

SURVEY Highlights

DEMOGRAPHICS

Nonprofit arts workers tended to be young, female, and white. The nonprofit arts workforce in our sample did not reflect the ethnic diversity of Chicago's population.

TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

About 50% of nonprofit arts workers had a college degree in the arts and humanities. The arts administration master's degree was uncommon. Executive directors largely lacked management training. About 50% of executive directors had held a previous management position outside of the nonprofit arts.

COMPENSATION

Executive director salaries in the nonprofit arts compared favorably with national nonprofit salary averages, but salaries were highly dependent on organization size, with smaller organizations tending to pay well below for-profit rates. Staff salaries ranged widely but tended to be significantly lower than salaries for comparable positions in the for-profit sector. Most nonprofit arts professionals reported little or no benefits.

JOB SATISFACTION

Reported job satisfaction was high, despite substantial job stress. Mission and the organization's artistic product were major sources of satisfaction. Main sources of stress included the organization's financial problems, long hours, and staff inadequacies. Salary dissatisfaction was markedly higher for staff than for executive director respondents. Perceptions of discrimination on the job were not uncommon.



JOB TENURE AND SECTOR ATTRITION

The median tenure of the executive director was 7–8 years, longer than in other nonprofit surveys, and half had been in their current position for more than 8 years. Predicted turnover was high, with 70% of executives and 90% of staff planning to leave their current position within the next 5 years. But a solid majority of both executives and staff planned to stay in the nonprofit arts sector, and about 50% of nonretiring executives planned to be executive directors in their next position.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Three out of four organizations had no leadership succession plan. Almost all of the organizations that did report a succession plan identified a possible internal successor.

PROFESSIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Executives and staff members indicated high confidence in their ability to perform their duties. Staff tended to want more career development opportunities, and executives wanted better-trained staffs. Most respondents had never been formally evaluated. Mentorships were highly valued as a professional development tool.