

# A Time of Crisis: A National Survey of Arts and Culture during COVID-19 with a Focus on Black or African American and Hispanic Voices

Eine Zeit der Krise: Eine nationale Erhebung über Kunst und Kultur während COVID-19 mit Schwerpunkt auf schwarzen oder afroamerikanischen und hispanischen Stimmen

JENNIFER BENOIT-BRYAN\*

Vice President & Co-director of Research at Slover Linett Audience Research

## *Abstracts*

The dual crises of COVID-19 and our reckoning with systemic racism in the United States have created a necessary and overdue opportunity for reflection, adaptation, and change in the cultural field. This article, which shares preliminary findings from a study of the general public with an extensive oversample of culturally active Americans, is a resource to support this important movement. Working from the view that relevance and resilience are two-way streets, the researchers set out to understand what people and communities need from their cultural organizations now and in the future, and what cultural organizations can expect from communities. An open invitation to interested arts and culture organizations resulted in unprecedented participation across the sector: more than 650 organizations distributed the survey resulting in a sample of more than 120,000 respondents. Results are shared for the overall weighted sample as well as separately for Black or African American respondents and Hispanic or Latinx respondents, who are particularly underrepresented on the lists of arts and culture organizations in the United States.

Die doppelte Krise aus Pandemie und systemischem Rassismus in den Vereinigten Staaten haben eine notwendige und überfällige Gelegenheit zur Reflexion, Anpassung und Veränderung im kulturellen Bereich eröffnet. Dieser Artikel präsentiert vorläufige Ergebnisse einer Studie über kulturell aktive Amerikaner und Amerikanerinnen. Was erwarten Individuen und Gruppen jetzt und in Zukunft von Kulturorganisationen und was erwarten die Kulturorganisationen von ihren Besucherinnen und Besuchern. Die von mehr als 650 Organisationen verteilte Umfrage führte zu einer noch nie dagewesenen Beteiligung von mehr als 120.000 Befragten im gesamten Kunst- und Kulturbereich. Die Ergebnisse werden sowohl für eine gewichtete Gesamtstichprobe als auch nach separaten Kategorien für Schwarze oder afroamerikanische Befragte sowie hispanische oder lateinamerikanische Befragte, die in den Kunst- und Kulturorganisationen in den Vereinigten Staaten besonders unterrepräsentiert sind, ausgewertet.

## *Keywords*

Audience studies / Besucherstudien, Social change / Sozialer Wandel, Arts or cultural organizations / Kunst- und Kulturorganisationen, Arts administration / Kunstverwaltung, Digitalization / Digitalisierung

\* Email: [jen@sloverlinett.com](mailto:jen@sloverlinett.com)

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

As the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent in the U.S., researchers in the nonprofit arts and culture sector heard an urgent call for data to inform planning and decision making. In response, the team at Slover Linett Audience Research, a social research firm for the cultural sector, in collaboration with other entities, designed Culture and Community in a Time of Crisis (CCTC) which quickly became one of the largest surveys of cultural attendees ever conducted. CCTC is a special edition of Culture Track, a national survey of cultural participation that was inaugurated in the wake of the 9/11 attacks by LaPlaca Cohen, a strategy and branding firm for the cultural sector. Culture Track is a widely cited resource and catalyst for conversation among cultural practitioners, leaders, and funders. Given the urgency of the COVID-19 situation, Slover Linett and LaPlaca Cohen decided to partner on a national study and release its findings as an “emergency edition” of Culture Track in order to leverage the reporting precedent and visibility of that platform

Since 1999, Slover Linett has worked with museums of all types, performing arts organizations, science communicators, public media enterprises, cultural funders, and public agencies, helping them understand their communities and participants, experiment with new strategies for relevance, and connect more deeply to more people. Slover Linett uses rigorous social-science methods—quantitative, qualitative, and ethnographic—as well as community co-creation and dialogue techniques to illuminate needs, perceptions, values, behaviors, and outcomes. This project is a collaboration with LaPlaca Cohen, a strategy and branding firm that has more than twenty-five years of experience helping cultural organizations navigate change in the sector through insights and purpose-driven strategy and marketing.

A confluence of conversations with like-minded thinkers across the field and financial support from several foundations created an oppor-

1 Special thanks to Peter Linett at Slover Linett Audience Research for his vision and collaboration in shaping the study and providing helpful feedback on this manuscript; Madeline Smith at Slover Linett Audience Research for leading the survey development process and for her role in analysis; Matt Jenetopoulos and Aparna Hariprasad at Slover Linett Audience Research for research support; the advisors who provided feedback and support throughout the project, and the team at LaPlaca Cohen (Arthur Cohen, Diane Jean-Mary, Jennifer Jin, Manda Martin, and Kriti Mira Adhikari) for their partnership and collaboration on the design and meaning-making for this research.

tunity to conduct a national survey. Lead support for the study came from the Wallace Foundation and the Barr Foundation, with additional funding from Art Bridges and the Terra Foundation, as well as in-kind support from Focus Vision and Microsoft. The Wallace Foundation, which served as the first funder for this research, is a major philanthropy based in New York City that seeks to foster improvements in learning and enrichment for disadvantaged children and the vitality of the arts for everyone. The Barr Foundation, based in Boston, invests in human, natural, and creative potential, serving as thoughtful stewards and catalysts. Founded in 2018, Art Bridges creates and supports programs that expand access to American art in all regions of the U.S. The Terra Foundation for American Art is dedicated to fostering exploration, understanding, and enjoyment of the visual arts of the United States for national and international audiences.

When we began this national research and strategy collaboration with colleagues, the “crisis” on our minds was the global coronavirus pandemic. The escalating protests for racial justice that followed the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis in May, however, have demonstrated that the actual crisis in the U.S. is deeper, more historical, and unavoidably, irreducibly cultural. We set out to help the arts and culture sector both restart and rethink. This emergency, field-wide study was and is meant to support not just a return to vibrancy of the cultural sector, but also continued progress toward equity, inclusion, and wider relevance. The study has only gained in urgency as we pivot to support that progress.

