

# Arts Organization Coronavirus Impact & Response Benchmarking

AUGUST 10, 2020

The Advisory Board for the Arts surveyed leaders at arts organizations — including operas, symphonies, festivals, theaters, venues, schools, advocacy organizations, and museums — about the impacts of coronavirus on their institutions as well as other relevant topics of interest. This online survey was fielded **July 24–August 4, 2020**. This is the thirteenth survey of the series and focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I).

## DE&I PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES

### DE&I is Central to Arts Orgs...

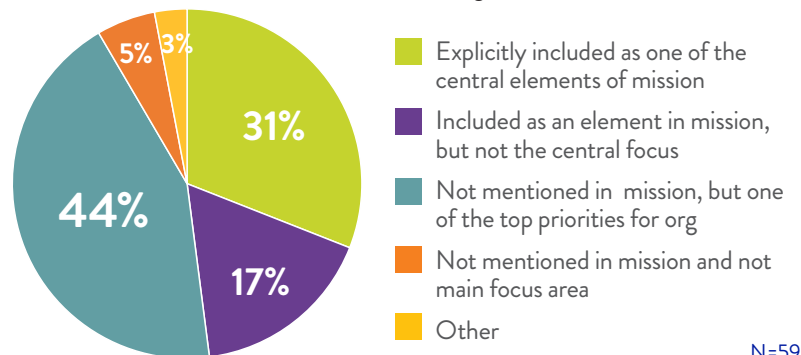
Importance of DE&I to Org Mission

**[ 8.0 ]**  
on a scale of 1–10

N=61

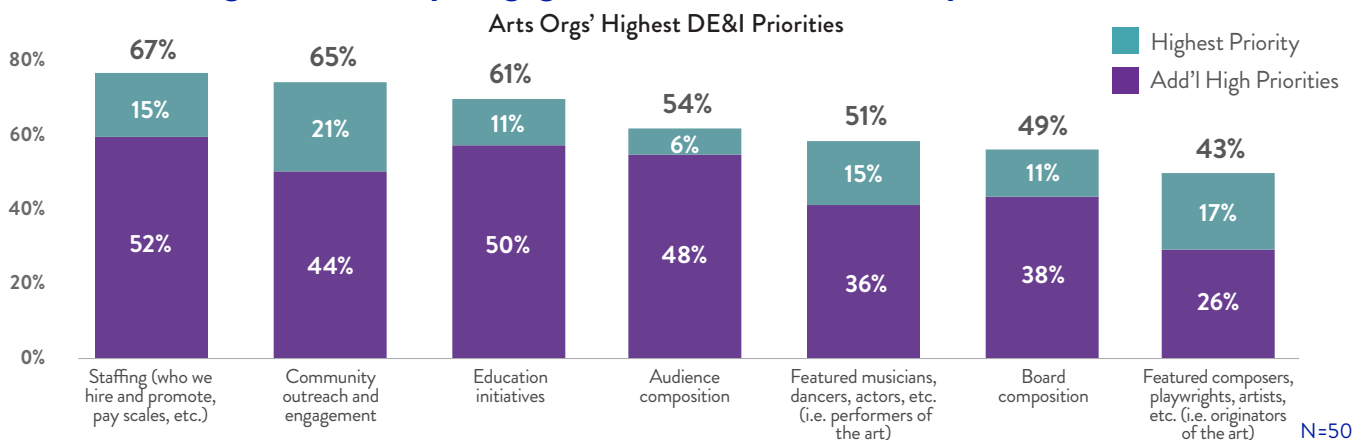
### ...But Less Than Half Explicitly Include it in Mission

