

# KENTUCKY ARTS IN DISASTER



A N I M P A C T R E P O R T



*This report is submitted in honor of those who lost lives, homes, workspaces, and livelihoods due to the natural disasters in Kentucky in 2021 and 2022. May the findings in this report help support arts communities in their path toward recovery.*

# Acknowledgements

This report is a collection of stories and data from Kentucky artists, craftspeople, artisans, arts managers, teaching artists, arts community leaders, arts board volunteers, arts funders, and governmental agency representatives—all affected by the compounding events of natural disasters in Kentucky in 2021 and 2022. Their experiences were collected between January 2023 through January 2024 and resulted in the findings and recommendations in this report.

**Sincere gratitude and thanks** are extended to those who gave their time and energy to share their stories, experiences, and insights through the study's survey, interviews, and focus groups. This report would not have been possible without them.

**Special thanks** to Brent Björkman at the University of Western Kentucky's Kentucky Museum in Bowling Green, KY; Lacy Hale at EpiCenter Arts in Whitesburg, KY; and Sarah Kate Morgan at Hindman Settlement School in Hindman, KY, for coordinating and hosting in-person focus groups for the report.

**Additional thanks** to Dr. Rachel Shane (Chair & Professor, University of Kentucky Department of Arts Administration) for her guidance throughout the research process; Melissa Bond, (University of Kentucky Extension Director for Community & Economic Development) for her insights and focus group leadership; and Tom Claeson (Director, Performing Arts Readiness Project) and Janet Newcomb (Executive Director, National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response) for their guidance on the research design.

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**Statistical analysis** was conducted in partnership with Dr. Gregory Hawk, Assistant Research Professor with the Predictive Analytics and Data Science (PADS) Hub at the University of Kentucky.

The University of Kentucky's Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved all data collection methods that involved human participants.

## Editors

Emily Moses, who was instrumental in providing relief and recovery resources to arts communities in the wake of the disaster events during her tenure at the Kentucky Arts Council.

Dr. Krista Lang Blackwood, arts executive, educator, and disaster survivor.

## Disclaimer

The information included in the Kentucky Arts in Disaster: An Impact Report made every effort to use present, current, and correct information as of April 2024. It does not represent legal guidance and is provided here for informational purposes. Federal and state rules, regulations, and processes are subject to change.

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## About the Cover Artwork

**Cover Artwork:** *I Leave the Past to Set Me Free* by Lacy Hale

**Artist:** **Lacy Hale**, was born in Southeastern Kentucky. At the age of five, she knew that she wanted to be an artist. At 18, she attended the Pratt Institute of Art in Brooklyn, NY. At 20, she returned to Southeastern Kentucky to pursue her professional artistic career. Hale has exhibited widely throughout Kentucky, Virginia, and New York.

Hale's work was included in a traveling Smithsonian exhibit in 2012. In 2018, Lacy received the Eastern Kentucky Artist Impact Award. She was a 2017 Special Grant recipient from Great Meadows Foundation, a 2018 nominee for the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painting Award, a 2016 Tanne Foundation Award recipient, a 2015 Nominee for the Joan Mitchell Foundation Emerging Artist Award, and a 2015 and 2020 recipient of the Kentucky Foundation for Women's Artist Enrichment Grant. She was awarded Appalachian Artist of the Year in 2021 and 2022. In 2023 she was a Johnson Fellowship nominee, and she is a 2024 United States Artist fellowship nominee. Her murals can be found all over the state of Kentucky and Virginia. She is the creator of the No Hate in My Holler slogan and design.

Lacy is co-founder of EpiCentre Arts, a 2016 Rauschenberg Foundation Seed Grant recipient, based in Whitesburg, Kentucky. She served two years on the board of the Kentucky Arts Council. Her work has been mentioned in Time Magazine by Kentucky author Silas House. Her artwork resides in the collections of Grammy Award-winning hip-hop artist Ishmael Butler and Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear, among many others.

## Artist Statement

*I Leave the Past to Set Me Free* was created from a place of wishing to heal. A couple weeks prior to the flood, I had seen this beautiful blue heron flying up and out of the river and over my car. I immediately went home and sketched it out. I knew I would make a piece of art out of it. It was such a striking and joyful scene. After the flood, the piles of debris-- pieces of my life and my neighbors'-- piled up daily. For months, these piles of people's lives would be hauled off, and the next day, there would be piles just as high. I decided to make a painting of the debris piles, the mountains with the leaves changing, and then paint out and over that scene with the beautiful blue heron across the canvas. Later, after the painting was complete, I looked up the symbolism of a blue heron and it was strength, resilience, and hope. It was just perfect.

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# Introduction

The arts can be a transformative force, providing safe spaces for reflection, growth, and comfort. This is especially true in times of disaster; murals, artworks, books, poetry, and music can provide an outlet for those who have been affected to share their stories. Artists and arts organizations, through their creative work, can sooth distressed souls and offer important respite from the worries of the mind. Yet during disasters, arts communities are often called to go even further, tasked with providing more tangible sources of comfort for a community in distress. Food. Water. Shelter.

In a disaster, the arts become part of a community's network for response. But who, or what, heals the artist? What funds support the arts center that has transformed its operations to provide basic necessities for survival? What aids arts managers in making difficult decisions about event cancellations or how to provide support services for their grieving staff and volunteers? What policies help musicians replace lost instruments or repair damaged ones? What replaces income lost when the gig economy suffers a disaster-induced recession?

These questions are essential in understanding the journey of the Kentucky artist and arts organization in the aftermath of recent disaster events.

The answers are essential for aiding arts councils, governmental agencies, and funders in formulating policies and support systems designed to assist arts communities before, during, and after disasters.

Disasters can come in many forms, from extreme natural weather events to human-made incidents. A defining factor categorizing an event as a "disaster" is when a community's resources require outside assistance to respond to those impacted by the event. Sometimes regional or state services can provide that assistance but extreme events often require federal intervention. An elected state, territory, or tribal leader asks the federal government to make a formal disaster declaration. This declaration, made by the President of the United States, officially releases financial and physical assistance through the federal government's emergency management agency, FEMA.



Between 2020 and 2022, Kentucky experienced seven federally declared natural disaster events (FEMA 2024). Two were particularly severe, with widespread, catastrophic damage and significant media attention. Both occurred within seven months of each other—the Western Kentucky tornadoes in December 2021 and Eastern Kentucky flooding in July 2022. Compounding these experiences were the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, declared a national public health emergency in March 2020, that significantly disrupted personal and professional livelihoods.

Kentucky is home to arts and cultural organizations, artisans, craftspeople, writers, visual artists, musicians, teaching artists, and arts educators that collectively hold its residents' history, traditions, and expressions. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Kentucky's arts and culture sector represents a \$6.49 billion industry, surpassing other key sectors such as the agriculture and forestry industry, which stands at \$4.7 billion.

Arts and cultural production represents 2.51% of the state's GDP and generates 50,526 wage-and salary jobs (NASAA 2024). In the wake of recent disaster events, countless arts and cultural artifacts, workspaces, and community events critical to the state's history, culture, and economy were damaged, canceled, or destroyed.

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## About the Report

The aim of this report was to

- > gather stories and information from Kentucky artists and arts organizations affected by disaster events to understand what they needed most, and
- > share their collected responses in a report that could serve as a resource for making needed and meaningful changes in supporting arts communities in times of crisis.

The report focuses on two federally declared disaster events: the December 2021 tornadoes in Western Kentucky and the July-August 2022 severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides in Eastern Kentucky.

The Kentucky counties included in the report were from the designated disaster areas declared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) following the two events, shown below in *Figures 1 and 2*.

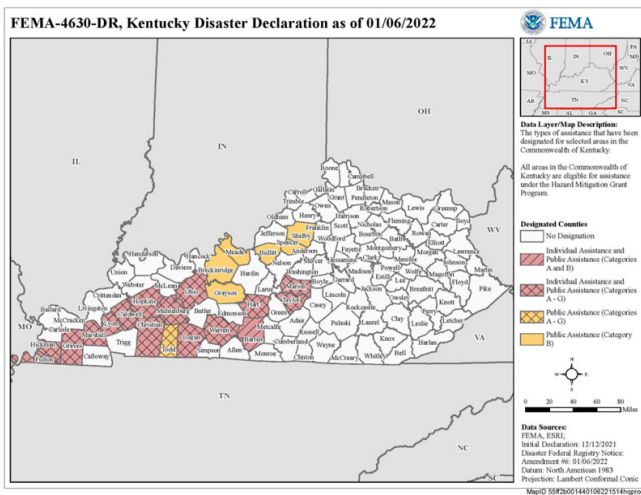


Figure 1. Western Kentucky Counties Disaster Declaration Map (FEMA 2022). 16 counties were declared eligible for FEMA Individual Assistance; 23 were declared eligible for Public Assistance.

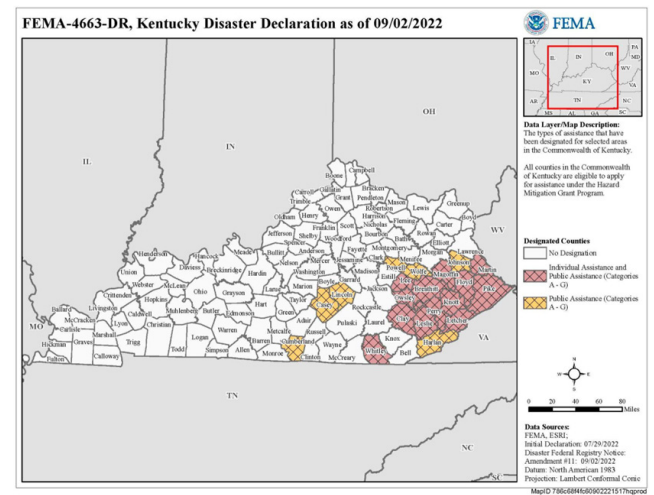


Figure 2. Eastern Kentucky Counties Disaster Declaration Map (FEMA 2022). 13 counties were declared eligible for Individual Assistance; 20 were declared eligible for Public Assistance.

To inform the report, a study was designed to gather information on:

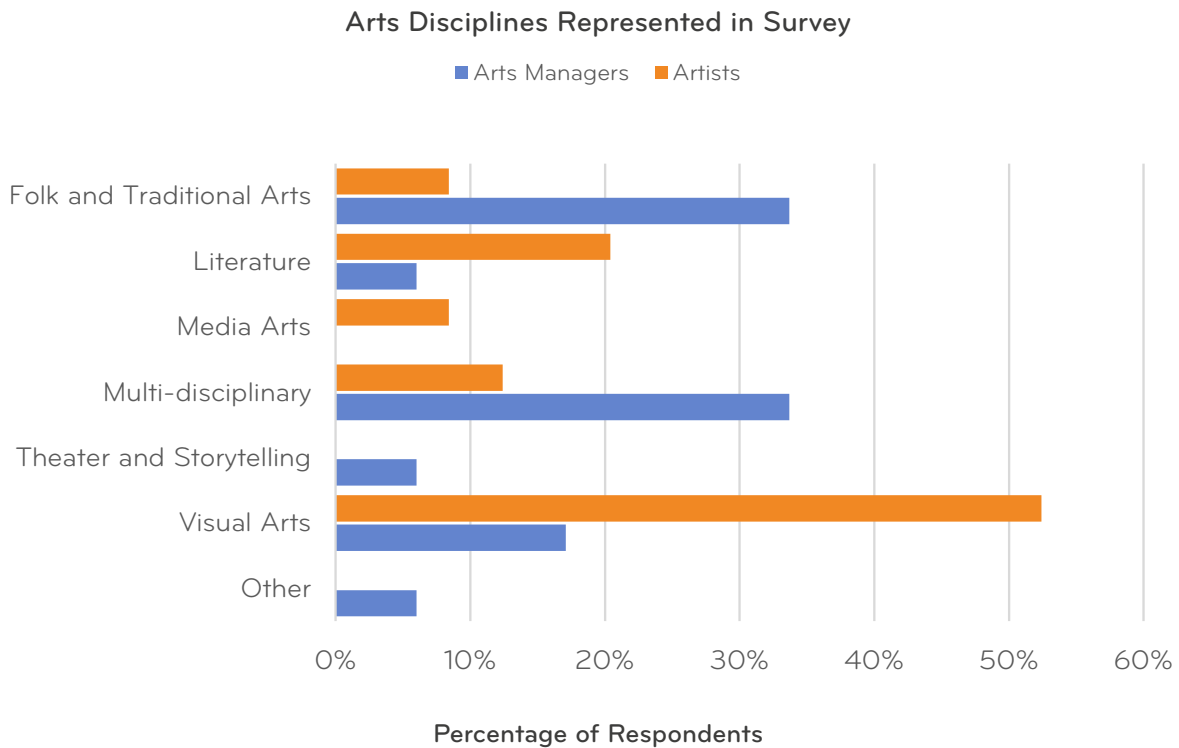
- > pre-disaster levels of preparedness,
- > initial impacts of the disaster event,
- > immediate recovery needs met or unmet,
- > types of assistance and networks utilized, and
- > emerging or continuing needs.

The following study methods were used to collect this information between January 2023 and January 2024:



## Online Survey

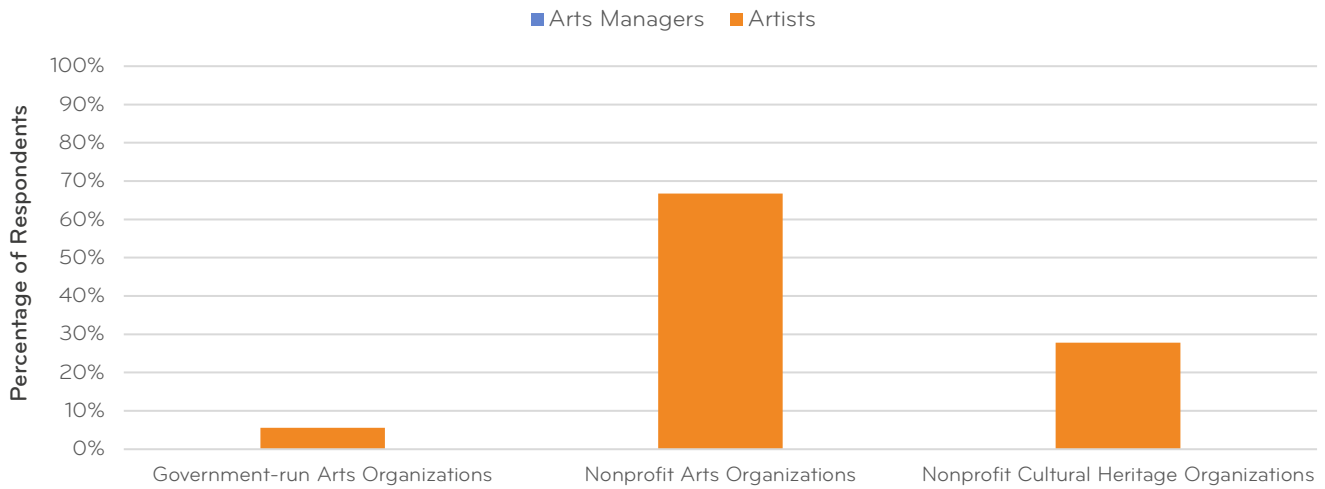
The online survey was open to any Kentucky arts community member in the affected counties. The survey was open for responses between April 12, 2023, and June 30, 2023. There were 61 total responses, with 43 completed surveys analyzed for this report, including 25 individual artists and 18 individuals representing arts organizations.



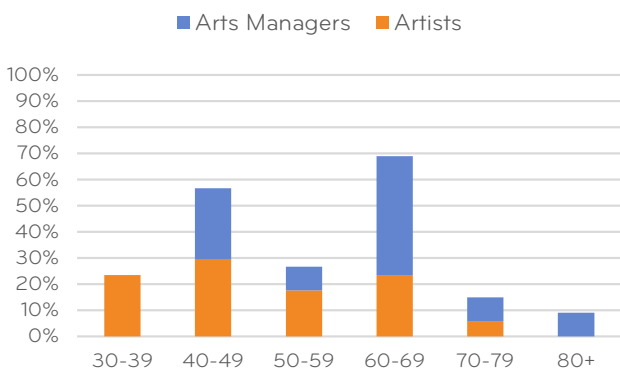
The artistic disciplines represented in the study crossed a wide range of creative media, including folk and traditional arts, theater and storytelling, literature, media arts, and multi-disciplinary. Most responding artists (52%) were from the visual arts discipline. The one "other" category represented the cultural heritage sector with a specific focus on Appalachian history. Of the respondents representing an arts organization, 12 (66.7%) were nonprofit arts organizations, five (27.8%) were from the cultural heritage sector (historic preservation), and one (5.6%) represented a government-run arts organization.

