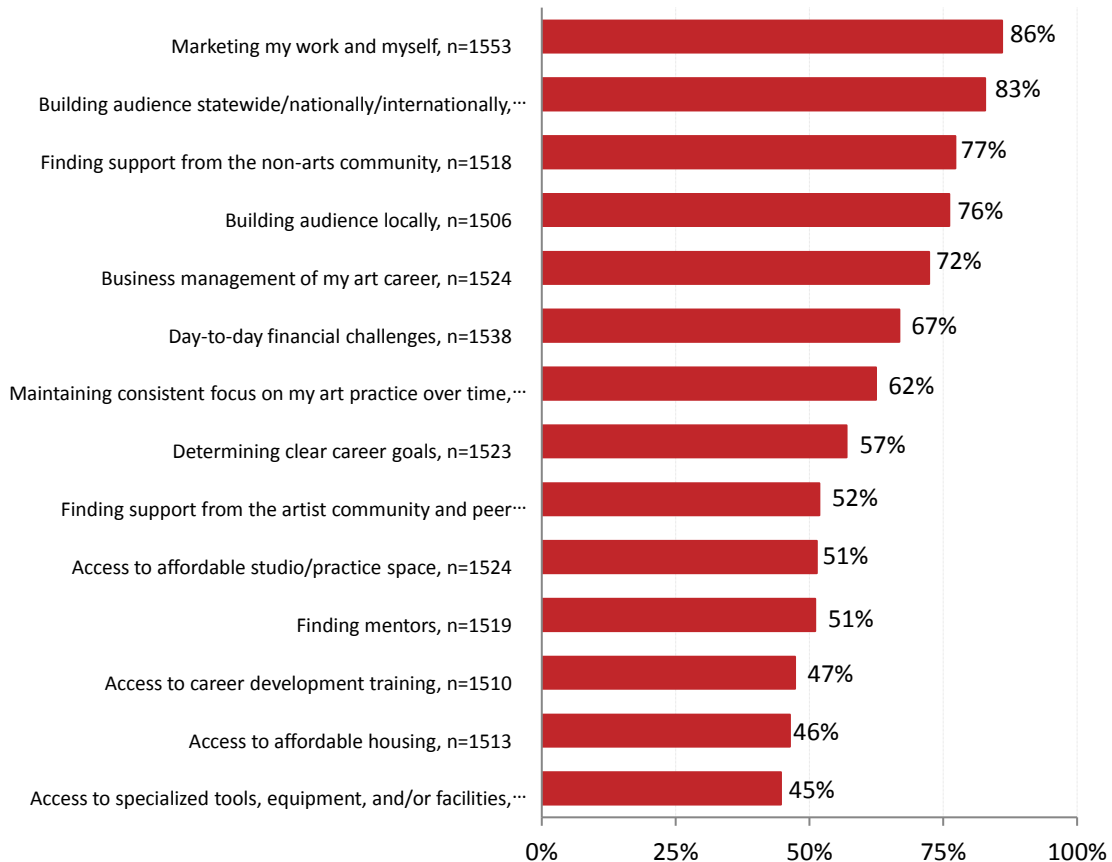
Washington State Artists' Needs

Artists responded to questions that provide insight into their needs, preferences, and perspectives on a variety of issues including career challenges, and regarding timely topics aligned with Artist Trust’s strategic initiatives.

Career Challenges

Artists were asked about the challenges they face as an artist in Washington State. This question was also asked in the 2015 Needs Survey, so comparison is possible over the two years, analyzing concerns noted as “somewhat challenging” and “very challenging” for artists.

- Four top challenges remain consistent for respondents:
 - Marketing myself and my work (86% 2016 / 90% 2015)
 - Building audiences statewide/nationally/internationally (83% 2016 / 91% 2015)
 - Finding support from the non-arts community (77% 2016 / 80% 2015)
 - Building audience locally (76% 2016 / 85% 2015)
- “Business management of my art career” (72% 2016 / 79% 2015) and “Day to day financial challenges” (67% 2016 / 78% 2015) were identified as somewhat less challenging in 2016 than in 2015.



Career challenges were also examined by region.

