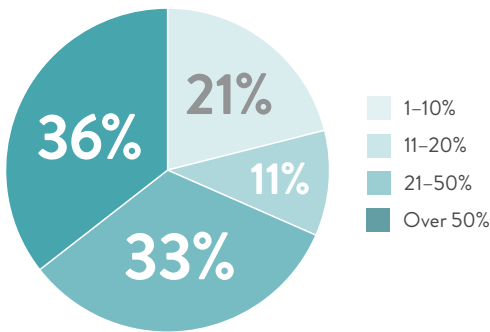# ABA Executive Benchmarking

MAY 2, 2024

The Advisory Board for the Arts regularly surveys leaders at cultural organizations — including operas, ballets, symphonies, festivals, theaters, venues, schools, advocacy organizations, and museums — about issues relevant to their industries. This online survey was fielded **April 15–24, 2024**. This is the ninety-fourth survey of the series and was designed to help leaders benchmark themselves on HR & workplace.

STAFF RETENTION & TURNOVER
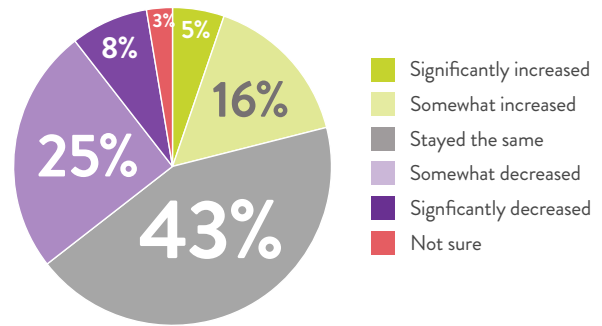
Administrative FTE's

What is your full-time equivalent administrative staff?

- 1–10%
- 11–20%
- 21–50%
- Over 50%

36%
21%
33%
11%

N=76

Turnover Rates Remain Similar to Last Year

How has your staff turnover changed from last year?

5%
16%
43%
25%
8%
3%

- Significantly increased
- Somewhat increased
- Stayed the same
- Somewhat decreased
- Significantly decreased
- Not sure

N=76

Development Has the Highest Turnover

Which departments have seen the greatest turnover rates in the last 24 months?

Department	%
Development	42%
Marketing & Communications	33%
Front of House/Visitor Services	24%
Technical/Production/Facilities	22%
Education/Community	21%
C-Suite	7%
Artistic/Curatorial	6%
Human Resources	1%
Other	21%
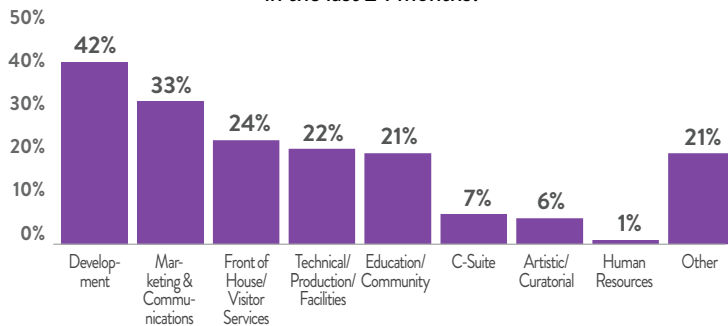
N=72

Mid-level Associates/Coordinaters Are Leaving at the Highest Rates

Which type of staff is leaving at the highest rate?

Staff type	%
Mid-level associates/coordinators	58%
Entry-level staff	23%
Senior managers	7%
Senior leadership (c-suite)	5%
Other	4%
Not sure	3%
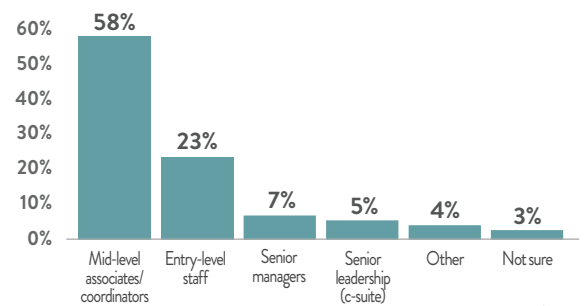
N=73

