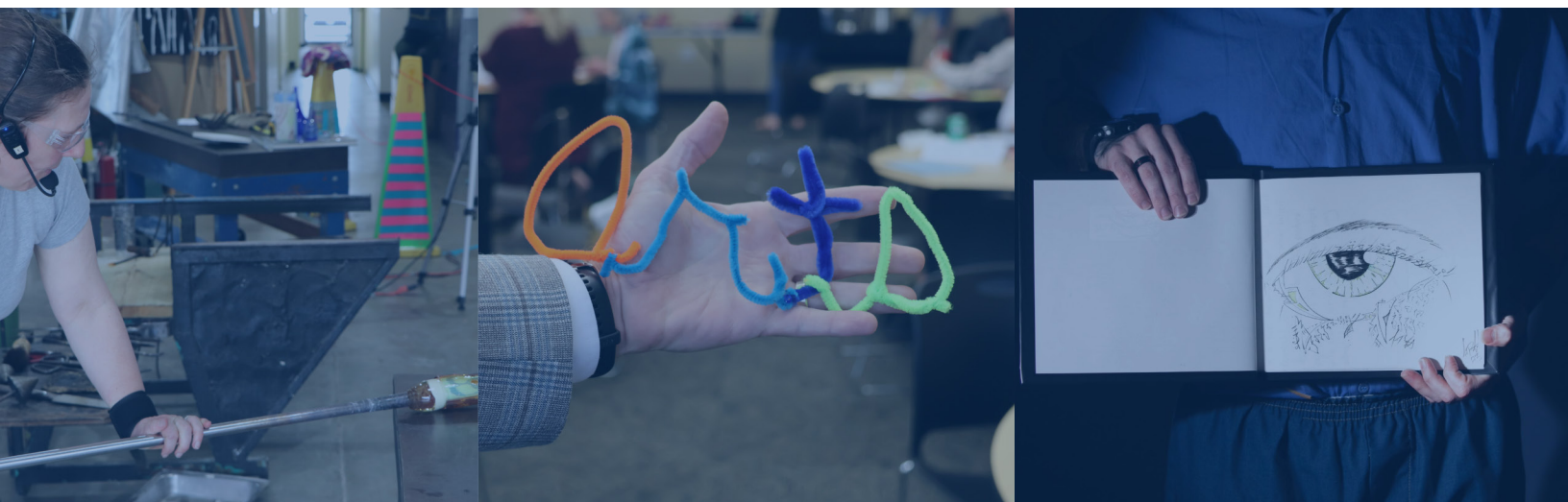


Indiana Arts Commission Artist Needs Assessment 2023-2024



**INDIANA ARTS
COMMISSION**



The statewide Artist Needs Assessment began in Fall of 2023 to directly inform future services and programs for individual artists in Indiana.

The goals were threefold:

1. To create an opportunity for local artists to network, connect, and learn from one another.
2. To inform new and refined services and programming for individual artists in Indiana.
3. To provide an open forum for artists of various backgrounds to voice opinions, concerns, experiences, and needs connected to their experience as an Indiana creative.

The assessment consisted of two core components:

1. **Listening Sessions:** Eleven in-person facilitated listening sessions across Indiana with nearly 150 artists of a variety of backgrounds, hosted by IAC Regional Arts Partners in conjunction with other artists who acted as co-facilitators and co-hosts. The Tamarack Foundation for the Arts along with a professor from West Virginia University trained the IAC staff and contracted artists in facilitation to inform the structure and content of the listening sessions. Elaine Grogan Luttrull, Ph.D. (Minerva Financial Arts), co-designed target participation numbers broken down by demographics and artistic discipline for each geographical region, in order to engage a representative sample of Indiana artists.
2. **Statewide Survey:** A subsequent public survey, based on themes that emerged from listening session feedback, was disseminated statewide.

The feedback from the listening sessions and survey was used to inform the design and planning of proposed services and programs for Indiana artists. These programs, tailored to address the specific needs shared by our artists, hold the promise of significantly enhancing their professional development and success.

Listening Sessions

From September to December 2023, the IAC conducted eleven listening sessions in every region of the state with nearly 150 participants from many different artistic, geographic, and demographic backgrounds. Each listening session was recorded and transcribed producing over 400 pages of anonymized feedback. After analyzing the feedback, five needs emerged consistently across the listening sessions:

- Networks and Connection
- Marketing Support and Education
- Financial Support and Education
- Local Investment in Local Artists
- Affordable and Accessible Space

Public Survey Results

Following evaluation of the listening sessions, the Indiana Arts Commission and consulting partners developed a survey to narrow in on some of the most important and pressing needs for creatives in Indiana. The anonymous survey sought to gain broad feedback to confirm, refine, and expand on the needs identified during the listening sessions. Questions covered geography, artistic discipline, career stage, entrepreneurial identity, familiarity with business resources, and needs identified in the listening sessions. Artists were also provided an opportunity to share comments.

The survey opened on January 22, 2024, and closed on February 16, 2024. At the conclusion of the survey period, the Indiana Arts Commission received a total of 581 responses. Respondents represent 70% of Indiana's 92 counties, and 22% of respondents live in a rural county.

General key findings include the following:

- 90% of survey respondents are generating some income from their artistic work.
- A majority of artists view themselves as entrepreneurs/small business owners but over 80% of respondents who identified as small business owners have never heard of or accessed Indiana Small Business Development Center resources.
- Financial support and education is a primary need across career stage and discipline.
- Local marketing platforms stand out as a highly desired resource.

More key findings of the survey, regarding geography and career stage, include the following:

- Local arts organizations are a key resource across geography and career stages of artists.
- Rural artists ranked networks and connection equally important to financial support and education.
- Artists at a more advanced career stage ranked networks and connections as least important and ranked local investment in local artists as more important than early-career artists.
- Emerging artists value affordable space more than any other group.

For a more complete overview of the survey responses, see Appendix 1.

High Priority Needs

The listening sessions and survey combined to define some of the primary needs of Indiana artists currently. The following four needs emerged as high priority consistently across the listening sessions and were confirmed in the survey:

- **Networks and Connection:** Feedback from artists focused heavily on the desire to build more relationships and connections with other artists, within and beyond their respective disciplines. Artists sought mentors, recurring opportunities to meet other artists, resources to find other local artists, and community hubs dedicated to creatives to spark organic networks and relationships. Networks and connections were seen as vital to career success and the ability to grow locally.
- **Marketing Support and Education:** Marketing was mentioned as a particular challenge for many artists. Specifically, social media marketing was recognized as a very time-consuming effort that seldom produced a meaningful return in engagement. Additionally, participants noted a lack of local resources, outside of social media, to advertise and champion local artists. Technical assistance and educational resources about marketing emerged as priorities.
- **Financial support and Education:** As artists described their life and career, many noted a recurring tension between creativity and financial stability that limited deeper emersion in their artistic work/product. Challenges such as inconsistency of cash flow, health insurance, cost of materials, and time for business planning are key drivers that build tension between creativity and financial stability. The time and stress of running a business as an artist often meant the need for multiple part-time positions or a full-time position to subsidize their artistic career.
- **Local investment in Local Artists:** Artists noted that local government and local organizations are critical catalysts for artists' careers and artist retention. Feedback highlighted how public art, local festivals, and local performing and exhibiting opportunities are essential resources, particularly for young artists, and lay the groundwork for local artist growth, as well as public engagement. Many artists emphasized the importance of government and organizations prioritizing support, resources, and opportunities for artists working locally.