## SURVEY PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

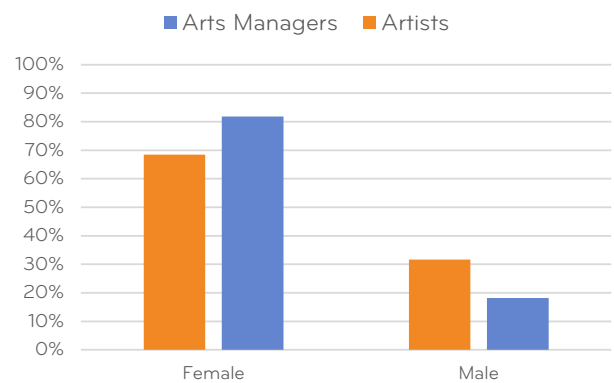
### Arts Organisation Business Type



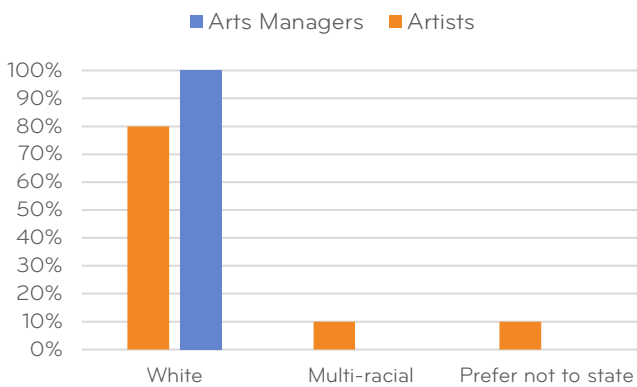
### Age



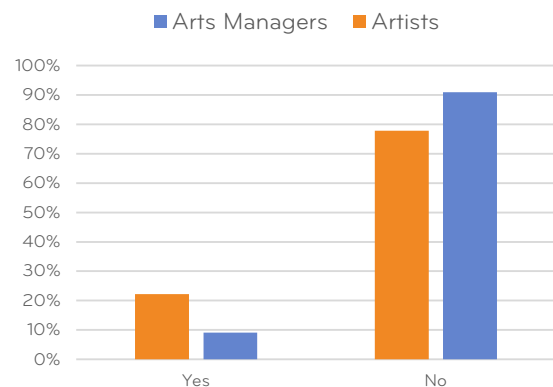
### Gender



### Race



### Disability\*



\*The study used the Americans with Disabilities Act to define an individual with a disability as a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, (2) has a record or history of a substantially limiting impairment, or (3) is regarded or perceived by an employer as having a substantially limiting impairment.



In total, 65% of survey respondents experienced the Eastern Kentucky flooding—17 artists and 11 arts organizations—and 30% of respondents experienced the Western Kentucky tornadoes—seven artists and six arts organizations. One responding arts organization experienced both disasters based on the scope and reach of its nonprofit organization, and one didn't experience either disaster directly. There were only three statistically significant differences in the survey question responses between the two disaster areas:

- > When asked about levels of preparedness for the disaster—well prepared, moderately prepared, somewhat prepared, or not prepared— 59% of Eastern Kentucky study participants reported not being prepared, and 17% of Western Kentucky participants reported not being prepared. (p-value .043)
- > Eastern Kentucky respondents appeared to access community foundations and private foundations more for support than those in the Western Kentucky tornadoes. (p-value .063)
- > Eastern Kentucky respondents appeared more interested in understanding how to mitigate risks in their workspace as a learning opportunity compared to Western Kentucky respondents. (p-value .055)

For a full description of the survey design and process, see *Appendix: Research Methodology*.

## Interviews

One-on-one interviews were conducted with 10 individuals. Three interviews were with governmental agency representatives who worked directly with arts communities during the disasters—the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Interior, and the Kentucky Arts Council. Seven interviews were conducted with those who identified as working artists and/or arts managers representing arts organizations affected by the disaster.

## Focus Groups

In-person focus group discussions were conducted with 21 participants from three disaster-affected areas: Bowling Green (Warren County), Hindman (Knott County), and Whitesburg (Letcher County). Each group was gathered and moderated by an individual knowledgeable of the geographical area and known and trusted by the participants. In total, 10 individual artists and 11 participants representing arts organizations were involved.

## Document Review

To support the findings from the survey, interviews, and focus groups, a document review was conducted of mainly primary data sources and some secondary resources.

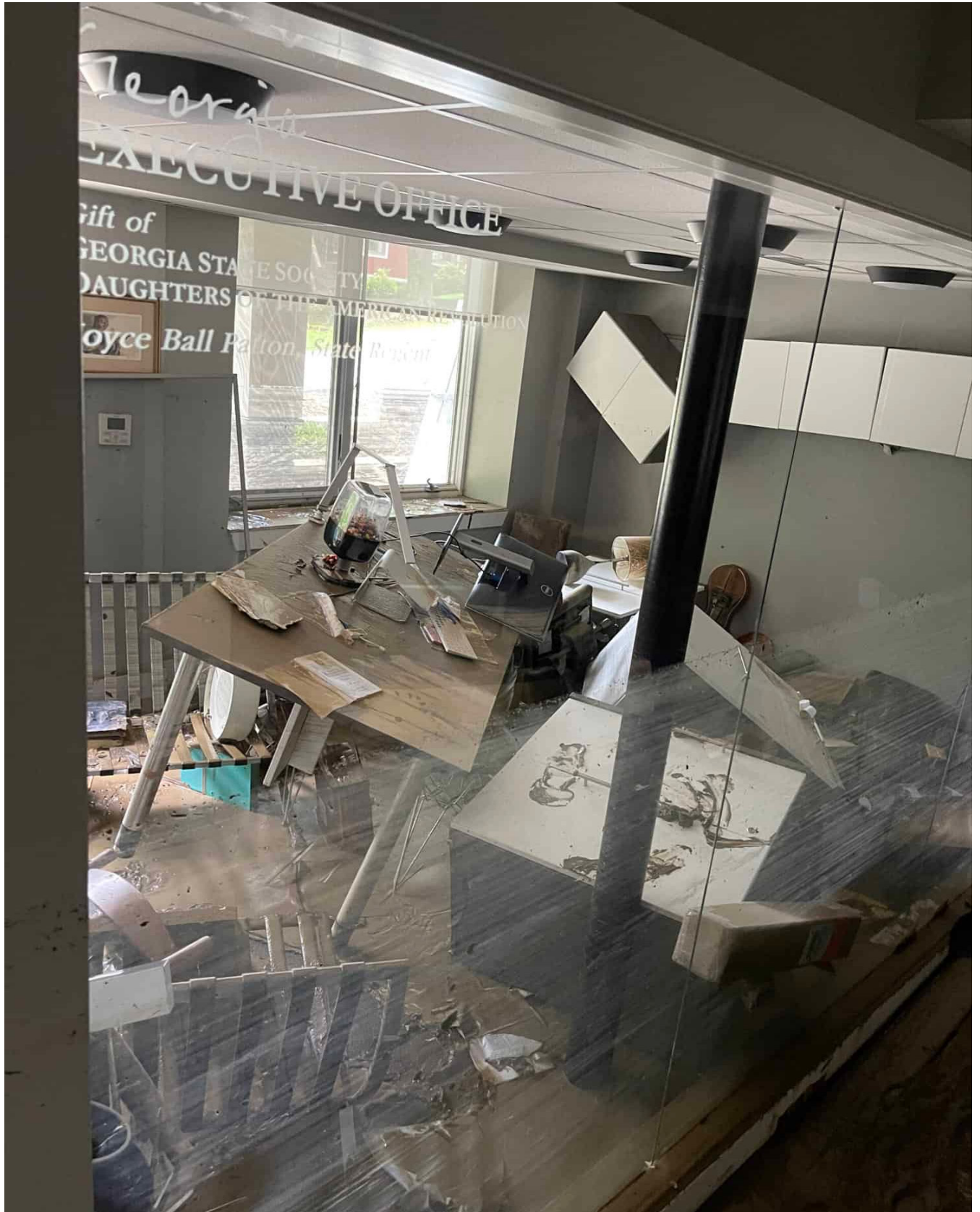
Primary resources included six interview transcriptions from phone interviews conducted by the Kentucky Arts Council with affected artists and arts managers immediately after the Western Kentucky tornadoes. Additional primary resources included National Heritage Responder deployment reports, raw grant data from the Kentucky Arts Council, Kentucky Humanities Council and CERF+, FEMA's open source data, and relevant social media and blog posts. Secondary resources included news articles, news reports, and documentaries related to the two disaster events. (See *References* for a detailed list of sources.)

## Limitations

The findings of this case study may not be generalizable to the broader arts and culture sector. This is due to the lack of a centralized database or disaster reporting mechanism for arts and culture organizations in Kentucky, meaning the total number of artists and arts organizations operating at the time of the disaster events and the total number of artists and arts organizations directly affected by the disasters were not known. Despite these limitations, the report's research design allowed for a survey, interviews, focus groups, and a document review that provided an in-depth understanding and analysis of specific cases or contexts relevant to the purpose of this study.

Much of the data collected was done under conditions of anonymity to protect the privacy of those who participated. This means that direct attribution was not included in many circumstances in this report.

Throughout the research process, great efforts were made to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings through careful selection of participants, triangulation of data sources, and a thorough thematic analysis of the data collected. Additionally, transparency regarding the sampling approach and its implications is provided more in-depth later in the report to ensure the reader's understanding of the study's limitations and the context within which the findings are situated (see *Appendix: Research Methodology*).



*Credit: Damaged Executive Office at Hindman Settlement School (Facebook 2022)*

# About the Disaster

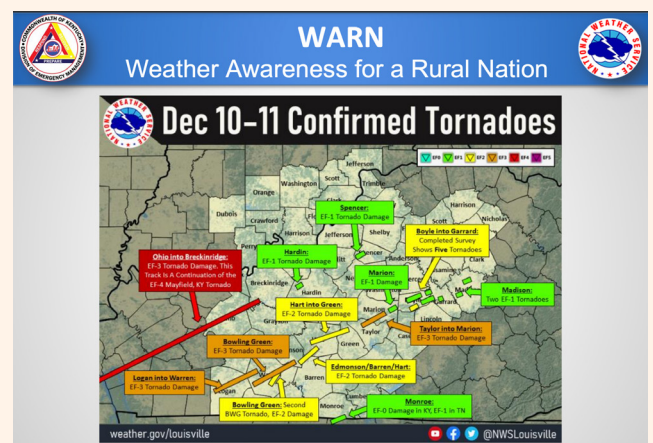
## Western Kentucky Severe Storms / Tornadoes

On the unusually warm evening of December 10, 2021, a tornado outbreak occurred in the central and southeast United States that became the deadliest December outbreak in U.S. History (National Weather Service 2023). One powerful EF-4 tornado began in Northwest Tennessee and tracked across 11 counties in Western Kentucky, with the most intense damage observed in Mayfield, Kentucky. The tornado carved a 165.7-mile path, one of the longest in U.S. history (National Weather Service 2023).

Another long-track EF-3 tornado with winds of 160 mph traveled 122.7 miles through Tennessee into Western Kentucky, including Bowling Green, in Warren County. In total, 18 tornadoes were reported throughout the state of Kentucky during the weather event. The outbreak resulted in the deaths of 57 community members and catastrophic widespread damage (National Weather Service 2023). An estimated \$305 million was recorded in damages to homes, community spaces, and businesses (FEMA 2022).

The following day, December 11, 2021, Governor Andy Beshear declared a state of emergency that activated more than 180 Kentucky National Guard and State Police. The Governor also wrote to the President of the United States to request a federal disaster declaration that would release federal funds and resources to assist the Commonwealth in relief and recovery efforts.

On December 12, 2021, President Biden declared a federal disaster for the tornado-damaged areas—FEMA 4630 DR, allowing individuals, businesses, and municipalities to apply for the federal government's recovery programs.



*Credit: Confirmed Tornadoes featured by WARN (National Weather Service 2021)*



## Eastern Kentucky Severe Storms / Flooding / Land and Mudslides



*Credit: Eastern Kentucky Flooding (Arden Barnes 2022)*

Just seven months later, July 25 through July 30, several severe thunderstorms brought torrential rain, flash flooding, and river flooding to Eastern Kentucky. Deemed a 1,000-year flood, rainfall rates up to four inches an hour continued off and on for four days, which led to catastrophic flooding of many rivers in Eastern Kentucky, including the North, Middle, and South Forks of the Kentucky River, the Red River, and Licking River (National Weather Service 2022). Knott County had the highest rainfall total, 14 inches, and reported the most community member deaths at 17 (Courier Journal 2022). Flash flooding areas stretched from Northern Clay through Southern Owsley, Breathitt, and Leslie counties down to Perry, Knott, and Letcher counties. The flooding led to 600 helicopter and swift water rescues, and in some communities entire homes and buildings were swept away by the flood waters (National Weather Service 2022). Due to the mountainous terrain of the area, mudslides and landslides overwhelmed homes, businesses, and community spaces. The flooding in Eastern Kentucky resulted in 39 deaths and caused catastrophic damage to public, private, and residential areas (Dixon and Shelton 2023).

On July 28, 2022, Governor Andy Beshear declared a state of emergency that directed the Kentucky National Guard and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to assist affected communities. Also that day, the Governor wrote the President to request a federal disaster declaration. On July 29, 2022, President Biden declared the event a federal disaster—FEMA 4663 DR, which allowed eligible counties to apply for federal assistance and also made Hazard Mitigation grants requested by the Governor available for the entire state.

# Summary of Findings

## FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE

was viewed as inaccessible or unreliable to Kentucky artists and arts managers. The reasons given by study participants were three-fold:

- > federal inter-agency disorganization,
- > policies and procedures for applying and receiving assistance were too complicated, and
- > the roles of FEMA and other federal agencies in disaster response and recovery were unclear.

## AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

is needed at state and local agency levels to assist disaster-affected arts communities in the short-term and long-term. Kentucky artists and arts organizations noted strong needs for cash, equipment/material replacement, and relocation assistance as part of immediate relief and continuing disaster recovery. These needs required a coordinated response between federal, state, and local arts agencies, as well as private funders, to most efficiently address hardships of those on the ground. Yet, many of the relationships needed for this type of response did not exist prior to the disaster events.

## MENTAL HEALTH

concerns were a prominent theme in stories of relief and recovery from artists and arts managers. The compounding effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to the timing of the two disaster events in this study were a considerable factor. Artists and arts managers found creating art in the immediate aftermath of the disaster events difficult due to navigating tragic losses while also maintaining operations of their businesses. Currently, there isn't a standard continuum of care for artists and staff of arts organizations affected by disasters. Increased attention for addressing mental health concerns as part of disaster assistance could address staff turnover and loss of creative and cultural resources caused by the effects of disaster trauma.

## STRONG SOCIAL NETWORKS

can connect artists and arts organizations with emergency management agencies, university and extension services, and mutual aid groups that have local trust and specialized knowledge in arts and cultural heritage recovery. The effects of this study's two disasters highlighted that artists and organizations with strong, pre-established networks of support received more support, more quickly. Additionally, the noted lack of specialized knowledge about the work of arts and cultural organizations became very apparent when public agents and private companies provided financial, technical, and restoration assistance. These findings signal a need for a cultural disaster network that can connect resources in times of disaster and provide specialized knowledge in arts and cultural heritage disaster recovery.