Better Compensation Elsewhere is Main Cause for Employee Departure

What are the main causes for employee departure?
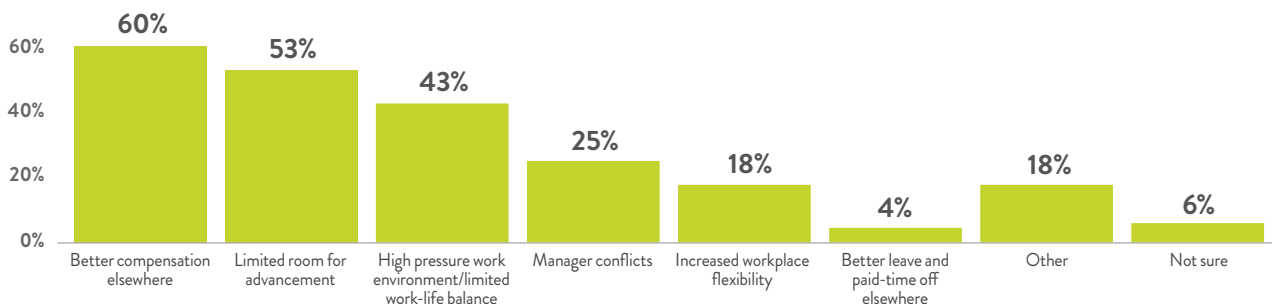
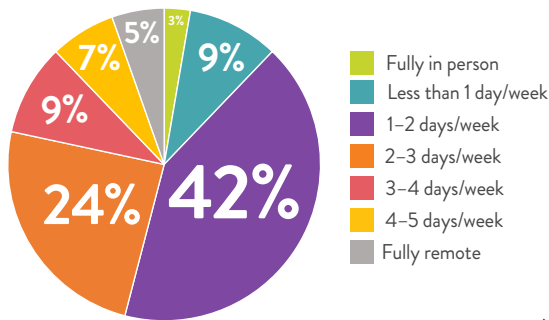| Cause	%
Better compensation elsewhere	60%
Limited room for advancement	53%
High pressure work environment/limited work-life balance	43%
Manager conflicts	25%
Increased workplace flexibility	18%
Better leave and paid-time off elsewhere	4%
Other	18%
Not sure	6%

N=68

ABA Executive Benchmarking

MAY 2, 2024

The Advisory Board for the Arts regularly surveys leaders at cultural organizations — including operas, ballets, symphonies, festivals, theaters, venues, schools, advocacy organizations, and museums — about issues relevant to their industries. This online survey was fielded **April 15–24, 2024**. This is the ninety-fourth survey of the series and was designed to help leaders benchmark themselves on HR & workplace.
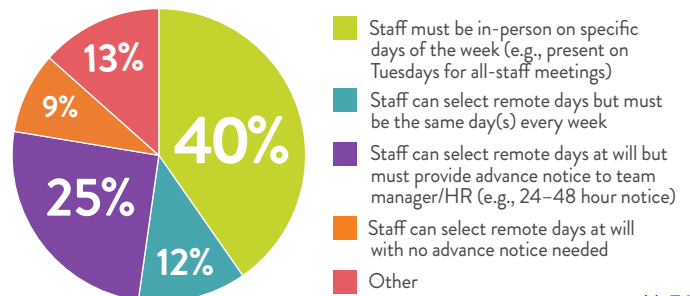
REMOTE WORKING POLICIES

Most Offer 1–3 Days Remote Work

Which describes your policy for remote work for eligible staff?

- Fully in person
- Less than 1 day/week
- 1–2 days/week
- 2–3 days/week
- 3–4 days/week
- 4–5 days/week
- Fully remote

9% / 42% / 24% / 9% / 7% / 5% / 3%

N=74

Many Require Staff to be In-Person on Specific Days

Do you have any limitations/parameters on remote working days?

- Staff must be in-person on specific days of the week (e.g., present on Tuesdays for all-staff meetings)
- Staff can select remote days but must be the same day(s) every week
- Staff can select remote days at will but must provide advance notice to team manager/HR (e.g., 24–48 hour notice)
- Staff can select remote days at will with no advance notice needed
- Other

40% / 12% / 25% / 9% / 13%

N=74

Most Don't Anticipate More In-Person Requirements

A year from now, do you envision your organization will require more in-person presence?

21% Yes
57% No
22% Not sure

N=67
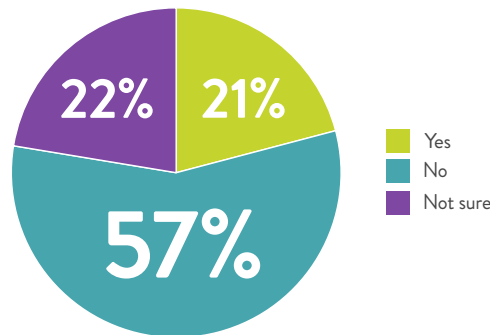
STAFF BURNOUT & MORALE

Orgs Rank Morale as Moderate

How would you rate the morale of your org's staff – 1 being very low and 10 being very high?

