Nashville Metro Arts Disparity Study

Report on Findings and Recommendations

RISE Research & Evaluation
June 2023

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"If the South—the birthplace of historic and destructive inequities—rallies to end structural injustice, it can model for the country what the journey toward racial justice and equity looks like."

-Tamieka Mosley,
Grantmakers for Southern Progress

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early 2023, Nashville Metro Arts commissioned a disparity study to examine if a legally supportive inference of discrimination in general operating grant funding distribution has occurred among BIPOC-led arts organizations over a 10-year period. RISE Research & Evaluation (RISE) conducted the study and found that because of the dearth of BIPOC-led arts organizations in the Nashville Metro Arts funding pool (n ≤ 5), statistical calculations could not even be performed. While we cannot offer valid results needed to meet the legal standard of strict scrutiny, established in the United States Supreme Court case, City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Company (1989), the fact that the BIPOC-led sample size is too small to even run analysis speaks volumes to the need to rectify the harm to these organizations.

As the only legally recognized method established in the United States Supreme Court, the City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Company (1989) case is fraught with problems. From a research perspective the statistical tests required to meet the standard have been called by legal disparity experts, "lethal in practice," and they continue to perpetuate inequities. The Croson ruling's metrics presume that there is a field to measure. Yet what we learned in this study is that the current field is not large enough to measure statistically. The disparity is greater than the model even imagines.

The initial analysis plan included running an independent t-test to calculate significance levels between organizations led by Black Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) and Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) organizations. But upon running a power analysis[1] to gauge the appropriateness of using a t-test, the results showed that the sample sizes in the data set provided by Nashville Metro Arts were too small to get accurate and reliable results. However, by the count, there is a dramatic difference between the number of BIPOC-led organizations and PWI organizations funded by Nashville Metro Arts, and the same is true for the average amount of general operating funding provided annually to these two types of organizations across our 10-year analysis (FY13–FY23).

- Average number of BIPOC-led organizations funded annually by Nashville Metro Arts, FY13–FY 23 = 2.9
- Average number of PWI organizations funded annually by Nashville Metro Arts, FY13–FY23 = 42.7
- Average amount of annual funding distributed from Nashville Metro Arts to BIPOC-led arts organizations, FY13–FY23 = $23,189
- Average amount of annual funding distributed from Nashville

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[1] Statistical power analysis is used to estimate the minimum sample size required in order to detect an effect, given a desired significance level. RISE Research & Evaluation uses a significance level of p ≤ 0.05.

Metro Arts to PWI arts organizations, FY13–FY23 = $51,811

Findings from these data sources strongly support the need for more equitable policies and practices within the Nashville Metros Arts department. Given these striking differences, we strongly recommend the following immediate actions be taken by Nashville Metro Arts.

- Nashville Metro Arts should move confidently toward any equity measures in its FY24 funding decisions to ameliorate the differences in funding based on BIPOC-led status and correct for historic inequities.
- Recognizing that an absence of current disparity according to the Croson standard does not mean that equity has been established, Metro Arts should continue to address historic and ongoing inequities that are not accounted for by the Croson standard.
- A further examination of a legal basis of disparity studies in the non-profit sector should be undertaken. Our commentary for legally defensible disparity analysis is limited by the tests applied in court. To our knowledge and based on advice received by counsel at legal firm, Griffin & Strong, there is no current equivalent for the non-profit sector.
- A total accounting of annual City-funded support to arts and culture organizations, including earmarks or capital grants from municipal departments other than Metro Arts, should be taken into consideration by grant panelists and staff when making funding allocation decisions.
- A funding cap policy for all organizations as a mechanism to create a redistribution fund to remedy many years of disinvestment in BIPOC-led arts organizations by Metro Arts

We also strongly encourage members of the Nashville BIPOC arts community to amplify their experiences, speak truth to power, and mobilize efforts directed at the City of Nashville and Metro Arts that support equitable and reparative investments. While there is no current example within the Nashville city limits of what equitable municipal funding for the arts looks like, we are highly confident that the imaginations and creative capacities of the people who have experienced this neglect are clear enough and strong enough to guide a transformative future. We are reminded of the wisdom of Angela Davis who said, "You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world, and you have to do it all the time." In the direction of radical transformation, where our work as researchers ends, the community's work as organizers begins.

Nashville Metro Arts recently committed to exposing and unraveling inequities in the local arts ecosystem as a pathway to ensure all Nashvillians are able to participate in a creative life. Following that commitment, the current executive leader of the agency set a course to examine conditions and outcomes within the policies and practices of Metro Arts from an equity lens. This came as a direct result of listening to community voices and paying attention to those people, communities and arts organizations that have been disinvested by the City and its arts employment and funding mechanism. In an effort to understand those claims more deeply, Metro Arts embarked on a disparity analysis working with an outside evaluation partner to design and conduct the study.

Arts Equity Theory

RISE Research & Evaluation grounded this work in a longstanding history of equitable arts investment theories and practices. We draw largely from critical race theorists working in arts and culture such as Gloria Anzaldúa (2013), Paolo Friere (1968), Concha Delgado-Gaitan (1994), bell hooks (1996), Ibram Kendhi (2023), and Daniel Solórzano (2002) (to name a few). By walking in the pathway these scholars made, we are able to put this data in a larger context informed by global freedom struggle movements. Below we provide a brief summary of some of the literature on that topic. Additionally, we are grateful for the leadership, support and collaboration from Justin Laing of Hillombo LLC.[2] As a partner in this study and a nationally recognized field leader in arts equity, Justin Laing provided guidance on the research design as well as critical input on the interpretation of the findings. His works specifically addresses systemic racism in the arts with such organizations as Grantmakers in the Arts, the Chicago Cultural Treasures Initiative and the Minnesota Orchestra, and he applied both Critical Race Theory and Antiracist frameworks to support and deepen the analysis.