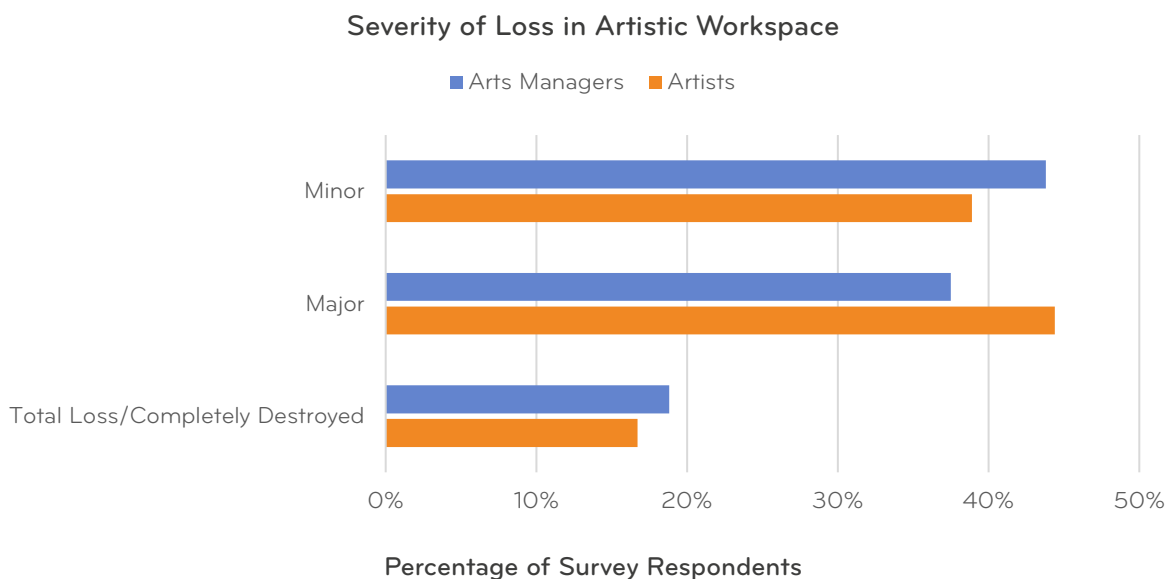
## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

are needed to empower artists and arts managers with skills related to preparedness, navigating relief resources, and long-term recovery strategies. Artists and arts organizations showed a clear desire to understand how to best navigate disaster resources before, during, and after a disaster occurs. One of the biggest challenges in requesting disaster assistance was understanding what organizations exist to provide support and how to work with them.

# Areas of Loss

The extent of loss for artists and arts organizations varied greatly. While some faced major or complete losses in their facilities and studios, others lost significant amounts of artistic inventory and archives. Some experienced minor or indirect losses, such as equipment damage in rented spaces or income loss from canceled contracts or events.

18% of respondents experienced total losses to their workspace. Major losses were experienced by 41% of reporting survey respondents, while another 41% reported minor losses.



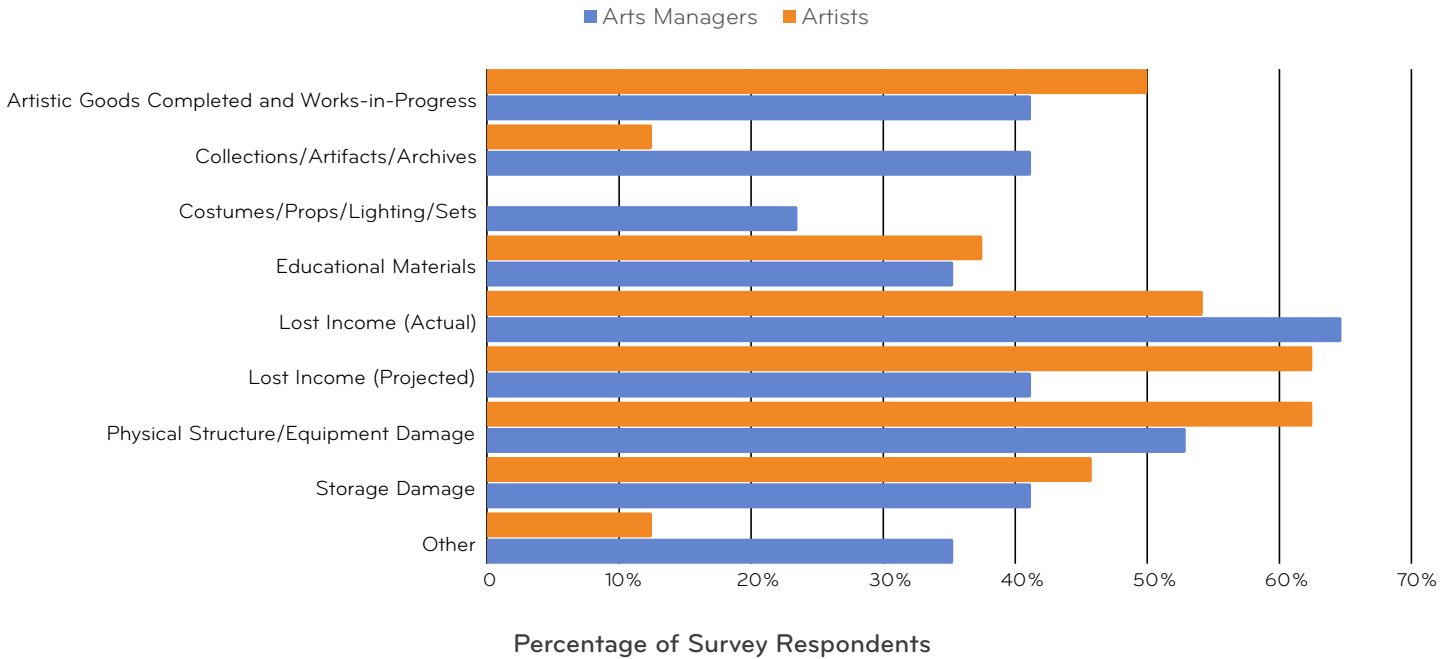
Reported monetary losses ranged from \$250 to \$5.5 million. Individual artists experienced losses ranging from \$250 to \$50,000 with a median loss of \$10,000 per artist. Arts organizations faced the highest monetary losses, ranging from \$4,800 to \$5.5 million, with an median loss of \$30,000 per organization.

Based on survey responses, the median monetary loss for an individual artist due to the disaster event was \$10,000.

Based on survey responses, the median monetary loss for an arts organization due to the disaster event was \$30,000.



### Areas of Loss



## Sims Studios and Art Shop

On December 11, 2021, Jennifer and Jesse Ray Sims, along with their family, faced a devastating double loss when a series of tornadic events damaged both their home in Cave City, KY (Barren County) and their downtown studio and art shop in Horse Cave, KY (Hart County). Jennifer, a beloved local arts educator, ceramicist, and painter, and Jesse Ray, an award-winning painter and muralist, had been renting the space for their thriving downtown studios and art shop. The studio lost a good portion of its roof and HVAC, leading to flooding and significant water damage inside the shop, resulting in the loss of equipment and materials.



*Credit: Sims Studios and Art Shop Storefront (Facebook 2022)*

Compounding their difficulties, the building owners decided to sell the property after the storm. The renter's insurance policy the Sims had did not cover all the damage; after the insurance claim was settled, they still needed \$20,000 in repairs and equipment replacement. They applied to FEMA for assistance but their application was denied due to coverage overlap. They needed to find a new, temporary home for the Arts for All Kentucky program, which offers art classes, exhibits, and receptions each year for the city and surrounding communities. Additionally, Jesse Ray's commissioned mural for downtown was delayed, along with artist residency contracts with area schools.

Local support networks and a grant from the Kentucky Arts Council played a pivotal role in enabling their business, the downtown district, and arts programming in the community to survive. Following the tornado, customers continued to seek out the artistic

services and classes offered by the Sims, highlighting not only how their art contributes to a vibrant and connected community, but also the economic benefit their business provides to the downtown area. Finding support within the community, the Sims secured a loan to acquire the building housing their shop, marking the beginning of the rebuilding process. Collaborating with the City of Horse Cave and with an emergency relief grant from the Kentucky Arts Council, the Sims extended the Arts for All program into 2022 and 2023 at the historic Thomas House. In September 2022, Jesse Ray unveiled the commissioned mural, "Welcome to Horse Cave," adorning the historic Pierce building.

The studio and shop have still not fully recovered from the structural damage—expensive and time-consuming repairs remain.



*Credit: Sims Studios and Art Shop Ceiling Repair (Facebook 2022)*



## Appalshop



*Credit: Appalshop's Madison Street Building in Floodwaters (Appalshop 2022)*

Appalshop, a cultural icon of the Appalachian region based in Letcher County (Whitesburg) has been dedicated to documenting and preserving the arts and cultural heritage of Appalachia through media, including film, music, and theater, since its inception in 1969. Its Madison Street building, located just off the banks of the North Fork of the Kentucky River, was a symbol of Appalshop's deeply rooted work in the Appalachian region. The building was always known to be in a flood plain (all buildings in that area of downtown were except the courthouse); therefore, flood insurance was a requirement. With this knowledge, the space was even designed

with a floodable warehouse that had concrete floors. In Appalshop's 40-year history with the building, the river had risen several times, but never threatened the facility itself.

On July 28, the flash floods submerged the first floor of the building in 6.5 - 8 feet of water, causing extensive damage to the organization's radio station, theater, and archives. The archives included the organization's historical and institutional archives, including recordings, photos, and print, as well as its business and financial records. Eighty percent of the organization's archives, including its 16mm and video equipment, were damaged or destroyed.

Due to the organization's strong connections to local, national, and international communities, there was a quick response to find support for Appalshop's archival staff in salvaging and preserving the organization's and the region's cultural history. The Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF), in partnership with its co-chairs, the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative and FEMA, provided personal protective equipment and specialized consultations on emergency stabilization methods. Peter Brother of Specs Brothers, LLC., a consultant on disaster recovery of magnetic media, designed the goals, protocol, and process for restoring Appalshop's archives. The National Heritage Responders, a program of the American Institute for Conservation, helped local staff in a "train-the-trainer" effort to help with short-term and long-term restoration of damaged media. The National Heritage Responder's team cleaned 551 open reel tapes during a three-day visit, and many of the damaged archives were shipped off for freezing and salvage. A tractor-trailer freezer was placed next to the building to hold archives and records until they could be cleaned and restored.



*Credit: National Heritage Responders and Appalshop Staff Salvaging Film Reels (National Heritage Responders Deployment Report 2022)*

Ultimately, the building was deemed unsafe for human activity. Appalshop has had two temporary homes since the flood: the Old Whitesburg Post office in Whitesburg and, as of the summer of 2023, a purchased space in Jenkins, KY (both located in Letcher County).

For arts organizations, the majority of losses included damage to facilities and equipment, as well as losses to educational materials, archives, costumes, props, and lighting. Looking beyond physical damage to facilities and collections, participating arts managers reported having to navigate the emotional distress of staff and volunteers who were directly impacted by the disasters. For some respondents, this meant making difficult decisions about whether or not to cancel planned shows, exhibitions, and other events. Arts managers in both disasters experienced an unplanned loss of revenue due to the loss of donations and canceled performances.

In Booneville, Kentucky (Owsley County), the town's Community Theater Group was about ready to open its original play "Inconvenient Dreams," which featured area volunteer community actors ranging in ages from 9-70 years old. The play's costumes, props, and set were all ready to open when the Eastern Kentucky flooding occurred. The direct impact of the flooding, including the loss of lives in families of actors and community members, prompted the theater's managers to cancel the premiere of the production. While viewed as insignificant compared to the loss of life, there was still a loss of income from canceling the production, which severely affected the group's ongoing efforts to renovate its downtown theater space and the theater group's morale.

*"The only reason you [ ] decide not to do the play really is just because of the trauma of most of your actors and your tech people." -*  
**JoAnne Richardson, OCARE Board Member (Owsley County)**

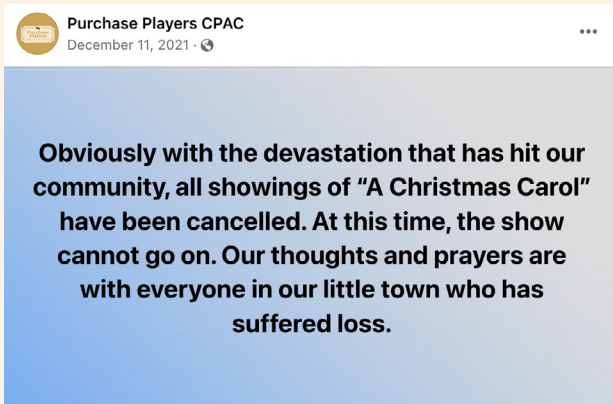
The Public Theater of Kentucky (Warren County) was in the middle of its run of "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" when the tornadoes came through. Several of the play's cast members' houses were destroyed. Due to the community's distress and devastation and the direct impact on cast members, the theater's board decided to cancel its final two performances. The cancellations caused a sudden loss of income in ticket sales and the need to navigate reimbursements and revise programming schedules.





*Credit: Exterior of CPAC Purchase Players' Theater after Tornado (Facebook 2022)*

The Purchase Players at the Community Performing Arts Center (CPAC) in Mayfield, Kentucky (Graves County) ended their opening night celebration of "A Christmas Carol" early due to the threat of the storm. Merely 30 minutes after the last person left the theater, the tornado hit downtown Mayfield, causing damage to the exterior and destroying interior assets including costumes, props, and other theatrical equipment. While the facility was deemed able to be repaired and restored, unlike many of its surrounding properties, the organization had to cancel its season programming until the summer of 2022. The CPAC's insurance policy covered some of the repair and restoration costs, but the organization needed to raise additional funds to maintain operations during its closure and to complete the restoration.



*Credit: Purchase Players CPAC Cancellation Post (Facebook 2021)*



*Credit: Interior Damage to CPAC Purchase Players' Theater (Facebook 2022)*

The Festival of the Mews, a two-day inaugural arts festival with music, art demonstrations, vendors, and food trucks, in Jackson, Kentucky (Breathitt County), was canceled due to too many people grieving after the flooding in Eastern Kentucky. The festival was replaced with benefit concerts in support of those affected by the disaster. The lingering impacts of the flood forced the festival to move out of Breathitt County to Berea, Kentucky (Madison County). Crystal Jones, the festival's creator, media artist, and founder/host of the award-winning podcast A Mewz in the Mountains, was quoted as saying that the flood "took the artistic energy out of Breathitt."

# Immediate Needs After Disaster

In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, a majority of artists needed physical help with clean up and assistance replacing materials and supplies. Study participants repeatedly mentioned the immense help needed for clearing out wet or muddy debris from their homes, studios, and workspaces. Additionally, there was a great need from artists for financial assistance to replace expensive equipment and materials, from computers to kilns to cutting tools to drafting boards.



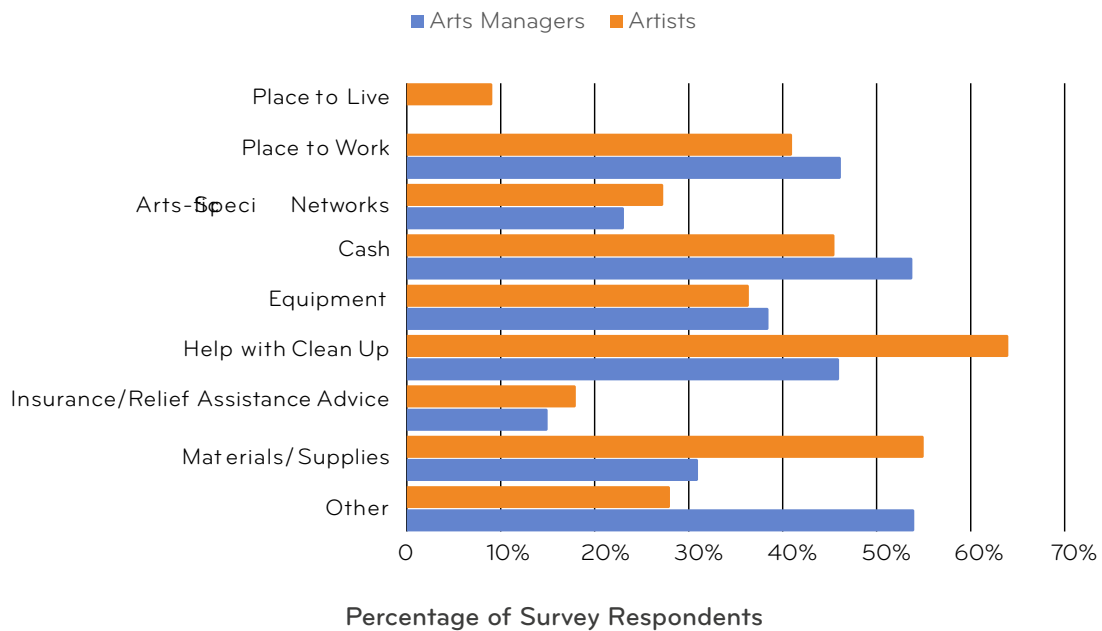
**Credit:** *Mucking Out Studio Space during Eastern Kentucky Flooding (Arden Barnes 2022)*

*"When you're a craftsman, and you have a craft that's really kind of specifically equipped, you spend the whole time after the flood trying to find your stuff. I'm still looking for things." Focus Group Participant (Knott County)*

Most arts organizations faced urgent cash needs, exacerbated by the loss of actual income resulting from the disasters. They required assistance rescheduling events and programs and coordinating with key stakeholders such as actors, board members, and volunteers who were directly affected.