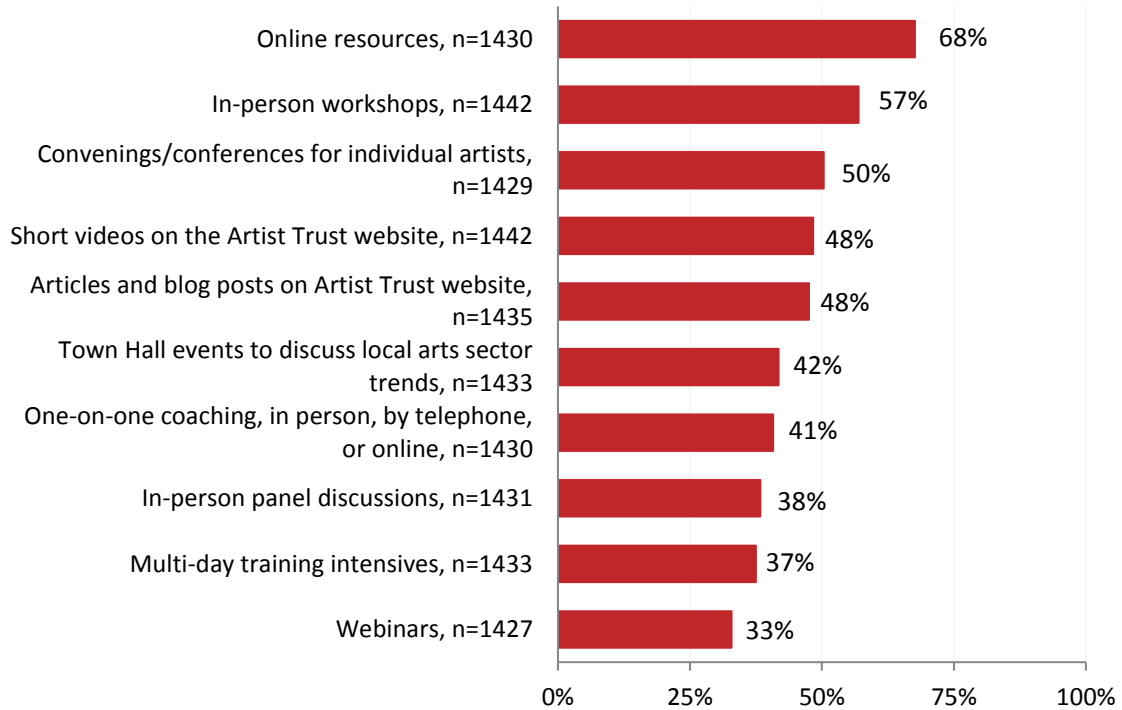
- Many career challenges are similar across the regions, with differences being most apparent regarding concerns around housing and space.
- Affordable housing was of greater concern for respondents living the King County and Puget Sound region than it is for other artists.
- For artists living in regions other than Puget Sound, housing was either not applicable or not challenging for more than half of respondents, suggesting that they may have stable access to adequate housing.
- Respondents in the North Central and South Central regions indicate many similar challenges.

	King	West	Puget Sound	North Central	South Central	East
Marketing my work and myself	86%	88%	86%	86%	90%	83%
Building audience statewide/nationally/internationally	82%	86%	83%	77%	86%	82%
Building audience locally	79%	75%	78%	57%	62%	75%
Finding support from the non-arts community	78%	80%	78%	79%	69%	80%
Business management of my art career	73%	73%	73%	69%	65%	76%
Day-to-day financial challenges	69%	64%	69%	46%	46%	74%
Maintaining consistent focus on my art practice over time	64%	55%	62%	77%	73%	69%
Determining clear career goals	60%	51%	57%	54%	54%	64%
Access to affordable studio/practice space	58%	37%	55%	54%	34%	54%
Finding mentors	52%	47%	52%	62%	47%	54%
Finding support from the artist community and peer networks	52%	60%	51%	36%	45%	53%
Access to affordable housing	55%	35%	51%	31%	21%	40%
Access to career development training	47%	50%	46%	42%	47%	61%
Access to specialized tools, equipment, and/or facilities	45%	44%	44%	62%	46%	56%

Preferred Delivery Methods Regarding Career Development

Respondents provided insight on the methods they currently prefer for receiving business practice training and resources of relevance.

