

IMPACT SURVEY

TESTIMONIES

Page updated as of August 14, 2020 2:00 p.m.

Data updated as of May 17, 2020

Dance/NYC understands the key role data including testimonies has in ensuring dance workers and companies are advocated for and that their needs are served at this time.

INDEPENDENT DANCE WORKERS

HIGHLIGHTED TESTIMONIES

"The coronavirus has shed light on how much pressure to work when sick, to take every gig, to work for exposure even at the detriment to the health and safety of the entire community. It is very hard to quantify the last hours in training and creative process on lost projects this spring, but my entire two years work on a project has enormously shifted with show cancellations." - Survey Respondent

"I am taking it day by day. I feel really overwhelmed when I think about the future as all my gigs, tours, teaching opportunities have all been canceled indefinitely. I make all of my income from dance. I have been teaching online which has been incredible to give service to dancers all over the world but there is not much financial gain from it." - Survey Respondent

"We need to pressure the city to include artists in their "reopening" plans - although I don't think its safe to reopen soon, and I worry that the arts will be last. We need long term solutions to financially support artists, and NYC needs to be an affordable place to live as an artist - and it hasn't been for decades. The city will have a great migration if they don't include us." - Survey Respondent

"I have been attempting to teach as much as possible via Zoom. It is very difficult - dancing and teaching on unsprung floors in my apartment has proved very tough on my body and has already given me a few injuries. It is also difficult mentally to try to both energize and calm kids and teens who are very scared during this Pandemic." - Survey Respondent

"I hope that coming out of this...nonprofit dance organizations consider restructuring their missions to deal with the long term sustainability of artists-- and move away from project funding. A few ideas:

1. Pay for down payments on property and provide courses to help people learn how to be property owners and buy homes (or align w local orgs that already do that)
2. Give artist money to put in IRAs
3. Fund artists to create platforms for long term sustainability (i.e.: co-housing projects, urban gardening/farming) skill sets like building, etc
4. Trust that artists will still be artists whether or not they have a sexy project and help them stabilize for the long term
5. Give an artist \$10k to build a tiny house and a group of artists \$100k or less to buy land. then they would be rent/mortgage free and be able to save money
6. Maintain a funding system that is simple and easy like these to cover grants- how amazing it was to apply for a grant that only took 10 minutes. Imagine if we could spend more of our time/energy and imaginative power on visioning new collective futures instead of doing needless admin?
7. Listen to artists "

- Survey Respondent

"If everyone is working from home then substituting is not needed and I have no source of income." - Survey Respondent

"We need to fight for a complete overhaul of our labor laws in this country to support artists, if not we will always find ourselves in these positions. The current system is unsustainable." - Survey Respondent

"The nonprofit I work for does not have the funds to continue paying us for remote work indefinitely. We don't know how much longer they can pay us." - Survey Respondent

"This crisis will shape our future as dancers for years to come. We need more public support to deal with setbacks and more alternative opportunities." - Survey Respondent

"In the past when I have attempted to apply for unemployment it failed due to having multiple employers as a freelancer. I am hesitant to apply again due to the complexity of proving employment as a freelancer." - Survey Respondent

"I have primarily worked as a performer my entire adult life. As there may be no performance opportunities in the near future, I spent the last two weeks working on an extensive application for a teaching job at a university, including a syllabus for a virtual curriculum designed for the era of social distancing. On the due date, I went to the website to upload my application only to find the posting had been removed the night before: The university has put a freeze on all hiring. So now I am re-evaluating again." - Survey Respondent

"Love is the way out of this. Not hate or stress. We don't have to do something spectacular for self approval on the internet. You are already special and people love you and want you to succeed. We will dance together soon! Take this time to recognize the healing planet and the good that has come of this and that we will return changed and strong and curious. So much art will come!" - Survey Respondent

"I don't know what I'm going to do after this is all over. Will My jobs even exist? Will I be able to get a lease if I have no income right now? What is the future of dance?" - Survey Respondent

FINANCIAL IMPACT

"I am trying my best to make this work. I would be more relieved at the moment if I was able to collect unemployment benefits, but I'm hav[ing] such difficulty getting through and completing an application. I spend several hours a day trying to get help from the Labor Department, and I have yet to have any success. I'm starting to lost hope." - Survey Respondent

[I am...] planning alternative income sources (virtual gigs), relocating closer to loved ones, canceling in-person engagements, researching unemployment benefits and relief funding." - Survey Respondent