Basic necessities like access to running water for cleanup and safe drinking water were critical. Additionally, many organizations lacked a place to work or store artwork, collections, and archives, particularly those experiencing major to total losses. These needs underscored the pressing challenges faced by arts communities in the wake of the disasters.

### Immediate Needs After Disaster



## Arts Spaces as Emergency Hubs

It was in the immediate aftermath that many participants noted the comforting sense of community from neighbor to neighbor before outside organizations and agencies arrived. For some organizations, the immediate needs of artists and their surrounding communities turned their organizations into emergency operations hubs for shelter, food, and water. Others provided an emergency space to salvage and store damaged collections.

The Western Kentucky University and Kentucky Museum became an archival triage center in the wake of an electrical fire that occurred at the African American Museum in Bowling Green, Kentucky, caused by tornado damage. The Little Shepherd Amphitheater in Jenkins, Kentucky, housed a displaced family of actors in its offices for eight months before temporary housing was in place—this

despite the theater's business experiencing a significant loss in income due to ticket and concessions sales from canceled performances. The Dawson Springs Museum and Art Center in Hopkins County became the repository for photos found in the aftermath of the tornado. Folklorist, oral historian, and teaching artist, Nicole Musgrave and musician Terrence Ray turned their office space into a distribution center to receive materials for artists and other community members in Whitesburg, Kentucky (Letcher County). Some arts and cultural spaces, such as the Hindman Settlement School, offered distinctive features like commercial kitchens, ample seating, and bathroom facilities. These attributes positioned them as emergency hubs for numerous displaced community members.

## Bowling Green African-American Museum



*Credit: Temporary Triage Area for Artifacts at the African-American Museum on Western Kentucky University's Campus (John Hardin/WKU Public Radio 2021)*

The African American Museum in Bowling Green plays a vital role in preserving the history of the Warren County region; its collection boasts artifacts that chronicle black culture in the region, specifically the Shake Rag and Jonesville communities that once thrived in the area. On the evening of December 10, the museum, on the corner of the campus of Western Kentucky University, experienced some damage to its office and windows due to the tornado that swept through Bowling Green that evening. With minor damage, the plan was to begin recovery efforts in two weeks. Precisely two weeks later, a fire, resulting from the electrical damage inflicted by the tornado, damaged or destroyed artifacts found within the facility and caused severe damage to sections of the facility itself. The responding firefighters pulled out what they could, and the artifacts were quickly moved to a neighboring facility on Western Kentucky University's campus. The damaged artifacts included photographs, letters, books, and war relics. The hardest hit area of the museum was



*Credit: Firefighters Respond to Museum Fire (Isselhardt 2021)*

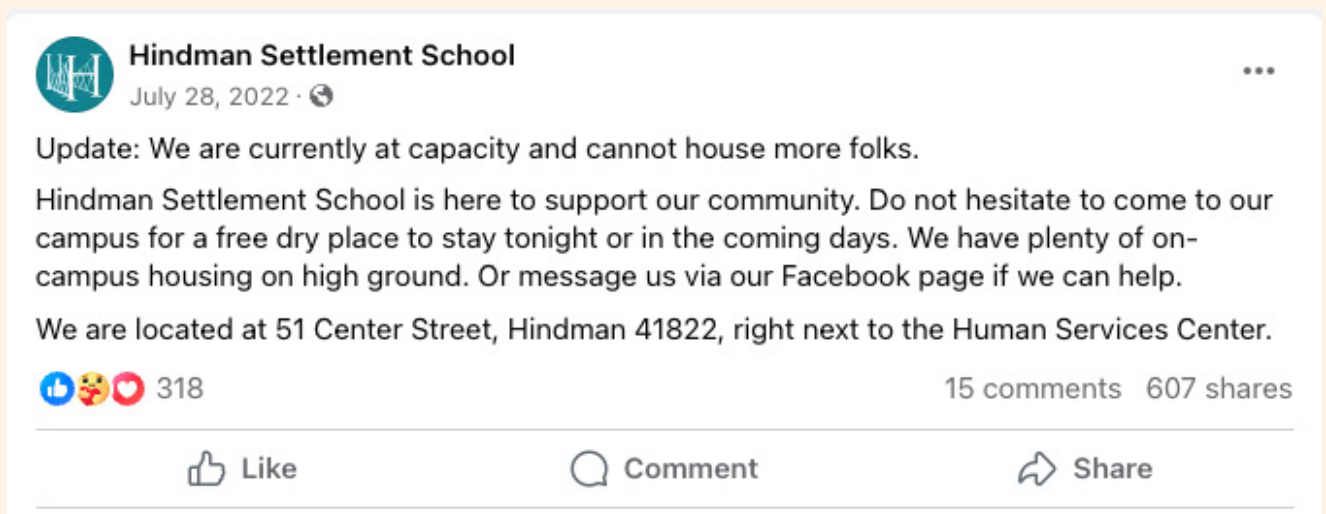
a space dedicated to military history with artifacts from local African American veterans. The Corvette Museum donated space in their walk-in freezer to help salvage artifacts deemed a top priority for the museum's mission. Difficult decisions were made about what to keep and what to let go. It was estimated that around 20% of the artifacts were beyond saving. The process was expensive, and a team of community museum experts in the area pitched in to write grants, set up a crowdfunding page (that raised \$5,000), and help file insurance claims to support the museum's long-term recovery efforts. On August 15, 2023, the museum reopened to the public.

*"Our biggest thanks go to the other museum groups that came and helped. Everybody just came together and started working together as museum partners."  
Wathetta Buford, Project Director for the African American Museum.*



## Hindman Settlement School

The Hindman Settlement School, a cultural and educational bedrock for Central Appalachia, found itself at the forefront of relief during the Eastern Kentucky flooding, despite also experiencing major facility damage. The school was hosting 60 writers for its Annual Writers' Workshop when the creek quickly rose from six inches to 20 feet in a matter of hours, flooding the ground floor of the central building of the campus and its learning center that housed administrative offices, classrooms, and priceless archives. Despite not having water, gas, or electricity, the school put out a social media message that they had housing, and soon, the school found itself serving as a hub for displaced community members.



*Credit: Hindman Settlement School Facebook Post (Facebook 2022)*

The school's deep roots in the community enabled the organization to partner with state and federal agencies like UK Health Care, Kentucky Division of Water, and FEMA to provide emergency services and medical assistance. Staff members—trained to be arts educators—and visiting writers became social workers overnight, assisting vulnerable populations in the area with shelter, providing three meals a day, and using local networks to find and deliver basic supplies.

In addition to becoming a distribution hub for the area, Hindman's extensive archives of and about the region—over 300 books—as well as photos, journals, instruments, and papers, had been submerged in water. Many of the artifacts had been mindfully placed in fireproof drawers in a show of preparedness, but water had never been deemed a threat so the institution lacked waterproof archival systems.



A call went out on social media for specialized knowledge in archival salvage assistance. Librarians and archivists from Kentucky, Tennessee, and beyond donated supplies or traveled as individuals and groups to help go through the artifacts and determine what was a priority for salvaging over others. Some archivists who stopped by Hindman were on their way to assist Appalshop, just a few miles away in Whitesburg.

Long term archival recovery efforts are ongoing; the school has hired a flood recovery archivist and continues to receive assistance from the National Heritage Responders. In its reconstruction, the school has replaced wallboard with synthetic and hardcore installation and has moved its electrical grid higher off the ground. The school's publishing arm, Fireside Industries, plans to publish an anthology from writers who experienced the flood with a release date of Summer 2024.



*Credit: Drying Damaged Archival Photographs at Hindman Settlement School (Facebook 2022)*

# The Search for Support

While local and neighborly support was considered a positive aspect in the immediate aftermath of the disaster events, navigating relief support from federal governmental agencies was found to be an overwhelming and, most times, defeating process for Kentucky artists and arts managers.

Multiple federal and state agencies collaborated to offer technical and financial aid. Yet, comprehending their roles and navigating their systems proved daunting for many. Sometimes survivors had to repeat the same information to new agents representing the same agencies. In short, there was no continuity of people representing the federal agencies designed to support relief and recovery services. Those federal employees who were local and deployed to assist were released from their regular work to help, but only for a month of time.

Study participants' frustration seemed to revolve around a lack of understanding of what federal and state emergency management agencies and their inter-agency counterparts can actually do. Nonetheless, a handful of exceptions existed in the form of national arts agencies specifically tailored to assist artists and arts organizations during times of disaster.

## Federal

While the overall emergency management structure in the United States is designed, in theory, to allow for local leadership guidance in directing state and federal support services, it appeared that the opposite was true in these two disaster events. Many respondents felt that state and government agency representatives came and went at a rate that made it difficult to know who to contact with questions.

*"Whatever the help is going to be from state or federal organizations, [...] they need local people deployed on the ground. The local people are the ones that obviously know better what's going on." - Focus Group Participant (Knott County)*

*"Everyone's interested and everyone understands, but no one can actually do anything." - Focus Group Participant, discussing federal agency representatives (Knott County)*

*"FEMA was trying hard [but] I don't know who FEMA was helping." - Focus Group Participant (Warren County)*

*"I mean, there must have been like 10 different agencies represented in those first couple of weeks and I got very confused about who was with whom." Focus Group Participant (Letcher County)*

From FEMA's perspective, there wasn't a local, state, or national centralized mechanism to know what percentage of eligible artists and arts and culture organizations were actually affected by the disaster, nor was there a comprehensive database of arts and culture nonprofits in the state of Kentucky for FEMA and its cultural arm, the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, to utilize. According to FEMA, this situation is not unique to Kentucky; many states do not have such a list.<sup>1</sup>

FEMA and the Smithsonian's Cultural Rescue Initiative co-chair the Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF), which is made up of 62 partners representing national service organizations and federal agencies. These agencies include some arts-specific partners, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Response, Americans for the Arts, and the Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+).

HENTF is a key source of networking between federal and state agencies in disaster situations. In the immediate aftermath of a major disaster declaration, the task force pushes emails to its 62 member agencies and its established state networks, including state emergency management agencies, state and regional archives, museums, and libraries. Those contacts are, in turn, asked to reach out to their local networks to see what arts and culture communities need and to offer resources with contacts and helpful guides.

When the Western Kentucky tornadoes were declared a major disaster, the task force did not have an existing partnership in Kentucky with which to connect. At that point, the Kentucky Arts Council became the key source of information and a conduit for communicating between HENTF partners and locally affected artists and arts organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> This need has been noted by federal and state agencies, including the University of Kentucky's Extension Service. The Kentucky Arts Council (KAC) did provide extensive information to FEMA from KAC databases about organizations/artists they knew of in the affected areas.

Seven months later, when the Eastern Kentucky flooding hit, HENTF used its existing relationship with the Kentucky Arts Council to more quickly share and understand unmet needs with HENTF's partners, including FEMA.

The Kentucky Arts Council's role connecting federal response and recovery to other state agencies as well as local arts and culture communities was critical in building awareness of assistance opportunities. This has implications for the role that any state arts agency can play in partnership with HENTF during a disaster event.

The Kentucky Arts Council's role connecting federal response and recovery to other state agencies as well as local arts and culture communities was critical in building an awareness of assistance opportunities.

Both HENTF and the National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness and Emergency Response (NCAPER), in partnership with the Kentucky Arts Council and other state agencies, conducted disaster coordination calls with local arts and culture organizations and artists affected by the disasters. The recurring calls brought attention to federal resources, including those provided by FEMA and HENTF, as well as the Department of Interior. However, there was a gap in state emergency management response in that regard. For example, the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management Recovery Branch posted contact information for a recovery specialist, and that information was purposefully shared by HENTF to those in the arts and culture community in Kentucky; however, many organizations that were referred to this contact never received replies.

In the survey for this report, a majority of artists (64%) and a strong majority of arts organizations (92.9%) were aware of FEMA assistance opportunities. However, only 32% of artists actually applied for assistance, while only 50% of the responding arts organizations applied.

Tracking who from the arts sector in Kentucky applied for FEMA assistance was challenging. In particular, it was difficult to examine how many individual artists applied for FEMA Individual Assistance because the information is considered personally identifiable and available only to a select few working in the FEMA's Individual Assistance program area. Additionally, any public arts institution that received funding through FEMA is not identified separately from the municipality that applied for funds (which all did), making it difficult to find out how much went specifically to arts and culture in FEMA's Open Source Database.

## ABOUT FEMA ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

**FEMA Individual Assistance** is open to individuals and families who have losses from a federally declared disaster. This assistance can be either **Housing Assistance** or **Other Needs Assistance**.

**Housing Assistance** can be temporary housing, lodging expense reimbursement, home repair, home replacement, or permanent housing construction. **Other Needs Assistance** can include any necessary expenses or serious needs not covered by insurance or a Small Business Administration (SBA) loan.

**FEMA Public Assistance** is open to governmental and eligible nonprofit organizations as reimbursement for debris removal, emergency protection measures, infrastructure repairs, or replacements due to the losses from a federally declared disaster (FEMA 2024).

	Total Requests for Public Assistance (municipal and private nonprofit entities (PNP))	Requests for Public Assistance determined to be eligible	Requests for Public Assistance withdrawn	Total Requests from Arts or Culture Private Nonprofit Entities with 501(c)3 status	Total Requests from Arts or Culture Private Nonprofit Entities with 501(c)3 status determined to be eligible	Total Requests from Arts or Culture Private Nonprofit Entities with 501(c)3 status withdrawn
Western KY	141	105	36	1	0	1
Eastern KY	232	127	65	5	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

Table 1. Requests and Results for FEMA Public Assistance for both disaster events, as it relates to the arts and culture sector.<sup>2</sup>

Based on the available data in Table 1, for the Western tornadoes, there was one request submitted by an arts and culture 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and that application was eventually withdrawn.<sup>3</sup> For the Eastern flooding, five 501(c)3 arts and culture organizations applied for FEMA Public Assistance. Of those five, three were determined to be eligible, and two were withdrawn.

In summary, between the two disasters, six arts and culture nonprofit organizations applied for FEMA Public Assistance.

Three of those six were determined eligible, which constitutes a mere 0.8% of total requests for public assistance by municipal and nonprofit entities were by arts and culture nonprofit organizations.<sup>4</sup>

**0.8%**

The percentage of eligible requests for FEMA Public Assistance by arts and cultural nonprofit organizations of all municipal and nonprofit entity requests for the two disasters.

<sup>2</sup> Data provided by the Coordinator for Heritage Emergency National Task Force and Office of Environmental Planning & Historic Preservation Resilience, FEMA. Interview with author, October 11, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> The museum was withdrawn as it became part of the larger municipality's assistance request.

<sup>4</sup> This data does not separate between arts and culture, meaning libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, etc. would be considered in this data set along with performing, visual, and literary arts organizations.



A snapshot of the disconnect in the emergency management sector's knowledge and awareness of the role of arts and culture in its communities can be seen in various iterations of FEMA's annual National Preparedness Report. In this report, each state assesses each of its 32 core capabilities. In the 2017 report, the lowest proficiency ratings were in the capabilities associated with the Recovery mission area, which includes attention to Natural and Cultural Resources (NCR)—where arts and culture reside. 71% of states and territories gave capabilities in Natural and Cultural Resources either a poor or mediocre rating. Later in the 2022 report, Natural and Cultural Resources were not even listed as a priority in capabilities associated with recovery. In the most recent 2023 report, "the lowest preparedness grant investments were in the Recovery mission area, which likewise includes two of the core capabilities in which communities report being furthest away from achieving their goals—Housing and Natural and Cultural Resources" (FEMA 2023, 15).

