

2021 GOS GRANT SURVEY FINDINGS

Since 2016, recipients of the General Operating Support (GOS) Grants were asked to complete a survey with information about key indicators. This has helped staff, members of the Arts Commission, and City Council to understand the impacts of the Cultural Grants Program and to do a “temperature check” on the health of the cultural community. This year continues on a theme with an examination of the indicators of the fallout and recovery from the pandemic.

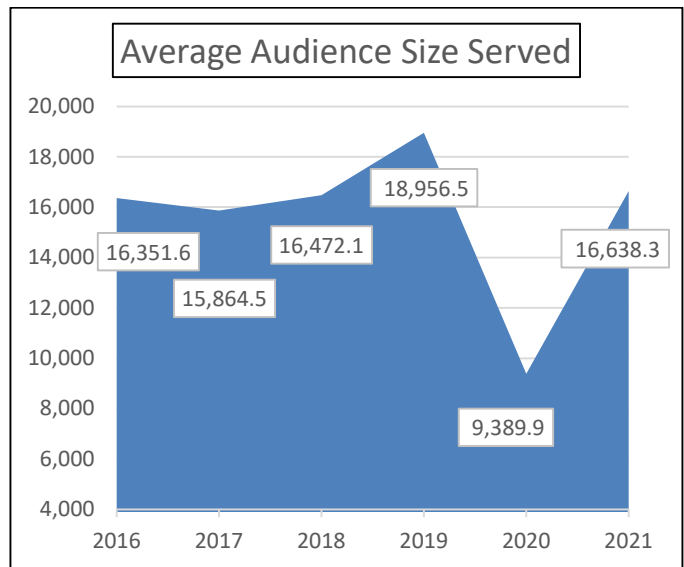
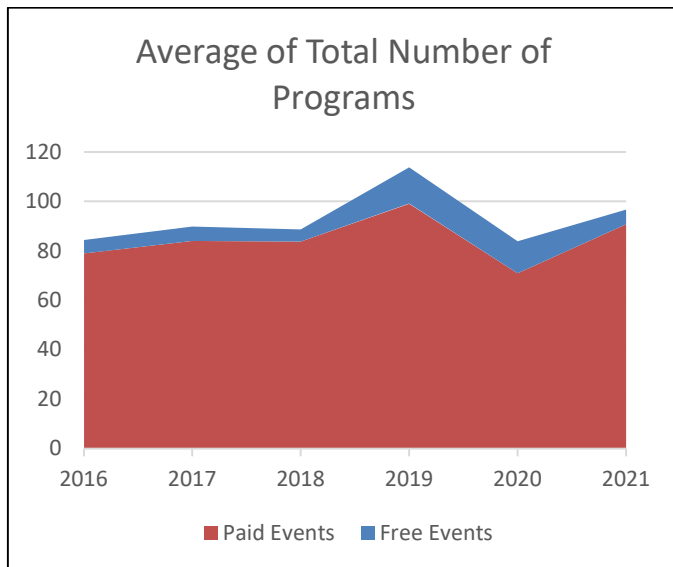
A note: the survey captures general measures. This does not always work the same for every discipline and every type of organization; there is variety in the criteria gathered when evaluating an organization. The data relies on each organization to make some judgments and provide the most accurate information possible.

About the GOS Grants in 2021

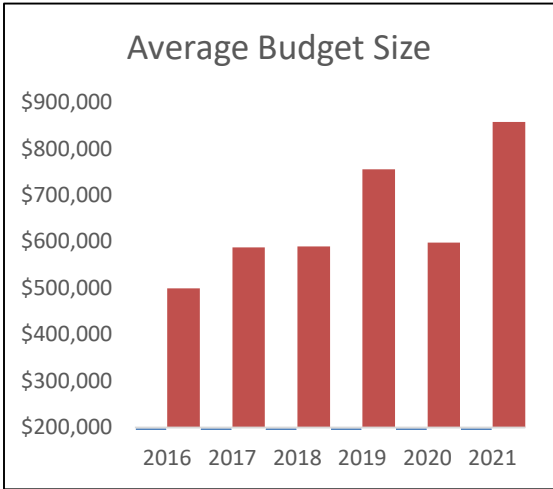
- > \$748,000 was distributed for General Operating Support to 37 organizations. Grants were provided in amounts that range between \$8,000 to \$50,000 depending on the size of the organization’s budget.
- > Among small organizations, the portion of an organization’s total budget that comes from this grant is between 44% and 11%. For medium, large and extra-large organizations that number ranges from 8% to less than 1%.