The applied research literature also adds to our theoretical lens and enlightens a multitude of benefits of equity—that equity work in arts and culture has the potential to impact far beyond the sector itself. The key elements featured immediately below represent general evidence-based arguments for the function and impact of equity. Further in this section we will specifically address deep and systemic issues of inequity within arts and culture at the local government level.

Equity strengthens democracy.

- In their 2009 report, *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best*, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy states that, "By intentionally elevating

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[2] http://hillombo.net/about/

vulnerable populations in their grantmaking, foundations benefit society and strengthen our democracy. Prioritizing marginalized communities brings about positive benefits for the public good," (pp. 2).

- California Tomorrow's work *Leading by Example: Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in Community Foundations* recaps the changing demographics in the U.S. at the time of their 2004 report. "No longer the province of major urban centers, diversity is now a reality in every area of the United States. Three states, the District of Columbia, and nearly half the country's one hundred largest cities no longer have majority White populations. Over the past thirty years, the percentage of the U.S. population comprised of racial and ethnic minority groups has nearly doubled, and the percentage that is foreign born has more than doubled," (Scharf, 2004, pp. 5).
- *Not Just Money: Equity Issues in Cultural Philanthropy* authored by the Surdna Foundation offers equity in the arts as a way to bridge political divides. "If arts and culture are primary ways that we empathize with, understand and communicate with other people—including people different than ourselves—then enabling a broad spectrum of cultural voices is fundamental to creating a sense of the commonwealth and overcoming the pronounced socio-political divides we face today," (Surdna Foundation, 2017, pp. 2).

Equity rights historic injustices.

- The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation issued a report titled, *What Are the Paradigm Shifts Necessary for the Arts Sector to Nurture More ~~Sustainable~~ Thriving Institutions of Color*, in which the authors remind us of the opportunity to correct a yawning gap in equitable funding. "There exists a pregnant consciousness around equity within the arts and culture sector from local to national funders. Yet the distribution of funding that should reflect the evolving diversity of our cultural landscape continues to trend in the wrong direction," (Yancey Consulting, 2018, pp. 7).
- California Tomorrow's work presents clear statistics on disproportionality. "Despite a civil rights movement that established legal protections against discrimination and advanced the vision of a society of equal opportunity and access, widespread disparities between groups persist and indeed are growing in the United States. Disproportionately it is families of color who are most impoverished in our communities. Disproportionately children from low-income neighborhoods attend schools with undertrained teachers and inadequate facilities. Families of color are two to three times as likely to lack health insurance as their White counterparts. And African Americans and Latinx have suffered consistently and significantly higher unemployment rates than Whites for decades," (Scharf, 2004, pp. 5).

Equity increases economic opportunity.

- The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy states, "Social inclusion

is based on the belief that we all fare better when no one is left to fall too far behind, and the economy works for everyone. Social inclusion simultaneously incorporates multiple dimensions of well-being. It is achieved when we all have the opportunity and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural activities which are considered the societal norm," (Jagpal, 2009, pp. 3).
● The PolicyLink report titled, *Creating Change Through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer,* provides hope regarding the role of the arts in economic opportunity. "Public sector investments in arts and culture across the United States can play a foundational and catalytic role in delivering racial and economic equity in community development," (Rose et.al., 2017, pp. 10).
● The same report provides clear statistics on the benefits of a creative economy. "Public arts and culture investments have significant place-making, economic and social impacts. A survey by Americans for the Arts found that the nation's arts and culture sector received about $4 billion in public investment in 2010. The sector generated $135.2 billion in economic activity, supported 4.13 million full-time jobs, and generated $22.3 billion in revenue," (Rose et.al., 2017, pp. 10).

Equity increases well-being.

● Once again, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy offers a rationale for equity in the arts that is based in well-being. "Human development and social inclusion provide compelling reasons for institutional grantmakers to contribute to the public good by supporting policies that seek to create a more level playing field. By prioritizing the marginalized communities in grantmaking, philanthropy has the opportunity to maximize the impact of its giving by looking beyond economic indicators to assess the health of people and society on multiple dimensions of wellbeing," (Jagpal, 2009, pp. 7).
● In *What Are the Paradigm Shifts Necessary for the Arts Sector to Nurture More ~~Sustainable~~ Thriving Institutions of Color*, we are reminded that community need drives organizations of color, and often these needs are centered on health and wellbeing. "African, Latin American, Asian and Native American (ALAANA) organizations primarily grow from need. A community or group of people have a need and usually people from that community rise up to meet it. The stability of the fabric of American societies depends on the health of [BIPOC] organizations to serve their constituencies," (Yancey Consulting, 2018, pp. 9).

Equity leads us to understand each other.

● "The arts and culture are an essential means by which people make sense of their lives, share their experiences, build bridges across divides, and realize their common humanity. The arts enable us to reflect on our own

circumstances, understand one another, and imagine different futures," (Surdna Foundtion, 2017, pp. 1).

- The D5 Coalition's report, *Analysis of Policies, Practices and Programs for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*, clearly tells us, "Equity-focused philanthropy will expand opportunity, support leaders from marginalized groups, and close gaps in indicators of well-being," (Dressel, et.al., 2013, pp. 5).
- The author of *Leading by Example: Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in Community Foundations* shares that simply working from the demographic changes in this country is not enough reason to focus on equity. There is a deeper, more compelling reason. "We have both a moral and social imperative to move forward our efforts if we are to reflect not just the racial and ethnic makeup of our communities, but also the differing ways in which our communities are 'experienced,'" (Scharf, 2004, pp. 17).

