DANCE/NYC AND PARTNERS RELEASE REPORT: STUDY INDICATES UNDERSUPPLY OF DANCE SPACE REACHES CRISIS POINT FOR CITY'S ARTISTS

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Dance/NYC and Partners Release Report: Study Indicates Undersupply of Dance Space Reaches Crisis Point for City's Artists

By Dance/NYC

New York, NY (For Release August 2, 2017) – The service organization Dance/NYC and a coalition of nine partners today announced the release of *Advancing Fiscally Sponsored Dance Artists & Projects*. The discipline-specific report follows *Advancing Fiscally Sponsored Artists and Art Projects* and is the first comprehensive assessment of the characteristics, needs, and opportunities of the vast segment of dance artists and projects that have entered into an arrangement known as a "fiscal sponsorship" with legally registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit institutions. Under this arrangement, sponsors provide financial and legal oversight and share their tax-exempt status. The sponsored dance workforce studied ranks artistic development space as its highest need, and only 8% reports being able to access all the resources necessary to fulfill its needs. The report recommends both the creation of new, permanent affordable spaces and the protection and increased use of existing spaces suitable for dance. Made possible with leadership support by The New York Community Trust and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the report is a game changer in advocacy for those making art outside of traditional nonprofit institutions and a powerful foundation for policy, fund, and resource development to move the dance field forward.



"New York owes so much to the artists who live and work here—they bring life and vibrancy to every corner of our city, and in ways large and small they help shape daily life in all fiveboroughs. But the challenges that individual artists face alongside their fellow New Yorkers are real. From widespread issues—like a need for affordable housing—to those that are unique to the creative sector—like a need for workspace and irregular income streams—we need to work together toward real solutions to make sure our neighborhoods remain a welcoming place for working artists," said NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl. "Thanks to Dance/NYC's latest report, we have a deeper understanding of the issues faced by dance artists throughout the city. Echoed in the City's recently released CreateNYC cultural plan, these recommendations for increasing access to affordable workspace, supporting better wages, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the cultural sector lay out a strategy for supporting and sustaining our city's rich dance community. We look forward to working with dance groups and artists throughout the city to keep New York the number one place dance is performed and created."

"A painstaking study of the plight of fiscally sponsored dance artists in New York, this report also presents innovative and collaborative plans to alleviate their burdens—principally the dearth of affordable rehearsal space and the absence of a living wage," offers Dr. Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, Chair, New York State Council on the Arts.

"Increasingly, artists understand that you no longer have to incorporate as a nonprofit to succeed," says Kerry McCarthy, Program Director, The New York Community Trust. "This report's recommendations will help modernize the arts sector, ensure that it responds to the needs of this growing segment of artists operating with limited infrastructure and meager budgets, and advance a more supportive and equitable environment where dance artists can afford to live and work in New York."

"The study demonstrates how dance artists are suffering the crisis of affordability that is impacting all New Yorkers," saysLane Harwell, Executive Director, Dance/NYC. "When rating areas of need, artists identify affordable artistic development space and living wages as their top priorities. The chronic undersupply of suitable affordable space appears to be reaching a crisis point, following a spate of closures and given increased competition for real estate."

Major Findings

- With at least 460 active projects, sponsored dance represents 15% of all sponsored arts activity in New York City.
- Sponsored dance projects have small annual budgets, approximately $18,400 on average.
- The sponsored dance workforce studied is working in multiple creative disciplines (with an average of 2.73 disciplines per artist) to achieve new horizons and impact.
- The majority (52-53%) of the sponsored dance artists and projects is based outside of Manhattan, especially in Brooklyn (39-40%).
- Nearly all (98%) of the sponsored dance workforce identifies as artists.
- A third (32%) of the sponsored dance workforce reports going unpaid for its labor.
- With 67% of respondents identifying as white non-Hispanic, the sponsored dance sample is less ethnically and racially homogenous than the wider sponsored arts workforce, but out of step with the makeup of the city's population, which is 33% white non-Hispanic.
- Only 17% of respondents indicates a nation of birth outside the United States, compared to 37% of the city's population.
- 10% of the sponsored dance workforce identifies as disabled, matching the percentage of New Yorkers who identify as disabled and suggesting the growing movement of disability arts may be finding a home in the fiscal sponsorship arena.
- The sponsored dance workforce skews young, with 85% of dance respondents born on or after 1965, compared to 70% of the city's population.
- 77% of the sponsored dance workforce identifies as female, significantly outpacing both the wide fiscally sponsored arts workforce and the

city's overall population, which is 52% female according to US Census data.

- The percentage of the sponsored dance workforce identifying as LGBTQ is 28%.
- The sponsored dance workforce studied ranks artistic development space as its highest need, followed by living wages, affordable presentation space, affordable healthcare, affordable living space, supplies and materials, and affordable training.
- Only a slim percentage of the sponsored dance workforce (8%) reports being able to access all the resources necessary to fulfill its needs.
- A chief hurdle for sponsored dance groups is access to funding sources, particularly to foundation and government funding programs that exclude sponsored groups despite their tax-exempt status. (While 93% of the sample receives funding from individuals, 52% receives foundation grants, and only 28% receives government income.)
- All charitable revenue sources (individual, foundation, and government) disproportionately serve sponsored dance artists who identify as white non-Hispanic and/or nondisabled.

Recommendations

The report offers four specific and practical recommendations for cultural planning to advance fiscally sponsored dance artists and projects:

- Meet space needs through both the creation of new, permanent affordable spaces and the protection and increased use of existing spaces suitable for dance, for instance, by strengthening communications environments and expanding space subsidy programs.
- Guarantee and raise wages for sponsored dance workers by tackling systemic barriers, such as funding requirements that limit administrative overhead, and by empowering employers and employees to collaborate on solutions.
- Raise the overall level and efficacy of funding for sponsored dance by, for example, refreshing existing government and foundation programs and educating individual donors.
- Expand the role of sponsored dance in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts already underway in the creative sector, including CreateNYC, the City's new cultural plan, and also develop targeted activities based on survey findings, with a focus on addressing ethnic and racial inequities and engaging New Yorkers born outside of the United States.

Importantly, the study exhorts collaboration among fiscal sponsors as a way to achieve scale and impact in the delivery of services and resources to their sponsored dance artists and projects. The process of preparing this report has already mobilized the fiscal sponsor community as a united voice, primed for action and ready for investment.

About Dance/NYC
Dance/NYC's mission is to promote and encourage the knowledge, appreciation, practice, and performance of dance in the metropolitan New York City area. It embeds core values of equity and inclusion into all aspects of its programs and operations. It works in alliance with Dance/USA, the national organization for professional dance. Dance.NYC

Partners

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Workforce demographics survey courtesy of DataArts

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