



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & HISTORY

MAYOR: Lauren McLean | DIRECTOR: Jennifer Stevens

AGENDA Arts & History Commission

Wednesday, September 3rd, 2025
5:00-6:30 pm
Greenbelt Room, 3rd Floor, Boise City Hall
150 N Capitol Blvd, Boise ID 83702

Virtual and in-person attendance is offered.
Watch via Zoom Webinar: [Registration Link](#)

- I. **Call to Order** – Commission Chair, Melissa Thom
 - a. Land Acknowledgement – Commission Chair, Melissa Thom
- II. **Minutes Approval**
 - a. **ACTION REQUESTED:** Approve Minutes from June 4th, 2025 (**Exhibit A**)
- III. **Director's Update**
 - a. Human Resources
 - b. America 250
 - c. Mayor's Awards
 - d. Commission Revision Updates
 - e. Upcoming Programs and Events
 - f. Needs From Commissioners
- IV. **Presentations/Updates/Approvals** **Pursuant to Idaho Code Section 74-204(4), all agenda items are action items, and a vote may be taken on these items.*
 - a. Informational Item: Public Art Update on *Passage* and *Kaixo Corner* – Stephanie Johnson (10 min)
 - b. Informational Item: Annual Grants Update – Makenzi Dunstan (10 min)
 - c. Informational Item: Cultural Survey & Listening Session Findings – Tilley Bubb (45 min)
- V. **Adjourn Meeting**



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & HISTORY

MAYOR: Lauren McLean | DIRECTOR: Jennifer Stevens

MEMO

TO: Arts & History Commissioners
FROM: Jennifer Stevens
CC: Mayor Lauren McLean, Courtney Washburn, Council Member Luci Willits
DATE: 8/29/2025
RE: Director's Update

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MONTH

Human Resources

Collections Coordinator: Matthew Thorley will begin on September 29th.

America 250

The City began its celebration in August at the Hayman House with *American Contradictions: Exhibition for the Boise Visual Chronicle*, a juried art exhibition featuring local artists who responded to a prompt related to the challenges inherent in American history.

The City of Boise's America 250 celebration will take place primarily between January and July 4, 2026.

The details are still in progress, but Arts & History is leading this effort with the help of the Office of Community Engagement. Possible events and exhibits include:

- Essay, Song, and Art Contest for Youth – through community partnerships;
- Exhibitions at JUMP through the Smithsonian Institution;
- Five Nights of 250 – Community discussions;
- Audio Minutes – Boise Place Names, through partnership with Boise State University and Idaho Matters;
- Digital Reader Boards, Valley Ride Transit;
- Deaf Education History Exhibition, James Castle House;
- Women's Labor History Exhibition, Erma Hayman House; and
- Trivia Nights – in partnership with Idaho State Museum and Idaho Public Television.

COMMISSION REVISION UPDATES

Legal is currently working on changes to the Boise City Ordinance to enact the following changes:

1. Increase the number of commissioners from seven (7) to nine (9), which will still include one voting student commissioner.
2. Add clarifying language requiring that the Arts & History Commission provide *recommendations* to City Council for projects exceeding \$50,000;
3. Add language directing said recommendations to be placed on City Council's consent agenda accompanied by a written staff memo;
4. Add language identifying the commission's role in promoting the public interest and civic engagement through the department's professional work.

Additionally, the City Attorney's office is also drafting bylaws that will outline clear expectations for commissioners, based in large part on the feedback we received from our interviews with you last year.

NEEDS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Upcoming Selection Panels and Events

- Please join an upcoming selection panel:
 - Library Public Art - 10 hours in October
 - FY26 Traffic Boxes - 8 hours in October
 - Landers Street Public Art - 10 hours in Spring 2026
 - Public Art Film Showing - 10 hours in Spring 2026
- Attend grantee events!
- City Steps **Session II** begins on August 23. All three tours provide new content. Please join us for a tour.
- Attend the Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Arts & History on September 18, 2025 at JUMP.





DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & HISTORY

MAYOR: Lauren McLean | DIRECTOR: Jennifer Stevens

MEMO

TO: Mayor McLean, Courtney Washburn, Council Member Luci Willits, Arts & History Commissioners

FROM: Stephanie Johnson, Public Art Program Manager

CC: Jennifer Stevens, Director

DATE: 8/29/2025

RE: Public Art Program Update

GENERAL FUND PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

Boise Visual Chronicle 2025

\$20,000; The BVC will take the form of an exhibition this year, opening in August 2025 and installed at the Erma Hayman House. This will include a jury that will award 1st, 2nd, and 3rd awards, as well as a purchase award. Each artist selected for the exhibition by the jury will receive a small stipend for framing/display and will be able to offer their works for sale during the exhibition. Eight artists were selected by the jury and have begun work. Exhibition opening reception August 28th, 6-8pm.



West Valley/Ustick NIP Public Art Project



\$216,000 (artist budget, \$100,000); *Passage*, a public artwork by James Peterson of Art + Contraptions is **complete**.

CCDC PROJECTS WITH TYPE 4 AGREEMENTS

521 W Grove St. Public Space, Public Art

\$731,322 (artist budget, \$491,100); **complete!**

Artist team Hua Studio (Huameng Yu and Louis Chinn) are continuing to collaborate with CCDC, the site design team, architects, engineers, and the construction team as their works complete fabrication and begin to installation at the site. The artists are in Boise to assist with the installation process and will be in town through the dedication of Kaixo Corner (July 28 at 4:00 pm).



Linen Blocks T4 ArtPort Installation

\$20,000 2nd art port sculpture installed on Grove St. between the 10th and 11th blocks. Partnership with sculpture class at BSU to select and display student artwork. Installation took place May 5th, 2025. Artist Grace Ott's sculpture *One Man's Trash Responds* to the statistic from the City of Boise's Climate Action Roadmap describing the average amount of waste from each Boise household per month, Ott's work features a Cooper's hawk on its nest atop a 138-pound pile of trash.



Traffic Boxes 2025

\$42,500; 16 artists selected for new traffic boxes to be wrapped in summer of 2025. Boxes are located within CCDC's Westside Urban Renewal District. Selected traffic boxes are currently being wrapped and will be completed by September 1st, 2025.



PUBLIC WORKS PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

Warm Springs Golf Course Asphalt Mural Invitational

\$32,000; Project in conjunction with the opening of the new Warm Springs Golf Course Clubhouse. Traffic calming asphalt mural at the intersecting pathways of the Greenbelt and Warm Springs golf cart pathway. Selected artist Andie Kelly designed a piece that mimics a flowing river, steam rising from geothermal springs, and golden currant blossoms scattered throughout. Mural installation set for mid-June 2025.



Water Node

\$330,000; Water Conservation & Resiliency Public Art Project at the Foothills Learning Center. Working with community stakeholders as well as Parks and Rec staff. Call set to release in June 2025. Installation Fall of 2027.

AIRPORT PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

ConRAC (Consolidated Rental Car Facility)

\$308,700; Vinyl banner mural installation on façade of building, first iteration of rotating installation every 3-5 years. Call opens March 2025, with installation to occur alongside opening of facility in Spring 2026. Selection committee has selected 3 finalists, finalist proposals are due in August.

NEEDS FROM COMMISSIONERS

None this month





MEMO

TO: Mayor McLean, Courtney Washburn, Council Member Luci Willits, Arts & History Commissioners

FROM: Alaggio Laurino, Public Art Collections Manager

CC: Jennifer Stevens, Director

DATE: 8/29/2025

RE: Public Art Collections Program Update

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT UPDATES

CCDC T-4 Deferred Maintenance Reimbursement Approval

In partnership with the Capital City Development Corporation (CCDC) through a Type 4 *Deferred Maintenance Agreement*, several key public artworks have recently undergone successful maintenance and repair. This collaboration allowed for critical preservation work on *Botanica*, *Integration Mural*, *Bicycle Trio*, *Idanha Canopies*, and, most notably, *Grove Street Illuminated & Boise Canal* by artist Amy Westover.

As part of this effort, Westover oversaw significant material improvements to her 2003 installation located at 9th and Grove. The original steel and plexiglass utility covers, which had experienced repeated material failure, were replaced with more durable cast bronze elements. The work was thoroughly documented, and CCDC has agreed to reimburse the associated maintenance expenses.



This project represents a successful collaboration between city departments, CCDC, and the artists involved, ensuring the continued safety, integrity, and visual impact of these valued public artworks.

MAJOR ONGOING MAINTENANCE UPDATES

River Sculpture Damage

On June 26, a traffic accident resulted in damage to the *River Sculpture* located in front of the Grove Hotel at Front Street and Capitol Boulevard. One of the vehicles involved struck an adjacent planter, which then slid into the base of the sculpture, damaging one of the granite façade slabs. This is the second traffic-related incident affecting the sculpture in the past year.

Damage has been documented, all pieces have been collected, a police report has been filed, and an insurance claim is underway. We are exploring options to repair the sculpture using salvaged granite currently in storage.

The recurring nature of this type of damage has prompted us to begin evaluating potential mitigation measures to protect the artwork going forward. Additionally, this incident may impact ongoing efforts to inspect, repair, or upgrade the sculpture's LED lighting. There is also a planned treatment to thoroughly wash and seal the façade to enhance the granite's color and longevity.



We will keep the Commission updated as we gather more information and move forward with next steps.

NEEDS FROM COMMISSIONERS

None this month.



MEMO

TO: Mayor McLean, Courtney Washburn, Council Member Luci Willits, Arts & History Commissioners
FROM: Matilda "Tilley" Bubba, Cultural Planner
CC: Jennifer Stevens, Director
DATE: 8/29/2025
RE: Cultural Planning Activity

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MONTH

2025-35 Cultural and Creative Industries Master Plan Update

In May we conducted nine listening sessions and three one-on-one interviews with the public, artists, and organizational leaders to deepen our understanding of current conditions. In August I completed three public presentations on the results of the survey and listening session:

- Monday, August 18, 12 – 1:30pm ZOOM (recorded)
- Wednesday, August 20, 12 – 1:30pm, Boise City Council Chambers
- Thursday, August 21, 5:30 – 7pm, Bown Crossing Library

After this staff will work on the drafting of the plan.

General Fund Public Arts Master Plan

Public Art staff and I are finalizing the draft text for the General Fund Public Arts Master Plan, which will guide the program moving forward. It will go to Community Engagement in September for design and be completed by December 2025.

Collections Management Policy

Staff representing public art and archives are working with me to revise and craft a comprehensive collections management policy. This is a year-long project that will carry us into the next decade of collections management processes.

Division Strategic Plan Update

At this 6-month check-in point I am working with each division to update their strategic plans.

NEEDS FROM COMMISSIONERS

- No needs at this time.



MEMO

TO: Mayor McLean, Courtney Washburn, Council Member Luci Willits, Arts & History Commissioners

FROM: Kristen Hill, Cultural Sites Program Manager

CC: Jennifer Stevens, Director

DATE: 8/29/2025

RE: Cultural Sites Division Update

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Ariana Martinez Residency

The James Castle House said farewell to Ariana Martinez after a wonderful 10-week term. During their stay, Ariana connected deeply with the Boise community and was able to rediscover ways of working that had been long dormant. Ariana hosted three open studios, one intergenerational workshop, and one final presentation at the James Castle House, where the community had the opportunity to meet them and see their work. We wish Ariana the best of luck in their future endeavors!

Persona and Place: Artists and Sites of the Historic Artists' Homes and Studio Program

Historic Artists' Homes and Studios Director Valerie Balint gave a fascinating presentation where she guided attendees through a visual journey of artists across three centuries, exploring how portrait photography and preserved spaces offer insight into their lives and legacies.

This engaging talk placed James Castle and his Boise home within a broader national context, connecting his story to other iconic figures and preserved sites in the Historic Artists' Homes and Studios (HAHS) network.



Coffee with a Curator

The Erma Hayman House hosted an interactive event with curator Katie Knight to dive into the Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate exhibition. Attendees discussed the artworks and their reactions to them, exploring the themes presented in each one and enabling a thoughtful dialogue.



Taste of River Street

The Erma Hayman House partnered with Kin chef Kevin Heulsmann for a fantastic tasting event featuring recipes inspired by the original River Street Neighborhood Cookbook. This cookbook was compiled by Dorothy Buckner in the 1960's and 70's with recipes donated by families throughout the River Street Neighborhood.





IHC Summer Institute

The Erma Hayman House hosted Idaho Humanities Council Summer Institute where 25 educators from around the state learned more about EHH and the Historic River Street neighborhood. They explored how art can provide a platform for engaging in hard conversations and learned how to make a zine to share a personal perspective. The IHC's goal of the Institute was to empower teachers to tell full narratives of Idaho's history and help them learn to research the stories and experiences of black Idahoans.

American Contradictions Opening Reception

Join us at the Erma Hayman House for our new exhibition *American Contradictions: Exhibition for the Boise Visual Chronicle*. This exhibition coincides with and supports the City of Boise's commemoration and celebration of America's 250th anniversary and asked artists to reflect on contradictory values and the "American Experiment" as it relates to Boise today.

America's founding was a revolutionary experiment – the creation of a new nation in search of a more perfect union. Our nation's history is complex, full of advancements and setbacks, as the American experiment continues to seek perfection. Fueling this experimentation is deep-seated tension: many of America's core values are contradictory, and the country has struggled to find a balance that will deliver on the promise of a more perfect union.

This exhibition fulfills the 2025 Boise Visual Chronical (BVC), which is a bi-yearly commission for a portable work of art into the City of Boise's art collection.

NEEDS FROM COMMISSIONERS – Upcoming Cultural Sites Events

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday, 9/9-9/30, 10:00 – 11:30am (Dick Eardley Senior Center): Coffee with Castle



Coffee with Castle is a four-part collaborative series with the Dick Eardley Senior Center. This event will bring people together to learn about James Castle and connect through conversation and community.

Saturday, 9/13, 11:00am – 1:00pm (James Castle House): *Workshop with Janhavi Khemka*

Join us at the James Castle House for a workshop with Fall 2025 resident Janhavi Khemka. Born in Varanasi, India, Chicago-based artist Janhavi Khemka approaches acoustics through woodcut printmaking and experimental installations composed of animation, sound, performance, and vibratory material.

At nine months old, Khemka contracted typhoid, which led to her loss of hearing. Slipping between imposed identities like 'disabled,' 'marginalized,' and 'immigrant,' Khemka transcends ineffectual terms, attuning herself instead to the possibility of listening to materials she works within.

Thursday, 9/25, 5:00-8:00pm (Erma Hayman House): *Race, Place and Grace*

This interactive workshop is designed to build bridges across diverse perspectives. Expect an engaging session filled with self-reflection, hands-on activities, and opportunities to connect with others in a supportive and inclusive environment.

Saturday, 9/27, 2:00-6:00pm (James Castle House): *James Castle Community Celebration*

Join us at the James Castle House as we commemorate Deaf artist James Castle's birthday and Deaf Awareness Month with a community-centered day of activities and stories. This event is a collaboration with the following community partners:

Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Idaho Association of the Deaf
Boise Art Museum
Boise State University
Boise School District
Idaho Hands and Voices
Collister Neighborhood Association

OCTOBER

Saturday, 10/4, 11:00am – 1:00pm (James Castle House): *Inside the Studio with Janhavi Khemka*

Join us at the James Castle House for an intimate studio visit with Fall 2025 Resident Janhavi Khemka. Learn more about Janhavi's creative practice and see the work she has created while living and working at the James Castle House.



Saturday, 10/4, 1:00-4:00pm (Erma Hayman House): *Taste of River Street*

Join us at the Erma Hayman House on Saturday, October 4 from 1–4 p.m. for a delicious afternoon honoring the diverse food traditions that shaped Boise's River Street neighborhood. This special gathering features a prix fixe menu created and curated by Chef Kevin Huelsmann of KIN, inspired by the River Street Center Cookbook, a compilation of former River Street resident recipes and culinary customs.