This paper is an introduction to the initial findings of the first wave of quantitative survey research. While survey research can quantify cultural behaviors, needs, priorities, and perceptions, discovering the underlying whys—the emotions, experiences, meanings, and identifications that shape engagement—requires qualitative research methods. We are currently designing an in-depth qualitative phase of the study that will allow us to amplify the voices of people and communities that have been underrepresented or marginalized in arts and culture research, delve into critical topic areas in more depth, and experiment with co-creative techniques to let the “users” of culture help envision what relevance, engagement and service would ideally look like in the recovery period ahead. We’re also working to secure additional funding for a second wave of quantitative research to track any change in responses around the U.S. since the start of the crisis and in light of the racial-justice movement. The survey will be updated to reflect the current context and reality, to

build upon what we've learned in the preceding phases, and to probe more deeply into specific topic areas, such as digital engagement.

## 2. The Goals of the Study

Our initial research questions were: How can cultural organizations help their communities and audiences get through this pandemic? How can arts and culture organizations of all kinds, already facing financial challenges before the crisis, survive not only the pandemic and closures, but also the months or years of economic contraction that may follow? More ambitiously, how might they actually emerge stronger, more relevant, more connected to the needs of their communities and audiences, and therefore more sustainable? How can they use the crisis as a spark for adaptation, a moment of punctuated equilibrium in the evolution of cultural production and participation?

Cultural leaders need an ongoing, nuanced dialogue with their communities and audiences about what really matters and what comes next—not only after the pandemic and the resulting economic disruption, but also during the resurgent struggle for racial justice sparked by the murder of George Floyd. That dialogue, mediated by mixed-methods social research, will inform the urgent work of change in human resources, community collaboration and service, artistic and educational programming, strategic planning and forecasting, digital engagement, marketing, fundraising, and more.

There are currently many research studies focused on cultural institutions being conducted in the U.S. and Europe, but so far, most of those studies have chosen to take a narrow rather than a holistic view of the challenges ahead, inquiring almost exclusively into the likelihood, timing and conditions that would allow people to resume engaging with culture in the ways they had engaged before the twin crises. Most have chosen to survey only active cultural consumers, not the broader, demographically representative U.S. population, and concentrate on revenue-generating behaviors rather than what people have been going through emotionally and physically during these painful times, or what they need from culture now. Thus, from the start, we saw the need to address a wider spectrum of issues, both from the perspective of people and communities and from the perspective of the institutions.

### 3. Study Design: Sample and Survey Contents

#### 3.1 Sample

We developed a dual-sampling framework for this study because there are two groups that we felt were crucial to hear and learn from: the general public and active arts and culture attendees. In reality, these groups overlap extensively, and our approach to handling that overlap is discussed below.

For the sample of the general public, we collaborated with the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), a leading research center based at the University of Chicago. NORC maintains a panel, AmeriSpeak, that provides coverage for over 97 percent of U.S. households (YANG et al. 2018). All U.S. respondents (age 18 or older) were eligible for participation. Statistical weights for the AmeriSpeak sample were calculated using panel base sampling weights to start (the inverse of probability of selection from the NORC national frame) and were then raked to external population totals associated with age, sex, education, race/ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, and Census Division. The external population totals were obtained from the February 2020 U.S. Census Current Population Survey. In total, we collected responses from a sample of 2,027 adult American respondents through the AmeriSpeak panel between April 29 and May 13, 2020, with a weighted cumulative response rate of 6% and a margin of error of +/-2.88%. In addition to the high level of representative coverage of the NORC panel, we chose to work with the AmeriSpeak team because of their statistical expertise in weighting data, particularly with respect to combining probability and non-probability samples.

For the sample of arts and culture attendees, we invited any primarily adult-serving arts and culture organization in the United States to send the survey to a portion of its audience email lists at no cost to the organizations. In return, these organizations were promised that they would have access to their respondents' survey response data, and that those responses could be compared to the national sample. We shared this opportunity through social media and emails to our networks of clients and colleagues, and we worked with an advisory group of eighteen cultural leaders and technical advisors, as well as a range of service organizations and professional networks to spread the invitation. Service organizations that promoted the study and encouraged participation on the part of their members included the American Alliance of Museums,

the League of American Orchestras, Opera America, and the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities.

In all our communications, we emphasized that we particularly encourage small cultural organizations and African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native American (ALAANA)-focused or Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color (BIPOC)-focused organizations to participate in the study, because we suspected they would be underrepresented among these networks. We also reached out directly to over a hundred ALAANA-serving organizations with an invitation to participate in the research.

In total, 653 organizations distributed the survey to a portion of their lists. Those organizations included arts councils, craft groups, arts schools, film centers, radio stations, architecture centers, botanical gardens, historical societies, museums of all types (art, cultural, history, science, natural history, children's), zoos and aquaria, dance companies or venues, orchestras, opera companies, performing arts centers, theater companies or venues, and photography centers. They had a median budget of US \$ 5,000,000, a median staff size of 45 full-time employees, and a median audience size of 90,000 visitors or attendees per year. Museums and performing arts organizations were represented most heavily (see Table 1). Organizations from 48 states, DC, Puerto Rico, and two Canadian provinces participated in the research (149 from the Midwest, 173 from the Northeast, 194 from the South, and 133 from the West Census Region, one from Puerto Rico, and three from Canada). Approximately 4 % of participating arts and culture organizations self-identified on a brief survey of participating organizations as an ALAANA organization.

Though their voices are essential, during the time of crisis and institutional shutdown, the most precarious organizations may have been less able to participate in the survey. Indeed, we heard from a few small organizations that were interested in the study but didn't have the staff available to pull lists or send an email. This anecdotal evidence of a differential impact in participation by size and stability indicates that we may have heard from fewer voices from the most vulnerable communities and institutions during COVID-19.

Participating organizations were asked to send the survey to a sample of up to 5,000 people randomly drawn from their lists. We provided recommended survey invitation language along with an organization-specific survey link (URL). In the suggested invitation language, we asked that participants respond to the survey only once, even if they received it

Micro Arts Category	Number of participating organizations	Proportion of participating organizations
Architecture	1	<1%
Arts Councils	8	1%
Arts Schools and Instruction	1	<1%
Botanical Garden/Arboretum	44	7%
Crafts	5	1%
Dance	21	3%
Historical Society	4	1%
Motion Pictures	3	<1%
Museums - Art	164	25%
Museums - Cultural	17	3%
Museums - History	42	6%
Museums - Natural History	15	2%
Museums - Other	7	1%
Museums - Science	33	5%
Music - Chamber Music	7	1%
Music - Other	18	3%
Music - Symphony	76	12%
Opera	15	2%
Performers (not elsewhere classified)	1	<1%
Performing Arts Center	34	5%
Photography	1	<1%
Radio	1	<1%
Services	15	2%
Services and Facilities	5	1%
Theater & comedy	106	16%
Zoo or Aquarium	8	1%

Table 1: *The number and proportion of participating organizations classified by micro arts category.*

from multiple organizations. As an incentive, respondents were offered the chance to win one of twenty-five VISA gift cards each worth \$100. A website was created with answers to frequently asked questions, information about the organizations involved in the study, and the drawing

rules. The survey was hosted on the Decipher survey platform, a sophisticated online research tool operated by FocusVision, which agreed to provide the platform free of charge as an in-kind donation to the cultural sector.