Inclusion of DE&I in Org Mission



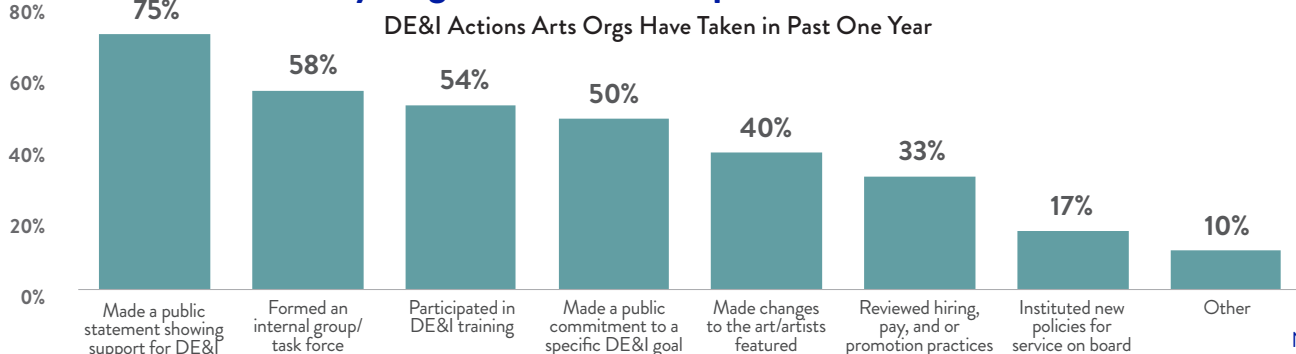
N=59

### Staffing, Community Engagement, and Education Top DE&I Priorities



N=50

### Many Orgs Have Taken Steps to Advance DE&I



N=48

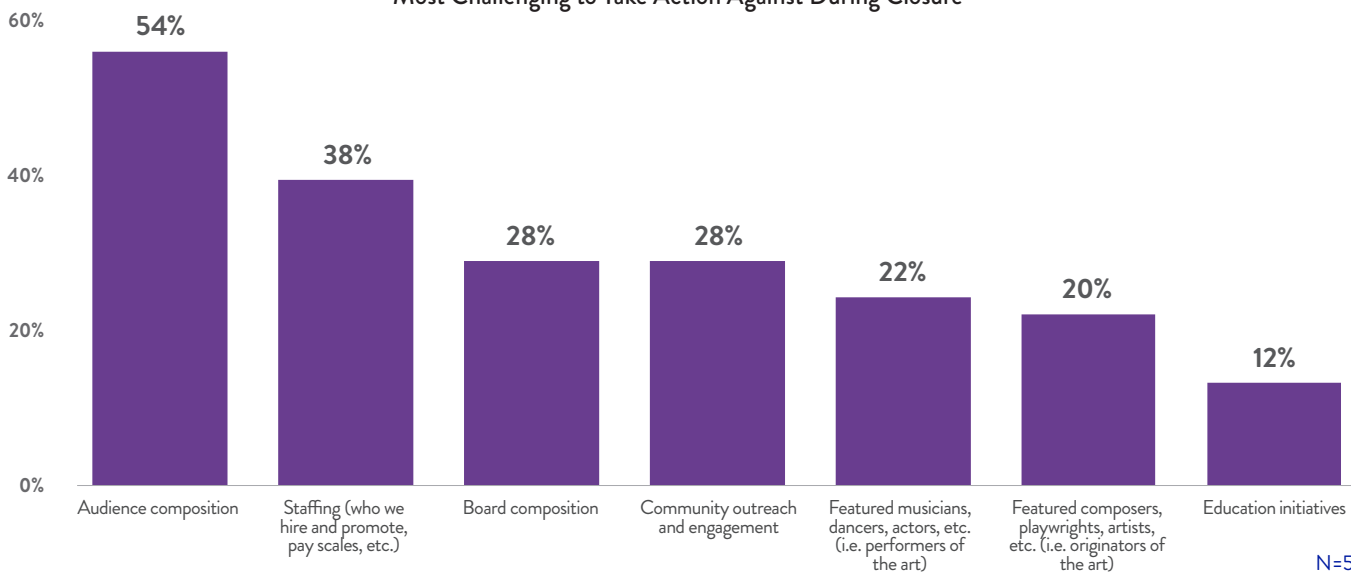
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## DE&I CHALLENGES AND METRICS