6.04

N=72

Tech/Production/Facillities & Education/Community Have the Lowest Morale

Which departments have the lowest morale?
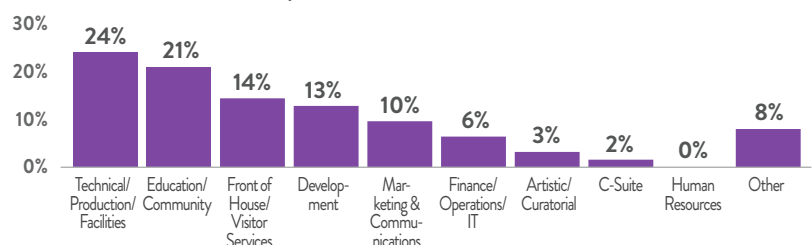
Department	%
Technical/Production/Facilities	24%
Education/Community	21%
Front of House/Visitor Services	14%
Development	13%
Marketing & Communications	10%
Finance/Operations/IT	6%
Artistic/Curatorial	3%
C-Suite	2%
Human Resources	0%
Other	8%

N=63

ADVISORY BOARD for the ARTS
Transforming Arts Organizations Worldwide

ABA Executive Benchmarking

The Advisory Board for the Arts regularly surveys leaders at cultural organizations — including operas, ballets, symphonies, festivals, theaters, venues, schools, advocacy organizations, and museums — about issues relevant to their industries. This online survey was fielded **April 15–24, 2024**. This is the ninty-fourth survey of the series and was designed to help leaders benchmark themselves on HR & workplace.

STAFF BURNOUT & MORALE

Increased Workload & Limited Visibility on Leadership Decisions Are Main Causes of Morale

What are the main causes for your staff's morale?

Category	%
Increased workload	52%
Limited visibility into leadership decisions	52%
Overall organization financial uncertainty	48%
Individual financial stress, inflation and compensation	43%
Uneven workload distribution	30%
Limited staff training and onboarding practices	22%
Staff reductions	22%
Program budget cuts	22%
Overtime expectations	17%
Limited work-place flexibility	13%
Audience attendance pressures	9%
High turn-over rates	9%
Hiring delays/ hiring challenges	9%
Other	17%
Not sure	0%

N=23

Artistic/Curatorial Have the Highest Moral

Which departments have the highest morale?

Department	%
Artistic/ Curatorial	22%
Development	14%
Education/ Community	14%
Marketing & Communications	13%
C-Suite	13%
Finance/ Operations/ IT	8%
Technical/ Production/ Facilities	6%
Front of House/ Visitor Services	3%
Human Resources	0%
Other	6%

N=63

Many Offer Additional Time Off for Overtime Hours

Do you have policies in place to compensate staff for an especially intense periods of work?

- We offer financial compensation for overtime hours — 27%
- We offer additional time off for overtime hours — 6%
- Staff can negotiate a combination of financial compensation and/or time off — 46%
- Other — 18%
- None of the above — 28%

N=67

Increased Communication & Transparency Has Been Most Helpful for Staff Wellbeing

Have any of these tactics been successful at supporting staff wellbeing & avoiding burnout at your org?

Tactic	%
Increased communication and transparency	47%
Established boundaries around work outside of traditional work hours	30%
Regular social gatherings	26%
Clear expectations around remote work and being available online	24%
Mental-health days/ wellbeing initiatives	17%
More standardized staff training and onboarding	17%
Employee appreciation offers	12%
Implemented employee engagement plans	12%
Call-free/meeting-free time blocks	9%
Employee Resources Groups	5%
Other	14%
None of the above	18%