Saturday, 10/18, 11:00am – 1:00pm (James Castle House): *Workshop with Janhavi Khemka*

Join us at the James Castle House for a workshop with Fall 2025 resident Janhavi Khemka. Born in Varanasi, India, Chicago-based artist Janhavi Khemka approaches acoustics through woodcut printmaking and experimental installations composed of animation, sound, performance, and vibratory material.

Thursday, 10/23, 6:00-8:00pm (James Castle House): *Where Art Begins: Artists Creative Spaces Panel Conversation*

Join us at the James Castle House for an engaging conversation with several Boise artists about their creative practice and the spaces they create in. Panel conversation from 6-7pm with a casual reception to follow.

- *Desired Action:* Please join us for any and all of our events and share with your networks!





MEMO

TO: Mayor McLean, Courtney Washburn, Council Member Luci Willits, Arts & History Commissioners

FROM: Jennifer Yribar, Communications Manager

CC: Jennifer Stevens, Director

DATE: 8/29/2025

RE: Communications, Grants, and Public Programs

TEAM UPDATE

In June, Rahel Gebrehiwot and Megan Kittridge, Interpretive Tour Guides, completed the spring session of our City Steps guided tours and together with Christina Wilkens, Education and Public Programs Manager, are planning the fall session, introducing two new tours. Sophie Copple, our Arts & History Summer Intern, is halfway through her internship program and has focused her time developing a social media plan to support next year's America 250 initiative, assisting Makenzi Dunstan, Grants and Outreach Program Manager, with preparations for the Arts & History Grant review panel, and will also participate as panelist for the 2026 Writer-in-Residence selection process. Sophie's presentation to Leadership is scheduled on August 13 and she will conclude her internship on August 29.

COMMUNICATIONS

2025-2026 Communications Priorities

- Jul. 28: Kaixo Corner (521 W Grove St.) Ribbon Cutting & Grand Opening
- August:
 - Arts & History Website launch (moved down from July)
 - City Steps Guided Tours fall session (launches Aug. 23 through Oct.)
 - *American Contradictions*: An exhibition of the Boise Visual Chronicle (Opening Aug. 28)
- Sept:
 - Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Arts & History and 2026-2027 Cultural Ambassador (Sept. 18)
 - James Castle Community Celebration (Sept. 27)

- Jan.
 - America 250 in Boise (programming: April – July 2026)
 - BOI 100 : Boise Airport's Centennial Celebration (April 6, 2026)

Arts & History Brand Marketing

In collaboration with our staff, the Office of Community Engagement, and Information Technology Department, we continue to work on applying many of the recommendations provided by Drake Cooper in our messaging and across our outreach materials, including in our website upgrade and redesign project (planned for August).

Alongside the Office of Community Engagement, we have also completed work on a City of Boise x America 250 mark and are working on developing digital and print applications to support the city's commemoration and celebration of America's 250th anniversary.

Arts & History Website Upgrade & Design Refresh

We continue to work with the city's Office of Community Engagement and Information Technology Department on the A&H Website Upgrade & Design Refresh project (boiseartsandhistory.org). This project aims to upgrade our content management system to a current version, remediate accessibility compliance to meet new federal requirements (compliant by April 2026), and enhance the website user experience while honoring the unique features of Arts & History's brand. Project timeline is now August 2025. The James Castle House (jamescastlehouse.org) and Erma Hayman House (ermahaymanhouse.org) websites will be upgraded starting in November 2025 through March 2026.

Press Releases (Published/Planned)

- **May 27, 2025:** [Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate Exhibition Opening](#)
- **July 23, 2025:** [Kaixo Corner Dedication and Grand Opening Celebration](#)
- **July 28, 2025:** [Kaixo Corner Opens to the Public Just Ahead of Basque Festival](#)
- **July 30, 2025:** New Warm Springs Grill + Golf Serves Up Patio Views and Fairway Fare for Golfers and the Community

Media Coverage

- [This unique exhibit in Boise turns words of hate into works of art | Opinion](#) [Idaho Statesman]
- [One artist finds new ways to engage the senses](#) [Boise State Public Radio, Idaho Matters]
- [Retro glow: Alum rescues historic neon, returns it to the streets of Boise](#) [The Arbiter, Boise State University]



- [Art exhibition 'Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate' to open in Boise](#) [KBOI Channel 2]
- [Hate literature transformed into powerful art exhibition debuts in Boise](#) [KIVI Channel 6]
- [Anti-racist art exhibit comes to Boise, transforms a message of hate into change](#) [KVTB Channel 7]
- ['Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate' exhibition comes to Boise](#) [BoiseDev]

GRANTS AND OUTREACH

Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Arts & History and 2026-2027 Cultural Ambassador

Nominations for the Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Arts & History and applications to be the next City of Boise Cultural Ambassador are now closed.

- Total number of Mayor's Awards nominations received: 44
- Total number of Cultural Ambassador applications received: 11

Award recipients and the next Cultural Ambassador will be announced at the Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Arts & History on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 5 p.m. at JUMP. Individual tickets and sponsoring opportunities will be available for purchase in early summer. [Learn more](#).

Story Story Night is the current City of Boise's [Cultural Ambassador](#) (2024-2025).

Upcoming events:

- 9/30, Slammer of the Year. REAP WHAT YOU SOW

Learn more on [Story Story Night's website](#).

Arts & History Grants Program

The FY26 Arts & History Grant funding, totaling \$150,000, will be distributed through two opportunities:

- Annual Arts & History Grant: Opens May 1 – Closes June 16, 2025 for awards between \$1,000 and \$5,000 totaling \$120,000. This funding supports people in established and emerging cultural fields with projects designed to benefit the Boise residents.
- America 250 Grant: Opens in January 2026 (dates TBA) for awards between \$1,000 and \$5,000 totaling \$30,000. This funding supports individuals and



organizations in established and emerging cultural fields with projects designed to support the City of Boise's commemoration and celebration of America's 250th anniversary between April and July 2026.

Boise City Writer-in-Residence

We announced the [City of Boise's 2025 Writers in Residence: Susan Bruns](#) (October 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025) and [Alan Heathcock](#) (April 1 – September 30, 2025).

Upcoming events:

- 9/20: [A Community Reading and Celebration of the Written Word with Boise City Writer-in-Residence Alan Heathcock](#)

Application for FY26 Boise City Writer-in-Residence terms closed July 28, 2025. 24 applications were received. Selected writers will be announced in September 2025.

Outreach

Upcoming outreach events (**Note:** This is a *tentative* schedule. Additional opportunities may be added throughout the year. Dates and events are subject to change.):

- August/September: Boise Comic Arts Festival (BCAF)
- September: Open Streets Boise
- October: Boise Neighborhood Interactive

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Public Programs

We continue to engage department-wide teams in monthly Public Programs Roundtable, program team meetings, and Book Club discussions (optional), to develop shared language and best practices in public programming and community engagement. We met in July to reflect on the previous months' programs and events and review our upcoming programming calendar. We also shared a divisional update where Jennifer, Makenzi, and Christina gave a brief overview of our newly restructured roles and how everyone the department can work with us as a division. Christina also shared reflections on the current program development timeline/process and offered "next steps" to expect moving forward, including personalized program development templates, establishing meetings with History and Public Art divisions to define programming need, and long-term goals of moving communication/documentation to Teams/SharePoint and additional Microsoft platforms.

Education



With a strong foundation laid for Public Programming, we plan to explore Goal 3 of our Strategic Plan focusing on building K-12+ programming. In collaboration with Boise School District, Boise State, and community partners, we plan to launch and Educator Advisory Team which will serve as a resource to build, review, and ultimately implement focused programming for students and educators in our community.

NEEDS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Cultural Program Guide

The July-September Cultural Program Guide is here! Learn more by visiting our [Events Calendar](#).

- *Desired Action:* Pick up a copy at our offices or at any city facility. Please share widely!

Upcoming Programs and Events

- 9/4: Mobile Market Day at Erma Hayman House
- 9/4: First Thursday: Engaging Everyone
- 9/4: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art
- 9/6: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art
- 9/9: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art
- 9/11: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art
- 9/13: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art
- 9/13: Workshop with Janhavi Khemka at James Castle House
- 9/16: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art
- 9/18: Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Arts & History
- 9/20: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art
- 9/20: Boise City Writer-in-Residence FINAL Event with Alan Heathcock at Erma Hayman House
- 9/23: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art
- 9/25: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art
- 9/27: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art
- 9/27: James Castle Community Celebration at James Castle House
- 9/30: City Steps – Guided Tours of Boise's History and Public Art

Learn more by visiting our [Events Calendar](#).

- *Desired Action:* Please consider attending.





DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & HISTORY

MAYOR: Lauren McLean | DIRECTOR: Jennifer Stevens

MEMO

TO: Mayor McLean, Courtney Washburn, Council Member Luci Willits, Arts & History Commissioners
FROM: Danielle Grundel, City Archivist
CC: Jennifer Stevens, Director
DATE: 8/29/2025
RE: Archives Program Update

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MONTH

Summary

The Archives program has completed the facility move, consolidating archives and records into one building. This brings us closer to the goal of creating a strong and functional city records and archives program to serve external and internal customers. We will be upgrading the front room and bathroom with paint and carpet to host researchers at the facility. By creating a designated research room, the public can more easily request to review records in person, fostering scholarship of Boise's history and promoting transparency. Additionally, the archives is gearing up for the America 250 celebration, working with the History Division aiding in the development of outreach and social engagement.

NEEDS FROM COMMISSIONERS

None this month



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & HISTORY

MAYOR: Lauren McLean | DIRECTOR: Jennifer Stevens

EXHIBIT A **Minutes** **Arts & History Commission**

Wednesday, June 4th, 2025
5:00-6:30 pm
Greenbelt Room, 3rd Floor, Boise City Hall
150 N Capitol Blvd, Boise ID 83702

Virtual and in-person attendance is offered.
Watch via Zoom Webinar: [Registration Link](#)

Commissioners Present: Kris Clegg, Gaby Thomason, Camryn Lafrenz, Rachel Miller (virtual), Trish Walker

Commissioners Absent: Amanda Ashley, Melissa Thom

Council Liaison:

Staff Present: Jennifer Stevens, Jillian Whitehill, Tilley Bubb, Stephanie Johnson, Ashley O'Hara, Christina Wilkens, Hannah Williamson, Lianna Hamby, Christine Evangelides Dodd

Public: Madeline Turnock

- I. **Call to Order** – Commission Chair, Kris Clegg called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
 - a. Land Acknowledgement – Commission Chair, Kris Clegg
- II. **Minutes Approval**
 - a. **ACTION REQUESTED:** Approve Minutes from April 2nd, 2025 (**Exhibit A**)
 - i. Motion: Move to approve by Commissioner Miller at 5:01 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Walker at 5:01 p.m. All in favor. Motion approved.
- III. **Director's Update**
 - a. Informational Item: Updates on human resources, arts advocacy, upcoming programs and events, and needs from Commissioners.
 - i. No questions from the commission
 - ii. Motion: No motion, informational item only
- IV. **Presentations/Updates/Approvals** **Pursuant to Idaho Code Section 74-204(4), all agenda items are action items, and a vote may be taken on these items.*
 - a. Informational Item: Cultural Plan Survey Results – Tilley Bubb

- i. Commissioners asked the presenter questions and provided feedback on related topics.
 - ii. Motion: No motion, informational item only.
- b. Informational Item: Public Art Project Updates – Stephanie Johnson
 - i. *Passage* at Redwood Park project update
 - ii. *Kaixo Corner* Public Art project update
 - iii. Boise Visual Chronicle 2025 update
 - iv. *One Man's Trash* ArtPort 2025 installation update
 - v. *Confluence* at Warm Springs Golf Course and Greenbelt project update
 - 1. No questions from commissioners.
 - 2. Motion: No motion, informational item only.
- c. **ACTION REQUESTED:** Vice Chair Election (5 min)
 - i. Commission Chair Clegg announces resignation
 - ii. Commissioner Thom will assume Commission Chair for remainder of term
 - iii. Commission Chair Clegg opens vote for Vice Chair
 - 1. Motion: Commission Chair Clegg nominates Thomason for Vice Chair. Commissioner Walker seconds; all in favor. Moved at 6:00 p.m.

V. Adjourn Meeting

- a. Commission Chair Clegg asks commissioners to offer a motion to adjourn.
 - i. Motion: Commissioner Thom motions to adjourn, Commissioner Miller seconds; all in favor. Moved at 6:04 p.m.



DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

June 4, 2025



HUMAN RESOURCES

- City Historian: Ashley O'Hara
- Education and Public Programs Manager: Christina Wilkens
- Collections Manager: Alaggio Laurino promoted, will backfill the position he is vacating.
- Cultural Sites Program Assistant: Cameron Stites-Stevens
- City Steps Tour Guides: Rahel Gebrehiwot and Megan Kittridge through fall.
- Summer Intern: Sophie Copple begins June 9 for 12 weeks.



ARTS & HISTORY DEPARTMENT REMODEL

- Moving back June 16th



ARTS ADVOCACY

- National Endowment for the Arts under scrutiny of current presidential administration
- Idaho Commission on the Arts pausing grant program
- Need for performing arts venue. Partners in City and beyond to discuss in June.
- Post cultural survey, nine (9) public listening sessions held. Report to come in soon.



2025 MAYOR'S AWARDS

- Award nominations and FY26-27 Cultural Ambassador applications received
- Awardees announced Thursday, September 18th at JUMP
- Tickets and sponsoring opportunities available early summer



AMERICA250 & COMMISSION REVISION

- No update at this time



NEEDS FROM COMMISSIONERS

- Pick up a copy of our April-June Cultural Program Guide and share widely!
- Support & attend A&H and grantee events.
- Have awareness of upcoming campaigns.