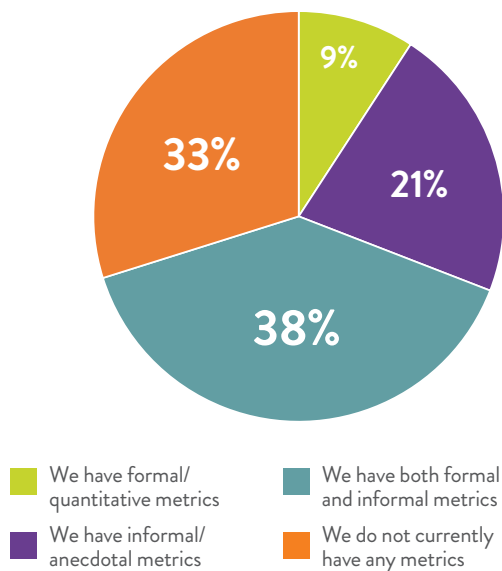
### Closures Taking a Toll on DE&I Initiatives

Most Challenging to Take Action Against During Closure



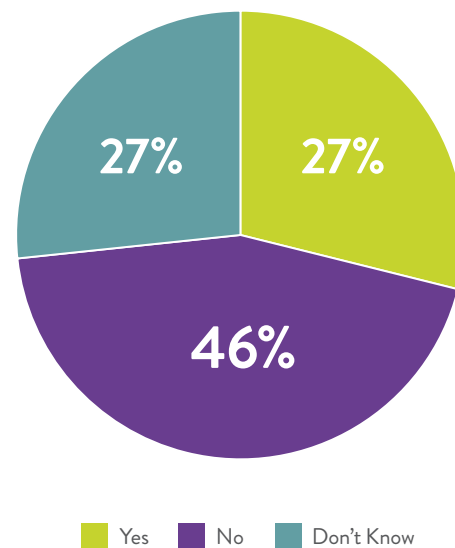
### Most Have Some DE&I Metrics

How Org Tracks Progress on DE&I



### Senior Leader Accountability Unclear

Progress Against DE&I Formal Part of Sr. Leader Evaluations



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## DE&I ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OBSTACLES

### DE&I Success Stories

*We're just starting — we've committed to addressing DEI as one of three central tenets of our new 5-year strategic plan, and have formed a working group.*

*The institution of a scholarship pool only available to Black and Latinx students.*

*We are focusing on board diversity and we have selected new members for next year who better represent our community.*

*Bussing children from Title I schools to our theaters for free public shows. We found these students were being left behind because they couldn't afford the buses. Many of these students had never been down town or to our theaters.*

*We chose to change a white centered show for a show that is by a black playwright and puts a black person in the center of the story in a positive light.*

*Our digital content initiative during the pandemic has focused on commissioning and compensating artists of color and underrepresented voices.*

*Started a new programming series two years ago that looks at an issue or theme that affects community (and primarily under served and underrepresented groups) through cross-disciplinary, arts and humanities focused, almost completely free programming.*

*In response to the social justice movements of this summer, we started a weekly Anti-Racism reading group online that has met every Friday through the summer, well-attended by a diverse group of faculty, staff, and students, and offering frank, civil, well-informed discussion of a variety of topics in the DEI area.*

*We recently secured a commitment for staff and board DEI training by a facilitator who recently led a healing circle for BIPOC groups.*

*We created a staff DEIA committee with a representative from each department. This summer that board of directors created a DEIA committee that will include board members, artists, community members, and two staff (representing the staff DEIA committee).*

### DE&I Frustrations and Challenges

*Financial incentives do not align with doing the work. Earned revenue incentivizes playing it "safe" with majority-white, big box office work. Philanthropy either doesn't care or doesn't give in large enough amounts to offset the costs.*

*Several funders have changed their giving priorities to focus on primarily-BIPOC cultures and communities, leading to the loss of several major grants. Having a European-based art form with an inequitable past means we have farther to go to reach equity and need even more support for DEI efforts.*

*Bridging the divide between staff/artists who want quick action and boards/audiences who are slower to change.*

*Creating a place for individuals that have typically seen our center as "not for them." Offering BIPOC artists and having very low attendance. Building those relationships authentically takes a lot of time.*

*The lack of BIPOC executives and lack of diversity on Boards.*

*It is challenging to learn how to talk about it without seeming to be condescending to those of color, and at the same time, how can we talk to our primarily white, liberal audience/constituency about this without offending them. The work needs to be done, and we need to have the courage to do it.*

*The fear of making a mistake. Worrying what you will do will not be enough.*

*Attracting a robust number of diverse, qualified applicants when recruiting for staff positions.*