Proposed New Programs and Timelines

In response to the needs identified by the listening sessions and statewide survey, two suites of programs were developed to support Indiana artists. Suite A is focused on community building and Suite B is focused on business development. While programming for 2024 and 2025 is concrete, other programming and timelines are subject to change as lessons taken from initial program pilots may inform future programming decisions.

Suite A - Community Building

Suite A contains three pilot programs focused on community building that will roll out between 2024-2027. The programs and their target launch dates are summarized below.

Work in Progress Exchange Labs (2025)

Work in Progress Exchange Labs is designed to provide network and connection for primarily emerging artists. Small support groups of artists will meet monthly across five areas of the state to share positive updates and challenges they are facing. The group members will be consistent from month to month, and the groups will be facilitated by a group lead who schedules meetings, sends reminders, and takes notes to be shared with participants and summarized for the IAC. Artists who participate in these small groups will also be eligible for small support grants on a rolling basis. The grant (\$250-\$1,000) could be used to complete a work in progress, purchase new equipment, or repair current equipment. This program will launch in January 2025, with the first grants being offered in spring of 2025.

Local Liaisons (2026)

The Local Liaisons program will meet the identified need of local investment in local artists and will be designed to support artists of all career stages. The goal is Local Liaisons advocate for artists in the local non-artist community through managing the Network and Community Program and the Micro-Grant opportunities (see above), relationships with [Regional Arts Partners](#), and the potential delivery of the On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator in its final iteration. The Local Liaison program would launch in early 2026, following the pilot phases of the Network and Community program and the evaluation and resurgence of the On-Ramp program.

Town Hall Meetings (2027)

To support the desire for marketing support and education, financial support and education, and local investment in local artists, IAC will institute a regular Town Hall Series to replace previously scheduled webinars. Each month, IAC would lead a Town Hall event that would be broadcast across the state. The Town Hall format would be consistent each month: (1) Announcements from IAC, (2) Opening story of success, (3) Relevant technical topic of interest, (4) Relevant non-technical creative story/local resource, (5) Next steps. This would be set-up webinar style so participants would watch the content and contribute through the chat, but not necessarily on camera. The current timeline for the Town Hall series is to launch in 2027 as a complement to the previously introduced programming.

Proposed New Programs and Timelines

Suite B - Business Development

Suite B also contains three pilot programs focused on business development that will roll out between 2024 and 2028. Those programs and their target launch dates are summarized below.

Creative Business Strategy (2025)

The Creative Business Strategy series is a six-week virtual series focused on business strategy. It is similar to the On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator, in that it covers business strategy, but different in that it is not an introduction to this type of content, but rather a workshop series that focuses on the application of strategy to existing creative businesses that are looking for new momentum. This program will meet the needs of marketing support and education, financial support and education, and local investment in local artists, and will primarily serve sustaining and scaling artists. Artists who participate in this 15-person cohort will also be eligible for a small \$1,000 honorarium to put toward their business. Applications for this program will launch in February 2025, with the program concluding in October 2025.

Get it Going Series (2026)

The six-week Get it Going Series aims to inject business strategy and compliance into budding creative businesses in Indiana. This series centers the artist in the business strategy conversation, but focuses on start-up tasks required of creative businesses. This program, designed for emerging artists, will meet the needs of marketing support and education, financial support and education, and local investment in local artists. Artists who participate in these small groups will also be eligible to receive a small \$1,500 honorarium to support startup business expenses, software subscriptions or certifications. Program launch is scheduled for mid-2026.

Ramp-Up (2027)

Ramp-Up is a plan to implement fellowships for established artists in Indiana, modeled after other fellowship programs, in which capable individual artists work for a company in a suitable role for a one-year period that best serves the business' operations but goes beyond creating artwork. The fellowship would aim for a two-fold outcome; demonstrating the innovative value artists are capable of bringing to any initiative, and the successful collaboration possible between differing industries. The program would address the needs of marketing support and education, financial support and education, and local investment in local artists. The final Ramp-Up timeline will be determined by preceding programmatic successes and learnings.

On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator

The On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator began in 2018 and has been successful in supporting creative entrepreneurs in Indiana. In 2024, the program welcomed its sixth cohort in its seven-year existence and has supported the entrepreneurial journey of over 200 artists during that time. However, based on findings from the Artist Needs Assessment, it is time to evaluate the program's successes and areas for improvement more thoroughly to ensure its continued effectiveness.

In 2021, five local cohorts took place alongside the main Central cohort with the support of the Indiana Small Business Development Corporation (ISBDC). This partnership was instrumental in expanding the reach and impact of the program. The Indiana Arts Commission is considering the recreation of this successful model through training the identified Local Liaisons program (see above), with the possibility of a Central cohort returning in the future.

However, prior to any relaunch of On-Ramp, or the re-introduction of local cohorts, the Indiana Arts Commission will evaluate the program, gather feedback, and plan for how to best retool On-Ramp to serve Indiana artists. In fall of 2024, a Request for Qualifications will be issued for potential evaluators, to be followed by an evaluation in 2025. In 2026 the liaisons will be trained on how to facilitate On-Ramp. On-Ramp will return in 2027 for the last central cohort by IAC and the pilot local sessions by the liaisons.