Equity Within Arts and Culture at the Local Government Level.

In recent years, local government, through direct cash allocations or indirectly through the development of public venues where arts programs occur, has become a stabilizing source of funding for the arts. Advanced by the creation of the Locals Program at the National Endowment for the Arts in 1982, city governments began to significantly increase their direct support for the arts from local tax-based sources. The four for primary sources of revenue for the arts at the local government level are:

- general fund revenue
- general county tax revenue
- designated or a percentage of dedicated taxes such as hotel occupancy or entertainment/sports tax and
- special taxation districts

In all cases, these public resources are considered to be in place to benefit the full range of public interests. What recent research has shown, however, is that those "public" resources have benefited traditional "White-led" institutions, whose budgets and assets have grown to build multimillion-dollar budgets, and for many, at the exclusion of the interests and cultural expression of the broader community.

As the nation's workforce has become increasingly diverse, the artists, leadership and programming focus of these publicly funded organizations has remained predominantly White. The City of New York for example, recently surveyed the staff and boards of the 987 arts organizations which received funding from the Department of Cultural Affairs. Of the City's cultural workforce, 61.8% were White, non-Hispanic, and 35.4% were persons of color. Also, they found an inverse relationship between diversity in boards and staff and organizational size (i.e. larger institutions had less diversity), and leadership was less diverse, on average, in upper management than lower- and mid-level management.

In 2016, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission administered the DataArts Workforce Demographic survey with 3,175 arts organization staff, board members, volunteers, and contractors in Los Angeles County. Results of note were: the arts and culture workforce is more homogenous (60% White, non-Hispanic) than the county's population (27% White, non-Hispanic); board members are the least diverse of the workforce cohorts; and younger workforce members are more racially diverse than are older members of the workforce. New York City and Los Angeles findings show how different arts communities reflect (or do not reflect) the racial diversity of their area's population.

These kinds of findings, while interesting, do not directly help answer questions of distributive justice in the dissemination of grants funds. Trends in arts funding from the private sector, including foundation and philanthropic funders, shows that bias has also contributed to lower capacities of arts organizations of color. Overall, their ability to generate earned and contributed income to meet the matching requirements mandated by many public sector funding agencies is diminished.

The result, over time, is that organizations of color and smaller community-based arts groups have lower capacities to access grants of substantial size, to build and sustain cash reserves and endowments, and to hire and retain full-time staff. Conversations around equity must consider how historic policies and practices have largely favored European-based cultural norms. Cities and local arts agencies across the country are responding to the data that points out these unbalanced and biased systems and are calling for more than the development of an equity statement to address this uneven picture.

Methods

For this particular study, RISE used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to arrive at an understanding of the level of differences that have existed in funding outcomes. Data on the funding history by Metro Arts to arts organizations over the last ten years was shared by Metro Arts and analyzed by RISE. We also gathered data from a unique survey designed to evaluate the leadership composition of organizations according to race, ethnicity and gender. Furthermore, we collected qualitative reflections and experiences of artists and arts administrators during two community listening sessions held on April 24th and 25th, 2023 and used an emergent themes analysis framework. These combined data sources and the mixed-methods analysis we conducted comprise the evidence from which we drew our claims.

Limitations

This study had notable limitations that are important to mention. First, the

directive was to conduct a legally defensible disparity analysis based on what the request for proposals termed, "minority- and woman-owned arts organizations that are ready, willing and able to carry out arts programs." Definitions for all these terms are muddy and not generalizable across sectors.

First, the readers must understand that a legal standard of disparity in the non-profit sector does not exist yet. Secondly, the concept of business ownership also does not exist in the nonprofit sector. We must be careful not to conflate "owned" with "led." Furthermore, there is no certification process to signify whether a non-profit organization is run by people who are "minority" or "women" (the close correlate in the business world being the Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises certification). And finally, the idea of what constitutes "ready, willing and able arts organizations," was not tested beyond the internal conversations between Metro Arts and RISE.

General Findings

However, we collectively learned about some of the limitations of this method in the process of the analysis and so we offer these insights to the field as a whole. We do not yet have as a field a standard method to measure systemic racism, and a method to capture "smoking guns" of discrimination will not be sensitive enough to explain such outcomes as an insufficiently large enough data set to measure. It is not uncommon in equity work to run up against a system that is incapable of seeing, acknowledging and understanding intersectional nuances. We look to legal scholars such as Kimberley Crenshaw[3] to illuminate these deficiencies across legal and other social systems. And we believe Nashville Metro Arts–by even being willing to venture out into this realm and put resources towards understanding the realities of the Nashville arts community from a research perspective–is creating a pathway that will bring depth and clarity to its own community as well as the landscape of equity analyses within municipal arts funding agencies across the U.S.

Using Kendi's (2023) standard of racism being the presence of clear racial disparities,[4] this study shows a clear picture of systemic racism impacting BIPOC arts leaders and organizations: first in the low number of applications that Metro Arts is even receiving from BIPOC-led organizations, secondly in the low amount of total dollars going to BIPOC orgs and finally in the fact that these dollars are mainly going to one institution. While more research and analysis is needed than was possible for this project, we suspect that Metro Arts' history of funding the same PWIs that were supported by the larger White arts patrons became a defacto barrier. Simply put, the current funding distribution by Metro Arts perpetuates a cycle of exclusion, where certain communities face barriers to entry and thus lack the necessary support to

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[3] Crenshaw, K. (1990). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stan. L. Rev.*, *43*, 1241.

[4] Kendi, I. X. (2023). *How to be an antiracist*. One world.

develop their artistic talent and cultural expressions. The result is a stark disparity in funding, access, and visibility, with marginalized communities being underrepresented and their artistic contributions undervalued or overlooked.