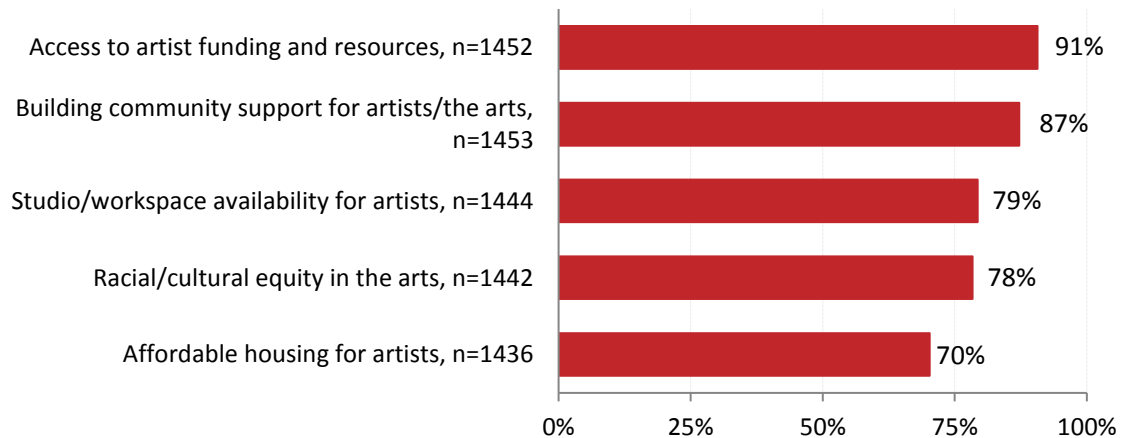
- More than two thirds of respondents (68%) found online resources the most useful source.
- Looking at specific forms of online resources, short videos on the Artist Trust website (48%) and articles or blog posts on the Artist Trust website (48%) were preferred over webinars (33%). Webinars were of limited interest, with almost a third (32%) stating they are not interested in this form.
- About half the respondents found in-person workshops (57%) and convenings/conferences for individual artists (50%) to be of interest.
- Multi-day training was of interest to more than one third (38%) of respondents.



Topics for 2017 Artist Trust Town Halls

Respondents were asked to consider five topics and to rank these topics as to their importance to artists and the arts communities in their area. These topics are under consideration for Town Hall events in the coming year.

- Access to artist funding and resources was a key concern of nearly all (91%) respondents.
- Eighty-seven percent (87%) of respondents saw building community support for artist/the arts as important or critical.
- Affordable housing was a concern for a narrower population of artists (70%).



These topics were also analyzed by region.

- Access to funding and resources was of high importance across all regions.
- Affordable housing was a critical or important concern for 81% of King County respondents, but less than 50% of respondents hailing from the North Central (43%), South Central (49%), or East (48%) regions noted it as a critical or important issue.
- Building community support was indicated to be more critical/important in the East Region than in any other region

