



IDAHO COMMISSION ON THE ARTS 2024 SURVEY ANALYSIS



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY
IDAHO POLICY INSTITUTE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Idaho Commission on the Arts (Arts Idaho) conducted a statewide survey to assess the needs, opportunities, and challenges within Idaho's arts community. The survey gathered insights from artists, arts organizations, and other stakeholders, revealing key areas where additional support and resources could enhance the arts ecosystem.

KEY FINDINGS

Funding Constraints: Financial support remains a top concern, with 88% of respondents identifying funding challenges. Artists and organizations struggle with operating costs, production expenses, and access to individual grants.

Venue Accessibility: There is a pressing need for affordable, multi-use venues, particularly midsize spaces that can accommodate performances and exhibitions.

Professional Development & Networking: Many artists seek mentorship opportunities, financial training, and an artist directory to foster collaboration and professional growth.

Community Engagement & Advocacy: Respondents highlighted the importance of increased outreach to diverse communities, particularly students and older adults, and called for enhanced marketing and public engagement efforts.

Application & Grant Process: While Arts Idaho's grant programs are valued, applicants expressed concerns about excessive reporting requirements and suggested streamlining procedures.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

To strengthen the arts community, Arts Idaho can advocate for increased city and state funding, improve its digital infrastructure, and facilitate networking and mentorship opportunities. Expanding support for rural areas, schools, and underrepresented artists will further enhance Idaho's creative landscape.

Overall, the survey underscores the vital role Arts Idaho plays in supporting the arts while highlighting areas for strategic improvement to ensure a thriving, sustainable arts community across Idaho.



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INTRODUCTION

The Idaho Commission on the Arts (Arts Idaho) distributed a survey seeking feedback from individuals and organizations within the arts community who have worked with their organization in the past. The survey results yielded three data sets, of which there was information regarding needs and opportunities within the arts community as well as direction of where extra support could be directed, in addition to general feedback for Arts Idaho.

KEY THEMES

- The growth of the population in the Treasure Valley does not match the support for the arts community.
- There is a need for both accessible and affordable multi-use venues and working or practice spaces.
- Artists need more ways to showcase their work through galleries or through community events.
- Artists are in need of opportunities for professional development and mentorship opportunities.
- Artists and organizations are looking for ways to network and collaborate with one another in order to stretch resources and increase their opportunity for impact.
- There is room for improvement within the application process and website functionality.
- The grants that have been available historically have been helpful but having an option for grants for individual artists is desired.
- There is concern over sufficiently supporting arts programming and availability in schools and rural areas.
- Resources for art projects and support are scarce, prompting extra support from the State Legislature or city.
- There is a need for data collection and availability regarding the arts community in the state of Idaho which will be beneficial for arts advocacy and grant writing.



OPPORTUNITIES AND NEEDS

When going through the data set with the responses for needs and opportunities, three main themes around funding, venues, and specific programming became apparent. Out of the 437 answers found from the data set, 140 referenced funding and finances, making up 32 % of the responses. Respondents make note of the need for living wages and affordable housing for artist and organization staff in the face of the increased cost of living. They also note the need for grants and financial support from private donors for operations cost, production cost, and materials. Some respondents highlight the need for smaller organizations to be prioritized when it comes to the awarding of grants.

The second theme found within this data set referenced venues, with it being mentioned in 93 responses and making up 21% of the overall responses. Individuals from rural parts of the state note the need for multi use venues while those in the Boise area highlight the need for affordable venues that are midsize and not as big as the Morrison Center but bigger than the SPEC.

While this data set had responses which fell more under the category of general needs, there were some opportunities also highlighted. One such opportunity was for art residencies in Idaho and events where artists can showcase themselves to the community. An opportunity that was suggested for Arts Idaho and artists to use is the power of community and word of mouth in small towns for advertising art performances.

SUPPORT

Within the data provided referencing support, common themes regarding financing and funding, community engagement and support, and professional development were most prominent. Of the 472 responses in this section, 415 related to finances, representing nearly 88% of total responses. Many respondents noted that funding is a consistent challenge when creating and carrying out arts programs and events in their communities. Many referenced appreciation for grant opportunities but identified ways in which grants could be more impactful, whether through increasing amounts to match increased operating costs or offering grants for individual artists who are not part of a larger organization. Within the Support data, there were 9 specific responses that referenced the need for collecting data to quantify the impact of the arts community in Idaho. It was shared that accessibility to this data through the Arts Idaho would be beneficial for the grant application and other advocacy purposes. Despite the small amount of these responses, their specificity was remarkable and deemed important to include.

Community engagement and support was also a large theme, accounting for 170 related responses and 36% of total responses. Many responses noted that although there are many growing communities in Idaho, the support from those communities is not equal to the growth. Many highlighted extensive needs for specific communities, such as students or older adults, while acknowledging that there is ample room for improving outreach to communities, a solution believed to be an option for increasing overall community support.

Both representatives of larger organizations and individual artists spoke to the need for support through opportunities for professional development. 143 responses, roughly 30% of total responses, referenced the desire to network with other artists and organizations in addition to the idea that having an artist directory would be beneficial for building these professional relationships. Others voiced the need to have opportunities for professional development, most often revolving around mentorships, financial training, or ways to learn about building support for themselves or their organizations in a community.

FEEDBACK

The feedback portion of data yielded a couple of areas of consensus among survey respondents. First, there was feedback regarding the overall procedure of applying for and receiving funds and many people expressed thanks and appreciation for work completed by Arts Idaho.

Regarding procedural feedback, 126 responses or 44.5% of total responses, referenced some part of the procedure of applying for and receiving funding from Arts Idaho. Many noted that they received support from Arts Idaho during the application process and that the process became easier each year it was used. Others reported that the time requirements surrounding the application and reporting process were labor intensive. Some responses noted excessive reporting, some even experiencing the reporting process as a barrier and deterrent from applying for future funds. Very few noted that the funds provided through grants were not worth the hours dedicated to applications and reporting.

Overall, 84 responses expressed appreciation and gratitude for the grant opportunities through Arts Idaho and the positive impact that Arts Idaho has on artists, organizations, and communities, making up roughly 30% of total responses. Many referenced support received directly from Arts Idaho staff throughout the application process or that their artistry would not be successful without the support of the Arts Idaho.



CONCLUSION

There is extensive gratitude and appreciation for the work that the Idaho Commission on the Arts does and the radiating impact of that work across our state in various communities with different organizations and artists. There is also recognition that all of the support cannot come from the Arts Idaho alone, the need for city and state support and/or funding is vital to keeping the arts community thriving amid recent population growth. The vision with increased community support includes opportunities for additional venues, shared working spaces, opportunities for arts displays and consumer purchases. Many noted opportunities for improving outreach and marketing for arts events as a means of increasing community engagement and support.

Overall, responses identified areas of improvement for the arts community in Idaho in general, most identifying the need for accessible, affordable venues in their area in addition to accessible and affordable rehearsal or work spaces. There were many responses that highlighted an opportunity for artists and organizations to network and collaborate, either through an organized directory or through opportunities for professional development. Additionally, there is a clear need to provide additional support to schools and rural areas, where funding is typically more limited. Many also recognized the need for affordable housing and healthcare as a vital piece necessary for artists to thrive outside of just funding for projects.

Areas of opportunity for Arts Idaho specifically included suggestions for updating the website, streamlining application and reporting procedures, particularly for repeat artists and organizations, and advocating to cities and the Legislature for additional streams of financial support.





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