The survey was distributed to more than 2.4 million people through participating organizations. In order to ensure that survey respondents wouldn't overwhelm the Decipher platform, organizations were provided a date and time window for distribution between April 29 and May 3, 2020 with backup options available on May 4-5. The list-sample survey was kept open through May 19, 2020. We received 121,730 responses, a response rate of approximately 5% (not all organizations reported to us how many survey invitations they had distributed).

Although this side of the sampling frame was meant to capture arts attendees and subscribers, museum visitors and members, and other active cultural participants, we should emphasize that not all of these respondents were highly affiliated with the organization from whose list they received the survey invitation. Such lists often include people whose emails were collected by the organization for a spectrum of reasons, including in exchange for free on-site wifi, to register for an event or program, or to purchase tickets, memberships, or subscriptions.

For our analysis, it was important to combine the two samples, the representative AmeriSpeak panel sample and the non-representative audience-list sample, into one combined dataset representative of the general U.S. population. We worked with statisticians at NORC to create a set of weights drawing from what we know of the behavior of the population-representative sample, then applied those weights to each respondent from the audience-list sample to bring the cultural oversample in line with the actual proportion of Americans with those levels and types of arts participation. These weights help counter the affinity bias we know exists on the lists of cultural organizations toward those with the highest levels of affiliation (e.g., donors or members/subscribers) to better reflect average participation in arts and culture activities.

Notably, we found that the unweighted responses from arts and culture organizations were disproportionately white, compared to the panel data which was weighted to the U.S. population (see Table 2). We don't, however, know to what extent the disproportionate white responses from arts and culture organization lists are due to the actual proportion of whites on these lists or to differential response rates by race or ethnicity. The widest gaps in representation on the lists of arts and culture organizations are for Black or African American attendees and Hispan-



ic or Latinx attendees. Given that disparity, it feels critical to share our initial analyses from these two demographic groups in particular, in the hope that a better understanding of the behavior, perceptions, preferences, and needs of underrepresented communities will inform arts and culture organizations working towards deeper relevance and more inclusive engagement. Thus, while standard professional practice is to report initial results only for the total sample, we report here on the total, as well as the results for Black or African American and Hispanic or Latinx respondents in the sample.

The combined weights were constructed using a machine-learning procedure to identify the variables that were most influential in predicting inclusion in the non-probability (i.e., audience-list) sample (MULROW et al. 2020; YANG et al. 2019). The most influential variable was past cultural attendance, but the weights also included activities during COVID-19, emotional impacts of COVID-19, past affiliation with arts and culture (e.g., donation, subscription, membership), education level, employment status, income, metro area, race and ethnicity, region, and age.

All results reported in this article use the combined sample sources weighted to be representative of the overall U.S. population. In our findings, we refer to this combined sample as the general public, or all Americans.

	Unweighted list data (n=108,641)	Weighted AmeriSpeak Panel data
Hispanic or Latinx	5%	17%
Asian or Pacific Islander	4%	3%
Black or African American	3%	13%
Native American	<1%	<1%
White or Caucasian	85%	61%
Two or more races	2%	4%
Other race	1%	1%

Table 2: *The proportion of survey respondents by Hispanic or Latinx ethnicity and race for the unweighted list distribution and weighted AmeriSpeak Panel data.*<sup>2</sup>

- In accordance with the Census, we define race as a person's self-identification with one or more social groups. Ethnicity determines whether a person is of Hispanic or LatinX respondent origin or not. For this reason, ethnicity is broken out in two categories, Hispanic or LatinX respondent and Not Hispanic or LatinX respondent. Hispanic or LatinX respondents may report as any race.

### 3.2 Questionnaire Contents

When developing the questionnaire, we were careful to formulate questions grounded in people's current context. While the cultural sector is acutely interested in understanding audiences' likely behaviors during the economic reopening and recovery period, we were wary of the validity of speculative survey questions about future behavior given the high levels of uncertainty about what lies ahead. We developed the questionnaire in collaboration with our colleagues at LaPlaca Cohen and our team of advisors, who brought a range of perspectives from research methodology, survey design, and leadership of arts and culture organizations or networks.

Where possible, we selected questions and/or response items from existing survey instruments to allow for comparisons to previous population-level data. For example, since 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), a U.S. government agency, has collaborated with the U.S. Census Bureau to measure adults' arts participation rates over various 12-month periods. Data for NEA's Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) have been collected cross-sectionally during seven periods, most recently in 2017. In addition, the National Science Foundation (another U.S. federal agency) has periodically supported modules on cultural participation in the General Social Survey (GSS), a national study conducted by NORC, most recently in 2018. For benchmarking purposes, we included some items similar to those in both the SPPA and GSS.

To ensure that respondents would feel positive and empowered as they filled out the questionnaire, we made response categories as inclusive and conversational as possible.

## 4. Preliminary Results

### 4.1 Pandemic Experience

The CCTC survey data shows that the COVID-19 crisis has taken a deep personal toll on American adults in physical, financial, and emotional ways. Critically, both the proximity to the virus and the economic effects of the pandemic have been more severe for Black or African American and Hispanic or Latinx respondents than the overall population. Almost one in five Black or African American respondents (19%) reported

	Total CCTC2020 weighted sample (n=111,344)	Black or African Americans (n=12,129)	Hispanic or Latinx (n=16,586)
The respondent, a family member, or a close friend has been sick or hospitalized due to COVID-19	12 %	19%*	15 %
Proportion with any reduction in income because of COVID-19	40 %	43 %	55%*
Proportion with no income at all due to COVID-19	11 %	15%*	18%*

\* Sub-group is significantly different from the overall weighted sample at the 95% confidence level.

Table 3: COVID-19 impacts on physical and financial health, and mobility split by key race and ethnicity groups in the CCTC 2020 data.

themselves or a close friend or family member having been sick due to COVID-19, compared to 12 % of the overall population (see Table 3).