UPCOMING A&H PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- May through June 28: [City Steps Guided Tours](#)
- *Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate* exhibition at the Erma Hayman House
- 6/5: Race, Place, and Grace: Origins - The Power of Personal Story
- 6/10: Evenings at Erma's: MUSIC
- 6/14: Inside the Studio with Ariana Martinez
- 6/14: Taste of River Street
- 6/28: Workshop with Ariana Martinez
- 7/8: Evenings at Erma's: STORYTELLING
- 7/12: Inside the Studio with Ariana Martinez
- 7/17: Ariana Martinez Final Presentation
- 7/25: Persona and Place: Artists and Sites of the Historic Artists' Homes and Studio Program
- 7/28: Kaixo Corner (521 W Grove Street) Public Opening



UPCOMING FY25 GRANT RECIPIENT & CULTURAL AMBASSADOR EVENTS

- 6/5: The Tree City Chamber Players present Musical Tales at the Library! at Bown Crossing
- 6/7: The Tree City Chamber Players present Musical Tales at the Library! at Collister
- 6/7: The Ecogeoglyphic Observatory presents RIPARIA
- 6/14: Starbelly School of Dance presents Boise Raks
- 6/18: Boise Community Band Concert
- 6/23: Story Story Night
- 7/12: Starbelly School of Dance presents Boise Raks
- 7/16: Boise Community Band Concert
- 7/21: Story Story Night



BOISE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SURVEY FINDINGS

Individual Artists, General Public, Creative and Cultural Organizations

Survey Dates: November 4 – 25, 2025

Response Total: 614 artists
470 public
127 organizations

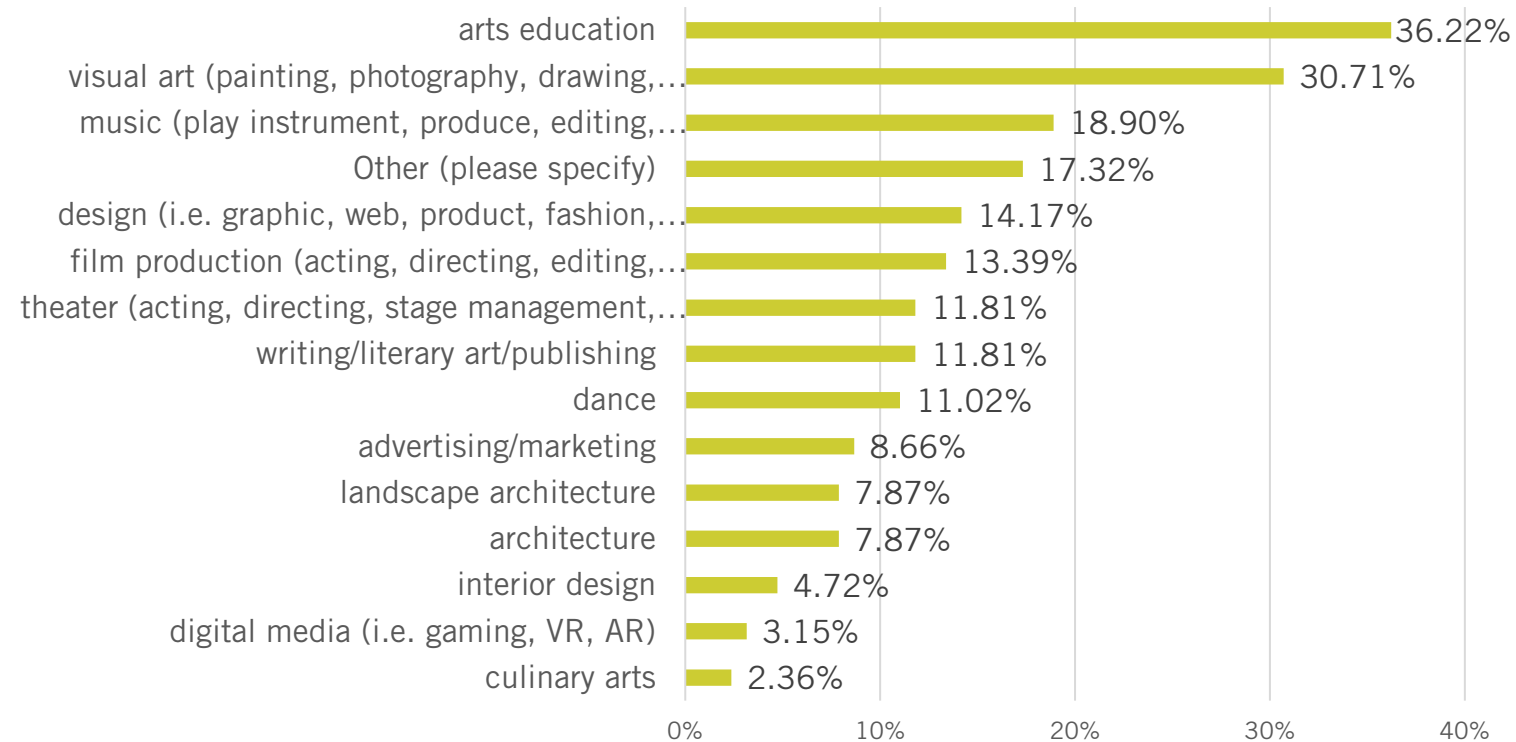




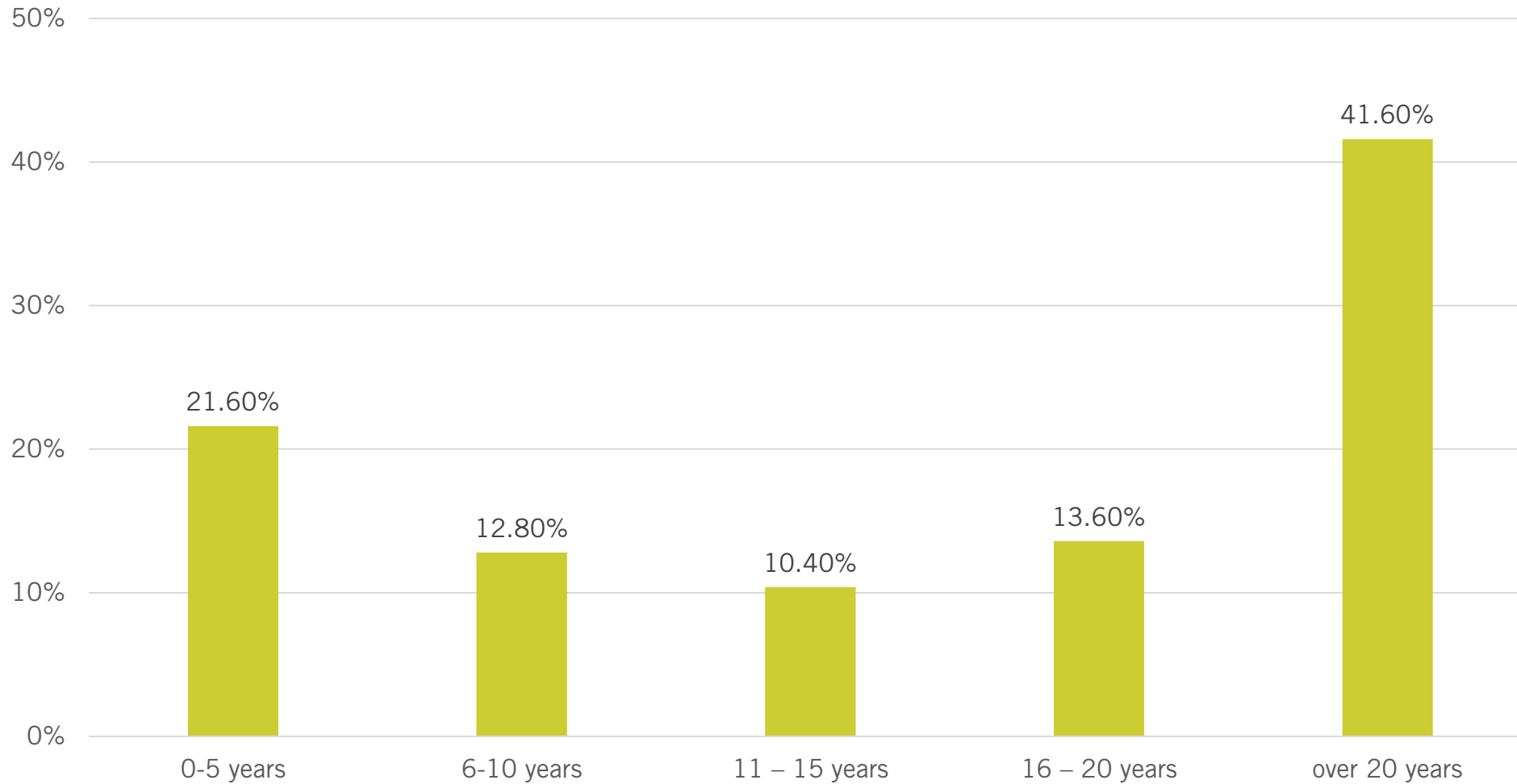
Idaho Shakespeare Festival

ORGANIZATIONS

Response Total: 127



LENGTH OF TIME IN BUSINESS

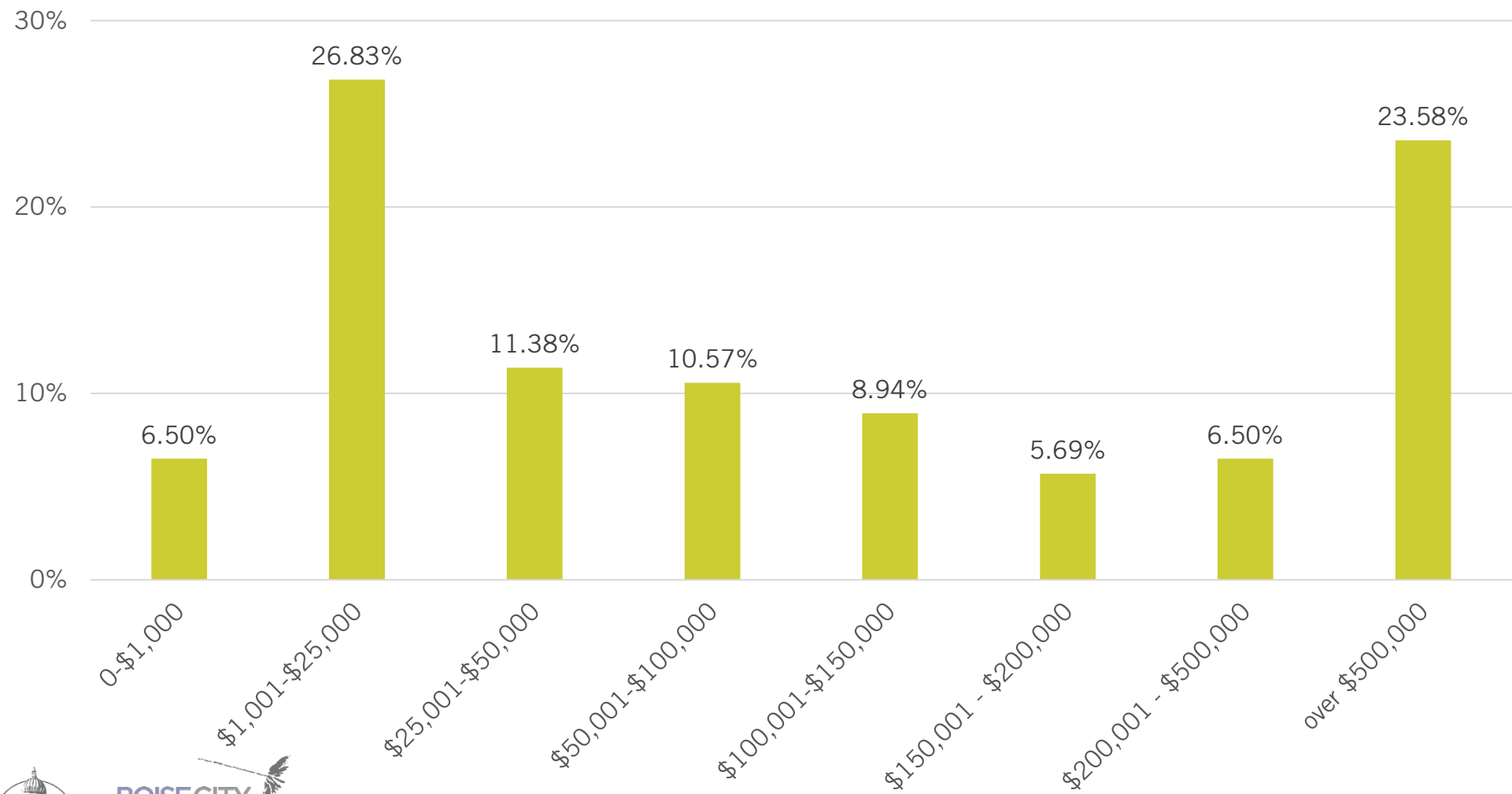


55% of respondent organizations have been in operation for over 15 years.

What isn't captured here are the arts/cultural organizations that



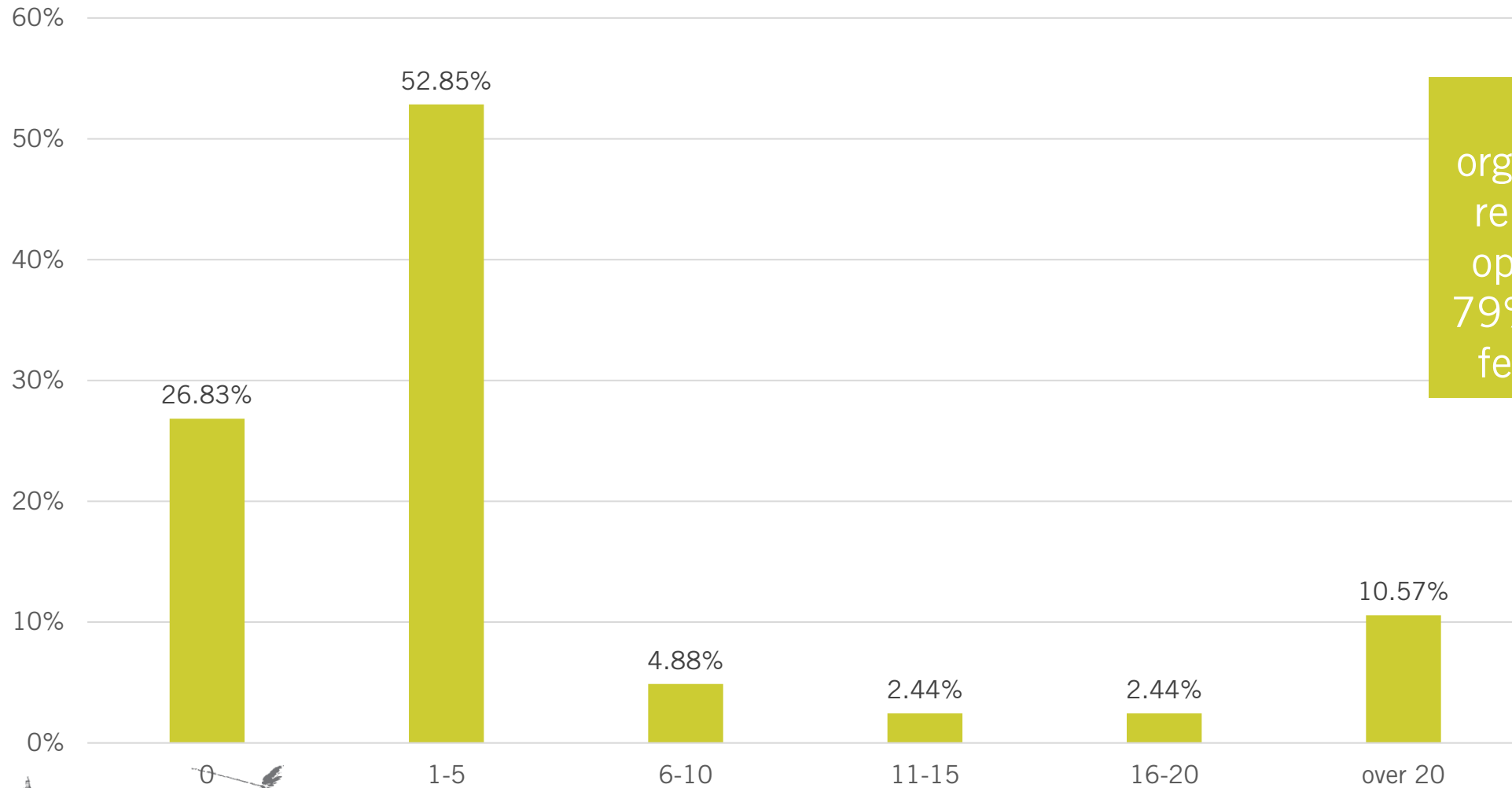
ANNUAL BUDGET



Respondent organizations have a wide range of annual budgets.

Spikes in responses under \$25,000 and over \$500,000 are indicators of organization size and scale.

