

ROUGH WATERS SURVEY I

Results: prepared for public

In order to shed light on how dance-based organizations in the United States are responding to the current economic turmoil, Dance/USA conducted a survey focusing on recent changes in earned income, contributions, and organizational operations. The survey opened on December 17, 2008 and closed on January 13, 2009.

The Dance/USA Rough Waters Survey was sent to managers of member dance companies in the United States (123), dance presenting organizations (46), and to Dance/MetroDC, Dance/NYC, Dance/USA Philadelphia and member service organizations who passed the survey onto their constituents.

Overall, the survey was begun by 120 respondents. A total of 83 fully completed the survey. Of the 83 full completions, 68 were dance-makers (inclusive of individual artists and dance companies) and 15 were presenting organizations. 26 responses were received from non-Dance/USA members, 21 were dance-makers and 5 were presenters. Dance/USA members completed a total of 57 surveys. 10 surveys were completed by member presenters. The surveys completed by Dance/USA member dance-makers (inclusive of individual artists and dance companies), 47, represent over half of all responses.

Data drawn from the 83 completions demonstrates the following:

- 41% reported that ticket sales have fallen short of plans by 5% or more.
- 42% reported that individual donations have fallen short of plans by 5% or more.
- 61% have been informed that one or more foundations will cut back support in the near future with 84% of those informed already reporting a decrease in foundation support of 5% or more.
- 48% have been informed that one or more corporations will cut back support in the near future with 84% of those informed already reporting a decrease in corporate support of 5% or more.

The data also indicates that more than one-tenth of all respondents have seen revenue decreases beyond 5% of plans in any two of the four areas mentioned above. Nearly one-fifth of respondents have seen a decrease of 5% or more in both ticket sales and individual donations. The second most common combination was a decrease of 5% or more in both individual donations and corporate support.

Some respondents reported increases rather than shortfalls. In all cases, those reporting increases have been 10% or less of the total respondents.

Responses regarding organizational adjustments to the crisis varied greatly and touched on issues ranging from board development, basic organizational management, and continuing budgeting challenges, to salary cuts, layoffs, and hiring freezes. 34% of responding organizations have already enacted contingency plans.

The Dance/USA Research Department thanks all members who participated in the Rough Waters survey for helping to focus the dialogue on what effects are being felt by dance-based organizations. A follow-up survey to track progress and changes will occur in late spring.