Financial impacts have also been widespread; 40% of the overall sample had seen a change to their income, with 11 % reporting no income at the time of the survey. Income impacts were particularly high for Hispanic or Latinx respondents, with more than half (55 %) reporting a change to their income, and 18 % reporting no income at all due to COVID-19 (see Figure 1).

With respect to the emotional impacts of the pandemic, Americans were twice as likely to say they feel more bored during COVID-19 than before, and they were twice as likely to feel less connected to others (see Table 3). Boredom among respondents is also much more common during COVID-19 than prior to the pandemic with a two-fold increase. Feelings of loneliness, anger, and sadness or depression were more balanced, with about the same proportion reporting feeling more or feeling less of these emotions during COVID-19.

Given that the physical impacts of the COVID-19 illness have been higher for Black or African American respondents and the economic impacts have been higher for Hispanic or Latinx respondents, it is notable that both groups reported lower levels of negative emotions, compared to the overall sample. While 27% of the total sample felt less or much less angry (bottom 2 box, see Figure 1), 39% of Black or African American and 37% of Hispanic or Latinx respondents selected one of those responses. For worry or fear, the total sample in the bottom 2 boxes was

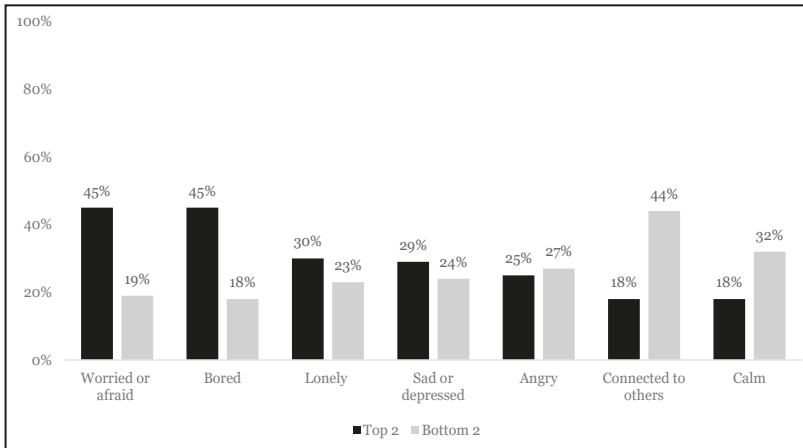


Fig. 1: For the CCTC 2020 total weighted sample ( $n=118,969$ ), do respondents feel each emotion during COVID-19 more or less than before the pandemic?<sup>3</sup>

19%, compared to 27% for Black or African American and 26% for Hispanic or Latinx respondents. Likewise, for sadness or depression, 24% of the overall sample selected a bottom 2 response whereas 35% of Black or African American and 30% of Hispanic or Latinx respondents selected one of those options. And finally, 23% of the total sample selected a bottom 2 rating for loneliness compared to 34% of Black or African American and 28% of Hispanic or Latinx respondents. This finding will be explored further in the upcoming qualitative research, but it is possible that the pain of systemic racism and other challenges Black or African American and Hispanic or Latinx respondents had already been facing may have made the pandemic feel like less of a painful discontinuity compared to many white respondents who may have been less likely to encounter trauma routinely prior to the pandemic.

#### 4.2 Connections to Arts & Culture

Turning to the topic of arts and culture, we hypothesized that the general public may believe that arts and culture organizations are less important during a crisis like COVID-19 than they were before. In fact, there was a slight increase in perceived importance. The proportion of the overall sample who said that arts and culture organizations were important to them before the pandemic was 37% (top 2 box), compared to 40%

3 Labeled response options for this 5-point scale were: “1-A lot less,” “3-About the same,” and “5-A lot more.” Top 2 boxes include respondents who selected a 4 or a 5 on the scale and bottom 2 boxes include those who selected a 1 or 2 on the scale.

(top 2 box) who said such organizations were important to them “during a crisis like COVID-19.” However, it is notable that most Americans didn’t feel that arts and culture organizations were important under either scenario. Hispanic or Latinx respondents were more likely than the overall sample to rate the importance of arts and culture organizations highly both during COVID-19 (48%) and before the pandemic (44%); there were no significant differences from the overall sample for Black or African American respondents.

It is possible that the importance of arts and culture organizations increased during the pandemic because almost all respondents (96%) saw one or more potential roles for those organizations to play during the current crisis. To explore the underlying structure of desired organizational roles, all 15 response options for this question were entered in a factor analysis (please see Appendix for more details on the factor analysis). The four emergent factors that explain the roles that Americans want arts and culture organizations to play during the pandemic are: to help them connect and process, to provide practical support, to provide emotional support, and to provide opportunities for escape.

Based on the categorization indicated by the factors, we created a new variable for each of the four dimensions and used it to classify respondents who had selected any of the associated items (see Table 4). The most universally desired role for arts and culture organizations to play (selected by 84% collectively) is broadly defined as connection and processing. This includes helping people stay connected and feel connected with those of different backgrounds, providing information to help educate children about what’s going on in the world now and in the past, and to provide support in processing emotions and with creative self-expression. The desire for arts organizations to help attendees heal, grieve, and process emotions could be supported through trauma-informed cultural mediation work (POOLE/GREEVES 2012).

Almost two-thirds of Americans are looking for emotional support and fun from arts and culture during the pandemic, in the form of hope, laughter, and/or relaxation. Over half of Americans are looking to arts and culture organizations to help them focus on something other than COVID-19 by offering a momentary distraction and escape from their everyday reality. And almost a third of Americans want arts and culture organizations to serve in more practical ways, looking ahead to recovery and/or meeting everyday challenges or financial needs. Both Hispanic or Latinx (33%) and Black or African American respondents (36% vs. 30% for full sample) were a little more likely than average to want practical support from arts and culture organizations during the pandemic (see Table 4).