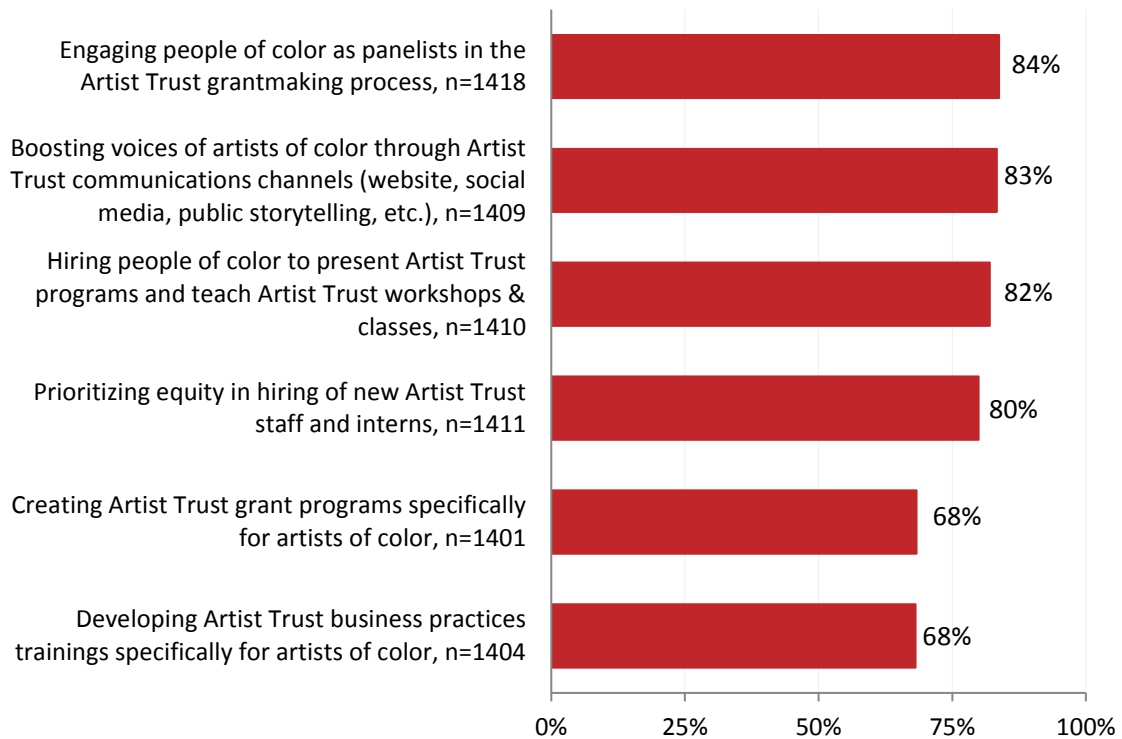
	King, population = 862	West, population = 164	Puget Sound, population = 1161	North Central, population = 15	South Central, population = 84	East, population = 130
Access to artist funding and resources	93%	86%	92%	87%	81%	94%
Building community support for artists/the arts	86%	89%	86%	80%	88%	92%
Studio/workspace availability for artists	85%	73%	82%	73%	64%	69%
Racial/cultural equity in the arts	84%	73%	81%	40%	68%	75%
Affordable housing for artists	81%	59%	76%	43%	49%	48%

Artist Trust Racial Equity Initiatives

In 2016 Artist Trust made a public commitment to prioritize racial equity throughout the organization, and released an Artist Trust Racial Equity Framework. Survey respondents were asked their opinion on which of several possible initiatives has the potential to make the most impact on artists and communities. In reviewing responses to this question, it is worth keeping in mind that nearly 80% of respondents self-identified as at least partially White/European.

- Eighty percent or more (80% to 84%) of respondents expressed that four initiatives (see below) would have either some or significant impact. Respondents indicated that *“Engaging people of color as panelists in the Artist Trust grantmaking process”* would be likely to have the greatest impact (84%).
- Initiatives perceived to be the least likely to have an impact (68%) are *“Developing Artist Trust business practices trainings specifically for artists of color”* and *“Creating Artist Trust grant programs specifically for artists of color.”*
- Responses were analyzed for differences between artists identifying as White and artists identifying as artists of color. Response rates were very similar, with the same order of choices in both respondent groupings. However, artists of color indicated a higher potential impact for all options. Respondents who selected any of the non-white options were more likely than the overall respondents base to see the potential for impact from *‘Creating Artist Trust grant programs specifically for artists of color’* and *‘Developing*

