



# **LANE COUNTY ARTIST FEEDBACK SESSIONS & SURVEY REPORT**

*2020*

## **CREATIVE SECTOR STRATEGY**

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# INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2020, a research committee within the Creative Sector Strategy group developed a survey and facilitated associated Artist Feedback Sessions. The survey serves as the leading edge of an assessment of needs and wants of artists and creatives in Lane County, with particular focus on the challenging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The artist feedback sessions were designed to gain in-depth knowledge of artists in our community.

The intention of this inquiry and report is to identify and prioritize the current pressing needs of Lane County artists and pass the data onto area arts organizations and stakeholders that have resources to respond with. The objectives of this report are to:

- Provide a direct, real-time line of communication between artists and arts organizations
- Give a voice to individual artists about their immediate needs
- Lead to programming and resource development that will be most effective right now
- Acknowledge the value of the Creative Sector and help provide growth and resilience

Results from the survey and feedback sessions will help inform the work of CSS as it plans how to best support artists in our community.

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## CREATIVE SECTOR STRATEGY

The Creative Sector Strategy group (CSS) is made up of representatives of the arts community across disciplines, facilitated by [Lane Arts Council](#), [ArtCity](#), and [Lane Workforce Partnership](#). We are working with Lane County artists, arts groups and organizations, educators, media, businesses and government agencies to strengthen and grow our creative sector. Our goals include increasing prosperity, vitality, inclusivity, and connection across all sectors through the arts and establishing our region as a thriving community with an elevated quality of life for all who live and visit here.

Interested in joining CSS? Fill out [this form](#) to let us know.

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# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 76.8% of Lane County artists lost income as a result of COVID-19
- Artists need ways to connect virtually with each other and the community
- Artists are in urgent need of professional development including tech proficiency and developing a digital presence

# TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

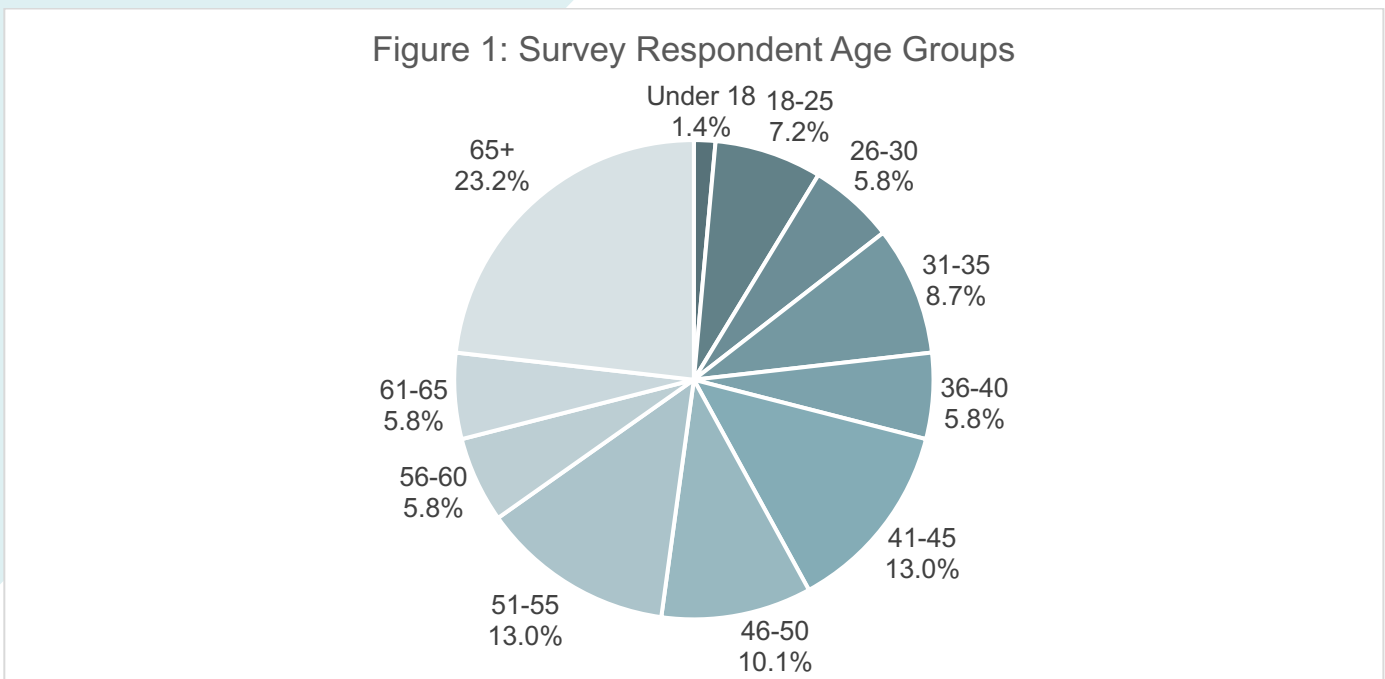
The Artist Feedback Sessions and Survey were designed by the Creative Sector Strategy group in response to needs identified through focus groups with Lane County artists. In addition to this, we considered topics of inquiry shared with us by Lane County arts organizations and areas of need related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was disseminated to artists through the networks of these organization’s contacts, and through the networks of those artists. There were 69 responses at the time of this report. This report is not intended to be comprehensive or reflective of the entirety of the Lane County artist community, but only those responding to our survey.