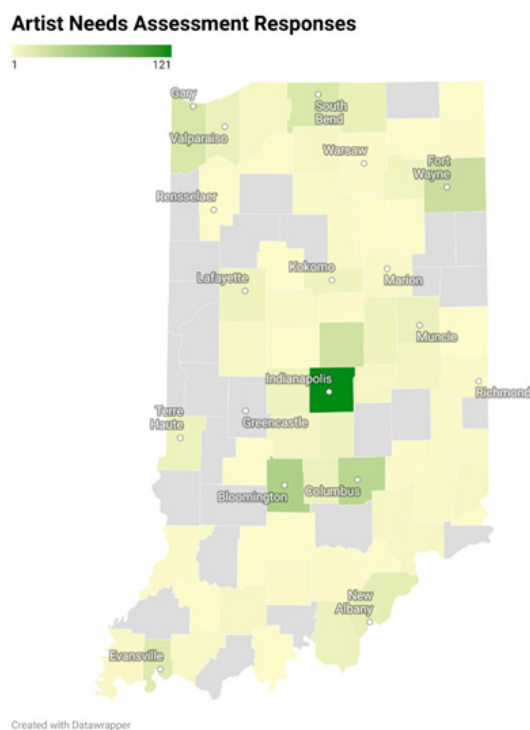


Appendices

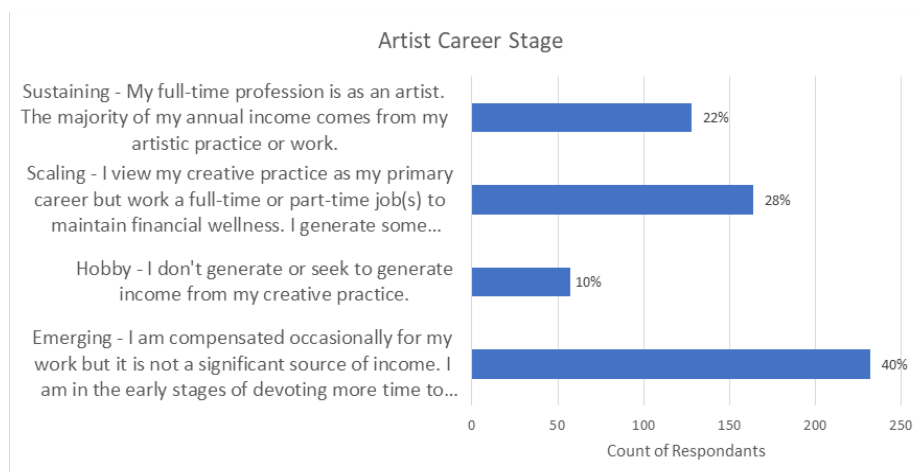
Appendix A: Survey Responses

The following graphs demonstrate the responses the survey that opened on January 22, 2024, and closed to responses on February 16, 2024. At the conclusion of the survey period, the Indiana Arts Commission received a total of 581 responses. The survey was crafted in response to the themes and needs that emerged during the focus groups.

Heat Map of Responses by County Location

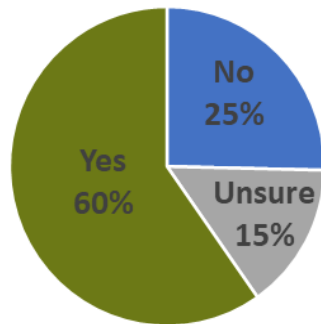


Responses by Career Stage

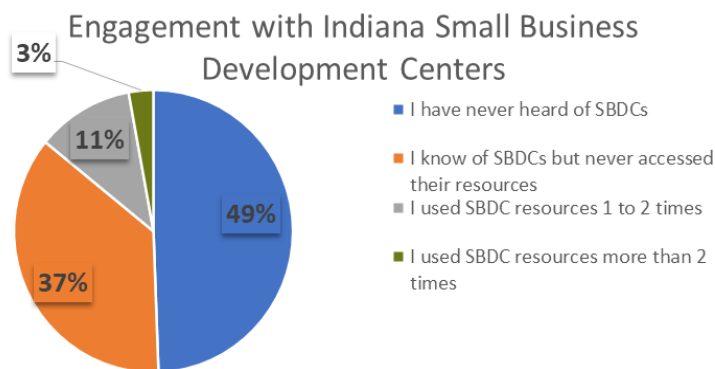


Artist Entrepreneurial Status

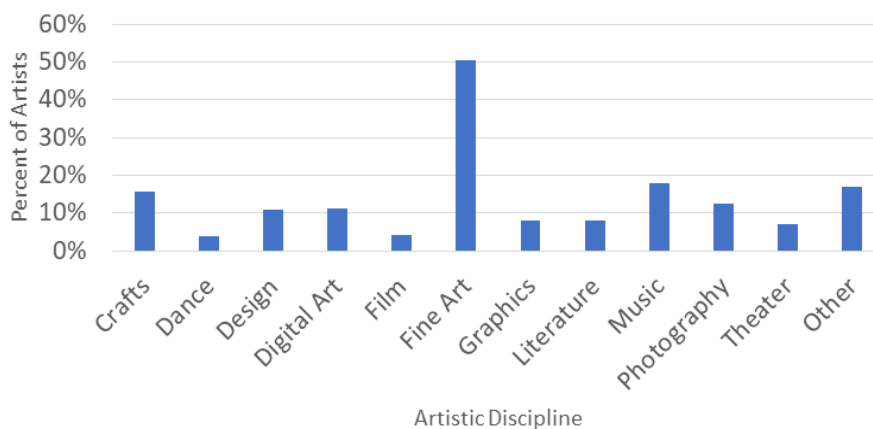
Do you consider yourself an entrepreneur/small business owner?



Artist Engagement with Indiana Small Business Development Centers



Responses by Artistic Discipline



Artist Engagement with Community

The survey asked what type of local organizations and groups artists are connected with and/or support them. The table below shows the results broken down by career stage. Key findings include:

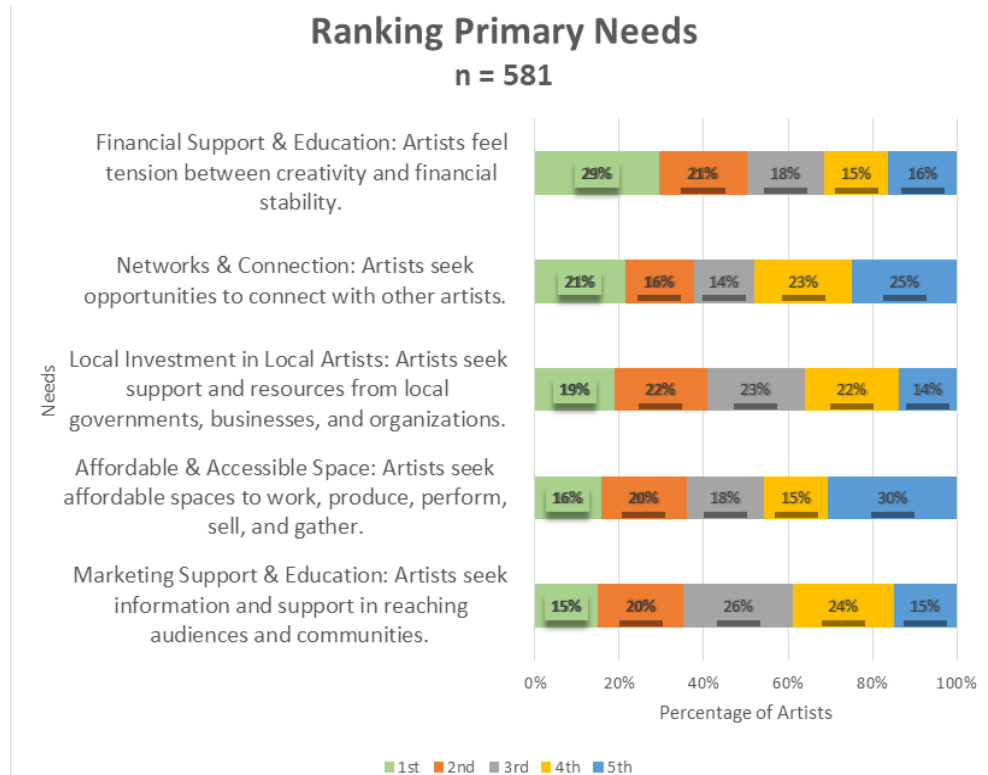
- Nonprofit arts organizations are a primary support for artists across career stages.
- A higher proportion of artists in a more advanced career stage are connected with and/or supported by small businesses.
- Very few artists of any career stage are supported by small business development centers.
- Hobby artists find support through avenues outside of more structured organizational settings.