The survey revealed widespread reasons why the respondents didn't apply for FEMA assistance, with a majority answering "other" in place of the following categories. This topic was explored further in interviews and focus groups.

*"We were told by FEMA that we are pushing too hard, too fast. But, there are tight deadlines. There is a disconnect from messages from FEMA - hey go fast and hey go slower." Interview Participant discussing FEMA and Historical Preservation*

The biggest deterrent and source of frustration was the requirement that any artist applying for Individual Assistance and arts organizations applying for Public Assistance must apply for a loan from the Small Business Administration (SBA) before receiving any assistance from FEMA. This issue was brought up multiple times in interviews and focus groups, as reflected in the word cloud below using participants' answers about their experience with FEMA.



These complex measures are in place to ensure the efficiency of public dollars. FEMA is required by law to ensure that any assistance given doesn't duplicate assistance from other sources. Additionally, it helps ensure that the assistance is being used for necessary expenses and not received through fraudulent means.

For those whose FEMA assistance was approved and paid out, it often wasn't enough. The individual artists who were awarded FEMA funds mentioned that it didn't cover much of their loss, although it was helpful to have.

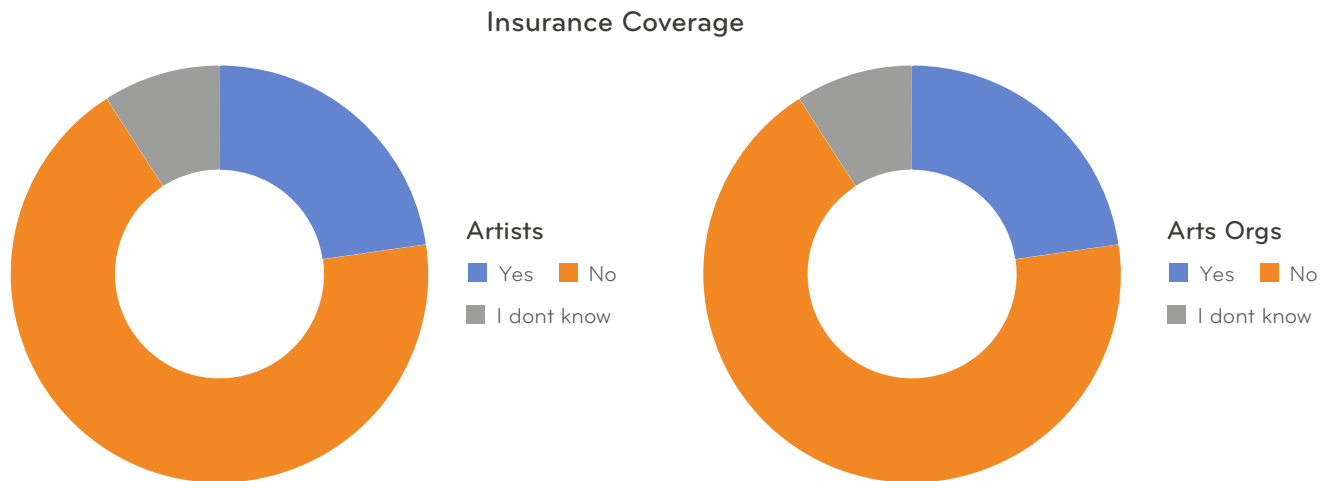
In most ways, FEMA should be considered a last resort, as the agency cannot provide assistance that has already been met by another agency, like SBA, or private insurance coverage.

*"FEMA gave me some ... [it wasn't] nearly close to being able to fix that house." - Interview Participant on FEMA assistance for damaged home and artistic workspace.*

*"We were advised to register with FEMA so that nobody would register with FEMA in our name. We knew we would be rejected because we had insurance. After you get rejected from FEMA, they recommend you to the SBA Disaster Loan. They hire lots of people to generate loans, but they don't have people processing loans. The turnover with the people in the loan processing was continuous. Every other week you would get a phone call, I forget what they called it, and your agent has changed. The website was difficult to navigate. It was not up to date with...where your loan was. At some point, we were approved for a loan and then they decided that we should get more money and the auditor came [with] all this stuff. Then we thought we were approved for a loan, and even though... you are approved for a loan, it doesn't necessarily mean you get the money. - Focus Group Participant (Warren County)*

## Insurance

Insurance was helpful for some but not for a majority of participating artists and arts organizations. The survey showed that a majority of respondents did not have, or were not aware of having, insurance—77% of artists and 75% of arts organizations. Of those that did have coverage, 100% of their claims were accepted.



When exploring reasons for the lack of insurance coverage, participants noted a variety of reasons: some policies were purchased a long time ago and had been forgotten and not updated. Some had insurance for one building that was covered in the main policy, but that didn't cover the building that was damaged. Others just didn't have enough insurance to cover the cost of building damage. These statistics echo findings in a 2010 study conducted by the leading national disaster relief organization for artists, CERF+. The study found that 69% of surveyed artists were not properly insured for business property and 76% of artists who owned the building in which their business was located thought that their homeowners' insurance covered their building.<sup>6</sup>

In 2021, the National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness and Response published "An Arts Field Guide to Federal Disaster Relief" to help artists and arts organizations in this difficult task of applying and receiving assistance. The publication highlights the different journeys in applying for individual assistance and nonprofit assistance and can be found at <https://www.ncaper.org/>

<sup>6</sup> CERF+ "Insuring Creativity: CERF Business Insurance Survey." February 2010.

## State and Local

A vast majority of participants—artists (77.3%) and arts organizations (77%)—applied for state and local forms of disaster relief. This relief ranged from private donors to community foundations to state agencies.

A majority of respondents—artists (81%) and arts organizations (100%)—applied and received disaster relief funding from the Kentucky Arts Council (KAC).<sup>7</sup> The Kentucky Arts Council announced via social media the opportunity to apply for relief funding.

They subsequently awarded grants to various artists and arts organizations, including organizations listed in their database and others that were not listed. In total, the Kentucky Arts Council awarded nearly \$170,000 in disaster relief assistance between both disaster events. These funds were a collective from the National Endowment for the Arts (\$115,000) and the state’s regional arts agency South Arts (\$26,000). The Kentucky Arts Council allocated \$35,000 from its own budget.

Grant Type	Number of Grant Awards	Grant \$ Range
Arts Education	13	\$300-\$2,500
Individual Artists	20	\$4,000
Arts Organizations	16	\$3,100-\$5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>\$170,000</b>

*Table Title. Kentucky Arts Council Disaster Relief Grant Awards*

The Kentucky Humanities Council awarded five \$20,000 relief grants for the Eastern flooding with money received from the National Endowment of the Humanities. The awards went to a diverse group in the arts and cultural heritage sector: the Wayland Historical Society, Knott County Public Library, Hindman Settlement School, Appalshop, and the Appalachian Artisan Center.

<sup>7</sup> Response bias should be noted for this data point as the Kentucky Arts Council sent the study survey link to a mailing list of those that had been affected by the two disasters.



Half of the surveyed individual artists applied for and received CERF+ funds.<sup>8</sup> CERF+, the Craft Emergency Relief Fund, has provided cash grants, training, and resources to craftspeople, artisans, and artists for more than 30 years. Respondents from the survey, interviews, and focus groups lauded the ease and efficiency of CERF+'s direct form of support. CERF+ granted a total of \$57,000 between the two disasters. For the Western tornadoes, five awards were given, totaling \$15,000. For the Eastern flooding, 14 awards were given, totaling \$42,000. There was one area of concern from participants regarding CERF+ funding, and that was the exclusion of photography as an eligible medium for support.

Respondents from the survey, interviews, and focus groups lauded the ease and efficiency of CERF+'s direct form of cash support for craft artists. CERF+ granted a total of \$57,000 between the two disasters.

Community and Private Foundations also played a strong role, particularly in Eastern Kentucky. The Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky provided \$50,000 in artist relief grants. Appalshop partnered with the Educational Foundation of America to provide \$40,000 in quick relief grants for Eastern Kentucky artists.

*"CERF+ ... I got news quickly about that and I got that application going. They were the most responsive." - Focus Group Participant (Warren County)*

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<sup>8</sup> Response bias should be noted for this data point as CERF+ sent the study survey link to a mailing list of those artists in their database that had been affected by the two disasters.

Particularly notable was the role of the Eastern Kentucky Mutual Aid group as a key source of coordination and support for artists and arts organizations in the aftermath of the flooding.

Its Facebook page was critical in sharing information between those in need and those who could assist in coordinating volunteers to muck out houses, deliver supplies, and distribute cash and gift cards.

In that respect, donations of gift cards from Dollar General, Walmart, and Target were noted as providing efficient and needed support. Main distribution points, like Cane's Kitchen in Whitesburg, KY, were not supported by state or federal assistance funds but by those with a personal checkbook that heard of the need for assistance to feed and help those displaced and volunteering.

Musicians and celebrities, including Kentucky natives Chris Stapleton and Tyler Childers, provided funds to support organizations like The Troublesome Creek Instrument Co. Trace Atkins performed a free concert to support Mayfield's continued recovery. Famed film director Steven Spielberg, and actress/painter, Kate Capshaw, matched donated funds as part of a fundraiser to support Appalshop.

#### OTHER FOUNDATIONS AND CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS NOTED BY STUDY PARTICIPANTS:<sup>9</sup>

- > Fund for Appalachian Kentucky
- > Bluegrass Community Foundation
- > Hope for the Hills
- > Newport Folk Foundation via Billy Strings
- > St. Paul Minnesota Communication Foundation
- > Mountain Association
- > Kentucky Women's Foundation
- > Kentucky Mudworks
- > Center for Disaster Philanthropy
- > Flora Foundation
- > Daughters of the American Revolution
- > Rotary Club (Bowling Green)
- > Kentucky Colonels

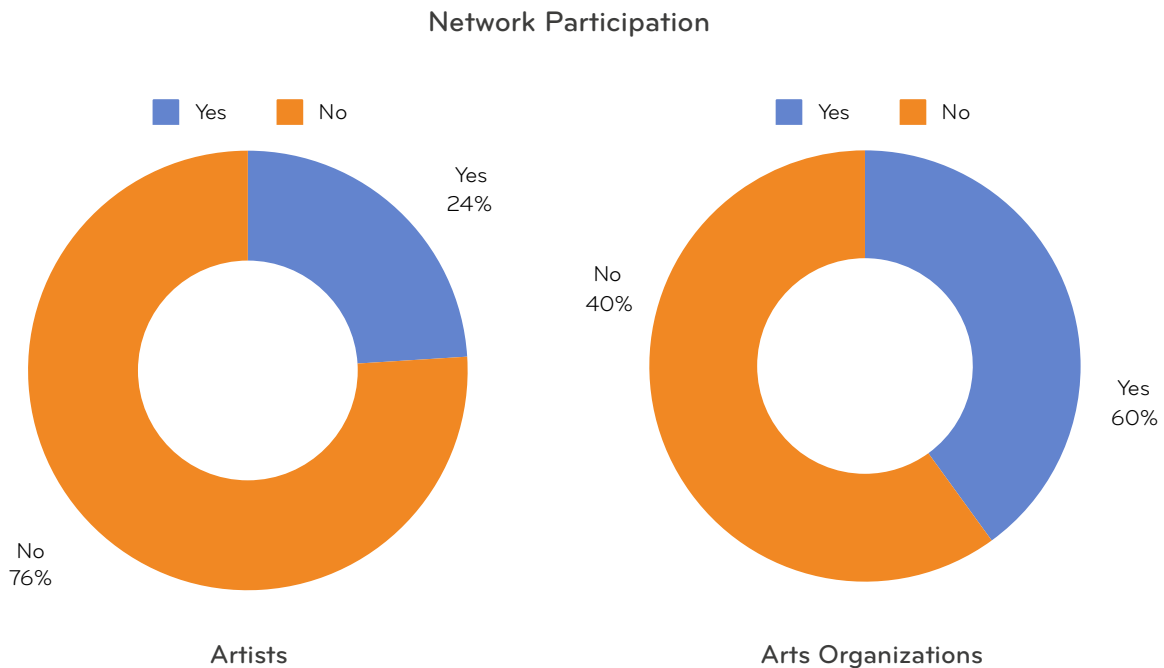
*"The most immediate and most effective [aid] ... came from our friends and neighbors." - Focus Group Participant (Knott County)*

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<sup>9</sup> Aggregated disaster philanthropic data was not available by the time this report was written and published. The most recent 2022 report from the Center for Disaster Philanthropy covers 2020 data.

## Technical Support via Arts Networks

76.2% of responding artists said they did not use local, state, or national arts networks/ groups for guidance and other non-financial support, either virtually or in person. Those that did mentioned CERF+ and the Kentucky Arts Council's virtual coordination calls with HENTF and NCAPER. CERF+ worked extensively with the Kentucky Arts Council to identify artists in Eastern Kentucky that were not part of the council's databases and conducted a site visit to help support artists in that region.



60% of responding arts organizations did utilize social networks and also participated in webinars and disaster relief virtual meetings hosted by the Kentucky Arts Council in partnership with the National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness and Emergency Response and the Performing Arts Readiness Project. Additional social networks included the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) and the Alliance for Response's National Heritage Responders that deployed archivists and preservationists to assist in archival recovery at Appalshop and the Hindman Settlement School.

## KHERN-Kentucky Heritage Emergency Response Network

One significant impact of the informal social networks built in the aftermath of the disasters was the founding of the Kentucky Heritage Emergency Response Network (KHERN).

After the two disaster events occurred within seven months of each other, it became increasingly clear that more formal coordination was needed between local and national cultural heritage responders, as no one person had all the information about how to respond to the disasters. The Kentucky Arts Council hosted coordination calls that were critical in connecting federal and state resources with real needs from artists and arts managers on the ground.

Noted organizations who participated in those calls at various times included representatives from Hindman Settlement School, Appalshop, the Kentucky Historical Society, University of Kentucky Libraries, University of Kentucky Arts Cooperative Extension, Transylvania University, Eastern Tennessee State University Libraries, West Virginia University Libraries, Kentucky Arts Council, National Heritage Responders, the Smithsonian, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Performing Arts Readiness, National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness and Response, and the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation.

Through those initial response meetings, Melissa Bond with the Community Arts Extension Program for Kentucky's Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Kentucky worked with Ruth Bryan, President of the Kentucky Council on Archives, to develop a state-wide cultural heritage disaster response training program for county extension agents. Through this program development, a network of representatives from the Kentucky State Historical Records Advisory Board, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Kentucky Arts Council, Lexington History Museum, and Kentucky Historical Society began to have regular group meetings. Tangible resources began to emerge from these meetings, including a series of four *leaflets* from the University of Kentucky's Cooperative Extension called the "Community Arts Disaster Recovery Series" and a name to begin to formalize the network for future disaster events: KHERN—the Kentucky Heritage Emergency Response Network.

The initial members created the following working mission statement: The Kentucky Heritage Emergency Response Network (KHERN) prevents and mitigates the loss of cultural resources in the event of disasters by serving as a state-wide emergency management resource.



KHERN bridges national and state resources to local arts and culture organizations and artists by providing:

- > emergency management information and trainings before, during, and after a disaster;
- > holding network member and participant meetings and convenings; and
- > advocating for the importance of supporting arts and culture emergency management for the benefit of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

KHERN joins other cultural response networks across the nation that have formalized to activate and provide assistance before, during, and after disaster events. The Foundation for Advancement in Conservation led the way for the growth of these networks in the cultural heritage sector with its 2003 launch of the *Alliance for Response Initiative*. Additionally, it is modeled after CultureAID, a self-sustaining network designed as an “arts responder hub” where membership is voluntary and free.

In October 2023, KHERN received a \$25,000 grant from the Performing Arts Readiness project to help further formalize the network. Its administrative hub is at the University of Kentucky, a partnership between the Department of Arts Administration, Cooperative Extension, and Libraries and Archives. Training to enhance levels of preparedness in the arts and cultural heritage sectors will begin in the Fall of 2024 around the state, and the network stands ready to activate should another disaster occur.