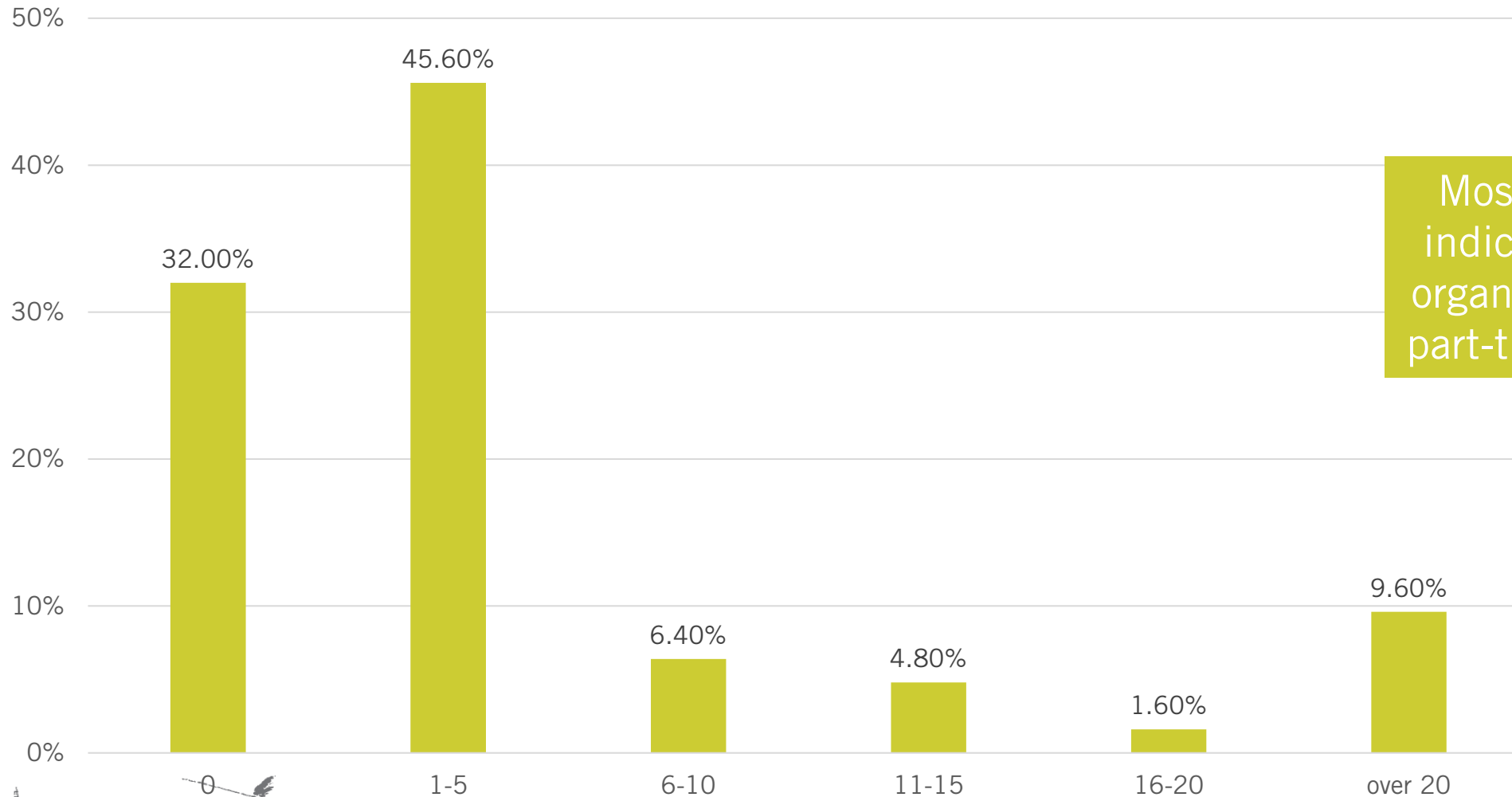
FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE COUNT



Most organizations are relatively small operations with 79% having 5 or fewer full-time



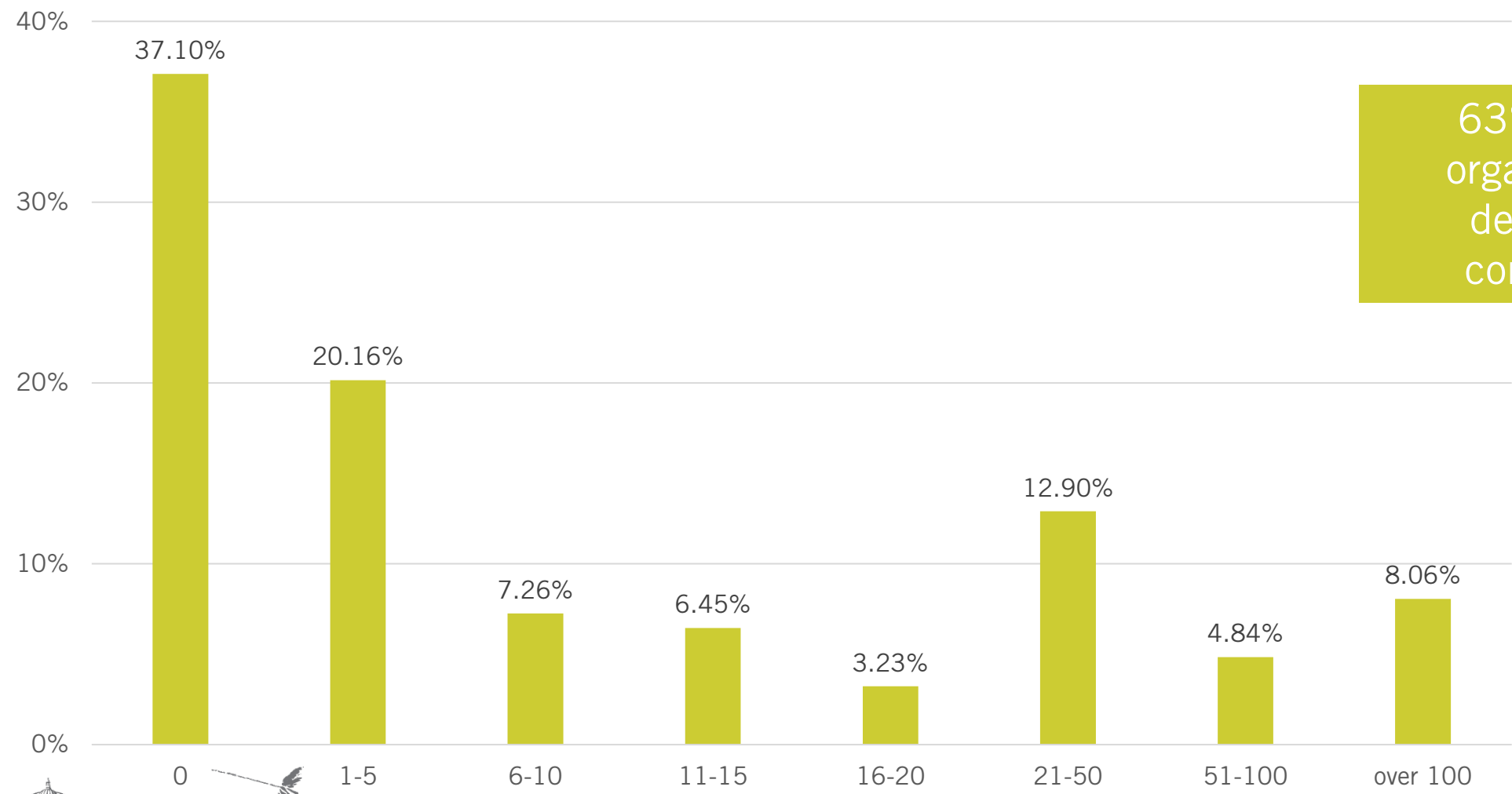
PART-TIME EMPLOYEE COUNT



Most respondents indicated that their organization has 0-5 part-time employees.