Organization Type	Hobby	Emerging	Scaling	Sustaining
Aging Services Providers	2%	4%	7%	9%
Art Associations or Clubs	16%	39%	46%	48%
Chamber of Commerce	4%	4%	10%	11%
Community Foundations	7%	9%	19%	20%
Higher Education	16%	10%	21%	26%
K-12 Schools	9%	11%	15%	25%
Local Arts Agency	23%	25%	37%	41%
Local Arts Nonprofit Organizations	39%	49%	63%	65%
Local Businesses	16%	31%	47%	57%
Local Government	7%	6%	7%	11%
Main Street Organization	2%	8%	8%	9%
None of the Above	28%	20%	9%	6%
Other	11%	8%	9%	7%
Private Foundations	4%	4%	8%	16%
Small Business Development Center	0%	3%	5%	5%
Social Service Organizations	2%	6%	5%	10%

Ranking of Needs - Overall

The survey provided a list of needs identified through the listening sessions and asked respondents to rank them in order of importance. Key findings include:

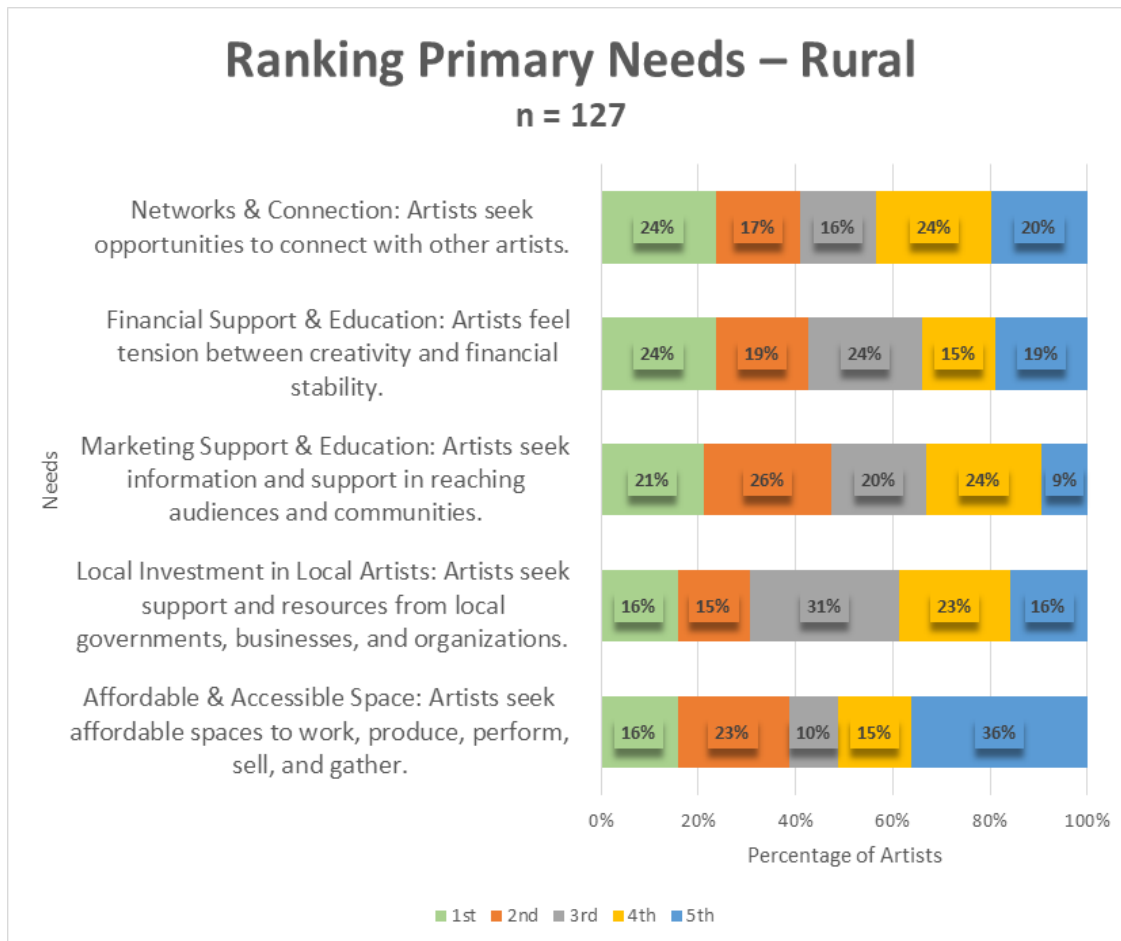
- Financial support and education emerged as a primary need with 50% of artists ranking it most or second-most important followed by local investment in local artists.