Factor with proportion selecting one of the included options	Response option	Proportion of CCTC 220 overall sample
Connection and processing (84% collectively, 87% of Black or African Americans, 85% Hispanic or Latinx respondents)	Stay connected	49%
	Know what's going on, with trusted information	29%
	Heal, grieve, and process our emotions	27%
	Bring people of different backgrounds together	34%
	Educate children while schools are closed	47%
	Express ourselves creatively	28%
	Reflect back on history or connect the past to the present	23%
	Take collective action	14%
Emotional support and fun (64% collectively, 66% of Black or African Americans, 63% of Hispanic or Latinx respondents)	Laugh and relax	53%
	Have hope	41%
Escape (58% collectively, 62% of Black or African Americans, 58% of Hispanic or Latinx respondents)	Offer distraction and escape during the crisis	46%
	Think or talk about important things other than COVID-19	36%
Practical support (30% collectively, 36% of Black or African Americans, 33% of Hispanic or Latinx respondents)	Look ahead and plan for recovery	41%
	Deal with financial and economic problems	21%
	Meet our practical, everyday challenges	18%

Table 4: Factor groupings for the role arts and culture organizations should play during a crisis like COVID-19 with response options by proportion of the overall sample. (n=116,482)

Even though most Americans saw numerous potential roles for arts and culture organizations to fill for them and their communities, only about a third (34% top 2 box) agreed that they'd seen or heard about arts or culture organizations in their area helping their community in a specific way during the crisis. The proportions were similar for Black or African American and Hispanic or Latinx respondents—both at 36%.

There's strong evidence that during COVID-19 there has been a surge of creative pursuits—over three-quarters of Americans shared that they'd done something creative during the pandemic. When designing the survey, a number of response options parallel to the 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) were included. While the CCTC data, looking at a much tighter timeframe, isn't directly comparable to the 2017 SPPA data, the proportion of Americans engaged in most of these creative pursuits was still higher. It is possible that a drop in the cost of artmaking materials, equipment, or classes has contributed to the observed rise in arts participation. The two exceptions to this growth were dancing and filmmaking, pursuits that may depend more upon interpersonal contact.

Black or African American respondents were more likely to report participation in dance or design compared to the overall sample. Hispanic or Latinx respondents reported higher rates of participation for those two dimensions as well, and also on painting, drawing, sculpting, or printmaking, photography or photo editing, and film and videomaking (see Table 5).

The aspects of cultural experiences that audiences are missing most during COVID-19 are the fun and decompression that in-person arts and culture once provided (see Table 6). Quality time with family or friends was at the top of the list (66%), followed closely by having fun (53%), and relaxing or feeling less stressed (39%). Interestingly, experiencing art, performances, or performers in person was fairly far down this list at 29% (although 47% of respondents with a membership or a subscription to an arts or culture organization missed this). The qualities people missed from in-person arts and culture experiences were fairly consistent across the sample, although Black or African American respondents were more likely to miss the relaxation and stress relief of arts and culture (48% vs. 39% overall); Hispanic or Latinx respondents were more likely to miss feeling transported to another place (25% vs. 19% overall); and both Black or African American and Hispanic or Latinx respondents were more likely to miss the celebration of one's own cultural heritage that arts and culture provided (13% each vs. 6% overall).

	SPPA 2017 data (n=6,849)	CCTC 2020 overall sample (n=118,444)	CCTC 2020 Black or African Americans (n=13,183)	CCTC 2020 Hispanic or Latinx respondents (n=17,886)
Cooking a new recipe or baking something	NA	62%	60%	59%
Making something by hand (quilting, pottery, woodwork, ceramics, knitting, metalwork, etc.)	21%	27%	20%	32%
Painting, drawing, sculpting, printmaking, etc.	14%	20%	18%	30%*
Photography or photo editing (as a creative activity, not for work or school)	16%	19%	18%	25%*
Creative writing, writing poetry, jour- naling	7%	16%	21%	20%
Dancing	23%	16%	34%*	24%*
Designing something (e.g., animation, digital art, computer graph- ics, etc.—not for work or school)	3%	9%	15%*	14%*
Filmmaking or vid- eomaking (as a cre- ative activity, not for work or school)	5%	5%	8%	10%*

\* Sub-group is significantly different from the overall weighted sample at the 95% confidence level.

Table 5: A comparison of the CCTC 2020 question “Some people are doing creative things during the pandemic. Have you done any of these things in the past 30 days?” for the overall sample, Black or African American and Hispanic or Latinx respondents to the 2017 SPPA question “In the last 12 months, did you do any [of the following]?”



	Total CCTC2020 weighted sample (n=118,691)	Black or African Americans (n=11,439)	Hispanic or Latinx (n=17,946)
Spending quality time with family or friends	65%	62%	60%*
Having fun	53%	57%	56%
Relaxing or feeling less stressed	39%	48%*	40%
Learning or experiencing something new	35%	42%	34%
Escaping the stress of the real world	32%	34%	34%
Experiencing artworks, performances, or specific performers in person	29%	23%	28%
Broadening my perspective	20%	16%	21%
Feeling transported to another place or time	19%	18%	25%*
Feeling creative or creatively inspired	15%	17%	19%
Celebrating my cultural heritage	6%	13%*	13%*
Other	5%	4%	4%
None of these	5%	6%	6%

\* Sub-group is significantly different from the overall weighted sample at the 95% confidence level

Table 6: *The qualities that respondents miss most about in-person arts and culture activities for the overall CCTC 2020 sample, Black or African American respondents, and Hispanic or Latinx respondents.*

## 5. Digital engagement

CCTC survey responses suggest that digital cultural activities have been serving primarily as an audience building and/or retention tool rather than a revenue stream for organizations. Most Americans (76% overall, 72% of Black or African American respondents, and 77% of Hispanic or Latinx respondents) were aware of specific digital content available through arts and culture organizations during COVID-19. And more than half of respondents (53% overall, 53% Black or African American respondents, and 55% of Hispanic or Latinx respondents) reported ac-

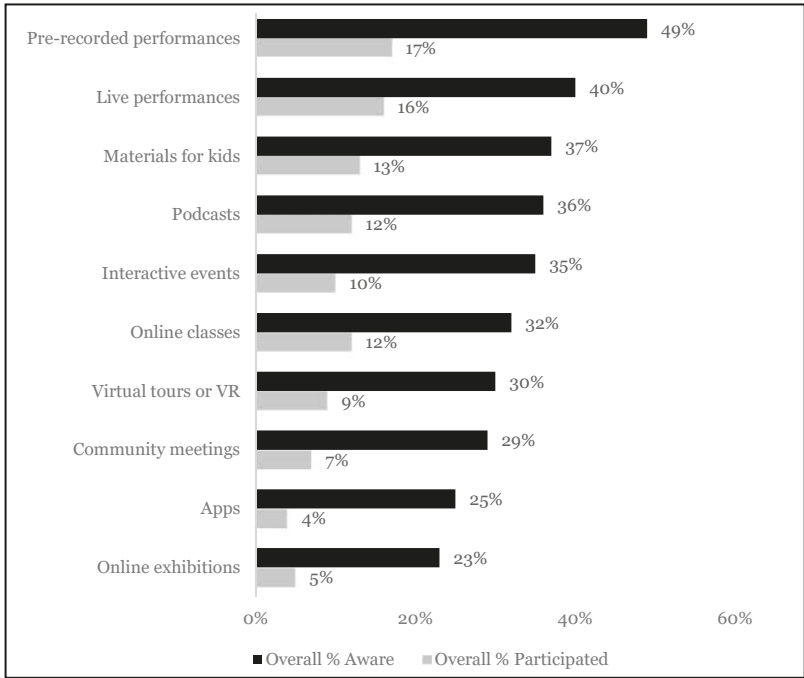


Fig. 2: CCTC 2020 awareness of online cultural activities (n=118,133) and use of online cultural activities within the past 30 days (n= 1,018-19,534)