DATA SOURCES AND RESULTS

In order to comprehensively assess equity in Nashville Metro Arts funding outcomes, three key data sources were utilized: a disparity analysis of funding across a 10-year data set comparing funding levels for PWIs and BIPOC-led organizations, a field survey of all arts organizations in the Nashville area and qualitative listening sessions. These sources provided a site-specific multidimensional perspective, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the presence and absence of equity within the funding outcomes of Nashville Metro Arts.

The first data source provided by Metro Arts was a database of annual funding amounts to each arts organization over a 10-year period. We ran an analysis process that examined the distribution of funds between PWIs and BIPOC-led organizations. We were planning to conduct a t-test analysis to determine if there were statistically significant differences in funding allocation based on race. By analyzing this long-term data set, the hope was that trends and patterns in funding disparities could be identified, providing insights into the historical presence or absence of equity. But after preparing to run the t-test analysis via a power analysis, we found that the sample sizes of the BIPOC organizations were too small to even calculate a t-test.

The second data source was a field survey conducted among all arts organizations in the Nashville area (not just those funded by Metro Arts). This survey aimed to gather data on race, ethnicity, and gender identity within these organizations. By collecting demographic information, it allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the representation of different racial, ethnic, and gender marginalized groups within the arts community. This data source provided valuable insights into the diversity and inclusivity of arts organizations in the Nashville metro area.

The third data source was a series of qualitative community listening sessions. These sessions engaged key stakeholders, including artists, community members, and arts organization leaders. Through open and interactive discussions, participants shared their experiences, perspectives, and concerns regarding equity in the municipal arts funding outcomes. This qualitative approach provided rich and nuanced insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals within the arts community, shedding light on where equity may be present or lacking.

By triangulating the findings from these data sources, a comprehensive conclusion could be drawn regarding equity in Nashville municipal arts funding outcomes. The disparity analysis allowed for an assessment of historical funding patterns. The field survey provided demographic data to evaluate representation. The qualitative listening sessions offered valuable qualitative insights, and the theoretical

lens helps us understand the larger picture. Together, these sources contributed to a holistic understanding of the current state of equity in the municipal arts funding outcomes, informing future strategies and interventions to address any disparities and foster a more equitable arts community.

Disparity Analysis

The disparity analysis of arts funding based on ethnicity revealed that the sample size of BIPOC organizations was insufficient to conduct a t-test analysis ($n \leq 5$). The study aimed to assess whether there were significant differences in funding allocation between BIPOC and PWI organizations. However, due to the limited number of BIPOC organizations included in the analysis, a reliable statistical comparison could not be performed using the t-test methodology.

The findings of this analysis clearly show the need for larger representation of BIPOC organizations in the Metro Arts funding ecosystem. It is critical to ensure a diverse and inclusive sample size that adequately represents the various ethnicities and backgrounds within the Nashville/Davidson County arts community. By increasing the number of BIPOC organizations included in the funding pool, future studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of funding disparities and meet the legal criteria.

At the same time, we also emphatically note the context of the legal definition is one in which the effects of systemic racism, a multivariate process, is reduced to a single calculation and does not accommodate the realities of the current situation–that too few organizations led and run by BIPOC people are participating in municipal arts funding programs. The conditions necessary for carrying out a statistical analysis could not even be met. Thus the measure reproduces systemic racism because it denies its existence in the first place, and harm against BIPOC arts organizations in Nashville continues to be replicated. The data presented here should be enough evidence for Metro Arts to solidly move forward with remedies that support BIPOC organizations. Because of the clear results from the combined data sources used in this study, the researchers at RISE endorse changes in this direction of supporting BIPOC organizations to bring Metro Arts into more equitable practices.

Methodology.

We collected numeric data over the last 10 fiscal years (i.e. FY2013–FY2023) that included names of the arts organizations, the amount of annual funding from Metro Arts, and the designation of each organization as being BIPOC led or white led. We ran basic descriptive statistics across the ten year data set. Results from that analysis are presented in Table 1 below in the results section.

We began by running an inferential statistical analysis but we were not seeing results that made sense. The researchers at RISE were struck by how small the BIPOC sample sizes were and there was concern among our experts that we would end up

with invalid results from a t-test if we did not first check for fitness of the variables. Given the results of the power analysis, we could not move forward with a t-test analysis. We needed sample sizes of 19–418, but the landscape of BIPOC-led organizations funded by Metro Arts showed only 1–5 BIPOC organizations being funded throughout the ten year analysis period.

Results.

Table 1 below shows a side-by-side comparison of the descriptive statistics across fiscal years and by type of organization. The mean is the average amount of funding given, the sum is the total amount of funding given to each group, and the count is the total number of organizations funded by Metro Arts in each group.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics: BIPOC vs. Predominately White Institutions (PWIs)*

Fiscal Year	BIPOC	Results	PWIs	Results
FY2013	mean	$5,112.50	mean	$45,290.85
	SD	1255.11	SD	52939.75
	min	$4,225.00	min	$1,575.00
	max	$6,000.00	max	$175,150.00
	sum	$10,225.00	sum	$1,856,925.00
	count	2	count	41
FY2014	mean	$5,625.00	mean	$39,157.08
	SD	3005.20	SD	49824.43
	min	$3,500.00	min	$850.00
	max	$7,750.00	max	$145,400.00
	sum	$11,250	sum	$1,879,540.00
	count	2	count	48
FY2015	mean	$5,180.00	mean	$42,520.95
	SD	2446.59	SD	50313.20
	min	$ 3,450.00	min	$ 1,980.00
	max	$ 6,910.00	max	$151,750
	sum	$10,360	sum	$1,828,401.00
	count	2	count	43
FY2016	mean	$4,448.10	mean	$41,951.91
	SD	1215.71	SD	48773.44
	min	$ 3,400.00	min	$ 1,700.00
	max	$ 6,165.00	max	$ 143,000.00
	sum	$17,792	sum	$1,887,835.80
	count	4	count	45
FY2017	mean	$9,262.50	mean	$52,673.54