The survey has been left open to passively collect data from as many respondents as possible. All personal information collected is confidential. Please pass the survey along to those you think may be interested in participating: [Artist Feedback Survey](#).

## SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

### *Demographic Information*

- Of the 69 survey respondents, **23.2%** were 65 and older and **36.1%** were between the ages of 41 and 55.

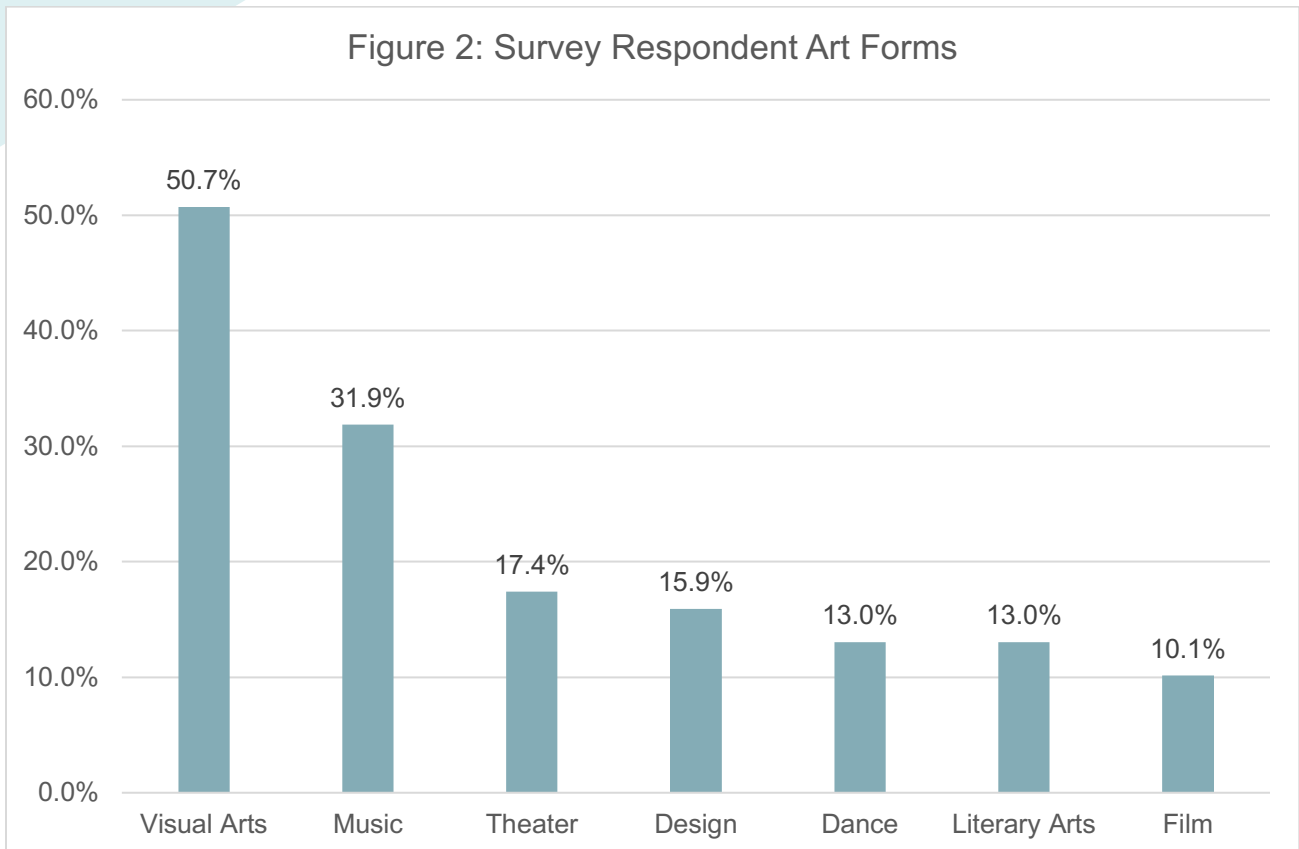