# KENTUCKY HERITAGE EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK (KHERN) PARTNERSHIP MODEL

## FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Smithsonian  
Cultural Rescue Initiative



FEMA



HENTF (Heritage Emergency National Task Force)  
Partnership of 62 national service organizations and federal agencies

## STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Kentucky  
Voluntary Organizations  
Active in Disaster

## KHERN

### FOUNDING ORGANIZATIONS



KENTUCKY  
HUMANITIES



Libraries  
Special Collections Research Center



KENTUCKY  
Arts  
COUNCIL



KENTUCKY  
HERITAGE  
COUNCIL  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



Cooperative  
Extension Service



LEXHISTORY



MAKE  
ART  
HAPPEN  
#ukartsadmin



Kentucky Department  
for Libraries  
and Archives



Kentucky  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



UK College of Communication  
and Information



KEENELAND  
LIBRARY

### ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

VISUAL  
PERFORMING  
FOLK  
LITERARY  
MULTIMEDIA

### BENEFICIARIES

### CREATIVE WORKERS

MUSICIANS, ARTISTS, DESIGNERS, ARTISANS, WRITERS

### CULTURAL HERITAGE

LIBRARIES  
MUSEUMS  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETIES  
MONUMENTS

KY.HERITAGE.EMERGENCY.HELP@GMAIL.COM | KHERN.KY.GOV | WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/KENTUCKYHERITAGEEMERGENCYRESPONSE

Credit: KHERN Partnership Model (KHERN 2024)

# Continuing Needs

Survey questions regarding continuing needs post-disaster revealed that financial recovery support and rebuilding inventory were the top priorities. One to two years after the disaster events, artists and arts organizations were still in need of long-term recovery assistance.

Federal agencies, like the Department of Interior, exist to support artists and arts organizations in their longer-term recovery efforts. Field coordinators from the Department of Interior's recovery mission areas of "Natural and Cultural Resources" are deployed to assist cultural organizations with technical support. This support includes helping connect arts and culture organizations with federal agency grant opportunities. One noted area of concern from the Eastern flooding deployment was the issue of repairing elevators.

## The Elevator Blindspot

Three cultural organizations in Eastern Kentucky were in need of significant resources to fix their elevators by the summer of 2023. No supporting agency would take responsibility for replacing an elevator despite repeated requests for assistance. Fixing elevators is a great expense, at least \$100,000, yet is essential for meeting ADA compliance and accessibility standards.



*Credit: Troublesome Creek Stringed Instrument Company Flooding Damage (Arden Barnes 2022)*





*Credit: Museum of the Mountain Dulcimer Flooding Damage at the Appalachian Artisan Center (Facebook 2022)*

One organization dealing with this issue was The Appalachian Artisan Center. The Center serves as a multifaceted cultural institution for the Appalachian region, dedicated to promoting and educating in traditional arts and crafts and nurturing local talent. It is the umbrella organization for the Troublesome Creek Stringed Instrument Company, the Appalachian School of Luthiery, artist studios in a variety of media, a gift shop, and the Museum of the Mountain Dulcimer— all located in a series of buildings in Hindman, Kentucky (Knott County) situated near Troublesome Creek. On the evening of July 28, the creek rose to unprecedented heights and caused significant flooding damage to the buildings as well as patterns, fixtures, instruments, artifacts, artworks, and equipment.

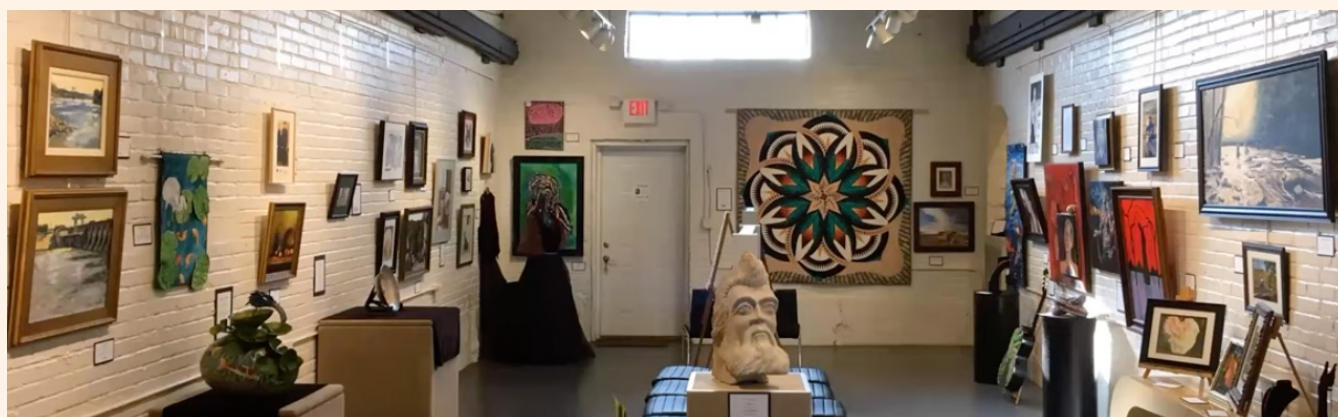
Artifacts and instruments in cases from both the factory and museum were blown out into the street and down the creek. At first, a stream of community members worked with the master artists and luthiers to provide immediate assistance with offers of water, food, and shelter. Then, more formal companies and agencies began cleaning out spaces. Of great concern to study respondents was the lack of specialized knowledge from the workers of the private companies hired to clean out priceless collections of artworks, instruments, rare materials, and tools of various artisan trades. Of even greater concern were the elevators that federal agencies declined to repair or replace.

*"Why do we care so much about this? Because our program eligibility is based on ADA compliance of our facilities. ADA compliance of our facilities is not possible without functional elevators." - Focus Group Participant (Knott County)*



## Ice House Gallery

The Ice House Gallery, named after the historic functions of the space as an ice house up until the 1980s, was home of the Mayfield-Graves County Art Guild since 1995. The gallery, called "The Soul of Mayfield", served as a community gathering space for artists, arts classes, exhibitions, events, and art camps. On the evening of December 10, the building that housed the gallery was in the path of the tornado and was destroyed. On display at the gallery was the annual "Impressions Art Show," which featured more than 100 pieces of artwork by more than 70 artists. Nanc Gunn, the Guild's Executive Director, quickly contacted artists to inform them of what had happened and return any work found back to the artists. The Guild had insurance which it used to pay out to the 109 artists who had lost or damaged work in either the featured show or other parts of the gallery's collection.



*Credit: Ice House Gallery Before the Tornado (Gunn 2021)*

The organization lost all of its paper files to the winds of the tornado, so relied on its comprehensive website to reconstruct the layout and assets of the organization as well as exhibiting artist names and values of their artwork. The Guild did not own the building that housed the gallery, so they could not file an insurance claim on the facility itself. When the building was deemed a total loss, it was razed, forcing the Guild to find a new home and a new identity.

In the immediate aftermath, the address for the Guild became the Executive Director's home address. The Guild used 26 different facilities in and around Mayfield to continue its programming and exhibition efforts—it held classes in a diesel mechanic shop and exhibited work in Paducah's City Hall. Then it found a temporary home at Region's Bank in Mayfield, where the Guild featured artwork until October 2023. Finding capital to invest in building or renovating a new space proved to be challenging and disheartening for the Guild. At times, the Guild was offered buildings that were too far in disrepair.

The feasibility of getting a \$1 million dollar donation for a new arts space in the aftermath of the disaster was deemed low by the Guild's leadership due to the significant needs and resources needed to rebuild in all sectors of the community. The approximately \$8,000 the Guild received in crowdfunding was helpful for maintaining operations, but not enough for a down payment. Requests for financial assistance for a new building were widespread, including to HGTV and the Oprah Foundation. HGTV had interest, but it had to be on their terms, not the community's, so the Guild declined the HGTV offer. The Guild finally found a new home with a permanent gallery space and gift shop more than two years later in January 2024.

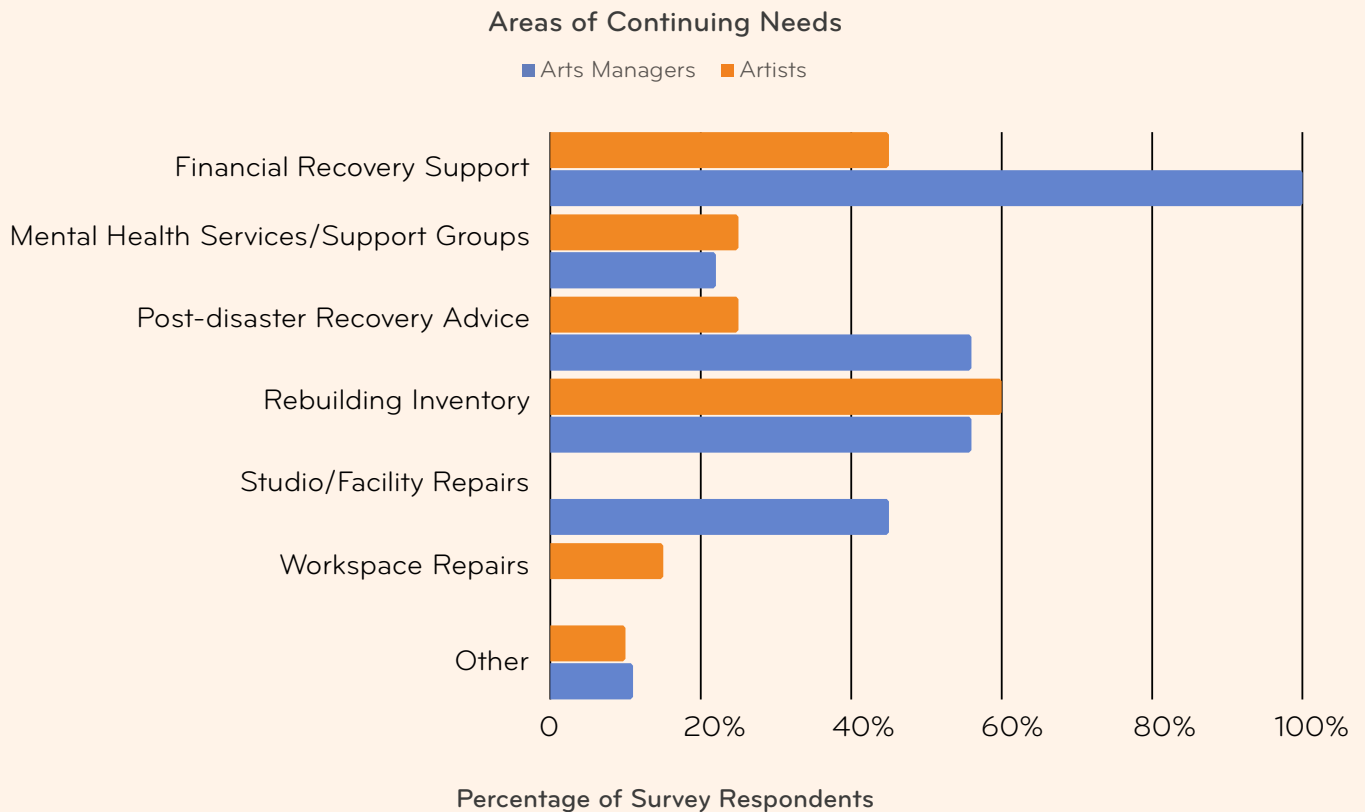


*Credit: Ice House Gallery After the Tornado (Gunn 2021)*

## Housing and Studio Space

Related to continuing needs in financial recovery were issues of finding new studio spaces and housing for displaced artists and arts organizations. In Western Kentucky, increasing rent and housing costs, particularly in rebuilt areas that had tornado damage, have made it difficult for artists and their businesses to find a suitable place to create and store their work. In Bowling Green, much of the inexpensive space was destroyed near the bypass, and the new development became too expensive or required long-term leases. For example, an artist consignment shop in downtown Bowling Green that featured over 50 different artists from the area was eventually forced to close due to the increase in rent after the tornado.

*"At first, we could [afford rent] and then it just kept getting raised and raised and so it pushed us out. ... it just got so hard to not only rent a space but also if you want artists to be able to get what they're paid, get what they owe ... you want to be able to support the building that is hosting you but also you want artists to be able to get paid." - Focus Group participant (Warren County)*



For Eastern Kentucky artists and arts organizations, finding affordable studio space was a challenge even before the flooding, but made nearly impossible afterward. Many noted that the problem wasn't that the housing was expensive; it was that it wasn't even available.

Study participants gave various reasons for this: housing and land being passed down through family members, the rising costs of insurance, and the Airbnb effect. This lack of housing is difficult for any type of artist or musician, but for ceramists, metal workers, and other artists who need a significant amount of space for their equipment and inventory, it is critical. Even for long-running cultural institutions like Appalshop, finding a new permanent space has been a complex effort. The current space is just temporary while the organization holds listening sessions and develops plans for its new permanent home.

*"There's still a serious housing crisis in the region... there was before and... it's worse now. And you know that ... definitely affects artists, you know, who want to stay in the region, or, you know, want to come and live here." - Interview Participant (Letcher County)*

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*"It was really hard to find a space for a studio when people [didn't] have a place to live." - Interview Participant (Letcher County)*

## Mental Health Concerns

While a majority of survey respondents did not select mental health support as a continuing need, there was a recurring theme in focus groups and interviews that provided a deeper understanding of the enduring impact of the physical losses of the disasters on artistic and managerial mental health. Participants mentioned an ongoing need for mental health support for staff still working in their damaged facilities and the want for more opportunities to talk, share, and work through the trauma of loss created by the disaster events.

These comments were compounded by the observations of regional cultural practices of not wanting to ask for too much or having feelings that other people have it worse. Participants deemed it the “You Need It More Than Me” or the “I Don’t Have Much, But They Don’t Have Anything” mentality.

For artists who experienced major to total losses, there appeared to be about a 3-6-month gap in their ability to want to create again.

In a paradox, the arts were also mentioned as important for a community’s collective healing, from the immediate aftermath to longer-term recovery. To address these mental health takeaways, policies and funding mechanisms are needed to build a continuum of mental health care services for artists and those working for arts organizations, both in the immediate aftermath of the disaster and as a longer-term recovery strategy.