	SD	3871.41	SD	55292.21
	min	$ 6,525.00	min	$ 2,845.00
	max	$ 12,000.00	max	$153,060.00
	sum	$18,525	sum	$2,159,615.00
	count	2	count	41
FY2018	mean	$6,350.00	mean	$57,207.32
	SD	606.22	SD	55,182.80
	min	$6,000.00	min	$3,100.00
	max	$7,050.00	max	$166,600.00
	sum	$19,050.00	sum	$2,345,500.00
	count	3	count	41
FY2019	mean	N/A	mean	$78,213.89
	SD	N/A	SD	53555.19
	min	N/A	min	$ 2,670.00
	max	N/A	max	$ 150,000.00
	sum	$6,850.00	sum	$2,111,775
	count	1	count	27
FY2020	mean	$83,070.00	mean	$64,594.13
	SD	47475.15	SD	44816.84
	min	$ 49,500.00	min	$ 9,400.00
	max	$ 116,640.00	max	$ 156,750.00
	sum	$166,140.00	sum	$2,067,012.00
	count	2	count	32
FY2021	mean	$22,040.33	mean	$45,540.89
	SD	23864.93	SD	44520.72
	min	$ 6,308.00	min	$ 1,170.00
	max	$ 49,500.00	max	$156,750.00
	sum	$66,121.00	sum	$2,550,290.00
	count	3	count	56
FY2022	mean	$40,837.83	mean	$45,419.50
	SD	56054.51	SD	43037.50
	min	$ 701.00	min	$ 1,050.00
	max	$ 146,200.00	max	$ 151,500.00
	sum	$245,027.00	sum	$2,180,136.00
	count	6	count	48
FY2023	mean	$ 66,305.60	mean	$57,353.83
	SD	68,904.89	SD	54112.51
	min	$ 8,702.00	min	$ 630.00
	max	$ 181,276.00	max	$ 187,860.00
	sum	$ 331,528.00	sum	$ 2,752,984.00

	count	5		count	48

Organizational Composition Field Survey

The purpose of the organizational survey given to arts organizations in Nashville was to gather data related to the demographics and representation within these organizations. The survey obtained information on the name of the arts and culture agency, the total number of staff, and the composition of staff based on racial or ethnic minority groups. It specifically asked for the percentage of staff members who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Middle Eastern/North African, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or Latine.

The survey also aimed to understand the representation of racial or ethnic minority staff members in senior or mid-level leadership positions within the organization. It requested the percentage of staff from minority groups who hold these leadership roles. Furthermore, the survey collected data on the gender distribution within the organization, asking for the percentage of male, female, and non-binary staff members.

By gathering this information, the survey helped us assess the diversity, equity, and inclusion within arts organizations in Nashville. It provides valuable insights into the representation of different racial and ethnic groups, as well as gender, at various levels of leadership within these organizations.

Methodology.

The survey questions were generated by experts at RISE Research & Evaluation and distributed to a list of all arts organizations in the Davidson County area. This list was provided by outside consultant, Cultural Planning Group, and was originally generated from an IRS public data source organized by North American Industry Classification System code for the arts. The list was further curated by RISE in partnership with MEtro Arts staff to update it for current relevance, including eliminating organizations that had closed. The survey was distributed via direct emails to the organizations on the list, through a Metro Arts e-newsletter, and a direct request in a pop-up window to Metro Arts website visitors.

Results.

Sixty-one organizations responded, representing roughly 19% of the total known arts ecosystem in Davidson County. We analyzed data from 55 responses. Due to incomplete answers, some data points were eliminated during analysis. On average, the respondent organizations have 10 people on staff, and on average 42.94% of staff are from BIPOC groups (i.e. American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Middle Eastern/North African, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and/or Latine).

Furthermore, participating organizations reported that 42.13% of their senior leadership staff are BIPOC. On average, respondents reported that 61.21% of their staff are women and 2.79% are non-binary. Across this sample, the average percentage of staff who are female and/or non-binary who also occupy senior or mid-level leadership positions within the organization is 47.09%

These results have greater impact when compared with the population of organizations funded by Metro Arts, painting a clear picture of exclusion and marginalization. Table 2 below shows the comparisons.

Table 2. *FY2023 Comparison of Staff Demographic Composition of Metro Arts Funded vs. Larger Arts Ecosystem Organizations*

% BIPOC-led Orgs, Survey Data	% BIPOC-led Orgs, Metro Arts Funded	% PWIs, Metro Arts Funded
42.13%	9.43%	90.57%

Community Listening Sessions

In April 2023 RISE facilitated two community listening sessions where artists and representatives from arts organizations were invited to gather at a public location and share their experiences across a range of areas of interaction with Metro Arts. A total of 84 community members participated. Participants were invited via Metro Arts' e-newsletter as well as by an open posting on the Metro Arts website. To accommodate as wide an audience as possible, the first session was held during weekday evening hours, and the second session was held in the middle of a weekday.