- In a free response question inquiring about race/ethnicity/cultural identity, **81.2%** of responses were categorized as White/Caucasian, **7.2%** Latinx, **5.8%** Asian/Asian American, and **4.3%** Native/Indigenous.
- When asked about gender identity, **59.4%** of respondents selected female, **36.2%** male, and **7.2%** trans, gender-nonconforming, and queer.

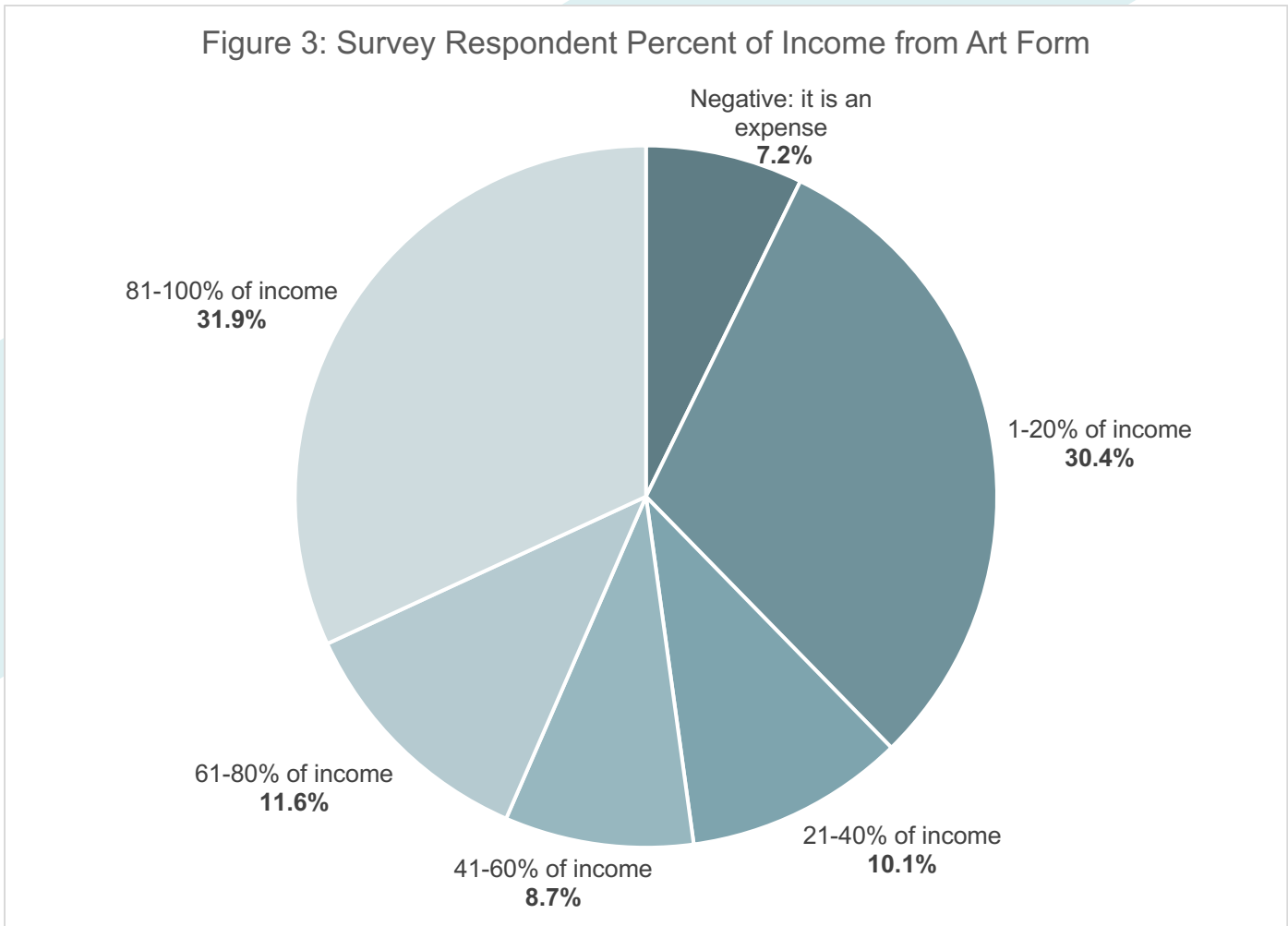
*Note: this was a multiple-answer multiple choice question, so the total response percent is greater than 100%.*