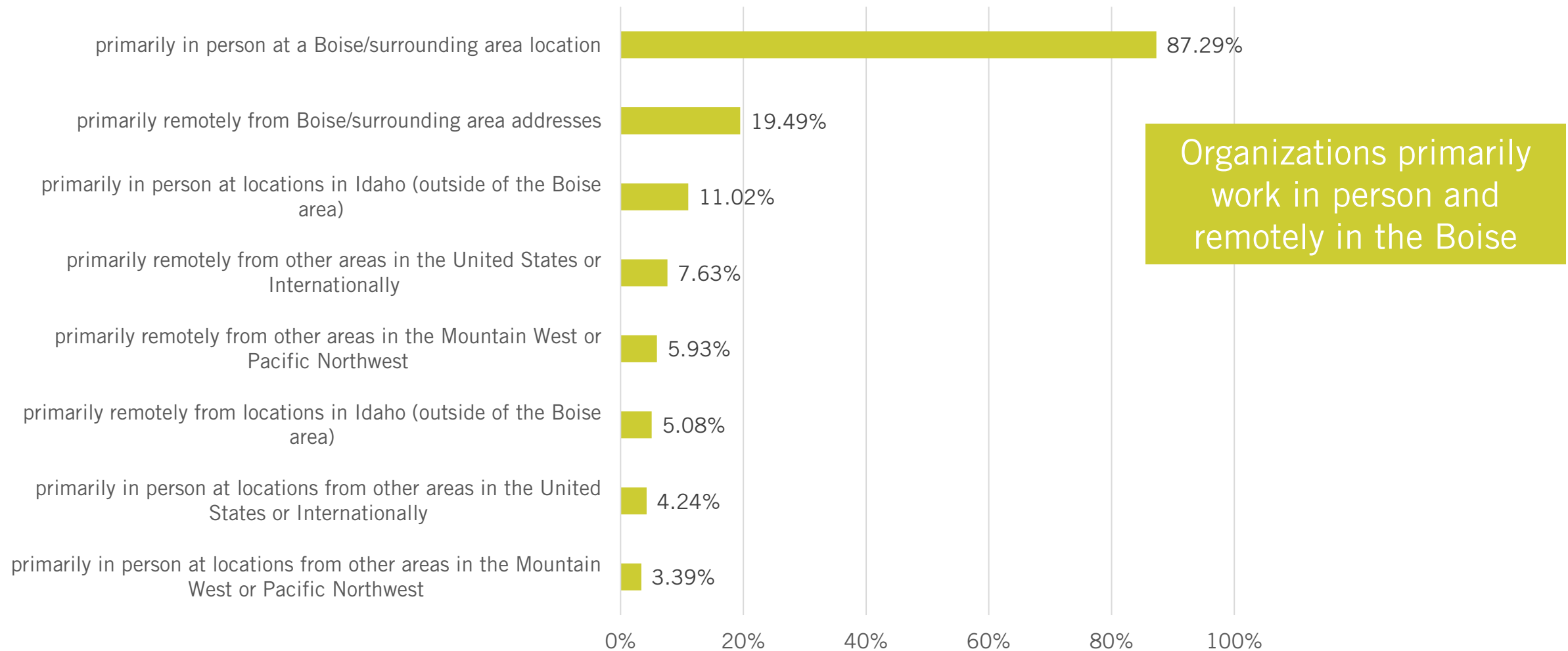


ANNUAL VOLUNTEER COUNT

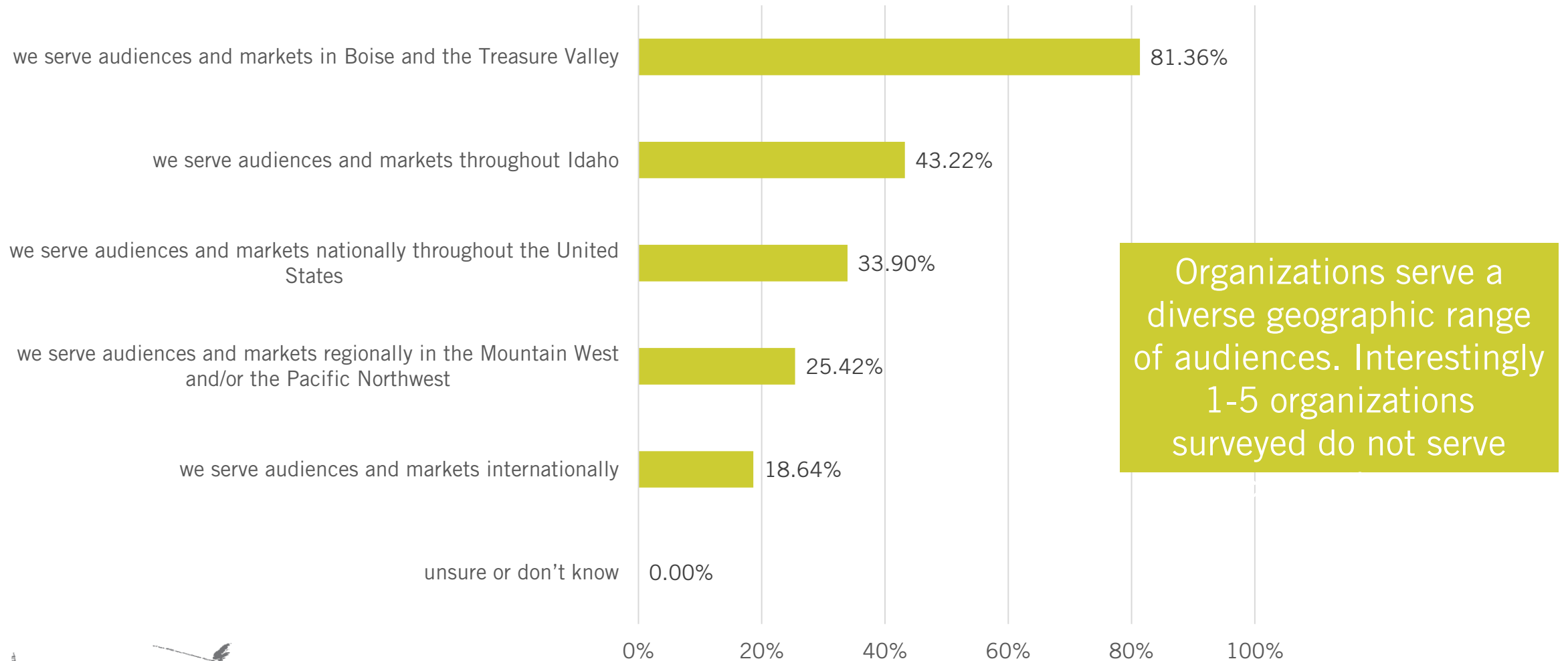


63% of arts organizations depend on community

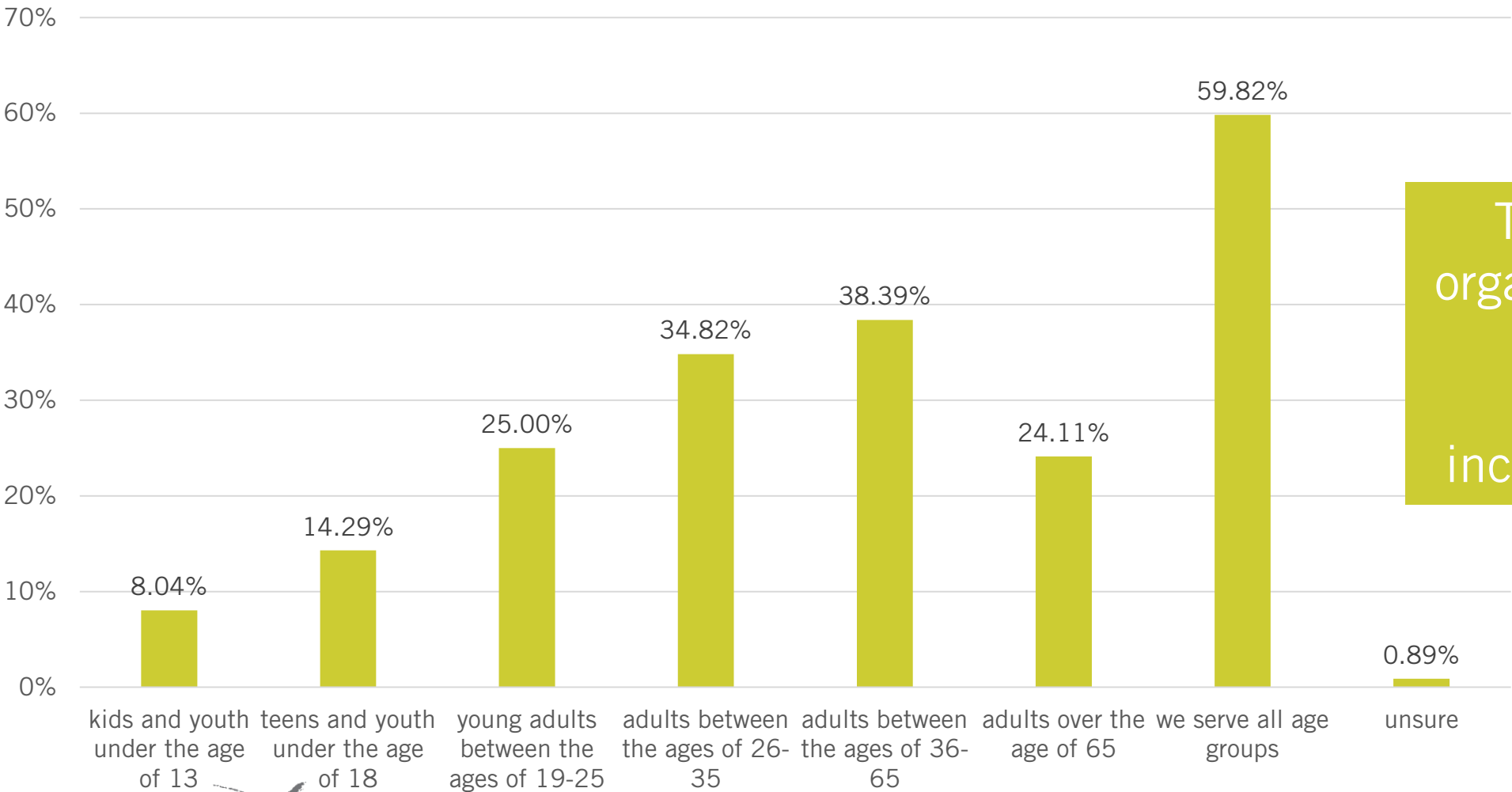
WHERE ORGANIZATIONS OPERATE



GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCES

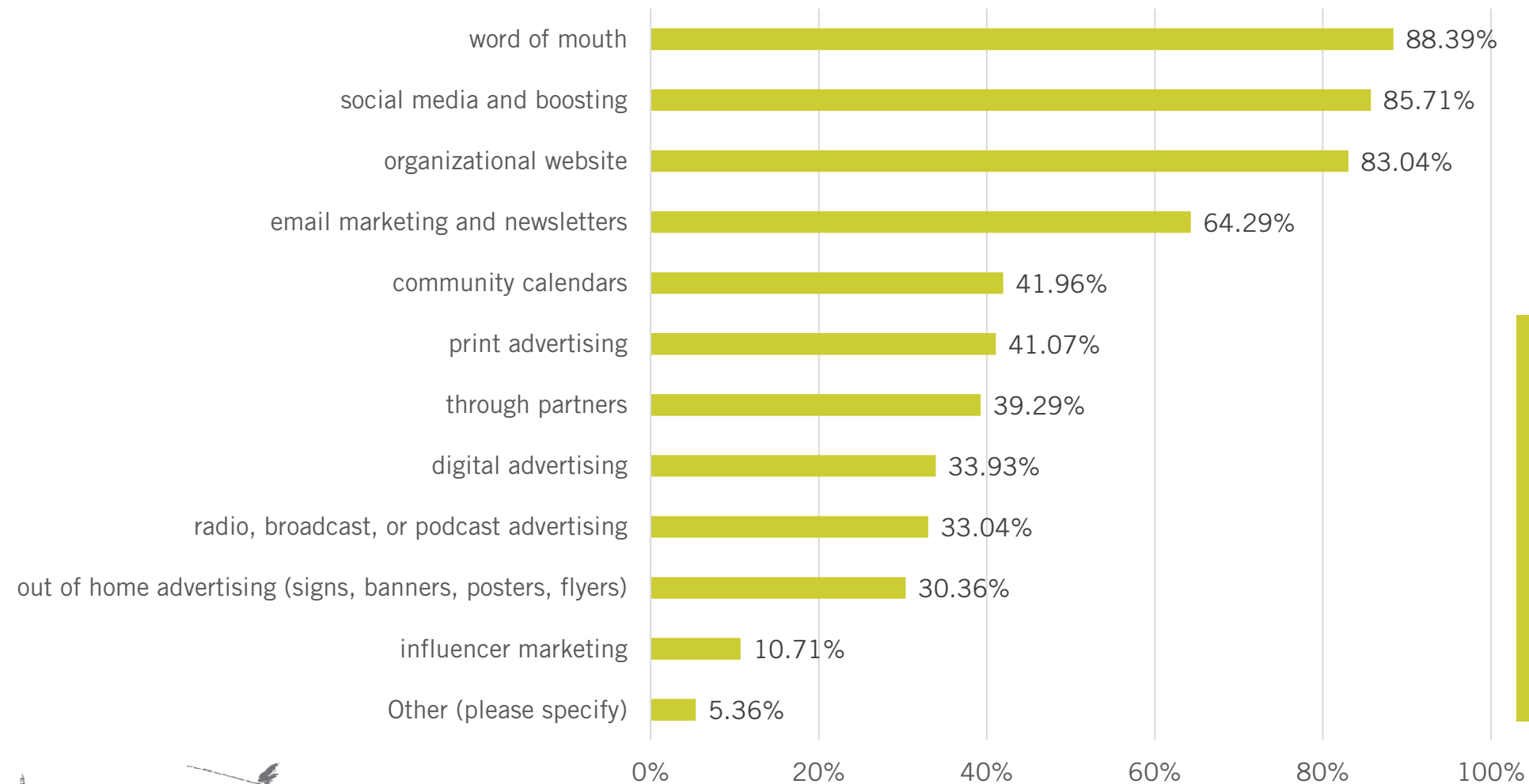


AGE GROUP FOCUS



There are fewer organizations serving specific age demographics including youth and

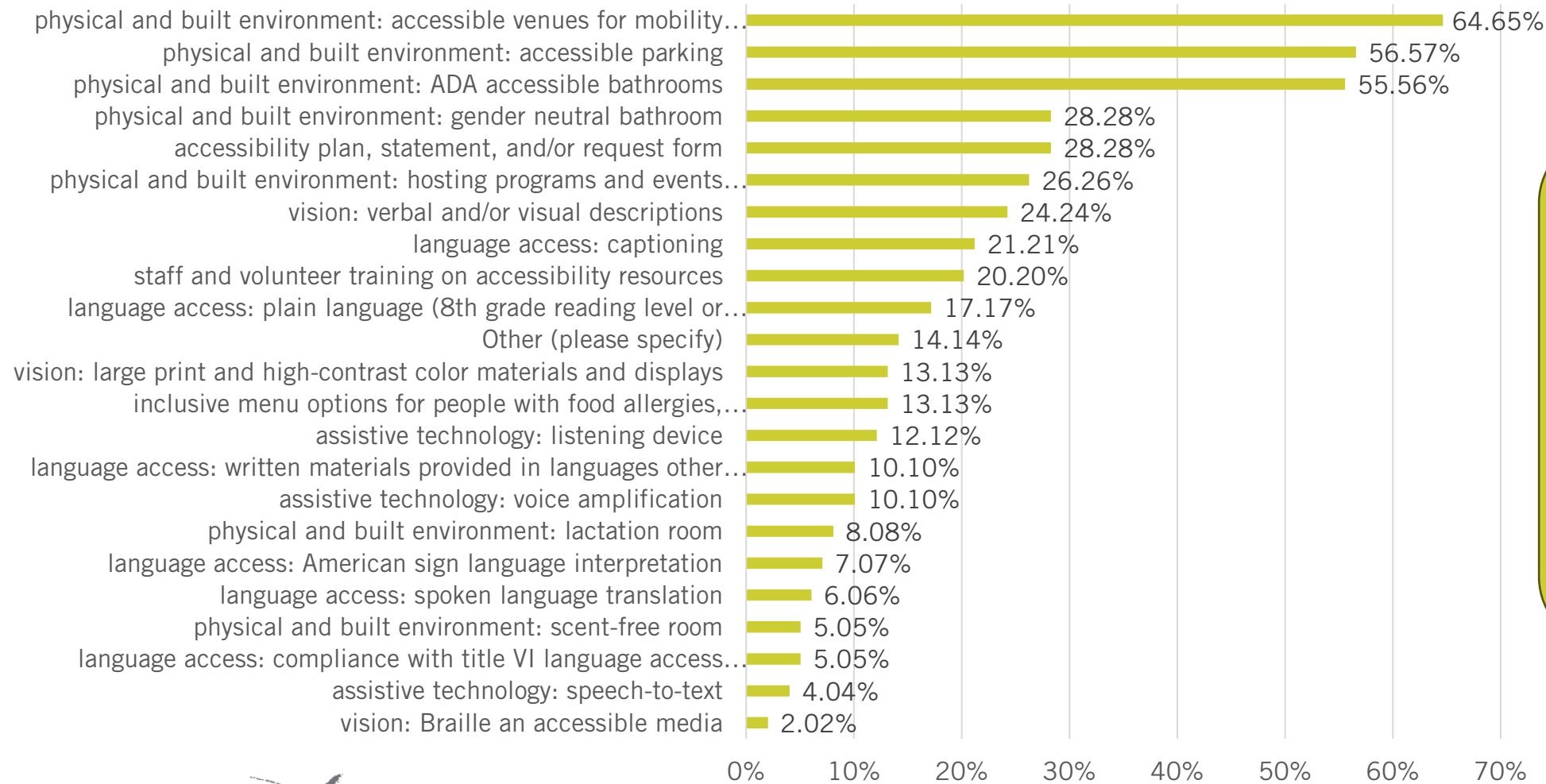
MARKETING STRATEGIES



Other responses included:

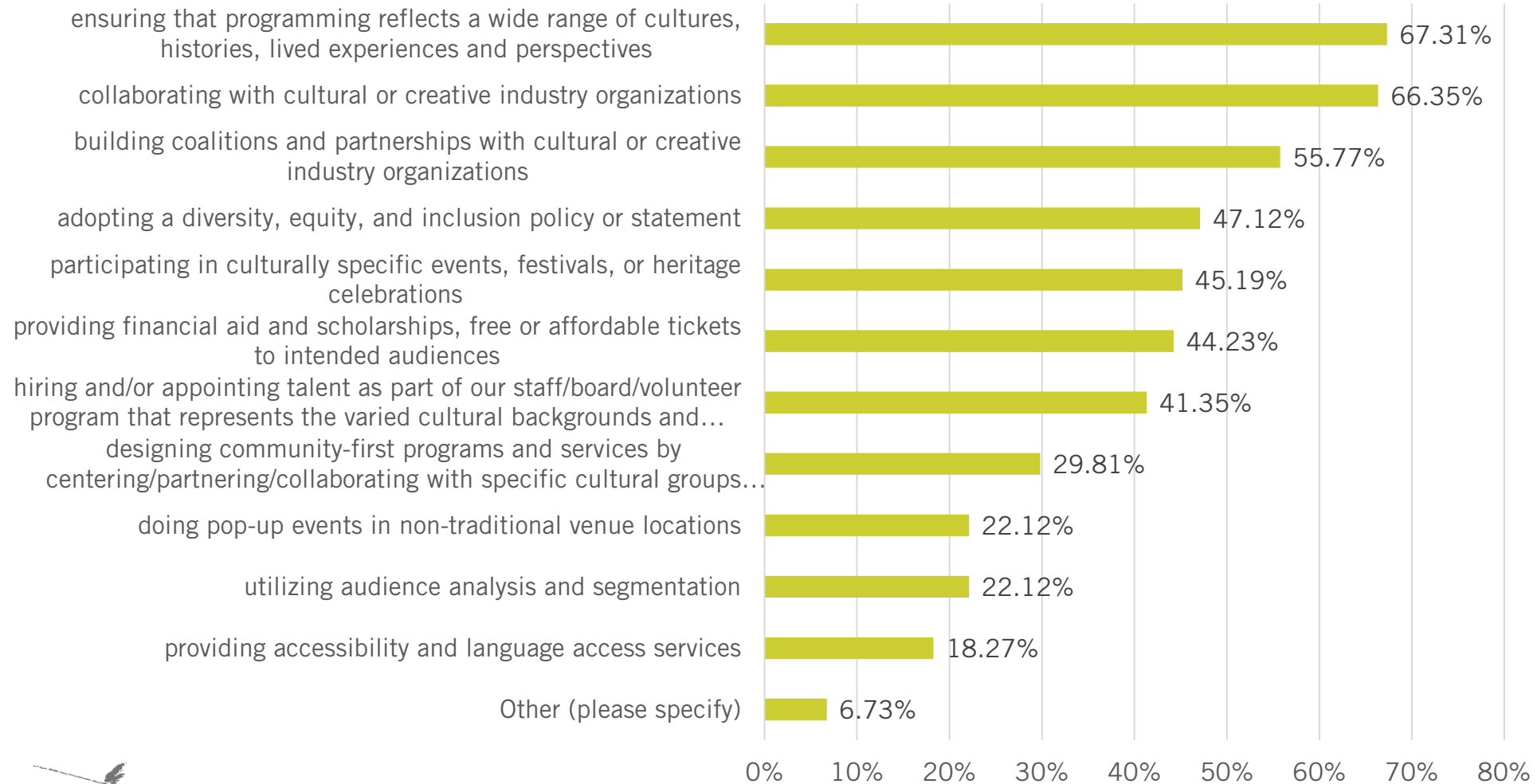
- *Community Events*
- *Flyers*
- *Philanthropic Interests*

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGIES

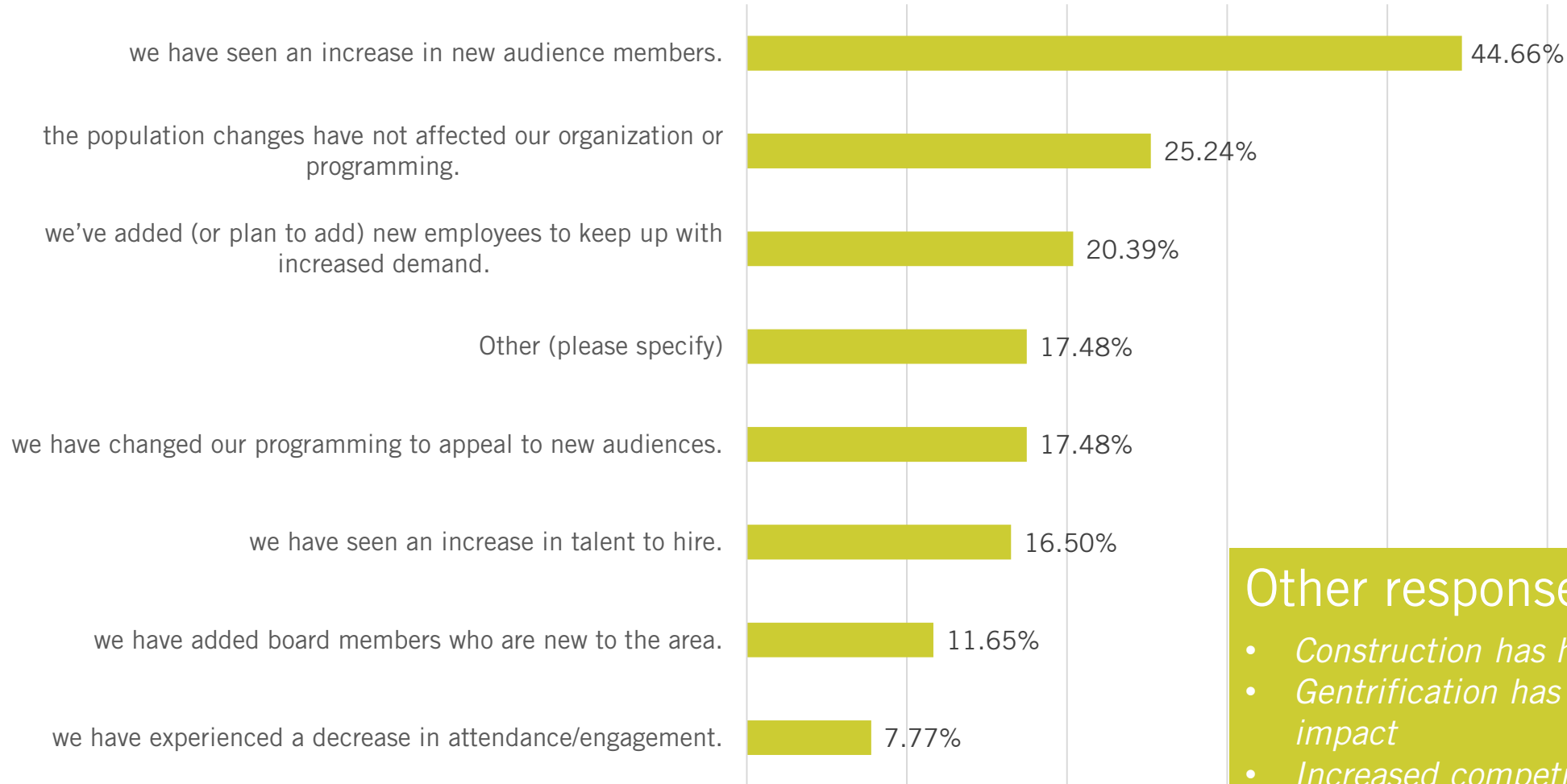


“Our art making process is entirely focused on accessibility. However, we need more funding to make our audience experience equally accessible.”