N=66

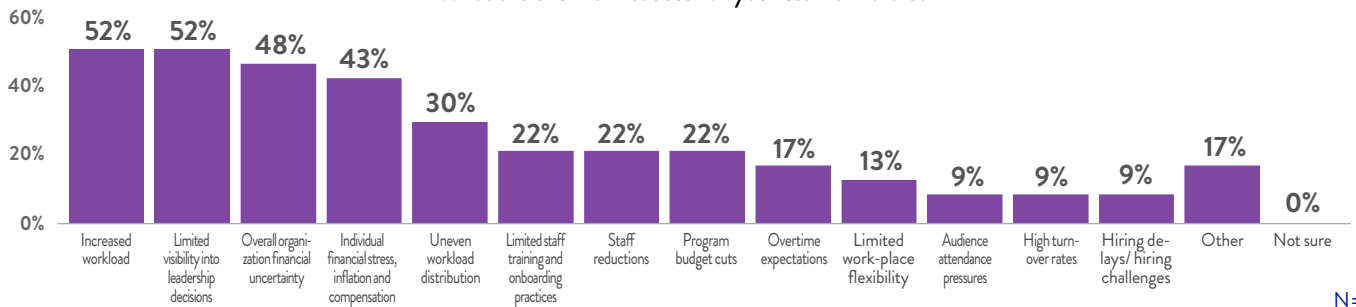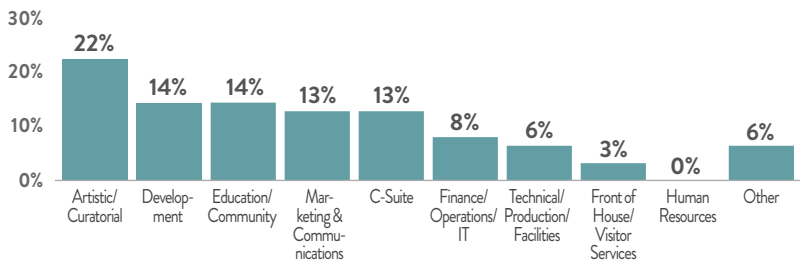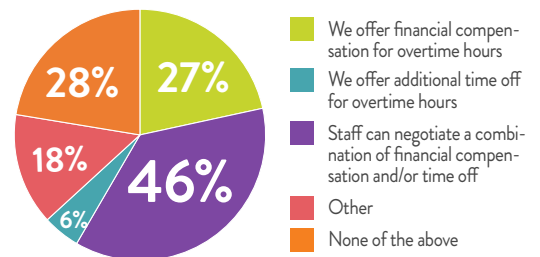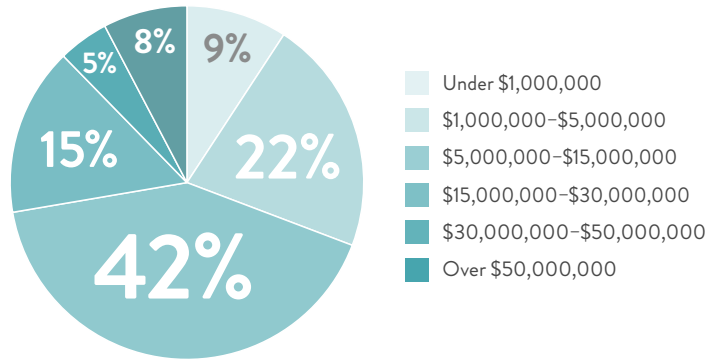# ABA Executive Benchmarking

MAY 2, 2024

The Advisory Board for the Arts regularly surveys leaders at cultural organizations — including operas, ballets, symphonies, festivals, theaters, venues, schools, advocacy organizations, and museums — about issues relevant to their industries. This online survey was fielded **April 15–24, 2024**. This is the ninty-fourth survey of the series and was designed to help leaders benchmark themselves on HR & workplace.
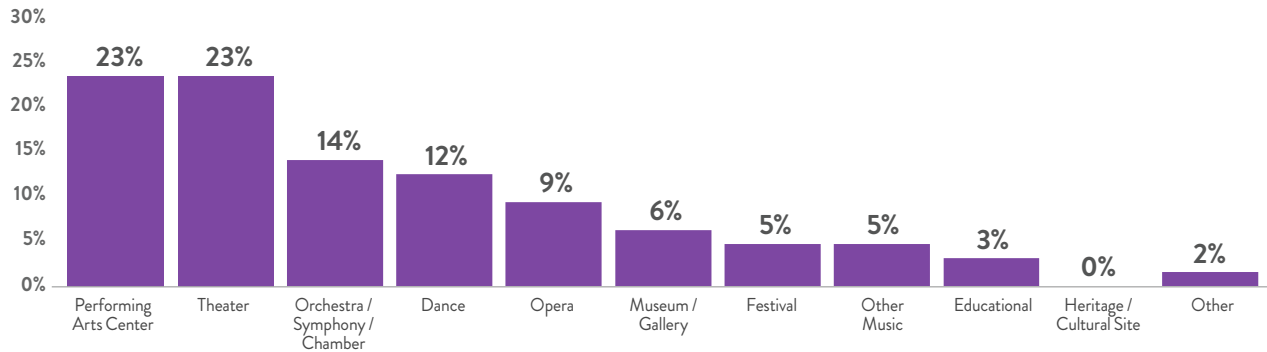
ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Operating Budget

- Under $1,000,000
- $1,000,000–$5,000,000
- $5,000,000–$15,000,000
- $15,000,000–$30,000,000
- $30,000,000–$50,000,000
- Over $50,000,000

9%, 22%, 42%, 15%, 5%, 8%

N=65

Genres

Genre	Percentage
Performing Arts Center	23%
Theater	23%
Orchestra / Symphony / Chamber	14%
Dance	12%
Opera	9%
Museum / Gallery	6%
Festival	5%
Other Music	5%
Educational	3%
Heritage / Cultural Site	0%
Other	2%

N=66