Ranking of Needs by Geography

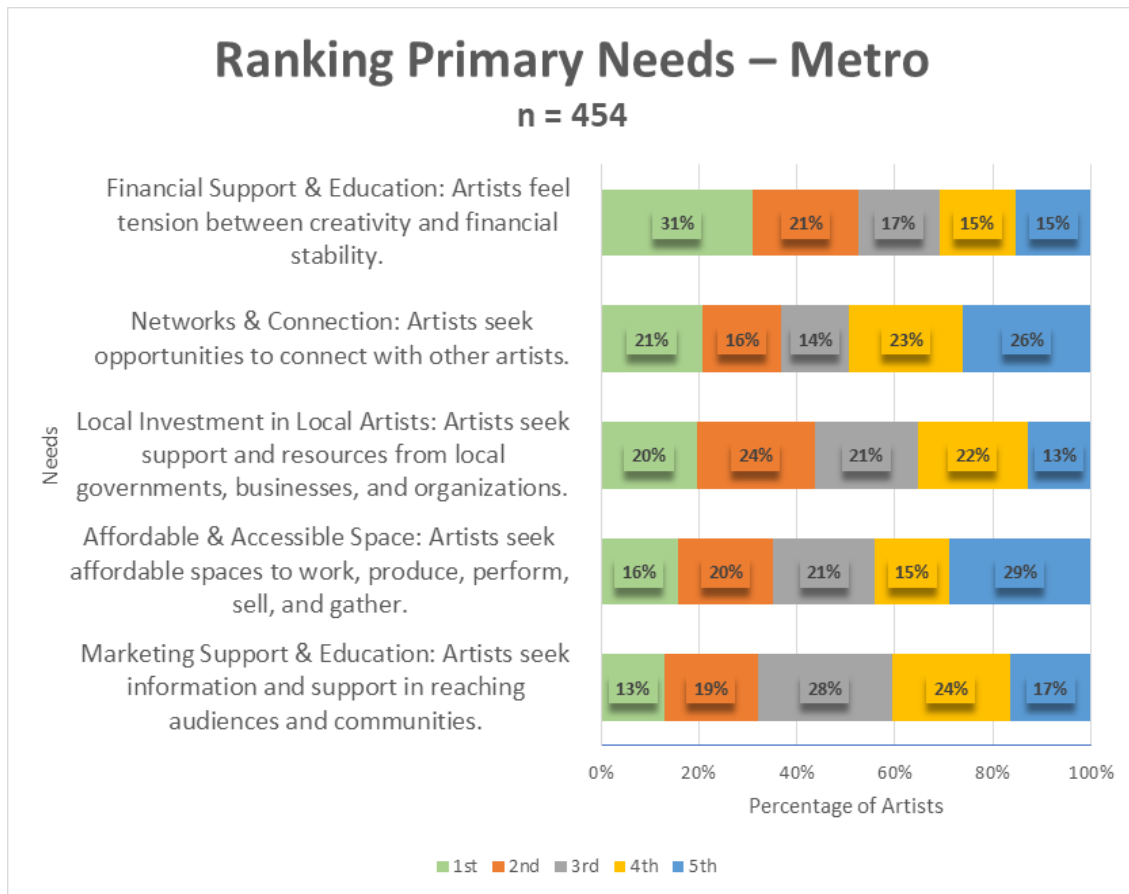
Rural is defined by county and the results below reflect primary needs ranked by rural artists who responded to the survey. Key findings include:

- Marketing support and education emerged as a primary need with about 50% of artists ranking it most or second-most important.
- Networks and connection was ranked higher among rural artists compared to metro-based artists.



Metro is defined by county and the results below reflect primary needs ranked by metro artists who responded to the survey. Key findings include:

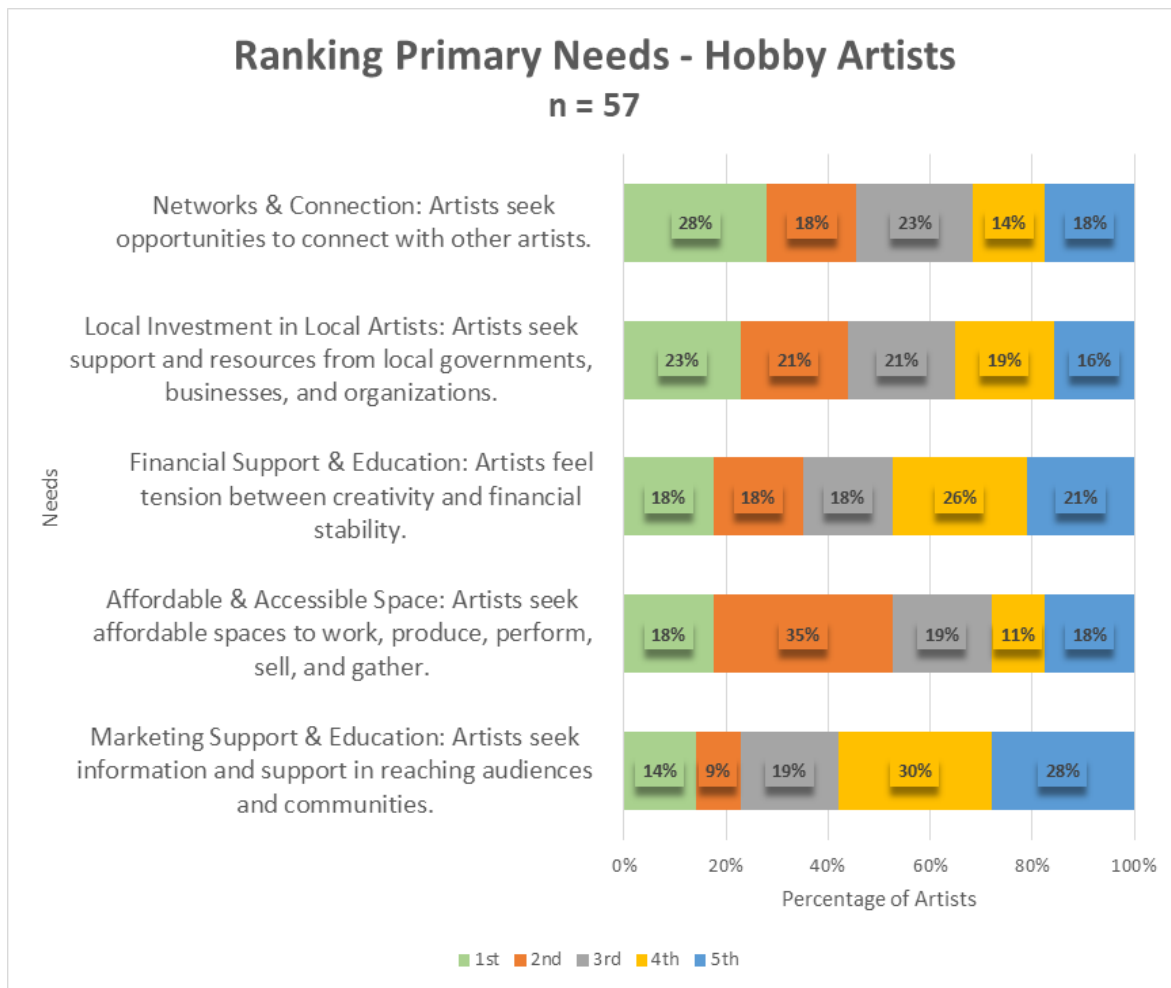
- Financial support and education emerged more clearly as a primary need with 52% of artists ranking it most or second-most important.
- Networks and connection was ranked least or second to least important by 49% of artists respectively.