*"I think when you put an artist mind and an Appalachian soul on there ... there's this idea that like, we have to be self-reliant and we're sometimes afraid to be vulnerable or we don't have a right to speak for something, or other people suffered more than us." - Focus Group Participant (Knott County)*

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*"It's not so likely that people in our community are going to go into a building that says 'Mental Health Help' and say I'm here for mental health help. But plenty would walk into a community center to quilt and have a person trained to be [at] the table who maybe they do need to say afterwards, think about [ ] going to this building... those art opportunities are great gateways and screeners and beginning conversations..." - Focus Group Participant (Letcher County)*

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*"What's important afterwards? Not color, not art, helping people with basic needs." Justine Riley, artist from Graves County (Kentucky Arts Council Webinar 2023)*

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*"What artists can do is begin to put a healing salve out there in the community...begin to help people come together to find a path forward." - Interview with Arts Manager (Letcher County)*

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*"...the arts are uniquely positioned [for community mental health] and ... it's [also] something where artists help other artists through our disciplines." - Focus Group Participant (Warren County)*

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*"Nobody was in the headspace to make art." Interview Participant (Owsley County)*

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*"How can I possibly pick up a camera? It's just too heavy, there is just too much." - Roger May, filmmaker from Letcher County/Appalshop (Kentucky Arts Council Webinar 2023)*

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*"I was out of work technically for three months and didn't do hardly any artwork... I mean, there was actually a question in my mind, 'Will I ever do artwork again?' Because just seeing all the grief and the trauma and the just hearing the stories of relatives and friends and people I didn't even know, I mean, it was just so overwhelming." - Focus Group Participant (Letcher County)*

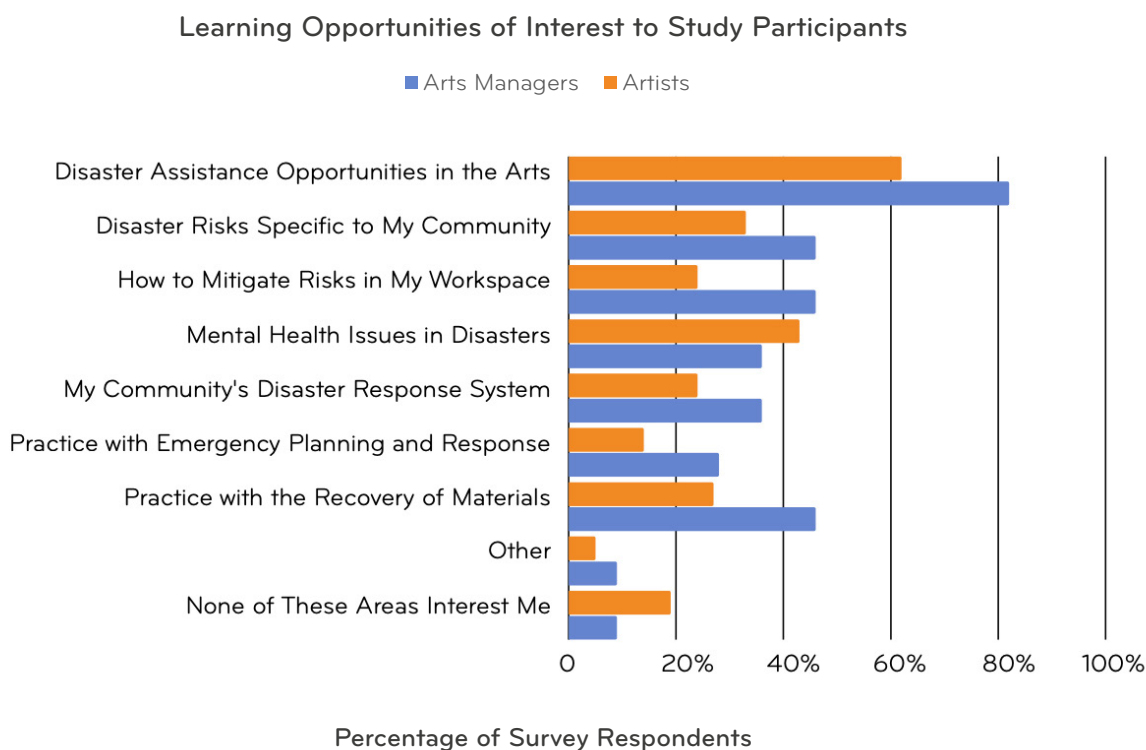
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*"I just feel as an artist, there's a part of you that's always in survival mode, but COVID and the tornado just kicked it into overdrive. It feels like you can't get ahead anymore. You can't make up for what you lost, and it never feels like you're out in front of it." - Focus Group Participant (Warren County)*

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# Looking Forward

When asked about learning opportunities that might interest the respondents, a majority were interested in disaster assistance opportunities, practice with the recovery of materials and artworks, and emergency planning. For artists specifically, there was interest in how to address mental health issues in recovery.



These findings were echoed by federal and state representatives who worked with artists and arts organizations after the disaster events. These representatives felt that there was a need for general awareness of how to protect facilities and collections in the aftermath of a disaster. This could include:

- > basic training for those who want to learn about archival skill
- > mitigation strategies specific to the nature of arts environments
- > preparedness activities including building an emergency communication plan or how to document studio workspaces and artistic inventory

Participants considered the need to look outward for new ideas and different approaches in that regard. Many felt that the knowledge they gained through their disaster experiences would be helpful to share with others, including a survivor-to-survivor training experience that could cover how to triage damaged archives quickly or how to navigate federal disaster assistance. Many also mentioned capturing the power of the stories from artists and arts managers through oral histories as well as bringing in social workers and therapists to work with artists and arts organizations in recovery. Some even described involving the community in broader training, including hosting a community archive day where people bring in photos or objects from their home. This type of program has been initiated since the Eastern flooding at the Hindman Settlement School.

The sincere interest in learning opportunities was highlighted in the viewership numbers from disaster webinar series developed and presented by the Kentucky Arts Council and Kentucky Humanities Council. Each developed their own series of disaster relief webinars specific to arts and culture that were offered live, recorded, or with Facebook streaming. Both organizations noted how widespread the interest in the webinars was including many viewers from out of state.

The first of six webinars that the Kentucky Arts Council hosted, "Meet the Field: Resources You Need in Times of Crisis", had 66 participants with 11 states represented. The Kentucky Humanities Council four-part webinar series in total saw more than a 1,000 individuals participate, including 27 institutions in Kentucky, representatives from 22 different states and even one international attendee. The survivor-to-survivor training idea was tested in one of the webinars hosted by the Kentucky Arts Council titled, "Two Disasters: A Kentucky Tale" that featured three artists and two arts managers that had experienced the tornadoes or floods.

The levels of preparedness that survey respondents gave reflect a need for greater preparedness and training offerings. A majority of those surveyed felt not prepared or somewhat prepared for the events that occurred (68%). Artists appeared to be more prepared overall compared to arts organizations, with 39% feeling moderately prepared and one respondent feeling well-prepared.

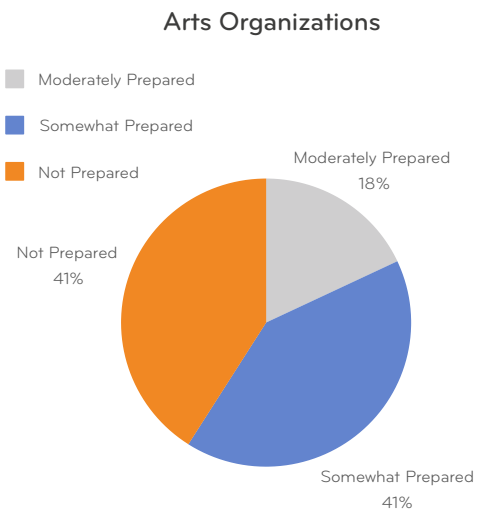
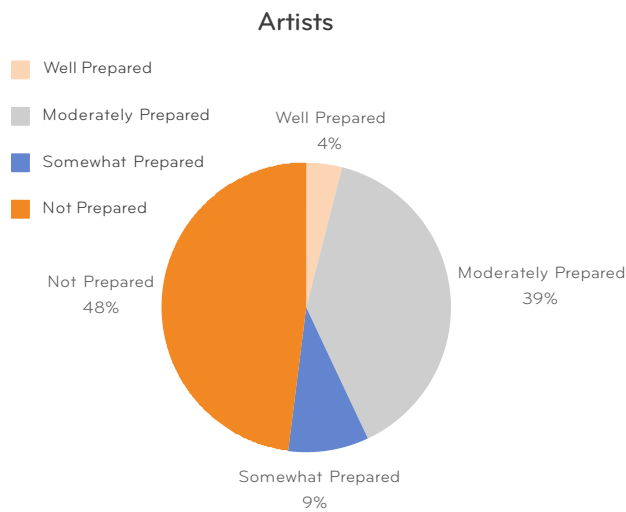
#### **Lessons Learned from Study Participants:**

"Have a battery back up."

"Have an inventory and use cloud storage!"

"Use ... social media to communicate!!"

## Levels of Preparedness for Disaster



Preparedness was discussed as a complex ideal, especially in a disaster event. While most agreed in discussions that learning opportunities would help towards greater preparedness, there was also a general sentiment that no one can be truly prepared for such historic and catastrophic events. For some, preparedness in one area meant greater risk in other areas.

*"...we had fireproof drawers, which was great. But we didn't have a damn fire. So they held the water and all the paper swelled to where we couldn't get them out until some of the water drained out. So it made it --it was more time before we could get those precious papers out and dry them, because we were protecting for fire and that wasn't the problem." - Melissa Helton, Hindman Settlement School (Kentucky Arts Council Webinar 2023)*

These experiences and sentiments influence individual perception of risk, which in turn influences how much time and how many resources are dedicated to preparedness for future disasters. When asked whether natural disasters might affect them in the future, 55% of survey respondents felt the risk was increasing or slightly increasing, 32% felt that the risk had not changed, and 13% felt it was either decreasing or slightly decreasing.

Statistically speaking, it will happen again. According to the FEMA's most recent National Preparedness Report (2023), floodplain risks, especially inland flooding, are increasing as well as novel weather patterns, erosion, and severe weather.

Those communities with aging building infrastructure are particularly vulnerable because the designs for those facilities were not made to withstand flooding and tornado impacts. The report highlights a 2022 study that found “property and infrastructure damage increasingly occurs outside of the 100-year floodplain zones identified by federal mapping systems.” Multi-disciplinary artist Justine Riley, from Graves County, and her husband Josh, have experienced this firsthand. They own Panther Creek Pottery in Mayfield, Kentucky (Graves County). After experiencing damage to their home in 2016, Justine didn’t think it would happen again soon. But the 2021 tornadic events damaged their home and their artistic livelihoods.

*“Seems like it is a new normal.” - Justine Riley, Artist (Kentucky Arts Council Webinar 2023)*



# Detailed Findings and Recommendations

The findings and recommendations in this section are designed to assist arts agencies and funders in building an emergency response framework that would help meet both short-term and long-term recovery needs identified in this report.

## FINDING 1

**Kentucky artists and arts organizations need stronger and more trusted connections to state and national disaster recovery resources.**

A. Artists and arts organizations with strong, pre-established networks of support received more support, more quickly.

## Recommendation

Arts agencies or councils appoint a designated representative to serve as a steering or advisory member with the Kentucky Heritage Emergency Response Network (KHERN). This network is designed to connect local arts and culture communities in need—from arts and cultural organizations to creative workers—to state and federal heritage agencies that have specialized support for arts and culture, as well as state and federal emergency management agencies. Additionally, KHERN is designed to support training and workshops in non-disaster times as well as to connect disaster relief and recovery grants and technical assistance support in times of disaster.

## FINDING 2

**FEMA and other assistance providers need eligibility policies that better recognize and serve the livelihoods of artists and the operations of arts organizations**

## Recommendation

To better recognize the livelihoods of artists and operations of arts organizations, FEMA and other assistance providers can continue to implement eligibility policies that take into account the unique nature of artistic and creative work, and the contributions that work makes in building back communities. This includes:

- Inclusion of lost income from canceled performances, exhibitions, workshops, teaching residencies, and commissions.
- Recognition of non-traditional workspaces including home studios, rented spaces, or mobile studios when assessing damage and determining eligibility.
- Consideration of a spectrum of tangible and intangible losses: in addition to physical facility and formal collection damage, agencies should recognize losses from the destruction of artworks, films, costumes, props, collections, rare materials, and tools, as well as works-in-progress.
- Flexible documentation requirements that consider the unique streams of income and work arrangements in the arts sector. This could include freelance contracts, portfolios, and commission invoices.

\*In March 2024, FEMA announced that it has new policies up for public comment that would specifically include artistic tools and instruments as eligible for individual other needs assistance. Additionally, FEMA announced changes to the SBA loan requirements for those applying for assistance.

### FINDING 3

Following a disaster, Kentucky artists and arts organizations primarily require immediate financial aid, equipment/material replacement, and assistance with relocation. These provisions should be accessible through streamlined and uncomplicated processes.

## Recommendation

State and local arts councils have an emergency relief assistance fund program, in partnership with appropriate funding agencies, with guidelines and a funding mechanism in place before a disaster occurs.

Based on feedback, funds would be relatively unrestricted to meet the varied needs of creative workers in the immediate aftermath of an emergency or disaster, including helping cover losses from canceled contracts, productions, gig employment, and commissions as well as unique tools of trade including artistic and artisan equipment and materials. Ideally, the grant application would be uncomplicated to accommodate the conditions in which disaster survivors would be applying.

From a long-term perspective, finding both temporary and new cost-effective locations for displaced artists and arts organizations is a strong need, but it is recognized that this takes considerable resources, time, and leadership. Therefore, it is recommended that state agencies partner with the developing Kentucky Disaster Recovery Framework (KDRF) to establish and connect arts and culture to broader assistance programs in the state.

#### **FINDING 4**

Kentucky artists and arts organizational staff need support services for healing and recovering. Artists and arts managers offered tireless efforts to help “muck and gut” homes, studios, workspaces, and facilities. They quickly triaged priceless works of art and archives and raised money or offered shelter, food, and water. They worked countless hours to help those in need. The mental and physical fatigue and PTSD may still remain affecting their work and productivity.

### **Recommendation**

Arts agencies and funders consider working with teaching artists and mental health providers on best practices to address mental and physical fatigue and PTSD among arts disaster survivors as well as arts responders. The offer of funding or providing therapy sessions, recovery fellowships, story circles or other forms of art healing-centered engagement would help address and provide comfort to those working in the arts. This type of program investment would help address possible staff turnover due to the effects of disaster trauma, which, in turn, also mitigates the loss of institutional knowledge in day-to-day operations and disaster recovery know-how.

## FINDING 5

Kentucky artists and arts organizations are interested in learning more about disaster assistance opportunities, emergency planning, and recovery of damaged materials.

### Recommendation

Federal, state and local arts agencies and funders can partner to incentivize mitigation and preparedness planning and training through grant programs and technical assistance. This could include allowing or recommending certain budget expenditures in a grant application be allocated towards areas in safety and security or mitigation.

## FINDING 6

Kentucky arts organizations need special assistance in replacing or restoring elevators.

### Recommendation

Federal and state emergency management agencies need to revisit assistance policy eligibility to cover this expense. In the meantime, agencies and funders should consider temporary special dispensations to continue award funding until arts organizations are able to return to ADA compliance.

## FINDING 7

Many Kentucky artists and arts organizations did not have insurance.

## Recommendation

Arts agencies and funders consider collaborative opportunities to discuss this issue and seek guidance on opportunities in the long-term from national preparedness and response advocacy agencies like the Alliance for Response, National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Response, CERF+, and the Performing Arts Readiness Project. In the short-term, agencies could incentivize insurance coverage by offering learning opportunities and resources about valid and reliable area providers.

### FINDING 8

Kentucky artists and arts organizations prominently used social media communication for immediate and short-term assistance after the disasters.

## Recommendation

For funders, emergency management agencies, volunteer groups, or mutual aid networks seeking to help coordinate and distribute assistance to local arts and culture communities, establishing social media pages in pre-disaster times is helpful as those pages can then be used in the aftermath of a disaster. Eastern Kentucky Mutual Aid provided critical support to local arts and culture communities with its use of social media to best organize volunteers, goods, and services to those in need. Additionally, these pages can be used in a variety of languages, which helps address accessibility concerns.

*"I worked with a couple of communities and family members and [there are] things that they just don't even know [ ] pertains to them because it's not in the language they know." - Focus Group Participant (Warren County)*



## FINDING 9

Federal and state emergency management agencies need resources and data about arts and culture organizations that exist across the state and how best to work with them in times of disaster.

### Recommendation

Kentucky arts organizations can register anytime, not just following a disaster, in FEMA's grants portal <https://grantee.fema.gov/>. This is an efficient way for Kentucky's Emergency Management Agency (KYEM) to know the organization exists and allows the organization to receive important information before, during, and after disaster events. This information includes being invited to applicant briefings, which provide extensive information about FEMA's Public Assistance Program and an opportunity to ask questions of KYEM. When registering with FEMA, a SAM.gov unique entity ID is also required, which can be obtained anytime at SAM.gov.

### Recommendation

Develop a state-wide asset mapping project that would provide a database of arts and cultural organizations, artists, and creative workers in the state. This database would be available to emergency management agencies and other assistance providers to better understand the number of arts and culture entities impacted during a disaster event and to assist those agencies in communicating resources to those impacted in a more efficient and effective way.