- The two most commonly reported art forms were visual arts and music with **50.7%** and **31.9%** of respondents, respectively.

*Note: this was a multiple-answer multiple choice question, so the total response percent is greater than 100%. Many respondents practice multiple art forms.*



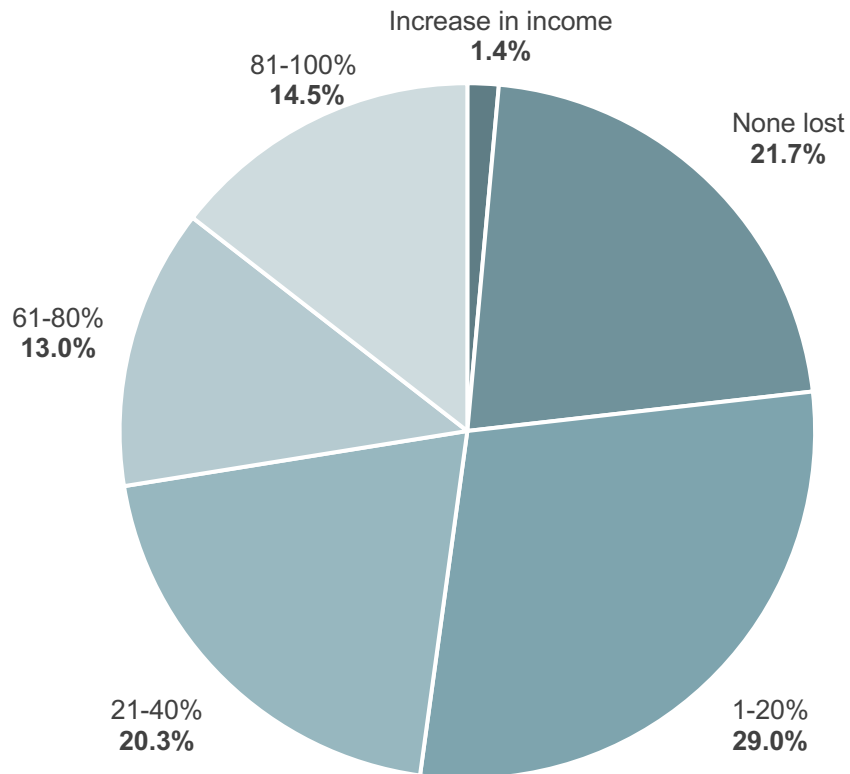
- Reporting on the percent of income from art, **31.9%** of respondents reported that they receive 81-100% of their income from their art form and **30.4%** receive 1-20% of their income from their art.



### Impact of COVID-19

- 76.8%** of survey respondents reported loss of income due to COVID-19. Of these, **29%** lost 1-20% of their income and **27.5%** of them lost 61-100% of their income.