INCLUSIVITY STRATEGIES



POPULATION INCREASE IMPACTS



Other responses included:

- *Construction has had a negative impact*
- *Gentrification has had a negative impact*
- *Increased competition in the arts*
- *Not applicable (outside of Boise)*



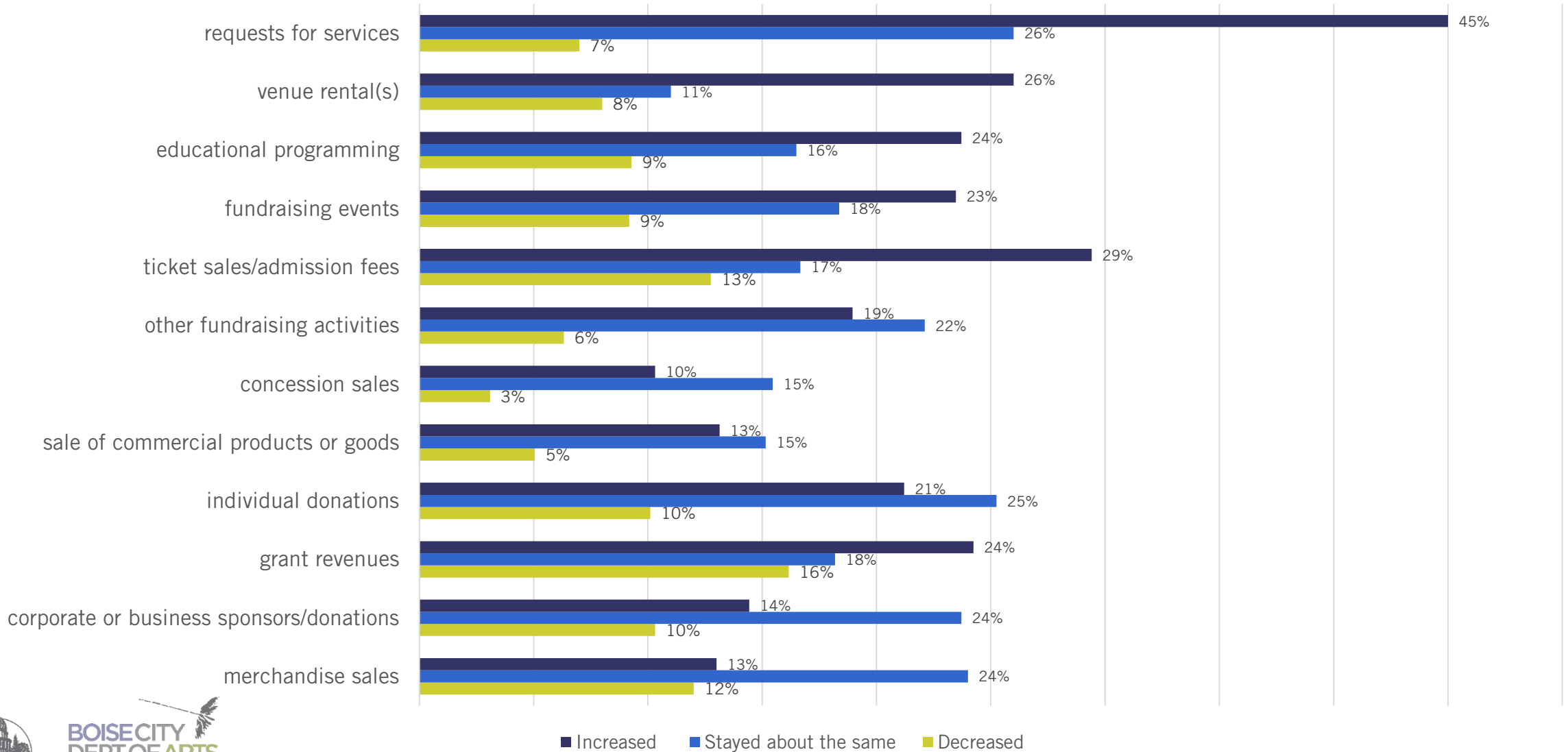
COMMUNITY TRENDS

- Audiences are looking for **more diverse options**, i.e. offered to different age ranges, various art forms, increase in Spanish language offerings, different cultural expression, events located in spaces outside of downtown Boise
- Audiences want **interactive experiences**, i.e. where they learn to dance or act, or engage with the performers in some way
- Interest in **live music** has increased; music scene is growing rapidly.
- Interest and support of **public art** is growing
- Awareness of the **value of film production** is increasing
- Audiences are becoming **more selective**
- **Marketing for arts organizations is more fractured** with traditional methods like newspapers not covering the arts; communication reaches smaller audiences.
- **Art cooperatives** and shared creative spaces like the Common Well, Surel's Place are drawing attention
- **Maker markets** and spaces are gaining traction
- **Volunteerism** opportunities in the arts, especially community-based events
- Audiences are interested in **historical content** in cultural production

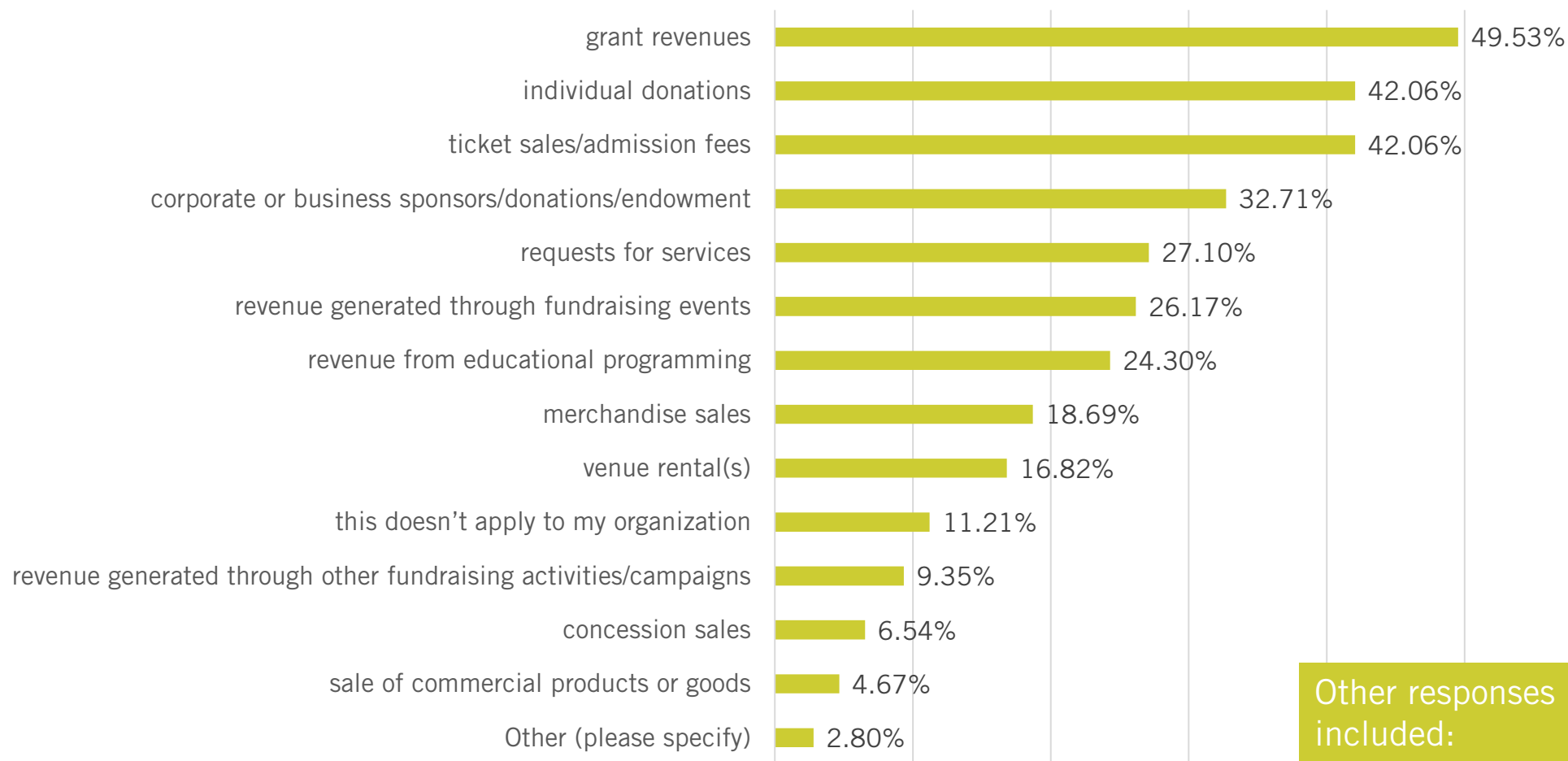
Down Trends:

- Small theater companies and school theater are hurting (rehearsal space hard to find)
- Less general interest in the arts overall (not recovered fully from pandemic)
- Art galleries and art purchases are down

FUNDING CHANGES SINCE 2022



TOP REVENUE STREAMS



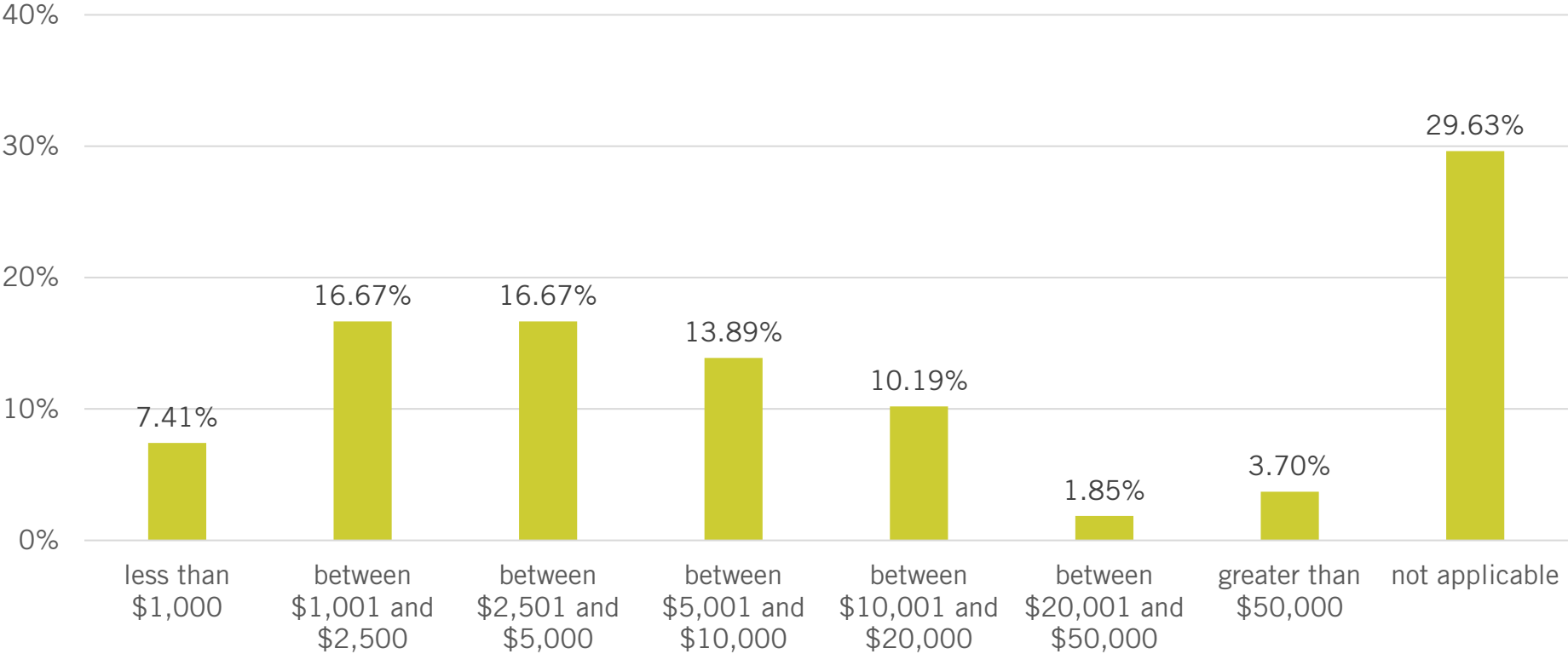
Other responses included:

- *Film Submissions*
- *State Funding*



GRANT FUNDING MINIMUM

What is the minimum amount of grant funding that would make it meaningful and worth the time to apply?