tual use of or participation in a digital activity in the arts or culture category during the pandemic. Most of those were free rather than fee-based activities or content. Of those who had used digital content from arts and culture organizations, just 13 % of the overall sample, 9 % of Black or African American respondents, and 14 % of Hispanic or Latinx respondents, reported having paid for one or more digital experiences.

Diving into awareness of individual types of digital cultural activities, respondents were most aware of live-stream (40 %) and pre-recorded performances (34 %), online classes (37 %), and online materials for kids (35 %). Black or African American respondents were much more likely to be aware of online materials for kids (58 % vs. 35 % overall), more likely to be aware of online classes (51 % vs. 37 % overall), and more likely to be aware of apps (42 % vs. 25 % overall). Hispanic or Latinx respondents showed fewer differences in awareness compared to the overall, but they were slightly more likely to be aware of apps (35 %) than the general public (see Figure 2).

	Total CCTC 2020 sample – Qualities receiving in digital experiences (n=22,058)	Total CCTC 2020 sample – Qualities missing from in-person experiences (n=118,691)
Quality time with family or friends	27%	65%
Fun	54%	53%
Relaxation or stress relief	52%	39%
Learning or experiencing something new	47%	35%
Escaping the stress of the real world	38%	32%
Experiencing artworks, performances, or specific performers in person	33%	29%
Broadening my perspective	21%	20%
Feeling transported to another place or time	22%	19%
Feeling creative or creatively inspired	27%	15%
Celebrating my cultural heritage	4%	6%
Other	2%	5%
None of these	2%	5%

Table 7: A comparison for the overall CCTC 2020 sample of the qualities respondents report receiving through digital arts and culture experiences compared to those they miss most from in-person experiences.

In terms of use or participation, pre-recorded and live-stream performances were again at the top of the list at 17% and 16% overall, respectively, followed closely by online materials for kids (13%) and online classes or podcasts at (12% each). Black or African American respondents were also more likely to use online materials for kids (19% vs. 13% overall), while Hispanic or Latinx respondents were more likely to use online classes (16% vs. 12% overall).

Digital activities appear to provide critical emotional support and a sense of escape during COVID-19 (see Table 7). Over half of those who had participated in digital offerings from arts and culture organizations during COVID-19 reported having fun (54%) and/or feeling relaxed or less stressed (52%). However, the proportion who reported spending quality time with family or friends through online cultural offerings

was quite low (27%), which is problematic given that this is the quality people missed most about in-person arts and culture experiences. Black or African American respondents were more likely to have felt creative or creatively inspired (40% vs. 27% overall) and to have spent quality time with family or friends (41% vs. 27% overall) in their digital arts and culture experiences. Hispanic or Latinx respondents were also more likely to feel that digital arts and culture experiences provided quality time with family or friends (33% vs. 27% overall) and celebrated their cultural heritage (8% vs. 4% overall).

## 6 Desires for a Post-Pandemic Period

As people thought ahead to being able to go out in public again, the desire to connect with people by getting together in each other's homes (70%) was at the top of the list of what people were most excited to do in the first few weeks (see Table 8). Outdoor cultural activities like visiting a park, garden, or zoo (46%) were much higher on the list than indoor activities like attending a concert or musical performance (29%) or a play (11%), or visiting a history museum, or historic site (10%), art museum (9%), science or natural history museum (7%), or a children's museum (5% overall 15% among those caring for children at home during the pandemic).

Black or African American respondents were more likely to be excited about attending church, temple, mosque, etc. again (46% vs. 32% overall) and visiting a children's museum (10% vs. 5% overall), but less likely to select many of the other options popular with respondents overall. Black or African American respondents were also most likely to say that none of these options were things they were looking forward to doing when they can go out again (11% vs. 3% overall). Hispanic or Latinx respondents were similar to the overall weighted sample, though they were somewhat more likely to look forward to going to a park, garden, or zoo (56% vs. 46% overall) and the movies (50% vs. 37% overall, see Table 8).

There is evidence that arts and culture organizations have some control over factors that will influence audiences' decisions about resuming in-person arts and culture attendance (see Figure 3). Three of the top five factors that respondents said would influence their return decisions are under the control of organizations: increased cleaning (50%), reduced admissions to limit crowding (47%), and enforcement of masks for

	Total CCTC2020 weighted sample (n=118,171)	Black or African Americans (n=13,105)	Hispanic or Latinx (n=18,310)
Get together with friends or loved ones in our homes	70%	52%*	70%
Go out to a bar or restaurant	63%	44%*	61%
Visit a park, garden, or zoo	46%	37%*	56%*
Go to the movies	37%	36%	50%*
Go to church, temple, mosque, etc.	32%	46%*	30%
Go to a concert or musical performance	29%	20%*	29%
See a play (nonmusical or musical)	11%	8%	8%
Go to a history museum or historic site	10%	10%	10%
Go to an art museum	9%	7%	13%
Go to a science or natural history museum	7%	7%	7%
Take an art, music, or dance class	6%	9%	6%
Go to a children's museum	5%	10%*	6%
See a dance performance	4%	8%	4%
Other	9%	4%*	9%
None of the above	3%	11%*	2%

\* Sub-group is significantly different from the overall weighted sample at the 95% confidence level

Table 8: *The experiences people are most excited to do in the first few weeks they can go out again for the overall CCTC 2020 sample, Black or African American respondents, and Hispanic or Latinx respondents.*

visitors (43%). The first two may impose some additional financial burdens on these organizations. The third, enforcing mask-wearing, is the subject of debates about the role of cultural organizations, enforcement approaches, and the ability of front-line staff to serve as enforcers. External factors at the top of this list include the availability of a COVID-19 vaccine (47%) and an announcement from government or public health officials that it is safe to return (42%). Black or African American res-