Programming

Office of Arts and Culture staff asked these arts organizations how many programs they offer including performances, exhibitions, participatory events, festivals, screenings, artist talks, and more. Education classes and private functions are separated out. The data shows a steady increase over the years right up to the start of the pandemic when closures in March 2020 stopped all in-person programming for a time. That traumatic decline was mitigated by online programming for a time. In 2021, venues began to reopen and the public became more comfortable with gathering for group events. By the end of 2021, audience size appeared to have recovered to 2018 levels, though that may be inconsistent among the different organizations.



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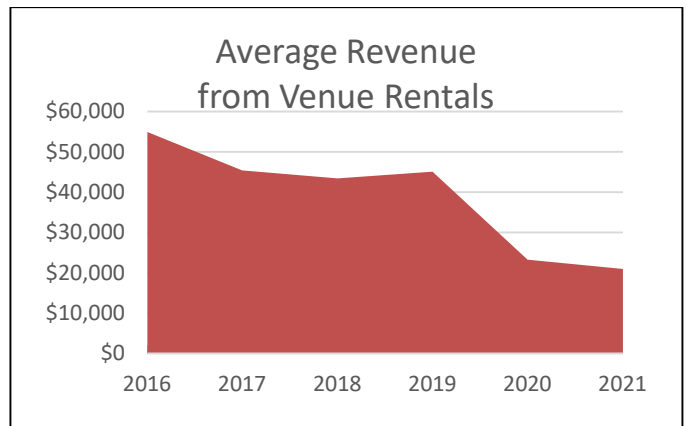
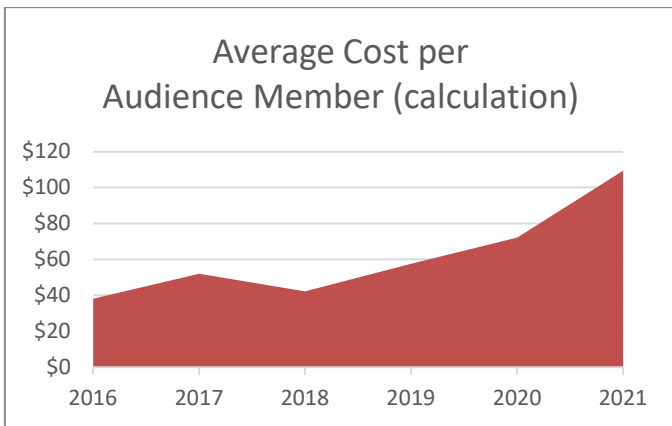
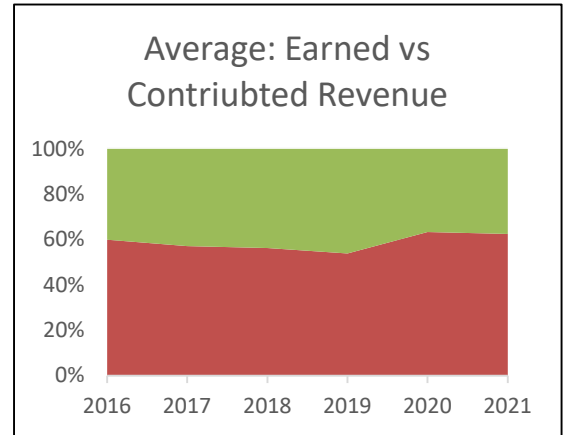


Budget

Compared nationally, most Boulder organizations would fit in small or medium categories. Nonprofits in Boulder vary widely even within disciplines or types. It is therefore important to take averages of budget size with a grain of salt. Admitting the uncertainty of the data we can make some assumptions. Budgets vary widely, with a median of about \$402,000. Thus, the average budget is included only to give a sense of change over time. With that in mind, the data shows that grants from local, state, and federal government and gifts from private foundations were an effective rescue function in 2020. And as relief funding in 2021. The large increase in the last year is concentrated in a handful of organizations that received significant one-time funds, such as Create Boulder’s relief grants at end of 2021.

