

DANCE/NYC PUBLISHES RESEARCH REPORT: DEFINING "SMALL-BUDGET" DANCE MAKERS IN A CHANGING DANCE ECOLOGY

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By Dance/NYC

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New York, NY (For Immediate Release) - The service organization Dance/NYC is pleased to announce the release of its latest research report, [Defining "Small-Budget" Dance Makers in a Changing Dance Ecology](#), a quantitative and qualitative analysis prepared in collaboration with Carrie Blake and Nelie Jacques from [Webb Mgmt](#). With leadership support from the New York Community Trust, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the study aims to further understand the unique characteristics, inner-workings and needs of "small-budget" dance, already known to be more diverse, resourceful and nimble than the metropolitan New York City area dance field as a whole. The findings are multi-dimensional, deeply influenced by the pervasive impacts of racism and inequality and the profound impacts of the pandemic. The report calls for collective action in order to move this segment of the field from a place of surviving to a place of thriving.

"So far we've learned that "small-budget" dance identifies itself as resourceful, adaptable, entrepreneurial, strong, fluid and community focused, with unique freedom of creativity—and alternatively does not wish to be identified by the number of dollars spent in any given year," said Alejandra Duque Cifuentes, Executive Director of Dance/NYC. "These dance makers long for resources that will allow them to focus on depth of process and value (as opposed to product and volume) and provide them with knowledge, consistency, sustainability, inclusivity and equity that will allow them to thrive. These results are not surprising, but reinforce and deepen our understanding of the issues at play rooted in white supremacy."

Dance/NYC's approach throughout this study, its recommendations, and the actions it hopes will follow, responds to the urgency of the current moment and is anchored on [Dance/NYC's values of justice, equity, and inclusion](#) as a service organization and collective of dance workers. The new study is grounded in the voices of dance making organizations and or/groups with budgets between \$25,000 and \$1 million. Dance/NYC recognizes the vast breadth of this budget range and the report therefore seeks to understand the uniquenesses and disparities among the various subsets of this segment. Information was collected through a field-wide survey; conversations between participants and audiences during [Dance/NYC's Defining "Small-Budget" Dance Makers in a Changing Dance Ecology Conference](#); the convening of a project cohort who provided feedback on issues identified through preliminary research and analysis; and a volume of commissioned essays by "small-budget" dance makers, cultural workers, advocates and researchers who offered reflections and recommendations based on the research findings...

The findings suggest a variety of key opportunities for the dance community; call for investing in "small-budget" dance makers, audiences, and cultural workers; and demand expressly the need for the dance field to shift its position from a focus on building institutions to a focus on the experiences of individuals within the sector.

Most notably, data findings show that the majority of "small-budget" dance organizations, groups and projects operate on the lower end of the \$25K to \$1M budget range studied, with 78% with a budget range between \$25K and \$250K. Further, the majority of "small-budget" artistic leads (55%) do not earn a regular salary from their work in dance and just 21% have a full-time job in dance. For artistic leads, full-time employment often involves a varied combination of artistic and administrative roles and responsibilities. Highlights from the report can be found by visiting [Dance.NYC/SBDMdata2020](#).

"In New York City's vibrant and diverse dance community, smaller organizations are an especially important driver of creativity and equitable opportunities, as this research from Dance/NYC helps us to see more clearly than ever" said [Gonzalo Casallas](#), Commissioner of the [New York City Department of Cultural Affairs](#). "I especially applaud the report's examinations of traditional concepts of value. If we shift the conversation on whose skills and talents we collectively uplift and celebrate, redefining and expanding how we think of value, skill, and expertise in this context, we can help to foster a creative community that welcomes, engages, and thrives on the experiences

and skills of all of our city's many communities, and particularly those BIPOC residents whose skills and experiences have been historically under-appreciated across mediums."

"The work of Dance/NYC, the work of this study, is critical in understanding the ways that dance is made in our city: who is doing it, what models are they using, how are they paying for it, will they be here in a year, and what will it mean to our culture if they are not." said [Lucy Sexton](#), Executive Director at [New Yorkers for Culture & Arts](#). "This study, diving deep into the details and the data of small budget dance making shines a much needed light on this ecosystem. Once understood, we can fight for policies to make it sustainable, funding to make it prosper."

Recommendations

The report offers recommendations paired with specific action items various groups can take — dance makers and companies, public agencies and institutional funders, and the service sector — in order to advance "small-budget" dance:

1. Value 'Small-budget' Dance Workers As Dignified Laborers
2. Create Infrastructure that Induces Long-term Sustainability and Equity for "Small-Budget" Dance
3. Coordinate Resources for "Small-Budget" Dance Makers

Visit Dance.NYC for the full report at [Dance.NYC/SBDMdata2020](#).

Prepared by: Carrie Blake and Nelia Jacques, [Webb Mgmt](#) and in collaboration with Dance/NYC.

Funders

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#DefiningSmallBudget #ImmigrantsDanceArts #DisabilityDanceArtistry
#NewYorkersforDance

Images of the Defining "Small-Budget" Dance Makers in a Changing Dance Ecology report are available via [Google Drive](#).

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