"The board of education is not paying out. Our grants have not been distributed to artists but to businesses with overhead." - Survey Respondent

"I have always considered myself exceptionally lucky to be able to live in New York City and make a living doing what I love. However, these circumstances make it impossible not just to live, but to exist - both as an artist and as a human being." - Survey Respondent

"I listed most of my clothes and dance costumes on a new Poshmark account app. I am in constant communication with the main dance studio i work for. I am creating content for online classes that I can sell. It has not been going so well so far." - Survey Respondent

"[I am...] attempting to minimize my bills and debts along with rent, but unfortunately am still required to pay rent from my management company. I am accruing more credit card interest due to loss of income and inability to pay my bill at this time until my unemployment and additional funding resources come in." - Survey Respondent

"it is \$668 per month, plus extra bills for my prenatal checkups. With no income flowing in soon I will not be able to maintain my coverage, and I am not qualified for Medicaid." - Survey Respondent

"I am concerned with how I am going to survive after the quarantine has ended. My money will be scarce and New York City is very expensive. I need to find a place to live by august and I don't know when my company is going to hire me again or when we will be performing." - Survey Respondent

"I've been working in the dance theatre community for the past 32 years. & have very little savings. I just paid my May's rent & will have to be very thrifty for the coming months." - Survey Respondent

"I am currently healthy, which I am very grateful for. Financially though, I am very scared. I had employment starting in March that was going to take me all the way through till December 29 of this year. All of that has canceled due to the virus. I'm very very afraid about paying rent each month." - Survey Respondent

"My two roommates who are also freelance dancers applied for unemployment 1 week later than me and still haven't received anything. Their online platforms say to call for assistance but their calls don't go through. They have no idea what to do and are scared they might have to leave the city." - Survey Respondent

"I really do not want to leave New York because of this virus. If I am able to secure some financial support to get me over the hump, it would allow me to stay and still pursue a career in dance once the state begins to lessen the stay at home order." - Survey Respondent

"I do not have any money for rent nor food. If I get this help, I will use it for food and a small payment balance over my rent bills, which are increasing and accumulating since April 1st 2020." - Survey Respondent

"I need any support possible. I have \$24 in my bank account." - Survey Respondent

"I am scared." - Survey Respondent

"I am in healthy condition, I do not have extra funds to pay for monthly health insurance payments at this time. I take supplements to keep my immune system strong, but haven't been able to pay for those out of pocket." - Survey Respondent

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

"I am really scared for the future, I have lost all my future dance work due to Covid-19, I have no sources of incomes and I don't think I will be able to pay my rent, health insurance, bills and groceries much longer with no sources of income coming, that is why I am asking dance nyc for a little help to get me going through the next month." - Survey Respondent

"This situation and the uncertainty that has accompanied this crisis has made it incredibly difficult to complete my projects successfully. The steep learning curve to equip myself to teach remotely is also very complex and stressful." - Survey Respondent

"I have been self-isolating and trying to save as much money as possible so that I can plan for the future. Right now, it is getting hard trying to maintain my living situation without any form of income, so I am focusing on keeping myself healthy." - Survey Respondent

"Being unable to work to support myself in my field or predict a positive future in this field which I've trained in for so many years and mastered is scary and a daily source of anxiety." - Survey Respondent

"I just want to work and create again and make even a small salary. it is terrible to feel depressed and have no purpose when all my life dance was the purpose." - Survey Respondent

"[I need] mental health support due to anxiety." - Survey Respondent

"I thought I was handling it well, then I got overwhelmingly anxious yesterday and had terrible sleep due to anxiety dreams." - Survey Respondent

"I have not been consuming any media as a means of fostering my mental health, but being without information is inducing anxiety and dissociation of its own. Resources for practicing mental health care in this situation would be useful." - Survey Respondent

"[Friends and family are providing] mental, emotional, and material. However, as a 35-year-old, relying on your family for financial support is morally punishing." - Survey Respondent

"With all of this work lost, my bills are piling up, rent is hard to make, and I am feeling like I am slowly drowning. My parents are in their later years, living in a high risk area, and I have been paying some of their bills on top of my own." - Survey Respondent

IDENTITY CATEGORY

"I'm on the way to renew my work visa in the U.S. I got a letter from immigration about they want to reject my visa. Looks like U.S. government don't want any foreigners in the U.S. But I can't lose my jobs. I have to spend more money to do consulting with lawyers." - Survey Respondent