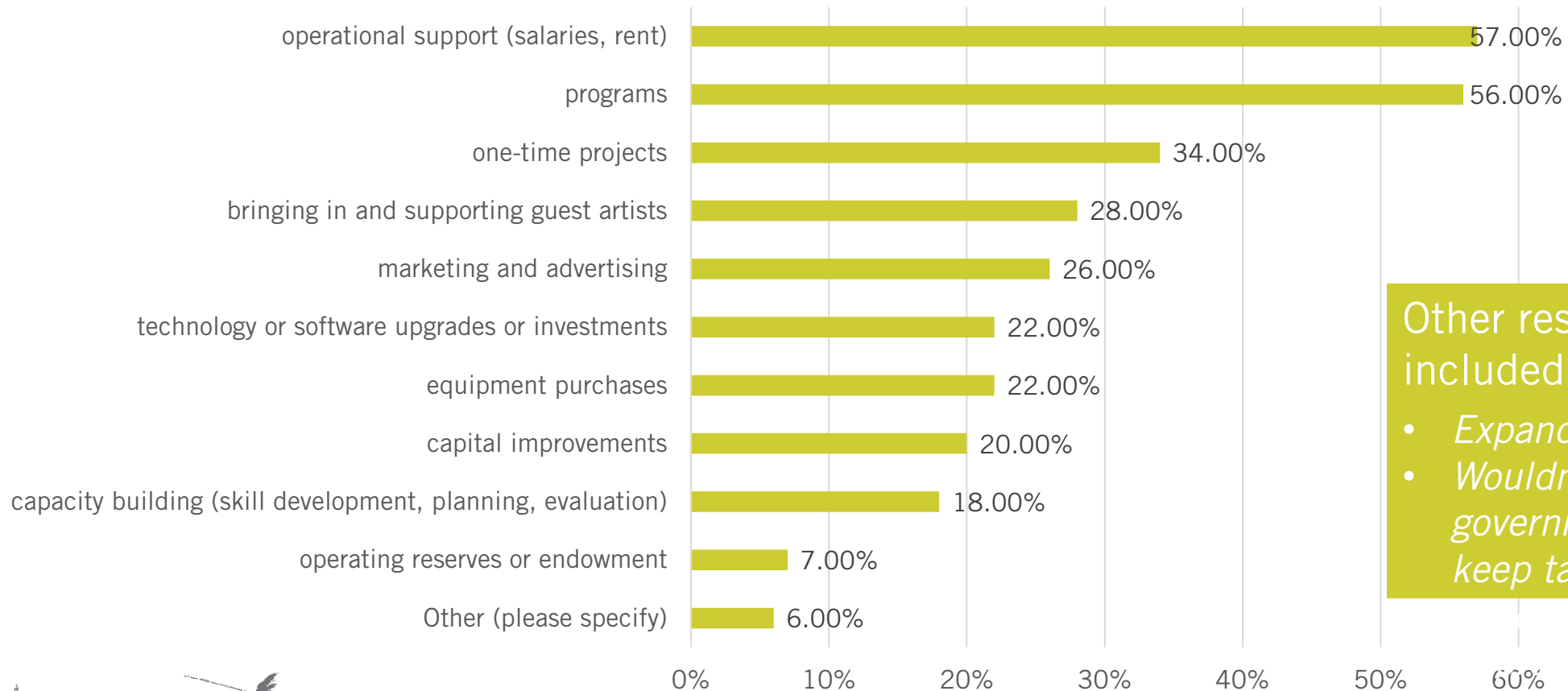


Over half (54%) of organizations felt that grants under \$10,000 were meaningful and worth applying for.

30% of organizations are not applying for grants – which we assume to be creative industries like architecture and

DESIRED AREAS FOR FUNDING

If your organization received a pool of additional funding, what areas would it most meaningfully impact? (Please select only your top three choices)



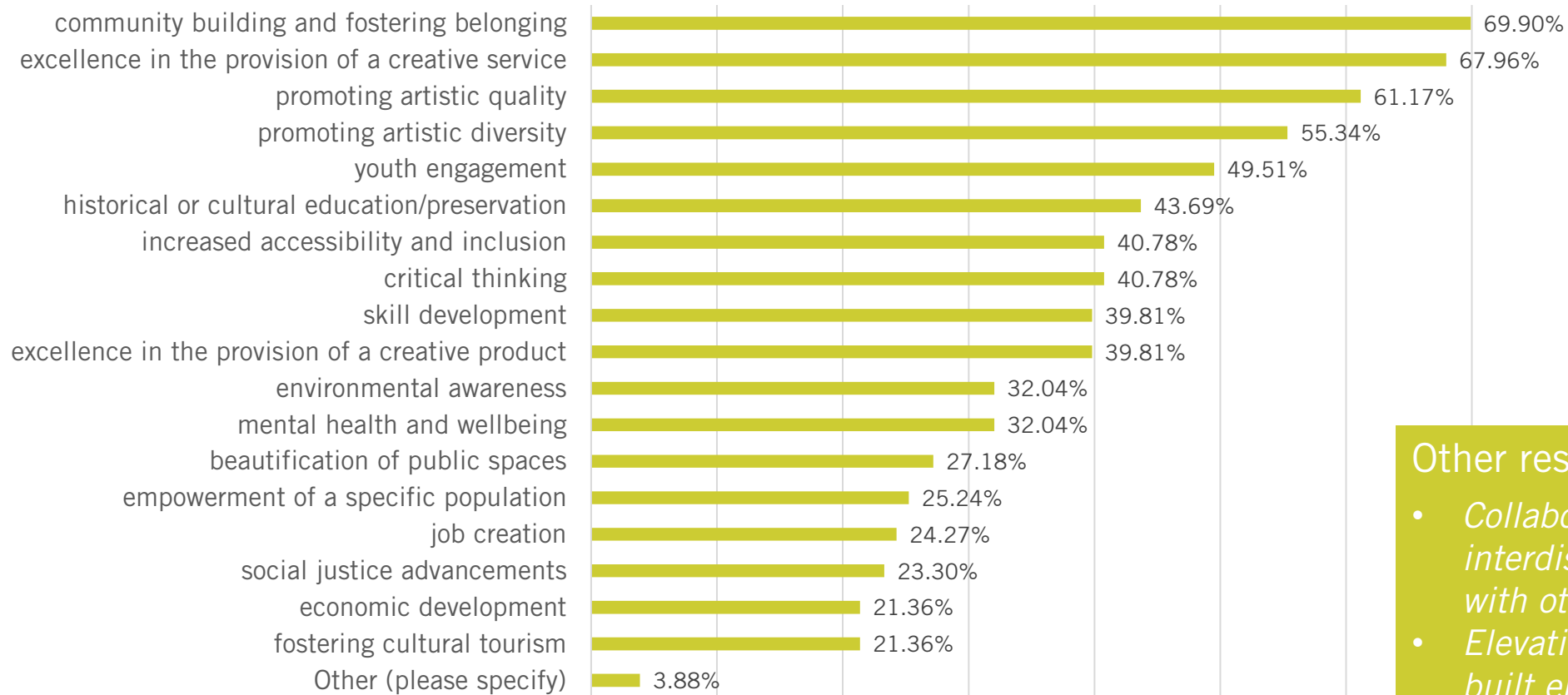
Other responses included:

- *Expand geographic reach*
- *Wouldn't use government funds to keep taxes low*



COMMUNITY IMPACT

What specific impact does your organization/business aim to achieve within the communities you serve?



Other responses included:

- *Collaboration and interdisciplinary integration with other industries*
- *Elevating the quality of the built environment*
- *STEM Education*



ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESSES

Successes within respondent organizations were largely centered around the following areas:

- Programming expansion/improvements (25)
- Community recognition and engagement (23)
- Renovated, completed, or adaptively used facilities and/or capital (13)
- Collaborative partnership (13)
- Staff expansion (11)
- Philanthropic, DEI and policy/advocacy efforts (11)
- Internal procedural and organizational updates (10)
- Budget/revenue increase (7)
- Awards and recognition (6)
- Valuable space (3)
- Execute the organization's mission (3)
- Landscape and urban beautification (3)
- Capital campaigns (3)



ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

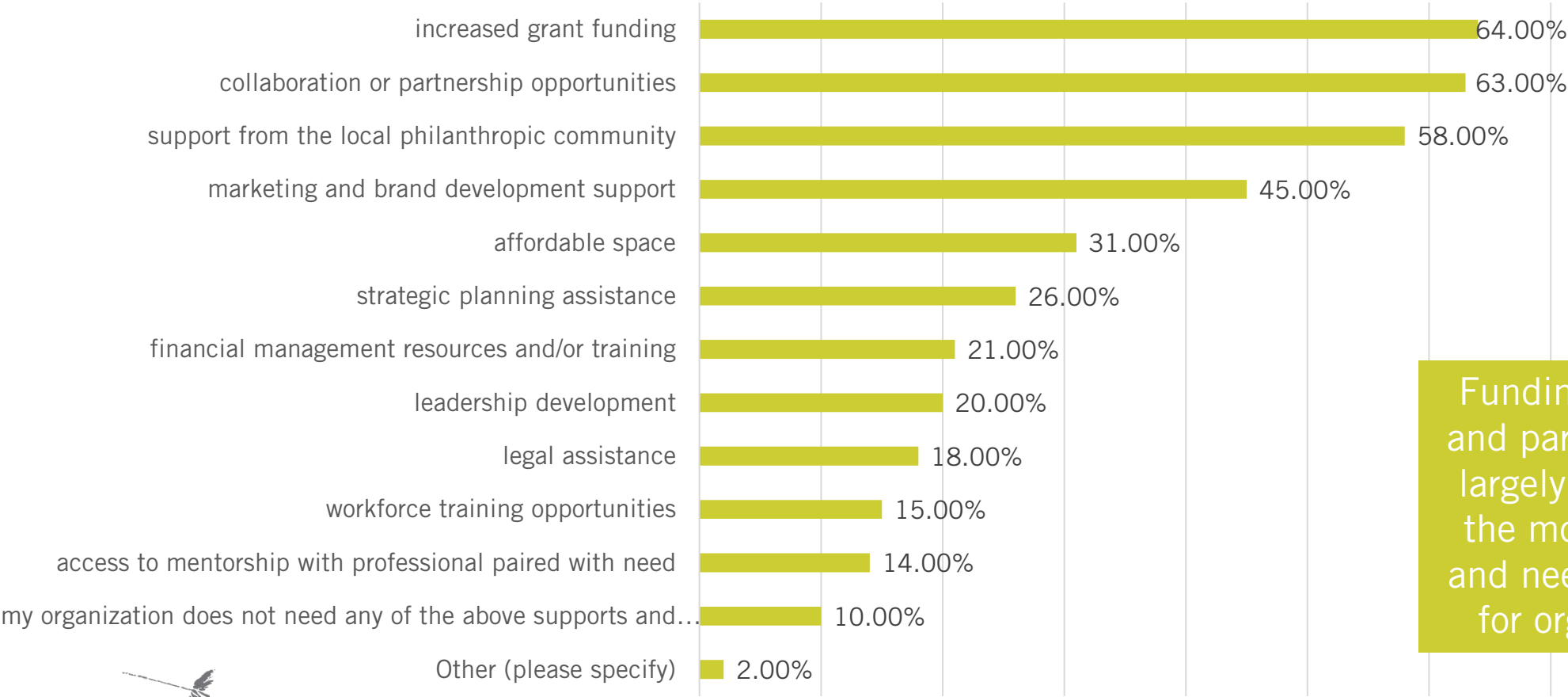
Organizational challenges were centered around the following themes:

- Financial stability (47)
- Need increased salaries / added capacity (14)
- Lack of space / Low-cost facilities (14)
- Public education and engagement / attendance (10)
- Advertising and marketing (8)
- Need improved donor base engagement (7)
- Grant writing (5)
- Lack of qualified, diverse hiring candidates and artists (4)
- Political landscape of Idaho (4)
- High construction costs and lack of laborers (3)
- Lack of time (2)
- Volunteers (2)
- Operational expansion (2)
- Expanded language access (1)
- Lack of RFP / competition-based awards (1)
- Too much competition in a small market (1)
- Weather and smoke for outdoor events (1)



SUPPORTS TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES

What resources, training or other support would help your organization address challenges and capacity issues?

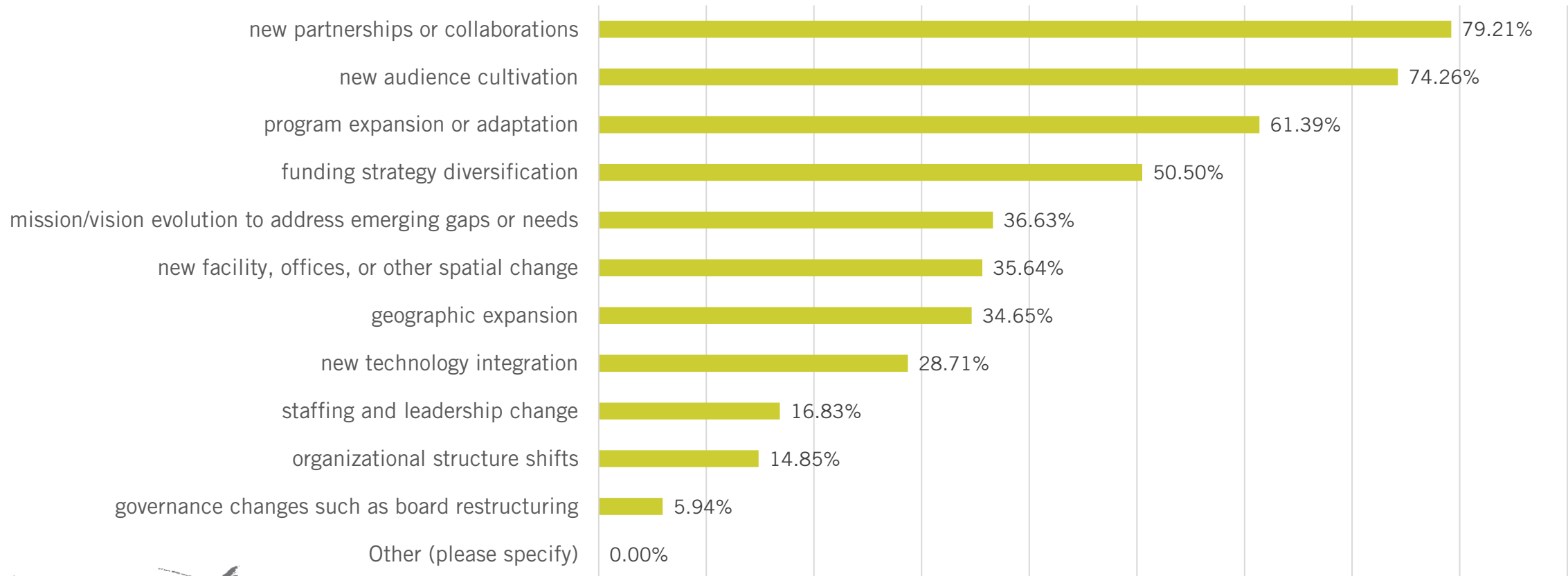


Funding, promotion and partnership were largely identified as the most impactful and needed supports for organizational



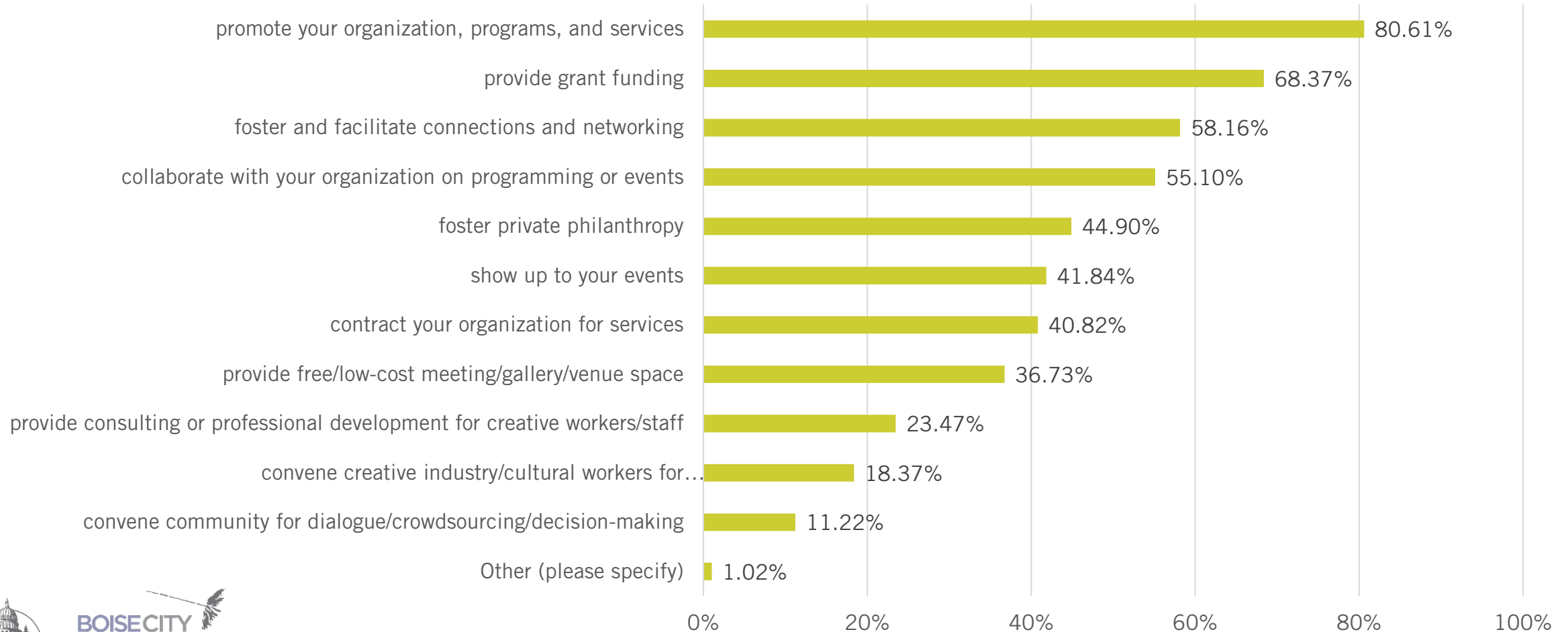
DESIRED ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

In what ways would you like to see your organization/business evolve or grow in the coming years? (Select all that apply)



HOW CAN A&H HELP ORGANIZATIONS?