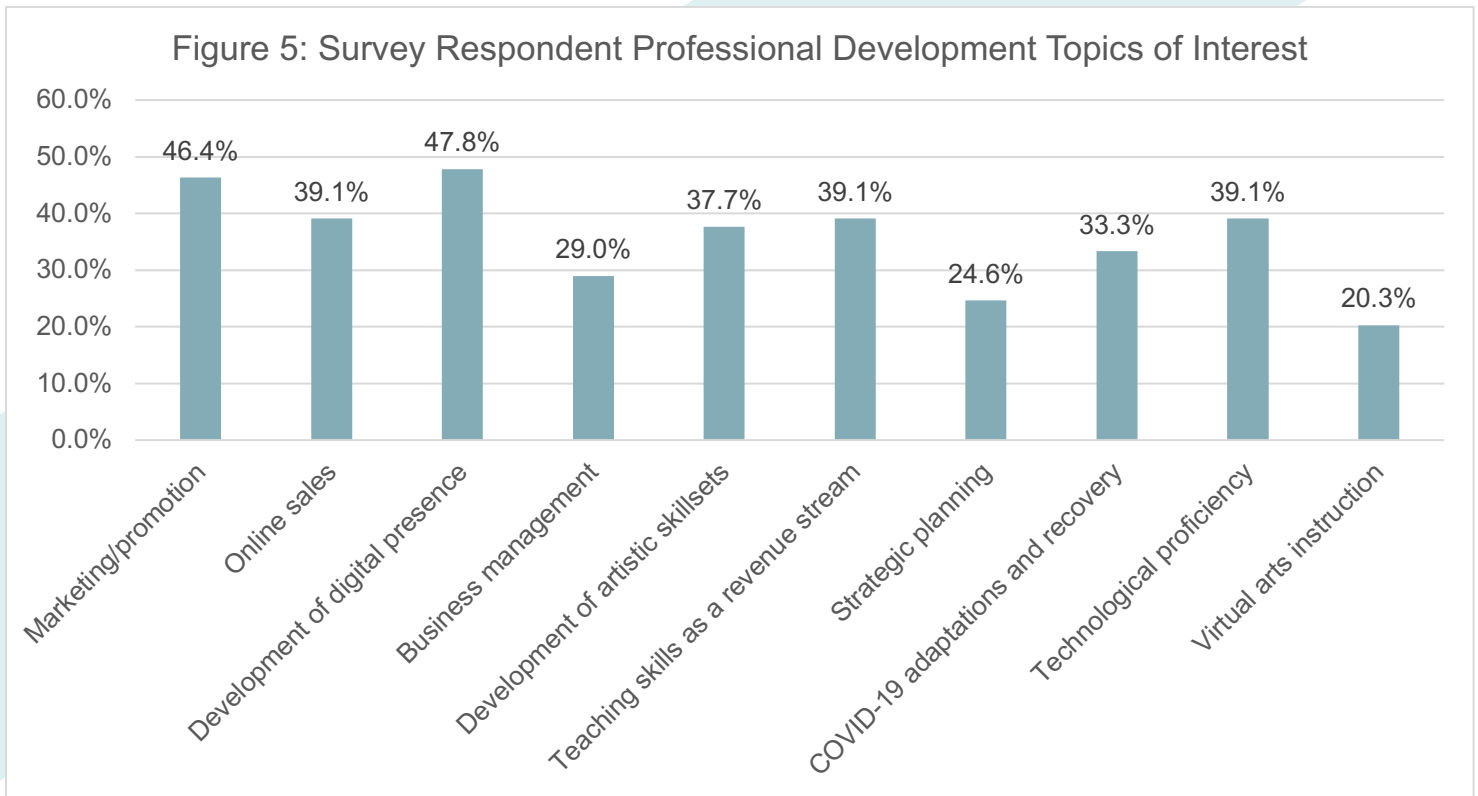
Figure 4: Survey Respondent Percent of Income Lost Due to COVID-19



- In a free-response question on art practice adaptation during COVID-19, it was found that the primary ways respondents have adapted to COVID-19 include a move to digital art creation and performance, and zoom teaching if capable.
- Nearly 90% of respondents noted that space is currently a challenge. The types of spaces designated were wide ranging, but nearly 50% believed there to be a lack of COVID-19-safe space and nearly 30% believed there to be a lack of performing space.
- For respondents seeking professional development right now, the types of resources that are of most interest include virtual workshops, virtual networking events, and one-on-one business coaching.

The topics of highest interest include developing a digital presence (brand development, website, social media identities), marketing/promotion (social

media, digital, print, advertising, etc.), online sales of art, teaching art skills as a source of revenue, and technological proficiency.



- When asked whether they could pay a registration fee for professional development opportunities, **23.2%** said they would not be able to pay for this service at this time. **14.5%** said they could pay up to \$15, **29%** could pay up to \$20, and **18.8%** could pay \$30 or more.
- When asked about networking opportunities, **44.9%** of respondents said they were interested in virtual gatherings with other creatives and **43.5%** were interested in connecting with local arts organizations and agencies.

### Other Information

- **18.8%** of respondents did not know of any organizations or programs that offer support to or resources for artists.



