



Dance/NYC Dance Industry Census Roundtable Discussion Series Discussion Questions

These discussion questions have been developed and informed by:

- A preliminary review of Dance Industry Census survey findings which highlight key characteristics and issues facing the dance ecosystem
- Dance/NYC's recent research and experiences in the field
- Input from the Dance Workforce Resilience Initiative Task Force

Delving into these issues will add further dimension to the research and contextualize the survey findings by adding the input, voices and lived experiences of individuals dance workers and those leading dance-related entities. These discussions will also bring forth ideas and strategies for transformation toward a sustainable and just ecosystem.

INDIVIDUAL QUESTION BANK

A. Financial Need

Context: So far, the Dance Industry Census suggests that financial need is one of the top critical issues facing the field and its workers. This top need is consistent across recent Dance/NYC research.

1. What kinds of financial strategies sustain you and your work? If you are comfortable, when answering this question, please name whether you receive income via W2, 1099 or both.
2. Data so far indicates that more than 75% of workers have some level of financial savings, but is it enough? What do you need to feel confident and secure about your financial well-being?
3. What causes you to experience financial need such as expenses, wages, life circumstances, etc.? How might it be possible to have the income you need to feel secure? Where would that income come from? What are the systems needed?

If time allows:



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4. How should “value” be defined in dance work? What is the value of *your* work relative to the wages you receive?

B. Health and Well-being

Context: The physical and mental health of our industry is paramount. Many dance workers are not getting the support, rest and care they need to support a healthy dance ecosystem.

1. Fulfillment is a term that is coming through in the research but it is multi-faceted. What would it mean to you to have a fulfilled life in dance? How would you describe it?
2. What types of care (medical, mental or other) do dance workers need in professional settings to address burnout and safety and in personal settings to ensure health and well-being? How might that care be provided?
3. Are there other issues facing the health and well-being of the dance workforce that we should consider or discuss?

If time allows:

4. What does the word “safety” mean to you?

C. Oppressions and Isms

Context: To date, this research confirms that dance workers are impacted by oppressive practices, specifically naming abusive and exploitative behavior on the part of artistic leads/choreographers, donors and other stakeholders.

Previous research revealed that dance workers are committed to dismantling structures of power inherent in the creative process and committed to establishing field-wide accountability and interdependence in response to oppression and racism.

1. What types of oppression have you experienced in dance? Are there other ways beyond those already named that oppression is apparent in the dance industry today?



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2. How is the dance ecosystem changing with regard to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility? Where is it still lagging? What would a just dance ecosystem look like to you?

If time allows:

3. Do you know of, or do you have experience with, any dance entities that have taken specific goals and actions to eliminate racist and oppressive practices in their work in dance? Briefly describe that entity and the actions they have taken.

D. Freelance Workers

Context: Freelancers navigate unique working conditions including short-term engagements, multiple simultaneous engagements, varied pay structures (including unpaid work) and high levels of uncertainty around their financial security and employment.

1. What are the biggest challenges and needs facing freelance dance workers today? How can the dance industry work collaboratively to address those challenges and needs? What would those efforts look like and what should the outcomes be?
2. Unionization is just one way to engage in collective action. What are other ways that freelance workers can be seen and receive equity in the workforce?
3. What are the benefits of a dedicated dance union vs creating conditions under which dance workers might better benefit from membership in existing unions? What are the limitations of unionization?

E. Recommendations

Context: This research aims to articulate changes that must be made to support the sustainability and health of New York City's dance ecosystem.

1. How can we move the needle on some of the issues discussed today? What are your recommendations for what the dance industry needs or how it should evolve?



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2. What role can and should Dance/NYC play in meeting these needs or supporting this evolution?

If time allows:

3. What are the characteristics of a healthy dance ecosystem?
4. What's most important to you when it comes to the future of dance in New York City?

ORGANIZED ENTITIES QUESTION BANK

A. People and Human Resources

Context: Organized entities rely on the individuals (paid and unpaid) that support its programs, services and operations.