Ranking of Needs by Career Stage

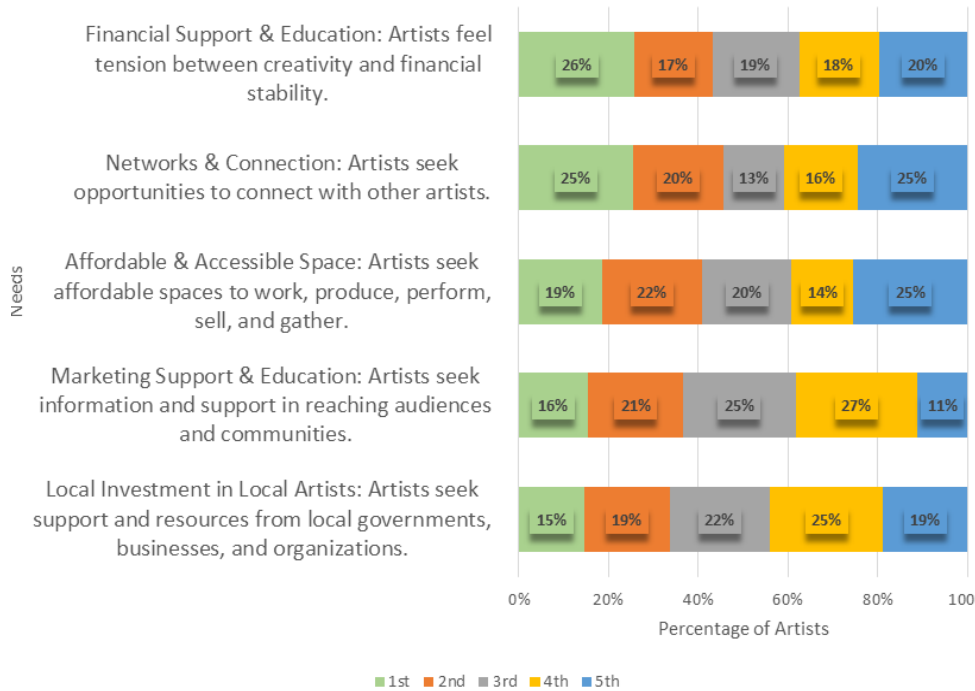
Primary needs were analyzed by career stage to understand variations in needs depending on the level of experience and business generated through an artist’s work. The key findings include:

- Hobby artists valued networks and connection more highly than any other artist career stage.
- Emerging artists find networks and connection most important with 45% ranking it most or second-most important.
- Among scaling and sustaining artists, financial support and education was overwhelmingly most important with nearly 60% of artists in each group ranking it most or second-most important.
- The importance of local investment in local artists increased and the importance of networks and connection decreased as career stage advanced.



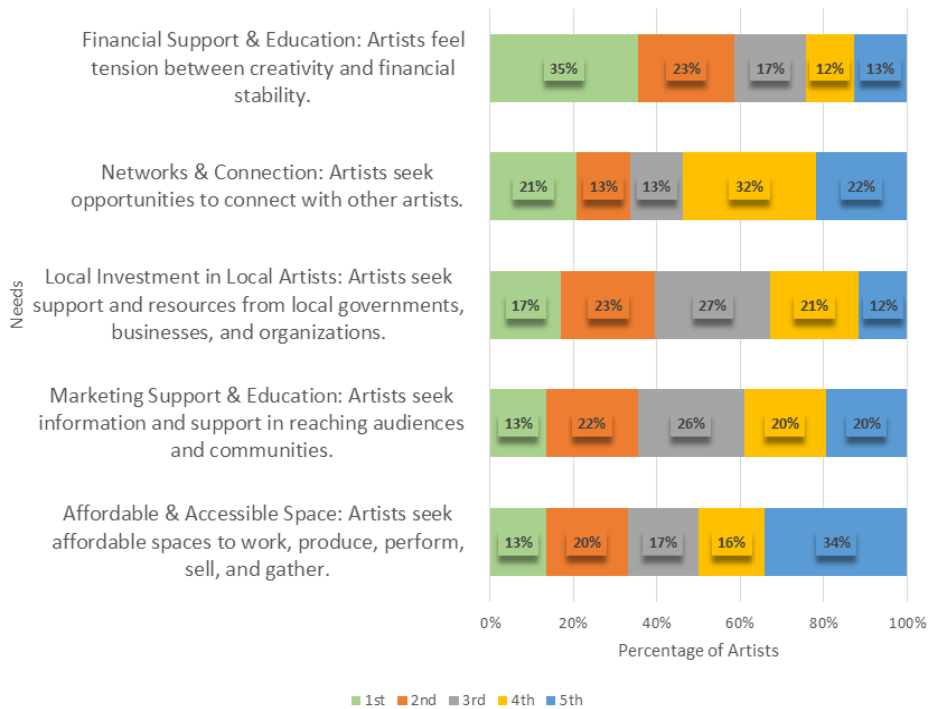
Ranking Primary Needs - Emerging Artists