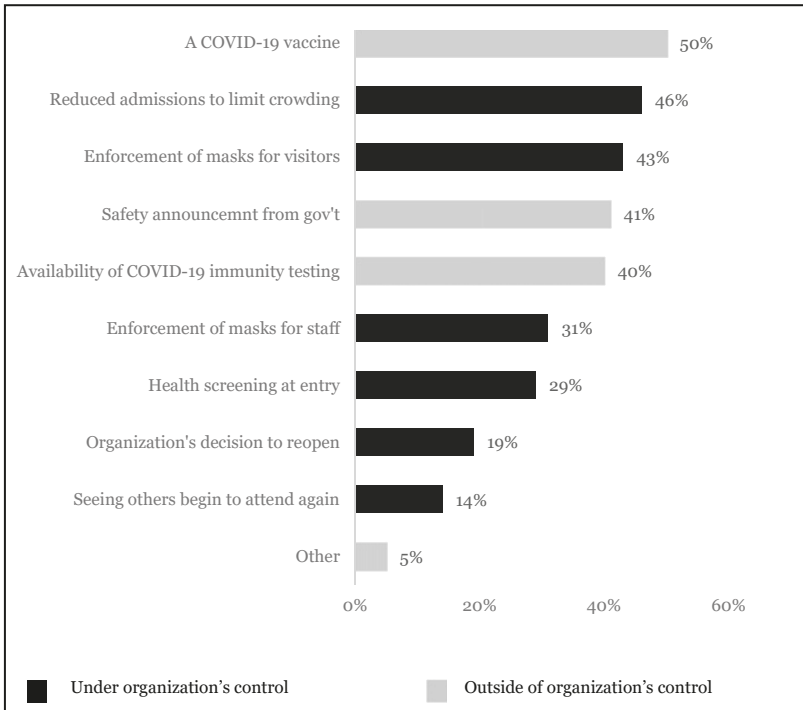


Fig. 3: For the CCTC 2020 total weighted sample (n=116,400), which factors will most influence decisions to resume attending in-person arts and culture experiences?

pondents were much more likely to select increased cleaning measures (68% vs. 54%) and seeing other people around them begin attending (19% vs. 14% overall) as influencing their decision to attend; there were no statistically significant differences between Hispanic or Latinx respondents and the overall responses for this question.

The majority of the public (72%) indicated interest in one or more changes in cultural organizations as they reopen. A factor analysis was conducted to identify patterns in how respondents selected among the 12 options for change in cultural organizations (see Appendix for more detail on the factor analysis). Three kinds of change that Americans want to see in arts & culture organizations emerged: becoming more community and people centered, offering more casual enjoyment, and providing more engaging content.

Based on the categorization indicated by the factors, we created a new variable for each of the three dimensions and used it to classify respondents who had selected any of the associated items (see Table 9).

		Total CCTC2020 weighted sample (n=116,090)	Black or African Americans (n=12,584)	Hispanic or Latinx (n=18,224)
Community and people centered (55% overall, 72% Black or African American, 66% Hispanic or Latinx respondents)	Friendlier to all kinds of people	24%	30%	27%
	Supporting local artists, organizers, etc.	24%	27%	31%*
	Treat their employees fairly and equitably	20%	25%	26%*
	Engage more young people	19%	27%*	26%*
	More focus on our local community	18%	19%	22%
	More diverse voices and faces	18%	35%*	25%*
	Working with other nonprofits in our community	15%	23%*	18%
Casual enjoyment (41% overall, 38% Black or African American, 51% Hispanic or Latinx respondents)	More fun	28%	29%	37%*
	Less formal	17%	14%	17%
	More child friendly	14%	16%	20%*
Engaging content (29% overall, 40% Black or African American, 32% Hispanic or Latinx respondents)	Stories or content that connect to my life	18%	21%	16%
	More frequent new works or exhibits	16%	17%	22%*
NA	Nothing – I wouldn't change them at all	28%	24%	18%*

\* Sub-group is significantly different from the overall weighted sample at the 95% confidence level

Table 9: *The changes that would make arts & culture organizations better for the respondent in the future for the overall CCTC 2020 sample, Black or African American respondents, and Hispanic or Latinx respondents*

The type of change in arts and cultural organizations that Americans most want is for them to become more community and people-centered, which includes features such as greater diversity; a focus on local artists, nonprofits, and community; deepening engagement with young people; treating employees fairly; and being friendlier to all kinds of people. Over half of the general public (55%), two-thirds of Hispanic or Latinx

		Unweighted American list responses from arts & culture organizations (n=115,618)	Total CCTC2020 weighted sample (n=111,344)
Highest level of education completed	Less than high school / GED	<1%	7%
	High school graduate	2%	22%
	Some college, no degree	8%	18%
	Associates degree	4%	9%
	Bachelor's degree	35%	24%
	Master's degree	34%	14%
	Professional or doctorate degree	17%	5%
Annual household income from 2019	Under \$25,000	5%	19%
	\$25,000-\$49,999	14%	24%
	\$50,000-\$99,999	32%	32%
	\$100,000-\$149,999	22%	15%
	\$150,000-\$199,999	12%	5%
	\$200,000 or more	15%	5%
Age categories	18-34	11%	29%
	35-49	20%	22%
	50-64	27%	25%
	65+	42%	24%

\* Sub-group is significantly different from the overall weighted sample at the 95% confidence level.

Table 10: *Education, income, and age for the unweighted list-based sample through arts and culture organizations and the combined panel and list sample weighted to be representative of the U.S. population.*

respondents, and almost three-quarters of Black or African American respondents (72%) wanted arts and culture organizations to become more centered on their communities and the people in them. Respondents also hoped for more casual and enjoyable experiences, including more fun, less formal, and more child-friendly experiences. This change was desired by 41% of the general public, 38% of Black or African American respondents, and 51% of Hispanic or Latinx respondents (largely driven by the desire for child friendly experiences). Finally, 29% of the general



public, 40 % of Black or African American respondents, and 32 % of Hispanic or Latinx respondents, want more engaging stories and content that feels more connected to their lives, and/or content that changes frequently.