Top ways respondent organizations would like to receive support from Arts and History



HOW IS A&H DOING?

How well is the City of Boise's Department of Arts & History doing in the following categories/service areas?



WHAT DO ORGANIZATIONS WANT?

- Public space and venues for art programming, i.e. invest in the Linen District, performance spaces, black box theater (15)
- Ways to increase collaboration and connection among community partners, i.e. for-profit creative industries, independent film, construction, Indigenous Tribes, design and planning (14)
- Increased focus on providing funding, grants, and connections to philanthropy (11)
- Provide more support, i.e. small organizations, teachers/mentors, STEM, minority populations (6)
- Investment into a wide range of varied public art (6)
- Increased community outreach and engagement (4)
- Professional development trainings (3)
- Increase historic focus (2)
- Accounting, legal, and accessibility consulting services (2)
- Expanded strategy, i.e. music, yearly growth strategy (2)
- Youth-related programming (1)
- BIPOC employees in the Department (1)
- More diverse public performances, especially free options (1)
- More input from artists during architectural development (1)
- Healthcare planning for creative workers (1)



WHAT ELSE?

- Respondents expressed a high level of gratitude towards A&H Department.
- Increased visibility/promotion of who is operating in the creative space, especially for women, cultural arts.
- A desire to see expanded funding opportunities with less performance-based outcomes, including donor base expansion.
- Increased local collaboration, especially outside of Boise and in the Greater Treasure Valley.
- A reflection that art is for everyone and is vital to creating community connection.



NEXT STEPS



- Assessment and Report on Qualitative Answers
- Listening Sessions with artists, public members, and organizational representatives
- One-on-one Interviews
- Cultural plan writing, document review & editing

PUBLIC ART PROJECT UPDATES



BOISE CITY
DEPT OF ARTS
& HISTORY



ONE MAN'S TRASH ARTPORT 2025: COMPLETE

- Local Boise State Student and artist Grace Ott installed this year's rotation of ArtPort sculpture on the 1000 Block of Grove Street
- An introspective on the birds that adapt to our landfills and how their ecosystem has consequently evolved. Responding to the statistic from the City of Boise's Climate Action Roadmap describing the average amount of waste from each Boise household per month, Ott's work features a Cooper's hawk on its nest atop a 138-pound pile of trash.



Photo credit: Wytska Van Keulen

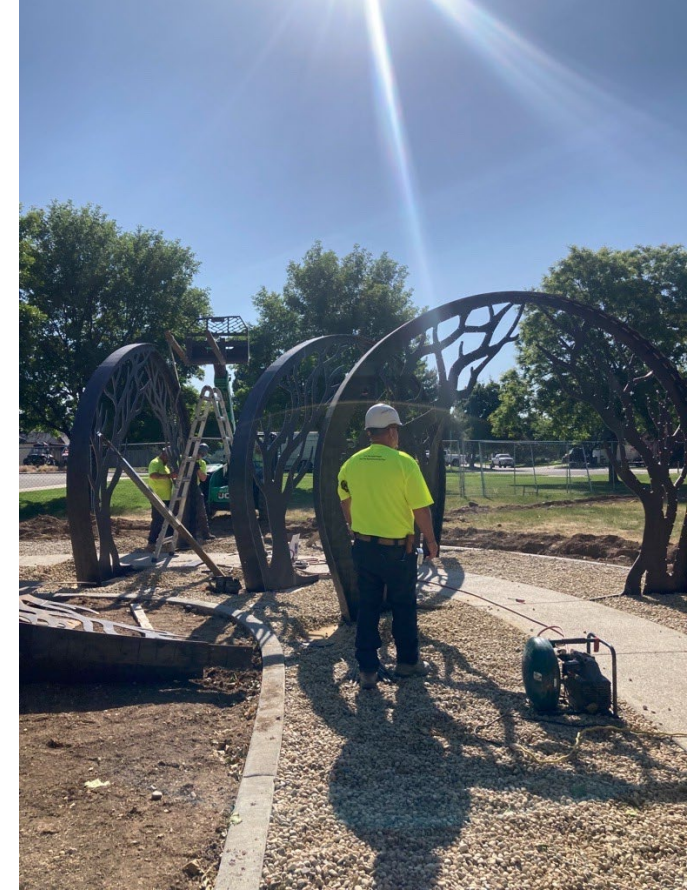
CONFLUENCE AT WARM SPRINGS GOLF COURSE: UPDATE

- Artist Andie Kelly installing mural June 16- July 3, 2025
- Located where the Warm Springs Golf Course pathway meets the Greenbelt, this mural reflects the natural flow of the Boise River and nearby geothermal springs. Deep blues and soft greys evoke water and steam, while golden currant blossoms represent native riparian plant life. With fluid forms and a soothing palette, the piece invites a quiet moment of connection to Boise's unique natural landscape.



PASSAGE AT REDWOOD PARK: UPDATE

Passage, a public artwork by James Peterson of Art + Contraptions is near completion. Construction and installation of the work is wrapping up in Redwood Park and the artwork will be accessible for the June 7th Ustick in Bloom event. The project will be highlighted through brief remarks during the event.



PROJECT BACKGROUND

- Funded by the Neighborhood Investment Program and the City of Boise's Percent for Art Ordinance
- Redwood Park in residential area and hosts the West Valley Neighborhood's *Ustick in Bloom* event
- The selection committee developed shared thoughts on the identity of their community:
 - Nostalgia
 - A neighborhood/community redefining its identity amid rapid urban development. Acknowledge this tension between its past and future
 - Desire to honor the history of this neighborhood/community
 - Desire for iconic, yet approachable public art, possibly with interactive elements
 - A community anchored by their roots, but inspired by opportunities for growth
 - The park is high traffic, used by neighbors for meeting spots, dog walks, and has a bike path at one edge



"Passage draws its inspiration from the beauty of nature and the delightful experience of strolling among apple orchards, paying homage to the agricultural heritage of Ustick. This artwork aims to weave a sense of tranquility into a narrative that vividly mirrors the past and present-day growth of the area. *Passage* is clad in vibrant hues reminiscent of apples, beets, and the changing colors of tree leaves at Redwood Park, offering a beautiful opportunity for all to come together and bask in community as friends, family and neighbors."

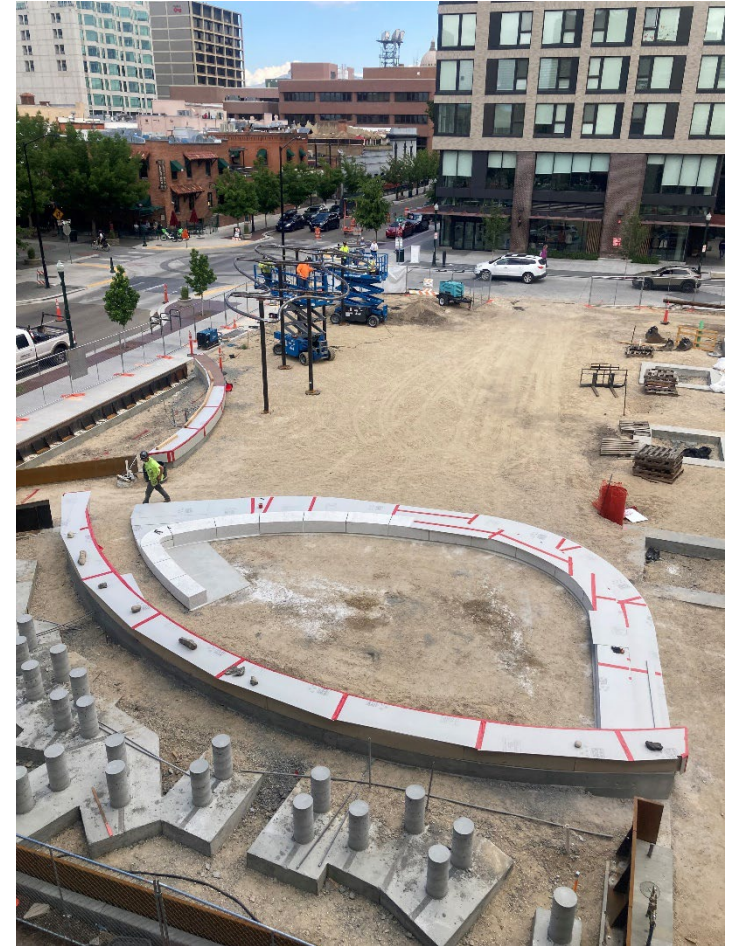
Materials:

- Laser Cut Weathered Steel Sheets
- Acrylic Panels
- Dichroic Film
- LED Lighting



KAIXO CORNER PUBLIC ART PROJECT: UPDATE

Artist team Hua Studio (Huameng Yu and Louis Chinn) are continuing to collaborate with CCDC, the site design team, architects, engineers, and the construction team as their works complete fabrication and begin to installation at the site. The artists are in Boise to assist with the installation process and will be in town through the dedication of Kaixo Corner (July 28 at 4:00 pm).



KAIXO CORNER PUBLIC ART PROJECT UPDATE

The October 2024 RFQ asked applicants to consider the following statements:

- The new public space intends to recognize and celebrate the history, contributions, and cultures of the diverse populations from the Old Boise neighborhood.
- There were many immigrant people in this area whose stories are not currently visible, but whose impact on Boise was indelible.
- Immigration in Boise mirrored larger immigration trends throughout the United States but were also impacted by specific local urban development patterns.

A selection panel consisting of a City Council member, Arts & History Commissioner, CCDC representative, local artist, and local community member, selected a new artist in December 2024.



Artists Louis Chinn and Huameng Yu are inspired by the rich and storied history of Boise. The multitude of hands and cultures that have shaped and built this place over many eras has led to a layered tapestry of voices that are both visible and hidden from modern memory. It is a place defined by a spirit of independence, resilience, and legacies of forging unlikely paths forward. The artworks at Kaixo Corner create a map of migration, culture, and ecology, inviting visitors to journey through both space and time, and across stories, memories, and dreams. These artworks honor the people who shaped this neighborhood and embedded their presence into the culture and the land.

- Materials:
- Sky River - Steel, aluminum, alcohol ink, polymer paint
- Ancestral Pillars + Storylines – Sandstone, concrete, brass
- Dreamscape – Brass, LED lights



BOISE VISUAL CHRONICLE 2025: UPDATE

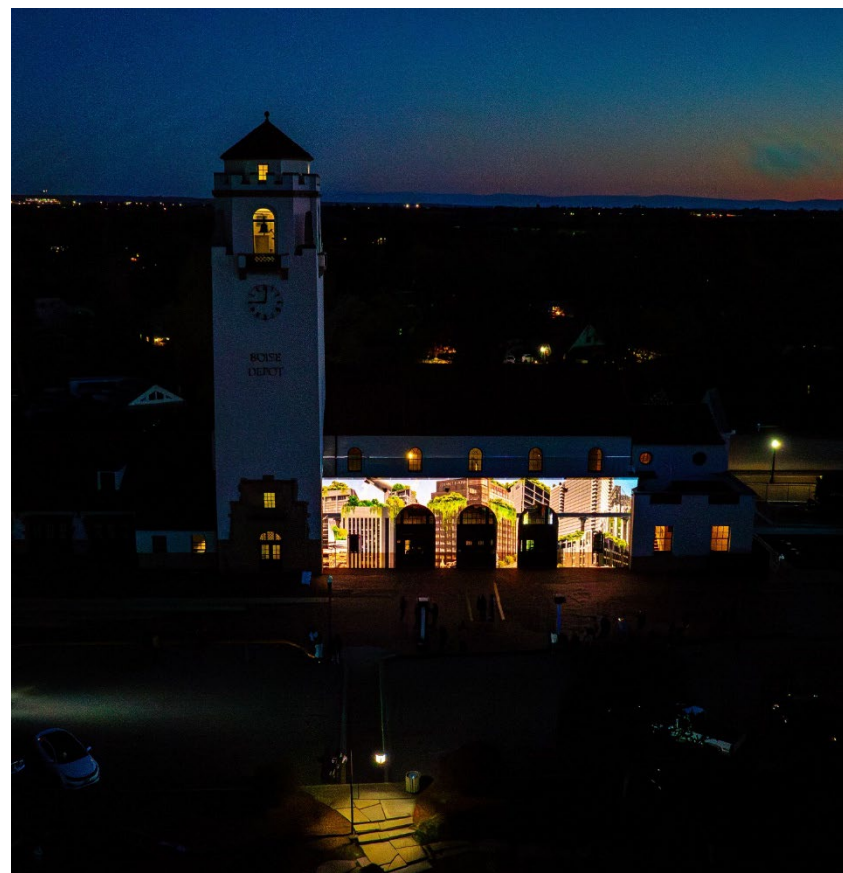
The BVC will take the form of an exhibition this year, opening in August 2025 and installed at the Erma Hayman House. This will include a jury that will award 1st, 2nd, and 3rd awards, as well as a purchase award. Each artist selected for the exhibition by the jury will receive a small stipend for framing/display and will be able to offer their works for sale during the exhibition.

Eight artists were selected by the jury and have begun work.



BOISE DEPOT 100 PROJECTION: COMPLETE

- Artist team Annika Kalac and Will Miller were selected for digital projection art for temporary display on the Boise Depot across 4 days. They collaborated with a contracted projection professional and developed artwork for display that varied daily. Their artwork was also informed by an activity at last year's Open Streets event.
- The artists collaborated with a projection consultant, Casey Nova of Lumenarius.
- Their artwork was successfully displayed during the Boise Depot Centennial celebration event from April 13, 2025 – April 16, 2025, gathering a crowd for the “Flip the Switch” kick-off event, as well as each evening for nightly viewing.
- The Depot Centennial event saw an estimated 7,000 visitors total, with about 150 visitors each night, just for the projection.



LINEN FENCE 2025: COMPLETE

- Local artist Liz Hilton completed work for the 2025 Linen Fence
- Made from vintage and modern publications, acrylic paint, charcoal, and epoxy resin on wood panel, this artwork reflects the passage of time through the evolution of the age of the materials and the progression of walking chickens. The work encourages viewers to look back at where we have been so we can more insightfully choose where we go from here.



DAUGHTERS OF THE DUST: COMPLETE

- Gracieux Baraka's vinyl murals, *Daughters of the Dust*, were installed at the Erma Hayman House and Main Library. The artwork will be displayed for 6 months.
- Baraka saw his sister Francine reflected in the life of Erma Hayman. Both artworks reflect the lives these women, and the ways we construct identity.