n = 232



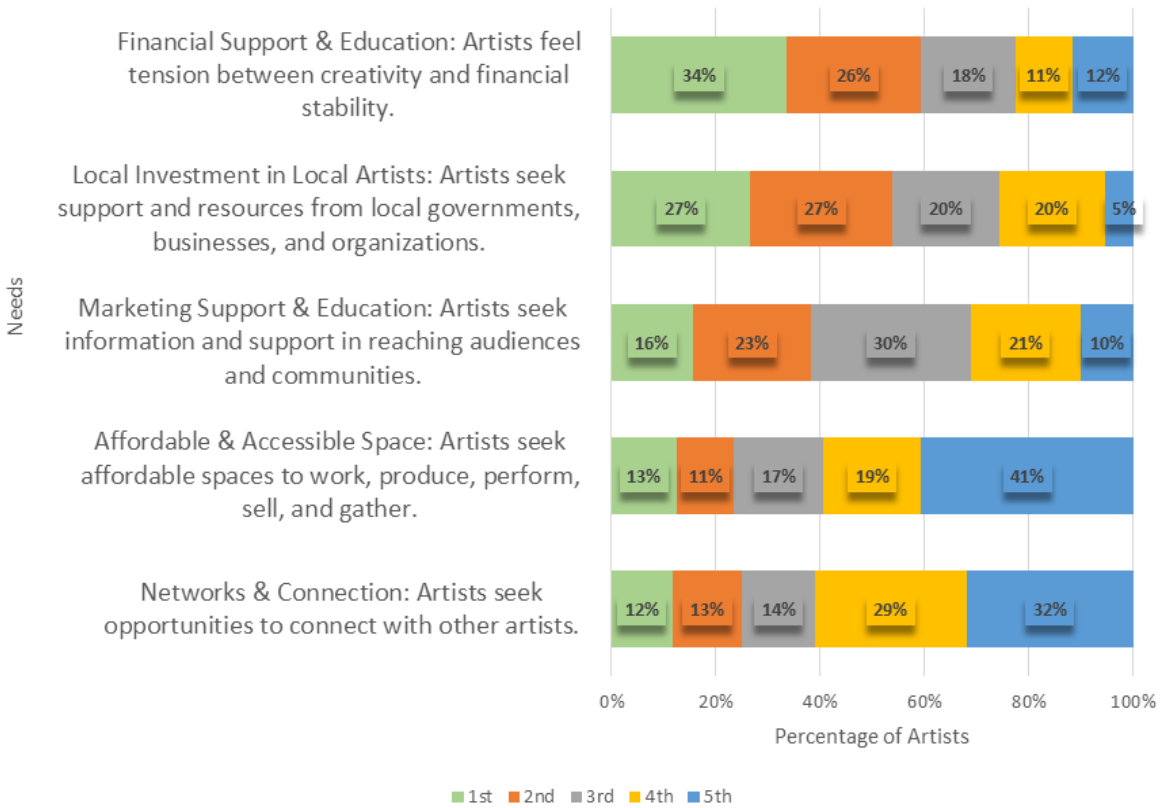
Ranking Primary Needs - Scaling Artists

n = 164



Ranking Primary Needs - Sustaining Artists

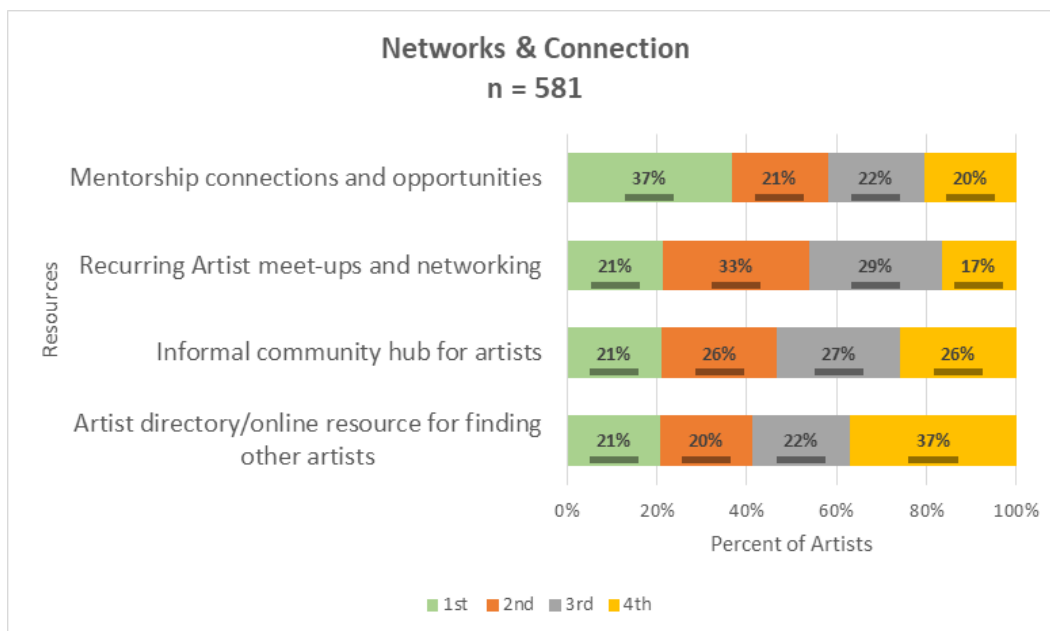
n = 128

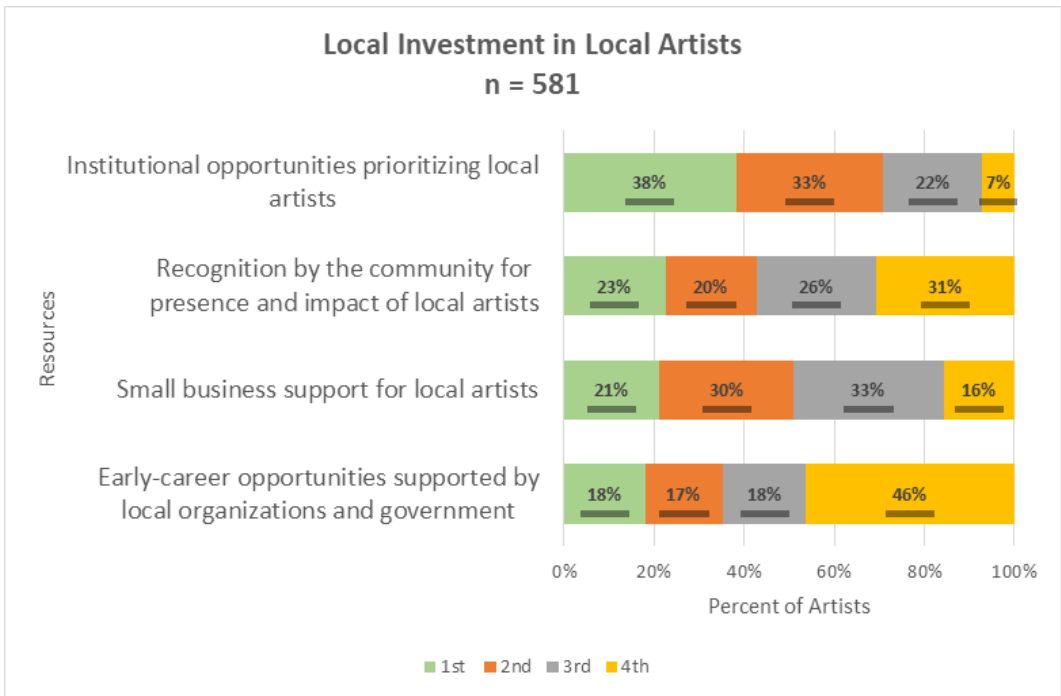
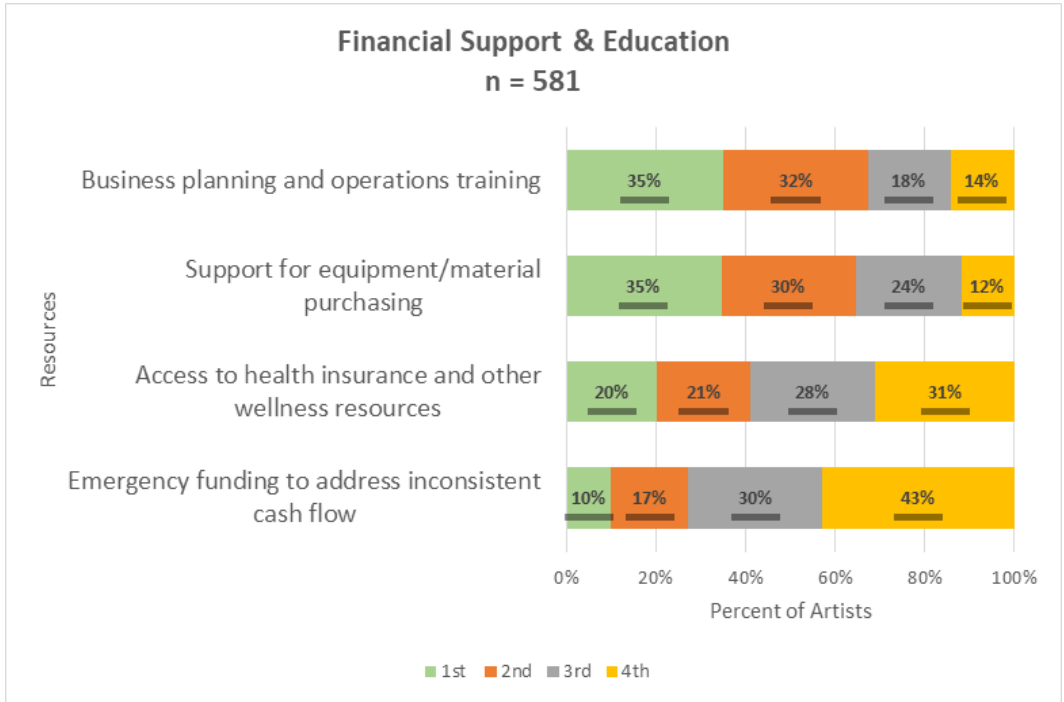