## 6. Demographic Summary

A summary of a few main demographic variables is included below (see Table 10) with comparisons drawn between the unweighted list data from arts and culture organizations and the overall data weighted to be representative of the U.S. population. Critically, respondents from the lists of arts and culture organizations were disproportionately white and underrepresented Black or African American and Hispanic or Latinx respondents, as well as multi-racial respondents (see Table 2 above). Additional demographic data is available upon request. The unweighted set of respondents from the lists of arts and culture organizations also critically underrepresents those with low education levels (those with high school graduation as their highest level of education make up 2 % of the lists and 22 % of the general public), low annual incomes (those with incomes under \$25,000 comprise 5 % of the lists and 19 % of the general public), and young Americans (those age 18-34 make up 11 % of the unweighted lists and 29 % of the general public).

## 7. Conclusions and Discussion

The scale of this CCTC dataset provides opportunities to explore ideas that aren't typically possible with data on cultural participation, and a few key themes have emerged. First, the impacts of COVID-19 on the general public and on the audiences of arts and culture organizations are deep and likely to be long-lasting. People are hurting physically, emotionally, and financially, and they're in real need of meaningful, in-person human connection. Furthermore, the negative health and financial impacts of COVID-19 are affecting Black or African American and Hispanic or Latinx respondents at a higher rate than the overall population. The disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 add to and further exacerbate the deep injustice of systemic racism in America. As cultural institutions reflect on the ways they can serve their communities during this

crisis and beyond, values and actions centered around cultural equity and racial justice should be a top priority.

During the crisis, the public's perception of the importance of arts and culture organizations has been steady, which we believe is connected to the fact that almost all respondents see some role for arts and culture organizations to play during the crisis in helping them and their communities. Many arts and culture organizations may need to expand their mission and scope to encompass the kinds of roles that are relevant to people in a crisis, focusing on ways to build connection, provide information and support processing, to spark emotions such as hope and laughter, to offer an escape from the constant barrage of news, and to help in more practical and planful ways.

The higher interest from Black or African American and Latinx or Hispanic communities to experience cultural institutions as places to celebrate their cultural heritage is noteworthy. Cultural institutions have an opportunity to envision new ways to provide and enlarge space for such group-specific cultural celebrations both in person and online. We believe there's work to be done by arts and culture organizations to creatively and innovatively step into these kinds of roles more fully—and it is critical that they do so soon, since most Americans weren't yet seeing arts and culture organizations helping their communities during the crisis.

Almost three-quarters of respondents agree that arts and culture organizations have real work to do to become more meaningful and relevant, "better," especially for non-white Americans. There's exceptionally high demand, particularly from minority communities, for arts and culture to become more community and people centered. There's a real push for more local connection and engagement through the support of local artists, focus on the community, relationships with nonprofits in the area, engagement with young people, and equitable treatment of employees. People are also looking for a warmer sense of welcome and friendliness and to see themselves and their community truly reflected in the diversity of voices and faces at arts and culture organizations. Making these kinds of changes is a critical step to broadening relevance to and engagement with communities.

The findings about digital activity are encouraging for institutions hoping to use these offerings as a way to connect with a wide spectrum of the public. Most people were aware of the availability of these experiences, and over half of the general public report using them in the previous 30 days. Moreover, the benefits that people are receiving from digital offerings align fairly well with what they'd been missing from in-per-

son arts and culture experiences. Educational digital offerings also offer particularly salient pathways (although should not be the only or even the primary route) to connection and relevance with Black or African American families, which arts and culture organizations could continue to build upon to deepen engagement. Nevertheless, a key dimension of in-person experiences that isn't yet very reflected in digital offerings is social connection, which is a core need of the public during COVID-19.

We plan to continue to investigate multiple dimensions of digital engagement in future research including the extent to which digital offerings are engaging people who hadn't attended a cultural institution recently, how those who access digital content but don't attend may be different demographically from those who had been attending, and the relationship between the perceived value of digital content and cost of that content. There are critical decisions about the resource allocation for arts and culture organizations in the future, which can be informed by these additional analyses.

This summary represents the first of several additional layers of analysis to come, including comparisons by types of COVID-19 impacts; comparisons by date within this sample to look for stable and unstable measures; a deeper analysis by race and ethnicity; deeper exploration of the impact of generation, geography, and types and depth of relationships with arts and cultural organizations; and other analytical lenses.

## References

- FIELD, Andy (\*2009): *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. London: Sage.
- MULROW, Edward J./GANESH, Nada/PINEAU, Vicki/YANG, Michael (2020): Using Statistical Matching to Account for Coverage Bias when Combining Probability and Nonprobability Samples. – In: *Forthcoming JSM Proceedings, Survey Research Methods Section*. Alexandria, VA: American Statistical Association.
- NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS/UNITED STATES BUREAU OF THE CENSUS (2017): *U.S. Patterns of Arts Participation: A Full Report from the 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* <<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/NADAC/studies/37138> > [April 1, 2020].
- POOLE, Nancy/GREAVES, Lorraine (Eds.) (2012): *Becoming trauma informed*. Toronto: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.
- YANG, Michael/GANESH, Nada/MULROW, Edward J./PINEAU, Vicki (2018): Estimation Methods for Nonprobability Samples with a Companion Probability Sample. – In: *JSM Proceedings, Survey Research Methods Section*. Alexandria/VA: American Statistical Association, 1715-1723.
- YANG, Michael/ GANESH, Nada/MULROW, Edward J./PINEAU, Vicki (2019): Evaluating Estimation Methods for Combining Probability and Nonprobability Samples through a

Simulation Study. – In: *JSM Proceedings, Survey Research Methods Section*. Alexandria/VA: American Statistical Association, 1714-1727.

### Appendix

The results of two factor analyses with varimax rotation are included in the text of these research results; this appendix provides additional details about the modeling of these factor analyses. The first factor analysis grouped the response options for the question of what role arts and culture organizations should play during a crisis like COVID-19. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for this analysis,  $KMO = .85$ . Bartlett's test of sphericity= $215108$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicating that the correlation structure is adequate for factor analyses. The maximum likelihood factor analysis was set with a cut-off point of  $.40$  and the Kaiser's criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1 (FIELD 2009) yielded a four-factor solution as the best fit for the data, accounting for 46.39 % of the variance.

To explore the underlying structure of desired change in arts and culture organizations, 12 response options for this question were entered in a factor analysis with varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis,  $KMO = .81$ . Bartlett's test of sphericity= $143709$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicating that the correlation structure is adequate for factor analyses. The maximum likelihood factor analysis was set with a cut-off point of  $.40$  and the Kaiser's criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1 yielded a three-factor solution as the best fit for the data, accounting for 42.80 % of the variance. The table of factor loadings for either model is available upon request from the author.