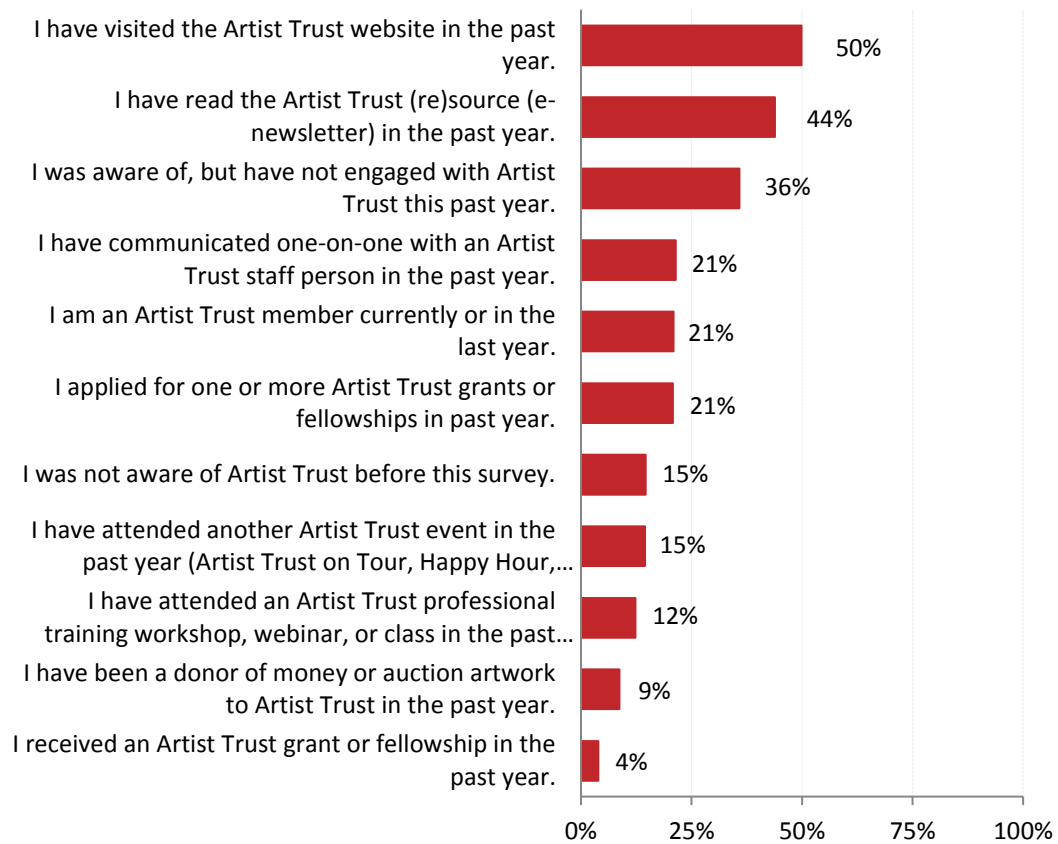
Artist Trust business practices trainings specifically for artists of color,' but they still indicated that these categories were less likely to be of impact than were the other initiatives.



Engagement with Artist Trust

Respondents were asked about their engagement with Artist Trust over the last year; 1,460 respondents answered the question.

- The most common form of interaction with Artist Trust in the last year was online, via the website (50%) and/or the e-newsletter (44%).
- Slightly more than one third (36%) of respondents had not engaged with Artist Trust in the last year.
- Only 21% had applied for a grant from Artist Trust in the last year.
- The survey introduced 15% of respondents to Artist Trust, which is more than the 7% in 2015 who were not aware of Artist Trust before the survey.



Conclusion

The 2016 Artist Survey data provides Artist Trust with information to prioritize its programs and initiatives. The findings provide a roadmap for responding to regional concerns and timely topics and improving delivery of services to artists across the State of Washington. The responses will be used to help shape the form and content of Artist Trust Town Halls and refine approaches to addressing racial equity in the coming years, with attention to regional differences.

Research on artists published by others in the field of artist support during 2016 provides additional context when considering the results of Artist Trust’s 2016 Survey. The Center for Cultural Innovation, with the National Endowment for the Arts, published [Creativity Connects: Trends and Conditions Affecting U.S. Artists](#). This extensive study builds on the seminal 2003 report by the Urban Institute, *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U. S. Artists*, and examines many aspects of how artists live and work today. The Strategic National Arts Alumni Project’s [SNAAP 2016 Annual Report](#) offers relevant insights, in particular regarding resources valued for advancing an artistic career. [Creative Capital Artists Look Back: 1999-2015](#), a report authored by Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, provides an evaluation of fifteen years of this notable program for artists and is of particular interest when considering the Artist Trust Survey findings on career development.

This 2016 Artist Survey was developed as the first in a series of annual surveys. Artist Trust is now positioned to gather data in 2017 and beyond, and to expand the organization's understanding of the constituencies it serves. Data collected in subsequent years will provide new opportunities to track change as well as enduring and consistent elements of the artist population and its concerns in Washington State.

NOTE: A related Excel document, *Guidelines and Templates for Artist Trust Annual Artist Survey: Administration and Analysis*, provides an overview for future iterations of the survey, and for analysis of data. Excel files related to the 2016 Artist Survey have been provided to Artist Trust for future analysis and comparison.

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