Ranking of Resources to Support Primary Needs

The survey identified potential resources to support artists and address the primary needs included in the survey. Each of the resources are grouped by primary need and were identified based on the statewide listening sessions. Key findings include:

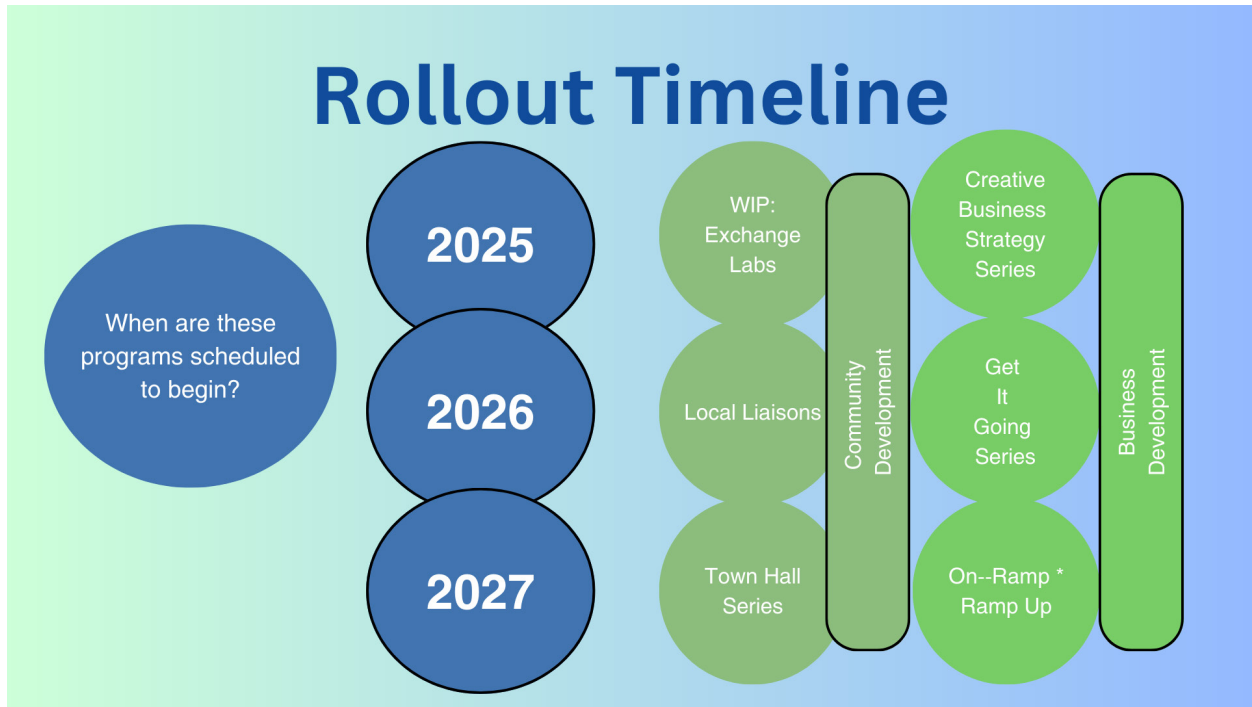
- **Networks and Connection:** Artists ranked mentorship opportunities as most important with about 60% ranking it most or second-most important with recurring artist meet-ups also ranked highly.
- **Marketing Support and Education:** Local resources and platforms to promote artists in the community are highly valued with over 80% of artists ranking it most or second-most important.
- **Financial Support and Education:** Business planning and operations training and support for equipment purchasing are the primary resources ranked most important. Health insurance and emergency funding were ranked lower overall across all artist career stages.
- **Local Investment in Local Artists:** Institutional opportunities prioritizing local artists are desired among a majority of artists across career stage with small business support for artists also ranked highly. Early-career opportunities supported by local organizations and government ranked lower across all artist career stages.





Appendix B: Timeline of Program Roll Out

The following table outlines the projected timeline for the proposed program responses.



Acknowledgments

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Community Organizers

Region 1 - Jamika Smith and Sam Love
Region 2 - Matti Giddings
Region 3 - Alex Hall
Region 4 - Scott Greeson
Region 5 - Lexi Musselman
Region 6 - Emily Bennett
Region 7 - Ryan Shelton and Kate Obbereich
Region 8 - Lyn Letsinger-Miller
Region 9 - Karen Chillman
Region 10 - Aaron Soulberry
Region 12 - Brian Bell and Paige Trinkle

Regional Arts Partners

Region 1 - Dave Mika, South Shore Arts
Region 2 - Kayla Myers, Community foundation of St. Joseph County
Region 3 - Heather Closson, Arts United
Region 4 - Tetia Lee, The Arts Federation
Region 5 - Braydee Euliss, Randolph County Community Foundation
Region 6 - Sherri Wright, Arts Illiana
Region 7 - Ryan Shelton, Noblesville Creates
Region 8 - Sean Hildreth, Brown County Community Foundation
Region 9 - Kimberly I. Ann, Columbus Area Arts Council
Region 10 - Anne McKim, Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana
Region 12 - Randy Lakeman, Madison Area Arts Alliance

Images Courtesy of AOS and APS Grant Recipients

Front Cover (left to right, top to bottom): Artlink, Marion Arts Commission, Bloomington Creative Glass Center, Marion Arts Commission, On-Ramp 2024, Indiana State University School of Music, Logansport Community School Corporation, Marion Arts Commission

Page 2 (left to right): Bloomington Creative Glass Center, Creative Convergence Spring 2024, Indiana University Arts and Humanities Council

Page 7: On-Ramp 2024

Back Cover (left to right, top to bottom): Creative Convergence Spring 2024, Hamilton County Artist Association, Marion Arts Commission, On-Ramp 2024, Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center, Artlink



The Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) is an agency of state government that works directly with communities, creatives, and organizations to harness the power of creativity to strengthen Indiana. Through its programs and services, the IAC funds and supports arts experiences, arts education, and the arts economy to enhance the quality of life for Indiana's people and places.