Researchers at RISE introduced the purpose of the data collection, reviewed consent procedures, facilitated a connecting practice, and held space for organized written and verbal feedback. Participants were invited to self-identify according to the following categories: representing a BIPOC-led organization, representing a historically white-led institution, BIPOC individual artist, white artist. They wrote single ideas on small sheets of paper related to the phases within the life cycle of applying for and receiving grant funds from Metro Arts. We asked for their input on the eligibility criteria, the application process, the selection and review process, the award amounts, reporting requirements, staff support, and any other related or non-related area they wanted to offer feedback on. All community input was transcribed into an Excel sheet and processed and analyzed in DeDoose® qualitative software.

Overall, the data from the community listening sessions suggests a mix of positive and negative experiences across the categories. Positive outcomes include appreciation for accessibility, recent changes in the grant making process, including a simplified application process and support from grant managers. Negative outcomes

include concerns about eligibility criteria, application requirements, limited funding amounts, lack of feedback mechanisms for organizations to speak directly with panel reviewers, and the need for more representation and support for BIPOC artists and organizations.

Generally, the feedback from White artists and PWIs was far more positive than from BIPOC artists and organizations. This is a key finding that deserves close attention. Clearly the experiences based on race are different with people of color facing more barriers, limitations and overall negative experiences in the grant process through Metro Arts. We offer that this may well be because these processes were historically designed with the White arts organization in mind.

Furthermore, the number and breadth of comments from white-presenting artists and historically white institutions far outweighed the number of comments from BIPOC artists and organizations. From a research perspective, this is an indicator of some possible causes. First, it is well documented in the academic literature that when groups of mixed power positions share institutional space, the dominant group (in this case, White people) can quite literally dominate the conversation, leaving less room for the voices of non-dominant groups to surface.[5]

Secondly, this is likely an indication of the dearth of BIPOC arts representation due to systemic marginalization and disinvestment, and/or a messaging and recruitment issue within Metro Arts. We are unsure if the communication mechanisms the department has at its fingertips are enough to reach BIPOC audiences with authenticity. Furthermore, this points to a possible relationship deficiency between Metro Arts and BIPOC communities. As one participant states, there is a desire from BIPOC communities for Metro Arts to operate closer to the grassroots level, to reach out to BIPOC organizations, attend their events, and meet them where they are.

Another clear finding that was echoed across all groups was the resounding desire for more funding. This issue came up regardless of race, organizational leadership, or size of the institution. Below we provide a deeper analysis of participant feedback based on (a) the categories we put forth during the listening sessions and (b) the identification of the person providing input.

BIPOC Organizations.

Eligibility Criteria.

The feedback on eligibility criteria was limited. However, a suggestion was made to include culinary arts as it is an effective way for the AAPI community to connect with the larger community. Additionally, there was an idea that cultural preservation would be a suitable category.

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[5] Ellsworth, 1989; Howard, et al., 2006; Leonardo & Porter, 2010

Application Process.

The response regarding the application process was mostly positive, with organizations expressing gratitude for the grant managers' support and responsiveness to their questions. However, some artists found the THRIVE application process daunting, indicating a need for improvement in that area.

Grantee Selection and Panel Review Process.

There was a positive perception that the selection and review process of these organizations' grants is more transparent compared to other funders. However, there was a call for more BIPOC representation on panels to ensure diversity and equity. Additionally, the review process for the current year seemed unusual without applicants being able to defend themselves.

Funding Amounts.

Gratitude was expressed for the support received, with an emphasis on valuing any level of assistance. However, the organizations indicated a need for additional financial support, particularly since many artists are working under semi-volunteering conditions. There was a perception that larger grants tend to be awarded to well-established organizations, and a request for larger grant amounts specifically to fund the construction of a cultural center for the Native American Indian Association (NAIA).

Reporting.

No specific feedback was provided regarding reporting requirements.

Support From Metro Arts.

Positive feedback was given about the workshops offered, although attendance was dependent on individual availability. No negative feedback was mentioned regarding support.

General Feedback.
There was a desire expressed to meet and learn about other organizations and artists, highlighting the importance of networking and understanding each other's work. The funding disparity was noted, with reference to a particular fact that only 18 cents of every 100 dollars goes to Asian American and Pacific Islander-led organizations nationally, and a hope that the city could improve upon this. Improved communication between organizations, regardless of size, was also emphasized. Additionally, there was a request to acknowledge the diversity within BIPOC art and not limit it to traditional or cultural forms.

BIPOC Artists.

Eligibility Criteria.

The feedback on eligibility criteria was mixed. There was appreciation for a flexible definition of art and artist, allowing for broader inclusion. However, there was a strong sentiment that Indigenous artists should be prioritized and actively sought after as First Nations people. The limited funding options for individual artists were also highlighted, with the THRIVE program being perceived as lacking resources and having criteria barriers that pose challenges for artists.

Application Process.

The simplified application process received positive feedback. However, concerns were raised about access and the desire for eligibility to be open to everyone with fewer criteria. The requirement for a community partner was seen as restrictive, and there was a call for more freedom in how artists can present their work. Knowledge and education about the application process were also identified as areas for improvement.

Grantee Selection and Panel Review Process.

Limited feedback was provided regarding the selection/review process. However, the desire for feedback from the panel with guidance from staff afterwards was expressed. Artists were interested in understanding the reasons behind their selection or non-selection for awards.

Funding Amounts.

No specific feedback was given regarding funding/award amounts, except for the suggestion that first-time applicants should be given a chance and awarded an amount that is feasible to start their projects.

Reporting.

No specific feedback was provided regarding reporting requirements.

Support From Metro Arts.

Positive feedback was given regarding support, but there were concerns about the responsiveness of staff, who were perceived as stretched thin and lacking capacity. The feedback sessions were noted to be predominantly attended by white-presenting individuals, indicating a lack of representation and voice for BIPOC artists. There was a call for Metro Arts to connect with the BIPOC audience more directly and to provide classes/training and a Q&A session with past winners for applicants.