"It is very hard to be a foreigner living in the US now. All the funds are geared towards American citizens... It makes me feel that even though I have invested more than five years of my energy, time, resources, and work here in this country...I will always be outside or on the edge of it. Being a queer Arab person doesn't make it easier either to receive work opportunities, that are now becoming less and less anyway for everyone working in the arts in the US." - Survey Respondent

"I just lost my grandmother to Covid-19 and I also have an uncle on ventilator. My family and community have been greatly affected. I am from Corona, Queens and Jackson Heights and I seeing the financial, racial and resource disparities daily." - Survey Respondent

"I'm an immigrant, and most of the financial aid that is available out there, I'm not able to apply due to my immigration status." - Survey Respondent

"I have completely self quarantined, due to this virus, I have no work, I can't employ myself in any other field due to my visa restrictions. I am originally from India and have decided not to go home for the health of my family and the people around me. I use my social media platform diligently to spread awareness about the resources currently going around for artists and freelancers." - Survey Respondent

"The fear...of losing my working visa and not knowing if filing for unemployment will put me in trouble and not knowing how long will I stay without working and financially paying the main expenses like rent and food..." - Survey Respondent

"As a work-visa holder (artist visa O-1), non US citizen, I'm not eligible for unemployment or stimulus check, which puts me in a bad situation." - Survey Respondent

"I'm not an American citizen, and I'm now on the process of renewing my Artist Visa (O1). The process with legal fees and USCIS fees cost around \$4,000 that I have to pay by July 2020. The financial problem that the COVID-19 is causing...is not only for my monthly expenses such as rent and food, but I now I find myself in a situation that I might lose the chance of renewing my visa because I can't afford the visa fees if I'm not working." - Survey Respondent

"Since health insurance was prohibitively expensive due to my status as a "guest worker" (even though I've lived here and paid taxes for 7 years, I am ineligible for ACA subsidies), my only healthcare plan is to not get sick or hurt myself. As a "guest worker"/immigrant, I didn't receive a \$1,200 stimulus payment, and I am ineligible for unemployment." - Survey Respondent

"I am not a citizen, and here on an O1 visa, therefore I cannot apply for unemployment, even though I pay taxes. It might hurt my chances to renew the visa according to immigration lawyers." - Survey Respondent

"In the midst off this pandemic and the economic despair, I truly appreciate my work as a dance artist and feel how very necessary what I do and other artists do is at this time. It is very hard and I want to trust we are all learning how to live much more humanely with each other." - Survey Respondent

DANCE ORGANIZATIONS, GROUPS & PROJECTS

HIGHLIGHTED TESTIMONIES

"If students start demanding refunds if we can't run our summer camps due to no registrations, if our space renters can't pay us, we will not be able to pay our rent, staff, artists or bills and -- without financial help or some kind of intervention -- we will be forced to close." - Survey Respondent

"With \$15,000 in lost ticket sales, we have a major cash flow problem. The only way to fill this hole is for the Artistic Director to put forth his own money." - Survey Respondent

"We are very concerned about economic impacts shaping foundation donations in the coming year, but it is unclear yet what these impacts will be. Currently, we are safe as an organization. Our affiliated artists, who are not "artistic personnel," are experiencing economics difficulties immediately as a result of canceled programming." - Survey Respondent

FINANCIAL IMPACT

We need...

"Cash, now. Funders converting programming grants to general operating support, and letting us know that ASAP, so that we can apply those funds to staff salaries, and retain as many of our staff members as possible." - Survey Respondent

"Mental health resources for staff and constituents to deal with the stress of the pandemic coupled with the racism." - Survey Respondent

"Our dancers, in particular, are experiencing loss of other performance and rehearsal income, as well as a loss of gig-income from their supplemental jobs as bars and restaurants in NYC, are closed. We are most concerned about their livelihoods in this crisis and dipping into creative development funds to support them as much as we are able." - Survey Respondent

"The most difficult issue is lack of cash flow and difficulty encountered with no current ability to do paid live performances. Fixed costs need to be paid. So, cash, at the moment, is the most needed resource." - Survey Respondent

"We need immediate emergency relief funds to pay our independent contractors for lost wages during this pandemic. We can't afford to pay our incredible team of instructors for workshops that aren't taught. we have about 7 instructors who depend on the income for workshops they teach. In order to survive." - Survey Respondent