# ARTIST FEEDBACK SESSIONS

Two artist feedback sessions were administered once preliminary survey results were captured. These sessions built upon results from the survey and presented an open dialogue of the needs of artists in the community in general, and specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participation in these sessions included 15 unique artist voices, confirming previously captured data or disclosing new information regarding the needs of artists.

Upon further analysis of these sessions, the following 8 highlights were revealed:

- **Mental health challenges and isolation:** Artists have a dire need to connect with others, even if virtual, to be heard and feel like a community.
- **Greater digital participation:** Artists strive to focus on developing themselves online, specifically in making, showing, performing, networking, and teaching.
- **Creativity:** Artists have been leaning into opportunities to learn new artforms that are related to current practices (i.e. guitarist picks up ukulele and mandolin, salsa dancer picks up tap, etc.), and artists feel societal pressure to create during the pandemic.
- **Audience engagement:** Artists understand the need to interact with fans and audiences in new ways, and are looking for resources to help cultivate audiences online.
- **Artist entrepreneurship:** Artists are inherently entrepreneurial and are looking for support groups on this topic.
- **Technology:** Artists are looking for resources to help navigate digital resources and increase tech proficiency.
- **Live events:** Artists recognize the benefits of in-person events (community, exclusivity, and participation) and strive to create an in-person feeling to online events.
- **Online platforms:** Artists are searching for virtual gallery and performance spaces to share, display, and sell work.

# PATTERNS

Results from the survey and feedback sessions reveal three important patterns connecting this primary research.

First, there is an increasing and pressing need for artists to connect virtually in groups of all sizes. Artists are looking for ways to participate in an artistic community that will help with mental health and professional development.

Second, artists need to enhance digital savviness and tech fluency. Available online resources are only useful if they can be properly used. Artists are looking for opportunities to learn digital marketing and engagement practices.

Finally, artists need community and societal support to generate income. Exacerbated by COVID-19, the creative sector does not provide sustainable income for most artists. According to an [analysis](#) on nonprofit employment (Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies), nonprofit “Arts, Culture, and Recreation” jobs were down **34.7%** between February and August 2020 – a job loss rate that is three times worse than other nonprofit subsectors.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

CSS recognizes the interconnectedness of artists, arts organizations, businesses and the entire community. While the following recommendations are designed for CSS, we encourage others to use the findings of this report as a resource, and engage in transparent collaboration as we work to uplift artists and reveal the true value of the creative sector in our community.

Our next steps will include focused work sessions and initiatives designed to respond efficiently and substantially to the needs identified through the Artist Feedback Sessions and Survey. Artists and the arts communities are working on adapting to reduced and changing forms of income and lack of access to development and performance/exhibition spaces. The survey shows widespread calls for professional development including business strategies, technical knowledge, and online models for teaching and presentation for artists.

Recommendation	Timeline	Who
Develop support groups and networking groups for artists	Immediately, ongoing	CSS
Identify and communicate recommendations for physical and virtual performance and exhibition spaces that are COVID-19-safe	Immediately	CSS
Identify and communicate grants and other funding opportunities available to artists	1-3 months, ongoing	CSS
Create strategic plan for the next three years	1-3 months, ongoing	CSS
Create professional development opportunities (i.e. developing entrepreneurship skills, technological training)	2-6 months, ongoing	CSS
Build strategic partnerships with arts organizations and businesses to provide professional development opportunities	2-6 months, ongoing	CSS
Revisit survey results and update recommendations	4-6 months	CSS

## CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted our entire globe, but has disproportionately affected artists and creatives and the Arts, Culture, & Recreation industry at large ([Johns Hopkins Analysis](#)). While nationwide surveying has been done to measure this impact on the arts ([Americans for the Arts](#)), the Creative Sector Strategy group sought to learn more about the impact locally, here in Lane County.

These Artist Feedback Sessions and Survey allowed us to gain insight into how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Lane County artists and what resources they are currently in need of. We heard directly from artists and are excited to be sharing a summary of this data with arts organizations in our community. We hope that this information not only helps arts organizations provide beneficial resources and opportunities to artists, but ultimately, uplifts the creative sector in Lane County.

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### THE ARTIST FEEDBACK SURVEY REMAINS OPEN

[The Artist Feedback Survey](#) will remain open to continue collecting responses from Lane County artists and creatives. Please share the survey to help us collect more data on our local creative sector.

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