

DANCE/NYC PUBLISHES SUPERSTORM SANDY RESEARCH

Sunday, September 14, 2014

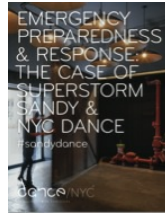
Dance/NYC Publishes Superstorm Sandy Research

By Dance/NYC

► [Share](#) | [Print](#) | [Download](#)

Today, during National Preparedness Month, Dance/NYC releases Emergency Preparedness and Response: The Case of Superstorm Sandy and NYC Dance.

[Click here for the full report.](#)



The study, prepared by Anne Coates, represents Dance/NYC's continued response to Superstorm Sandy. By sharing lessons learned in dance, we take a critical step toward a more resilient creative sector and a more resilient New York.

When Sandy struck the metropolitan area nearly two years ago, Dance/NYC assumed the role of an arts responder. It collected early testimony that made the case for the [NYC Dance Response Fund](#), established by the Mertz Gilmore Foundation and administered by Dance/NYC. The fund delivered \$200,000 to 51 dance nonprofits and sponsored artists whose stories of impact, loss, recovery, and resilience this study endeavors to tell.

The promise of the art form is uniquely present in findings on "resilience," defined broadly as the ability of an entity to adapt, recover, rebound, and/or return to form after shocks and stresses. For example, nearly two-thirds (63%) of grantees predict no material effect on future programming, and nearly one-third (31%) reports new audience and community engagement efforts in the wake of Sandy. Findings indicate approximately 80% experienced the storm as a call to action and launched into new practices to prepare for and respond to future emergencies, indicating "systemic" resilience.

In these findings, we see New York City dance not only demonstrating its own resilience but its contributions to the resilience of New Yorkers; dance and the wider creative sector are linked reciprocally with society.

To scale up delivery of this public value, Dance/NYC advocates the inclusion of arts and culture in all recovery and resilience agendas, which have been priorities for our new mayoral administration and countless others learning with us post-Sandy.

What you are about to read is also sobering. Findings underscore the scope and severity of Sandy's impact on the study sample, whose collective financial losses totaled more than \$5.8 million and cut across multiple loss types, dominated by actual (80% of grantees) and projected (70%) income losses resulting from, for example, cancelled dance performances and classes. Barely half (55%) of grantees report total financial recovery, and those with the smallest annual budgets recovered less than others --, raising questions about equity in the distribution of resources.

The study also dives into pre-Sandy financial dynamics in an effort to better understand the study sample. Using New York State Cultural Data Project profiles and calculations established by Nonprofit Finance Fund, the analysis shows the majority walking thin financial lines in service to the art form -- with very slim (sometimes negative) operating margins, little unrestricted cash, and negative unrestricted liquid net assets. These findings encourage broad thinking both about specific emergency preparedness measures and the field's overall financial health.

The value of this study, the first of its kind published by Dance/NYC, will be measured best by its application -- the dialogue, creative problem solving, and action it generates. While discipline- and geography-specific in its focus, it is also an invitation for arts and culture-wide activity and collaboration and common messaging among stakeholders. For public and institutional funders and colleagues in arts service, it is a tool to guide resource provision -- from the "establishment of emergency funding" called for by 92% of grantees to centralized communications, as may be made possible by a newly forming [CultureAID](#) (Active in Disasters). For dance and creative sector workers, it is a tool to advocate for, access, and manage resources.

For all of us, it encourages consideration and action now to prepare for future emergencies; there is work we can all be doing.

Join us in advancing a more resilient creative sector and a more resilient New York. Read the full report and weigh in online @DanceNYC #sandydance.

Onward.

Lane and the team at Dance/NYC

Lane Harwell
Executive Director
@dancenyc #sandydance

P.S. Save the date, February 22, 2015, for the Dance/NYC Symposium when we will act on research recommendations to connect the field to resources to catalyze resilience to future shocks. [Registration is open.](#)

The program is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

Dance/NYC research is supported, in part, by the City of New York, Bill de Blasio, Mayor, and the New York City Council, Melissa Mark-Viverito, Speaker, through the Department of Cultural Affairs, Tom Finkelpearl, Commissioner.

The Lambent Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation provided leadership institutional support. Dance/NYC also thanks The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for ongoing research support, and the Mertz Gilmore Foundation for the NYC Dance Response Fund.



[< back](#)

[previous listing](#) • [next listing](#)