1. What are the strategies and tools that your entity has tried and now uses to support a healthy work environment? What have you learned over time? More specifically, what types of support do you provide to people navigating various life stages (such as parenting, caregiving, health challenges, aging, etc.?)
2. How do you ensure equity and eliminate bias in hiring, management practices and within your workplace?
3. How are workers involved in decision making for your entity? Have you considered or implemented 'horizontal models' that involve staff and community in your entity's decision-making, such as worker cooperatives and participatory budgeting? If so, what was the outcome?

If time allows:

4. How has your workforce changed (in terms of size, makeup, location, skills and qualifications) in recent years? Name any potential causes and describe any impacts on your programming and operations.

B. Financials and Funding Models



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Context: Access to fundraising capacity and funding resources—specifically to capital for businesses and unrestricted or general operations funding for non-profits and fiscally-sponsored entities—is an ongoing need reflected across Dance/NYC’s research.

1. How do you define financial stability? How would you change your entity’s financial picture if you could?
2. If you were given an unexpected, sizable and unrestricted gift, how would you use it? Do you have any other funding priorities you would like to name?
3. How has your financial model or structure (income breakdown, balance of income vs expenses, financial result) changed since the pandemic? How have you changed your programming and the ways you deliver programming? And how have your workers been impacted by these changes?

C. Access and Accessibility

Context: The Dance Industry Census, as well as previous Dance/NYC efforts, have revealed broad knowledge gaps in defining and understanding accessibility in dance. To us, and for purposes of this conversation, we refer to access and accessibility in terms of accommodated disabled, aging, caregiving and other populations that experience all types of barriers and challenges to access.

1. What does the term “access” mean to your entity in terms of both its operations and any programming or services that you provide?
2. How has your approach to accessibility changed over time? What have you learned about accessibility and how have you learned it? What have you tried and what were the results?
3. What accommodations would you make if you had the resources? What do you need to make programs accessible?

D. Participation and Engagement

Context: Since the pandemic, dance entities have offered more programs and services digitally, outdoors and in non-traditional spaces. And some sources



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suggest that audiences, program participants and others are making even more last-minute decisions than they did pre-pandemic.

1. Please describe changes that have occurred in how people experience or access your entity's programs or services in the last few years.
2. How have you responded to changes in patterns of participation and engagement? Are there any tools or resources that you need to respond to these shifts?

If time allows in Participation & Engagement, move to Partnerships.

D2. Partnerships

Context: Partnerships provide mutual benefits to dance entities, including enhanced access to skills and resources.

1. Describe any partners and partnerships (both inside and outside of dance) that support your operations, sustainability and ability to advance your work. Why do these partnerships make sense for your entity? What value do they provide?
2. What are the criteria or needs you consider when designing or evaluating a partnership? What makes a partnership successful for you?

E. Recommendations

Context: This research aims to articulate changes that must be made to support the sustainability and health of dance in New York City.

1. How can we move the needle on some of the issues discussed today? What are your recommendations for what the dance industry needs or how it should evolve?
2. Who will implement these recommendations? (i.e. government, funders, artists, presenters, Dance/NYC and other service organizations, entities that make and/or present dance, dance facilities, etc.)

If time allows:

3. What are the characteristics of a healthy dance ecosystem?



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About Dance/NYC

Dance/NYC is a service organization for the dance industry in the metropolitan New York City area. Dance/NYC is committed to working towards a just, equitable, and inclusive dance ecology so that people can make dance with dignity and thrive. We do this through five-5 core programs:

- *Advocacy: we meet with government and philanthropic officials to advocate for the needs of workers and entities*
- *Action-oriented research: we do regular market research*
- *Convening: we bring people together to have conversations on their needs*
- *Technology services: our website is a hub for resources and finding work; and*
- *Grantmaking: we address inequities in the distribution of resources to the sector.*

Over the past ten years, Dance/NYC has acknowledged and promoted the contributions of dance workers and dance entities, driven policy and provided self-advocacy tools for the sector, stewarded resources where they are needed most based on its research, It continues to bridge the gap between the field and what it needs to thrive.