The practice of maintaining a standard operating reserve may be the key for a nonprofit to stay resilient. Noting a very healthy trend, most of the organizations reported building back some operating reserve in 2021. Only 8 nonprofits reported no operating reserve.

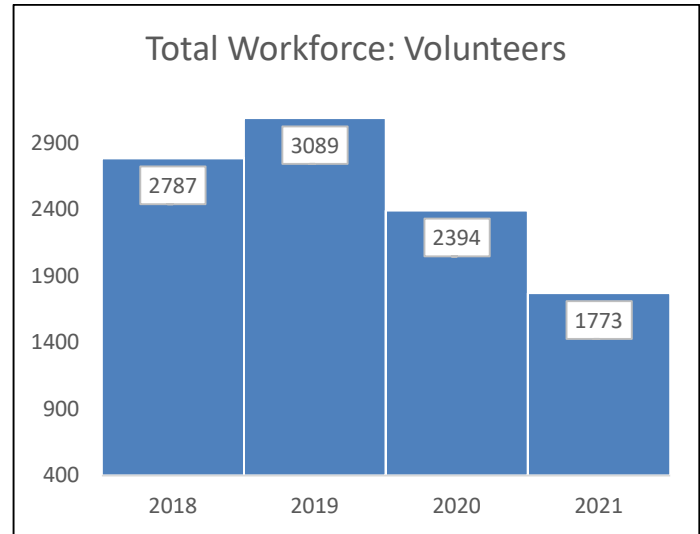
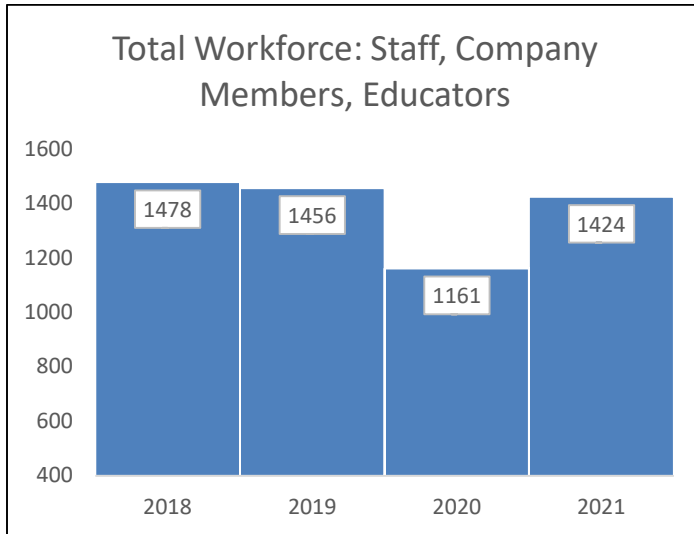
Another measure of financial health is cost per person. This is a simple calculation of the annual budget divided by number of people served. The continued increase here may be impacted by increased costs of inflation, new safety measures, and rehiring. The continued decrease in venue rental revenues is a red flag that, frankly, requires more investigation to be fully understood.



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Workforce

After a loss of ~300 jobs among these 37 organizations in 2020, there appears to be a recovery that comes quite close to 2019 levels. Volunteer jobs continued to fall, perhaps due to persistent wariness about in-person participation.



More Perspective

Below are other studies and assessments on the impacts that the pandemic, restrictions, and recession had on the arts and the creative sector of the economy:

- Scientific and Cultural Facilities District
COVID Impact Survey (September 2020)
<http://scfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/SCFD-2020-COVID-Impact-Survey.pdf>
- Colorado Creative Industries / Colorado State University
2020 Colorado Creative Economy Report (October 2020)
https://oedit.colorado.gov/sites/coedit/files/2020-10/2020_colorado_creative_economy_report.pdf
- Americans for the Arts
Impact of COVID 19 Data Dashboard (ongoing)
<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/disaster-preparedness/the-economic-impact-of-coronavirus-on-the-arts-and-culture-sector>