General Feedback.

The general feedback expressed a desire to challenge the current boundaries of legality that define what is considered factual/representational data. There was a call to change the guidelines and increase the time span for reviewing the council's demographics to have a more restorative impact. The suggestion of initiating legal action to influence demographic studies and redefine guidelines was put forward.

Predominately White Institutions.

Eligibility Criteria.

The feedback on eligibility criteria was mostly positive, with comments expressing that the criteria were easy to understand and recent changes to include smaller and younger nonprofits were seen as a significant improvement. The accessibility of the criteria was appreciated, along with the provision of assistance in finding fiscal partners for those without organizational infrastructure. However, there were some negative points raised, such as a small panel of grant editors holding significant sway over funding guidelines.

Clarity was sought regarding the size of organizations based on prior year's budget, rather than the current or projected budget. Some individuals expressed a desire to remove the requirement of Giving Matters,[6] while others felt that the application process was being abused by businesses seeking building beautification projects, which impacted other applications. The issue of non-501(c)3 organizations not being eligible for certain grants was also highlighted, requesting clearer communication on eligibility. The need for transparency in the evaluation process and more, smaller grants to involve communities was also mentioned.

Application Process.

Overall, the shorter and more simplified application process received positive feedback, with applicants expressing appreciation for the ease and accessibility it provided. However, concerns were raised about the limited space for explaining projects and their impact within the word count restrictions. Some applicants felt that the word limits were too low and restrictive, making it difficult to adequately convey their work. There were suggestions for higher character counts on question responses and the inclusion of multiple modalities for applications, such as videos. Challenges related to the online application process, computer access, and technological proficiency were mentioned as potential barriers for some organizations. Additionally, applicants desired more clarity on financial reporting requirements and the differences in reporting for various grants.

Grantee Selection and Panel Review Process.

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[6] https://givingmatters.civicore.com/

Positive feedback was given for the selection/review process, with specific mentions of the desire to have dialogue with panelists. However, concerns were raised about the lack of opportunity to respond to questions and the limited feedback provided to applicants. The absence of feedback and the perceived "us vs. them" dynamic were highlighted as issues. The need for diversity among panelists and the inclusion of individuals with various experiences was emphasized. One particular comment raised the issue of sexist comments from a panelist who expressed a bias against parents and birthing people. Applicants expressed a desire for video applications and suggested involving past recipients and young people in the review process. Coaching and clearer communication with panelists were also proposed to improve the process.

Funding Amounts.

Positive feedback was given regarding Metro Arts funding, which was seen as an opportunity for more robust programming. However, there were concerns about the minimal funding amounts and a desire for more transparency regarding the source of the funding. Some applicants expressed that the funding they received was helpful but insufficient to make a significant difference. Questions were raised about the justification and calculation of funding amounts, the impact of matching requirements, and the ranking process for funding. Challenges related to new organizations finding replacement Metro Arts funding and the potential for collective impact awards to discourage competition were also mentioned.

Reporting.

The reporting process received mixed feedback. Positive comments indicated an upward trajectory in terms of reporting requirements. Some individuals mentioned that monthly reporting kept them accountable and reflective, while suggestions were made for quarterly feedback or reaction to reports. However, negative feedback highlighted the tediousness of reporting, especially when excessive requirements and long lists of demographic data were involved. Applicants desired more tools to collect data about program participants and suggested minimizing reporting as much as possible. The need for support in reporting in meaningful ways to effectively tell their organization's story was expressed.

Support From Metro Arts.

Positive feedback was given regarding the support received from staff, including quick and thorough responses to inquiries. However, concerns were raised about not all potential grantees accessing support, and a request was made for staff to attend events organized by the applicants.

General Feedback.

The institutions historically led by White people expressed a desire for increased communication, urging Metro Arts to attend their shows and engage with their work.

They emphasized the importance of fostering better connections and maintaining open lines of communication.

The feedback also included specific recommendations for programmatic changes. Institutions proposed the establishment of funding programs specifically designed for organizations with volunteer boards to hire executive directors, as this would alleviate the strain on limited resources and enable more effective management. They suggested the development of a resource-sharing directory, where larger organizations could share their resources with smaller and emerging organizations as well as provide networking opportunities and guidance for growth and business development.

Other suggestions included the creation of a capital campaign resource list or outlets to assist organizations in securing funding for major projects. Institutions expressed a desire for Metro Arts to facilitate connections with other Metro resources, such as Parks & Recreation, to support collaborative initiatives. And there was a strong desire to have specific funding for rent/facilities costs.

In terms of supporting BIPOC artists, institutions led by white-bodied people recommended offering care grants specifically for projects addressing social justice issues, racism, and white supremacy culture. They highlighted the need for a more responsive process for small, opportunistic grants that are time-sensitive. They also sought assistance in introducing them to more BIPOC artists and fostering connections within diverse artistic communities.[7] Integration with the new Nashville music, film, and entertainment commission was suggested to promote shared awareness and collaboration. Finally, institutions expressed a desire for training and resources to help arts organizations develop diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and committees.

White Artists.

Eligibility Criteria.

In terms of eligibility criteria, one artist praised the positive experience they had participating in a learning lab, which helped them actively engage in the program. However, there were negative sentiments expressed regarding eligibility criteria, with suggestions to make it more inclusive by reducing barriers to entry and eliminating the requirement of non-profit status for many grant applications.

Application Process.

One artist appreciated the improvements made to the current version of the THRIVE app, finding it more manageable. However, others expressed dissatisfaction

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[7] RISE Research & Evaluation cannot endorse this request without first understanding whether BIPOC communities are asking for this kind of relationship and what conditions will be present. We are well aware of and want to guard against harm replication, including assimilating creative intellectual property, maintaining the racial disparity practice of BIPOC artists occupying the lowest-wage positions within white institutions, and microaggressions that can happen when partnerships like this happen.

with the length of the application, requesting a streamlined process with greater support and clearer outcomes. There were also complaints about confusing and complicated requirements in previous applications, indicating a need for simplification and clarity.

Grantee Selection and Panel Review Process.

White-bodied artists expressed a desire for more contact during the selection phase and greater transparency throughout. One person suggested implementing an open call format, similar to auditions, to ensure fairness and inclusivity. There were no positive comments offered on this area.

Funding Amounts.

Feedback regarding funding and award amounts indicated a negative sentiment overall. There were requests to increase the floor of funding amounts to $5,000, as well as concerns about limited funding opportunities for individual artists. Suggestions were made to vary funding amounts based on the depth and breadth of ideas and to foster public and private collaborations to increase available funds.

Reporting.

Reporting expectations were a source of confusion and struggle for some artists, indicating a need for clearer guidelines and support in understanding the reporting process.

Support From Metro Arts.

White-bodied artists appreciated the availability of Metro Arts staff and found information sessions helpful. However, there were instances where communication was lacking, with artists reporting a lack of response to pre-application correspondence and limited support when projects encountered difficulties due to external factors. Overall, artists desired a vibrant and affirming dialogue surrounding leadership efficacy of grassroots and emerging artists, with suggestions for longer-term mentorship and collaboration opportunities to connect grant moments over time and shape artistic endeavors into a constellation of ideas.

General Feedback.

There were concerns about public perception and the neighborhood's collective understanding of arts funding and leadership. One artist desired a nuanced perspective, highlighting that arts funding should not be solely assessed based on earning potential but also emphasizing the need for qualitative understandings and mutual processes to enhance community well-being. Here is a direct quote from this person, "I'm primarily concerned with my neighborhood's collective perception of public arts and Metro Arts. I don't want my neighborhood's conclusion to be that arts funding = arts leadership. The arts have something in common with the very young, the very old, and the very sick: we cost more money than we generate. So I don't want the arts to be assessed by their

earning potential, but also don't want us to assume that funding = solution. Especially concerned that our public perception would be that enough moderate grant awards means the arts are functioning well for community well-being."

The feedback provided valuable insights into the experiences and expectations of white-bodied artists within the program. It underscored the importance of streamlining the application process, increasing funding opportunities, providing clearer guidelines and support, and fostering open and transparent communication throughout the program. Additionally, suggestions were made to enhance community engagement, establish collaborative initiatives, and shape a more comprehensive understanding of the role of arts in society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the three data sources, it is evident that there are disparities in the funding outcomes for BIPOC-led organizations in the Nashville Metro Arts community. The disparity analysis revealed that the sample size of BIPOC organizations was too small to conduct a t-test analysis, highlighting the need for greater representation and participation of BIPOC organizations in the Metro Arts funding ecosystem. The descriptive statistics showed consistently and dramatically lower funding amounts for BIPOC organizations compared to historically white institutions throughout the 10-year period. This data supports the urgent need for increased support and resources for BIPOC arts organizations in Nashville.

The organizational composition survey provided valuable insights into the lack of diversity and inclusion within the pool of arts organizations in the Nashville area funded by Metro Arts. The field survey revealed that the representation of BIPOC-led arts organizations that participated in the survey averaged 42.13%, while funding from Metro Arts to BIPOC-led arts organizations only comprised 9.43% of total funding. This means Metro Arts is disproportionately funding predominantly white institutions at a greater level. This represents a staggering disinvestment by Metro Arts in BIPOC-led arts organizations and is an urgent area in need of immediate remedy. These findings further support the need for intentional efforts by Metro Arts to change policy and practice in support of BIPOC organizations and begin the work of correcting historical injustices in the funding landscape.

And finally, the community listening sessions offered a qualitative perspective on the experiences and concerns of artists, community members, and arts organization leaders. The sessions provided a platform for individuals to share their experiences with the municipal arts funding process, including the eligibility criteria, application process, selection and review process, award amounts, and reporting requirements. The feedback from participants highlighted both positive and negative aspects of the funding

process, underscoring the importance of improving the overall equity and transparency of the system.

The summary of findings led us to make several recommendations to nurture greater equity in Nashville Metro Arts funding outcomes.

- There is a pressing need to increase the representation of BIPOC-led organizations in the funding pool as well as increase their level of funding in order to remedy historic disinvestments. Efforts should be made to actively recruit and support BIPOC-led arts organizations, ensuring a more diverse and inclusive applicant pool. Furthermore, we urge Metro Arts to consider implementing funding caps so that a redistribution pool can be easily created and the process of building up organizations that have been neglected the last 45 years can begin.
- Metro Arts and the City of Nashville need to engage in a public process to acknowledge the historical choices and their participation in systemic racism, whether intentional or unintentional.
- The municipal arts funding process should be reviewed and revised to enhance equity and transparency, including a community process that uplifts BIPOC voices to redefine arts and culture in a way that aligns with BIPOC arts organizations and communities. The feedback gathered from the community listening sessions should be carefully considered and used to inform improvements in the eligibility criteria, application process, selection and review process, award amounts, and reporting requirements. Regular evaluation and assessment of the funding process should be conducted to ensure ongoing improvement and responsiveness to the needs of the arts community, and in particular the needs of BIPOC arts organizations.
- And finally we ask the arts community of Nashville to provide public support for the current Metro Arts Staff, the Committee for Anti-Racism and Equity (CARE) and arts leaders that are taking on this important work of addressing Nashville's systemic racism in arts funding.

APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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