# Appendix

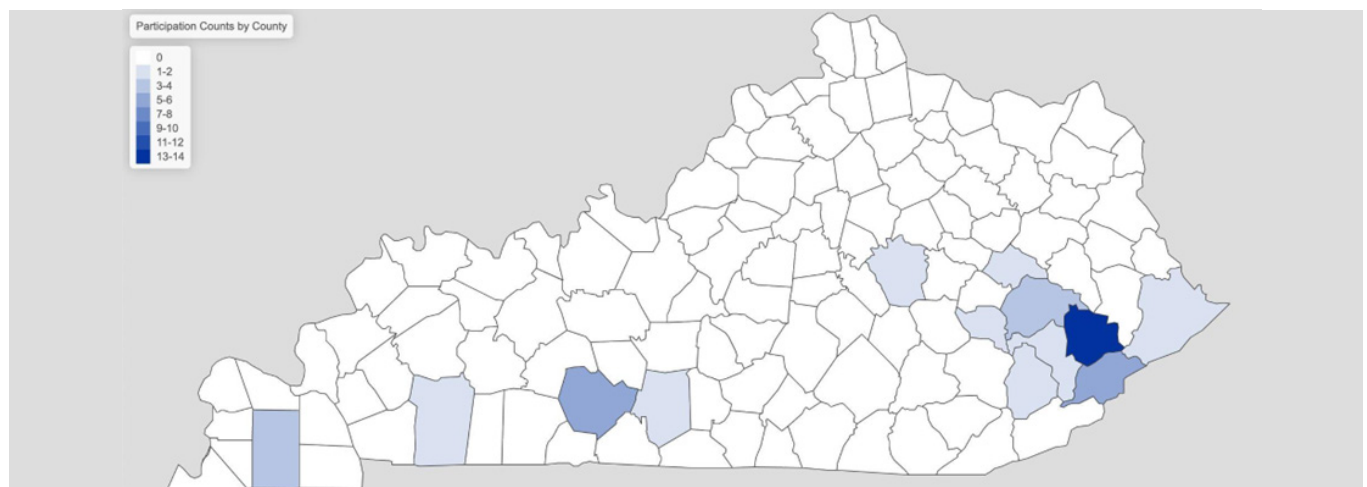
## Research Methodology

The survey findings represent data collected from an anonymous online survey using the University of Kentucky's Qualtrics account. The survey was initially distributed via email to the Kentucky Arts Council's contact list of 611 email addresses attributed to those in the disaster-affected counties. It was also distributed by the national artist relief non-profit, CERF+, to an unknown number of email contacts of affected artists in the region. Participants were encouraged to forward the survey link to others who had been affected by the two disaster events.

The survey questions were piloted from January through March 2023 with six reviewers: four reviewers were individuals actively working with survivors in Kentucky arts communities, and two reviewers work in ethical survey research methods.

Four rounds of edits were made to the survey questions to make the phrasing, words, and content as thoughtful as possible, considering the life-altering effects of disasters on so many.

The survey was open for responses between April 12, 2023, and June 30, 2023. There were 61 total responses, with 43 completed surveys that were analyzed for this report representing 25 individual artists and 18 individuals representing arts organizations. Not every respondent answered every question. Responses represented 13 counties of 43 total in the two FEMA-declared disaster areas (note: three surveys did not indicate a specific county). Of the individual artists that completed the survey, 50% relied on their artistic work as support for their everyday household expenses.



Survey Participant Count by County, In Order of Most to Least

Some of the hardest hit areas in Western Kentucky, including Mayfield, KY, located in Graves County, and Bowling Green, KY, located in Warren County were represented in the survey sample. The four hardest hit counties in the Eastern Kentucky flooding—Breathitt, Knott, Letcher and Perry—were also represented in the survey sample.

For categorical survey response items, differences between respondents from Eastern and Western Kentucky and between artists and arts organization representatives were analyzed using Fisher's exact tests. For quantitative outcomes, differences were assessed using two-sample t-tests. Log transformations were used to correct for right-skewness, when appropriate. Across all analyses, a p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. All analyses were completed in SAS 9.4 (SAS Institute Inc.; Cary, NC, USA).

The survey, interviews, and focus groups utilized a nonprobability sampling approach to select participants and gather data. Nonprobability sampling is a method where participants are chosen based on the researcher's judgment or convenience rather than through random selection. This approach was deemed appropriate for this study due to the nature of the research objectives and the characteristics of the population under investigation.

In this case study, interview and focus group participants were selected based on their relevance to the research topic and their ability to provide valuable insights into the phenomenon being studied. The sampling process involved snowball and purposive sampling, wherein participants were either chosen deliberately to ensure representation of diverse perspectives and experiences related to the impact of the disaster on arts and culture or they were contacted as known entities on the Kentucky Arts Council's mailing list.

It is important to acknowledge that the findings of this case study may not be generalizable to the broader population due to the nonprobability sampling approach used. Instead, the focus provided an in-depth understanding and analysis of specific cases or contexts relevant to the research objectives. Despite the limitations associated with nonprobability sampling, this approach allowed for rich qualitative data collection and in-depth exploration of the research topic.

Throughout the research process, efforts were made to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings through careful selection of participants, triangulation of data sources, and thorough analysis of the data collected. Additionally, transparency regarding the sampling approach and its implications is provided to ensure the reader's understanding of the study's limitations and the context within which the findings are situated.

# Arts and Culture Disaster Resources

## TOOLKITS

dPlan Disaster Planning Toolkit:

<https://www.dplan.org/>

CERF+ Studio Protector Toolkit:

<https://cerfplus.org/studio-protector/>

Arts Organizations At A Crossroads Toolkit. Managing Transitions and Preserving Assets:

<https://www.ncaper.org/copy-of-knowledge-assets>

## PUBLICATIONS

Community Arts Disaster Recovery Resources - University of Kentucky Community and Economic Development Initiative Extension <https://cedik.ca.uky.edu/arts-disaster-recovery>

An Arts Field Guide to Federal Disaster Relief - National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness & Emergency Response, National Endowment for the Arts, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation <https://www.ncaper.org/services-4>

Inspiration Book: Arts and Experiential Learning: Building the Foundation for Arts and Experiential Learning Partnerships for Mitigation and Resilience - Federal Emergency Management Agency

[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_inspiration-book-external-audience.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_inspiration-book-external-audience.pdf)

Fact Sheet on Arts and Culture: Helping People Before, During, and After Disasters - Federal Emergency Management Agency: [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_art-culture-fact-sheet\\_012024.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_art-culture-fact-sheet_012024.pdf)

The Event Safety Guide: A Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Live Entertainment Events in the United States - Event Safety Alliance: <https://www.eventsafetyalliance.org/the-event-safety-guide>

## EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS AND CERTIFICATES

Kentucky Arts Council Emergencies, Disasters and the Arts Series:

<http://artscouncil.ky.gov/KAC/Creative/emergencies-disasters-arts.htm>

Kentucky Humanities Council Disaster Recovery Workshops:

<https://www.kyhumanities.org/programs/disaster-recovery>

Performing Arts Readiness Project Webinars: <https://performingartsreadiness.org/webinars/>

University of Kentucky Arts Administration Undergraduate and Graduate Certificates in Arts Emergency Management: <https://finearts.uky.edu/arts-administration/arts-emergency-management-0>

## NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND STATE ARTS PREPAREDNESS ADVOCACY AND GRANTING ORGANIZATIONS

CERF+: <https://cerfplus.org/>

Heritage Emergency National Task Force: <https://culturalrescue.si.edu/who-we-are/hentf>

Kentucky Arts Council: <http://artscouncil.ky.gov/>

Kentucky Heritage Emergency Response Network:

<https://kdla.ky.gov/SLARC/Pages/KHERN.aspx>

National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response: <https://www.ncaper.org/>

National Endowment for the Arts: <https://www.arts.gov/>

Performing Arts Readiness Project: <https://performingartsreadiness.org/>

SouthArts: <https://www.southarts.org/>



# Survey Questionnaire

This is a copy of the survey questionnaire sent to disaster-affected artists and arts managers as part of the report's study methods.

## SURVEY INTRODUCTION

### Why should I take this survey?

This survey is part of a Kentucky Arts Council case study to understand how arts agencies can better support artists and arts organizations before, during, and after disaster events. We need your story to make sure the voices in Kentucky arts communities are heard, and more support can be available for future disaster events.

### How is the survey designed specifically for those affected by a disaster?

The survey was created with the belief that the human impact of disasters is just as important as the physical impact.

This means that all the questions in this survey were crafted with careful thought and a deep awareness of the lasting impact of disasters on local communities. Your participation is voluntary. There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer; however, we hope you will complete the entire survey so that the results reach their greatest potential.

### How long will this survey take?

We know you are busy. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. There are 20 questions with six demographic questions at the end.

### How will you use the information I provide?

This survey is confidential, however, you will be given an opportunity at the end of the survey to leave contact details if you are interested in helping us further with this study. All reports, publications, and conference presentations created from data collected in this survey will only be published in aggregate form. In other words, no individual survey responses will be made public.

## Who can I contact if I have any questions or concerns?

If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns about the survey or case study, the lead researcher for this study is Leah Hamilton with the University of Kentucky Department of Arts Administration. Leah's contact information is: [l.hamilton@uky.edu](mailto:l.hamilton@uky.edu).

If you have questions or concerns about ongoing disaster assistance or support, the Kentucky Arts Council (KAC) and SouthArts are supporting this research project. Please contact Emily Moses at the KAC: [emilyb.moses@ky.gov](mailto:emilyb.moses@ky.gov) or visit <http://artscouncil.ky.gov/>

If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

## SURVEY QUESTIONS

1 What best describes your role(s) in your local arts community? (Check all that apply.)

- Artist\*** - (Individual, Self-Employed, and/or Arts Business Owner)
- Manager** - (Paid employee of an arts organization, arts agency or for-profit arts company-hourly, part or full-time)
- Board Member** - (Volunteer leader of a nonprofit arts organization)
- Volunteer** - (Donate your time to support an arts cause/organization)
- Financial Supporter** - (Donate money to support the arts community)
- Other**

For this survey, the role of an artist is not defined by whether you make money, but by your pursuit of an art form, in any discipline.

2 Although you may serve many roles in your arts community, this survey asks specific questions about the impact of disasters on individual artists and arts organizations. In order to make the survey questions specific to each area, in what capacity would you like to answer the survey questions today? (Please choose **one**.)

- I would like to answer as an artist\* (Individual, Self-Employed, and/or Arts Business Owner)
- I would like to answer representing an arts organization. This organization is a(n)...
  - Artist collective (informal, no legal status)
  - Nonprofit arts organization
  - Government-run arts organization
  - Commercial arts business
  - Other

For this survey, the role of an artist is not defined by whether you make money, but by your pursuit of an art form, in any discipline.

3

Which category best describes your/your arts organization's arts discipline? (Please check only one.)

- Literature (creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry and play/screenwriting)
- Dance (choreography and performance)
- Music (composition, songwriting, and performance)
- Theater and Storytelling
- Folk and Traditional Arts
- Visual Arts (drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, fiber arts and textiles, mixed media, installation, new media)
- Media Arts (film, video, audio, computer/digital arts and interactive media)
- Multi-disciplinary
- Other

4

Which of the two natural disaster events selected for this study affected you/your organization?

- Western Kentucky Tornadoes (Dec 10, 2021 - Dec 11, 2021)
- Barren, Caldwell, Christian, Fulton, Graves, Hardin, Hickman, Hopkins, Logan, Lyon, Marion, Marshall, Muhlenberg, Ohio, Taylor, Warren
- Eastern Kentucky Flooding, Landslides, Mudslides (Jul 26, 2022 - Aug 11, 2022): Breathitt, Casey, Clay, Cumberland, Floyd, Harlan, Johnson, Knott, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Lincoln, Magoffin, Martin, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Powell, Whitley, Wolfe
- Both
- Neither (If neither, you do not need to complete the rest of the survey.)

5

How prepared do you feel you/your organization was to respond and recover from the disaster?

- Not prepared
- Somewhat unprepared
- Moderately prepared
- Well prepared
- Very well prepared

6

Please identify any areas of loss your workspace/organization incurred due to the disaster (check all that apply):

- Lost income (actual)
- Lost income (projected)
- Physical structures and equipment damage (items not intended for sale)
- Artistic works/goods/products completed and works-in-progress (items intended for use/sale)
- Collections/Artifacts/Archives
- Costumes/Props/Lighting/Sets
- Educational Materials (books, art supplies, etc.)
- Storage damage (raw materials, administrative files, documents, etc.)
- Other (please specify)
- I didn't experience any losses in my workspace, but I did experience personal losses
- I didn't experience any losses in my workspace or personally.



7 How would you describe the severity of your workspace's/organization's total losses (check only one):

- Minor
- Major
- Total Loss/Completely Destroyed

- What is the estimated total value of the loss (in dollars)? \_\_\_\_\_

8 Do you anticipate that the losses you incurred will negatively impact your ability to create, present, exhibit, or sell in the forthcoming year?

- Yes
- No

9 Please identify any areas of loss your workspace/organization incurred due to the disaster (check all that apply):

- Cash
- A place to live
- A place to work
- Equipment
- Materials/Supplies
- Insurance/Relief Assistance Advice
- Arts-specific networks (arts-led support groups/meetings for advice, relief coordination, etc.)
- Help with clean up
- Other, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

10

Were you made aware of direct federal funding assistance opportunities from the Federal Emergency Management Agency?

- Yes
- No
- If yes, how were you made aware? \_\_\_\_\_

11

Did you apply for any assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)?

- Yes
  - Housing Assistance
  - Other Needs Assistance
  - FEMA Public Assistance
  - I don't know which type of assistance it was
- If no, why not? (Check all that apply.)
  - It was unclear who was eligible for what type of assistance
  - I worried that if I applied for one funding area, I wouldn't be eligible for another.
  - I already had assistance for the COVID-19 pandemic and was concerned I couldn't apply for assistance again.
  - The process was too confusing
  - I was overwhelmed by all the information during that time
  - The 30 or 60-day deadlines to apply were a challenging timeframe
  - Other

12

Did you apply for/request any other type of disaster relief assistance? This could be financial, e.g., cash, and/or non-financial, e.g., donation of materials, equipment, or advice/expertise.

- Yes
- No

A. If yes, from which of the following sources?

- Kentucky Arts Council Artist Relief and Disaster Recovery Grant
- The U.S. Small Business Administration
- Community Foundation/Private Foundation (List foundation names here: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- CERF+
- Business/Corporation (List names here: \_\_\_\_\_ )
- Other

List the total amount of assistance received (rounded to whole dollars):

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List a brief description of non-financial assistance received:

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13

Did you/your arts organization submit an insurance claim?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

A. If yes, what is the status of the claim?

- Accepted
- Denied
- In appeal
- Pending
- Other

14

After the disaster occurred, did you participate in any local, state, or national arts networks/groups\* for guidance/non-financial support either virtually or in person?

- Yes
  - Please provide the name or description of the group \_\_\_\_\_
- No
  - \*Examples include support groups set up by the Kentucky Arts Council, the National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness and Emergency Response (NCAPER), CERF+ to help address response and relief efforts in the affected areas.

15

Please identify any areas of loss your workspace/organization incurred due to the disaster (check all that apply):

- Financial Recovery Support (cash, grants, etc.)
- Mental Health Services/Support Groups
- Studio/Facility Repairs
- Rebuilding Inventory (equipment, materials, tools, etc.)
- Post-disaster recovery advice
- Other, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

16

What best describes your thoughts on natural disasters affecting you/your organization in the future?

- The risk is decreasing
- The risk is slightly decreasing
- This risk is not changing
- The risk is slightly increasing
- The risk is increasing x

17

Which learning opportunities in disaster preparedness might interest you (check all that apply)?

- Disaster risks specific to my community
- My community's disaster response system
- How to mitigate risks in my workspace
- Mental health issues in disasters
- Disaster assistance opportunities in the arts (artist support networks, grants, relief programs, and organizations)
- Practice with emergency planning and response
- Practice with the recovery of materials, archives, artifacts, and artworks.
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- None of these areas interest me.

18

Knowing that the results of this survey are designed to help increase support for artists and arts organizations before, during, and after a disaster, do you have any additional thoughts/insights/comments for us to consider?

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19

Are you interested in participating in the study further, e.g., focus group or interview?

- Yes
- No

A. If yes, please provide your preferred contact method and information:

- Email \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



20

Do you have any photos/videos/illustrations of the damage that you would be willing to share for this case study?

Yes

No

A. If yes, provide a link to the images/video or share your contact information here.

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Demographic Information.

Why are we asking these questions? We're seeking demographic information to help ensure that the data collected represents those affected fairly. If you do not wish to answer, please feel free to skip it or "prefer not to state". If you do choose to answer, choose how you most strongly identify - select as many as applicable.

21

What is your age?

18-19

20-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60-69

70-79

80+

22

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Gender non-conforming
- Prefer not to state
- Other

23

Which categories best describe you? Select all boxes that apply.

- White (for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.)
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (for example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Columbian, etc.)
- Black or African American (for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somalian, etc.)
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaska Native (for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.)
- Middle Eastern or North African (for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.)
- Other race, ethnicity, or origin
- Prefer not to state

24 Which category best describes your highest level of educational experience?

- Internship
- High School Diploma/GED
- Apprenticeship/vocational training
- Some college-level courses
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Some graduate-level courses
- Master's Degree
- PhD, DMA, Ed.D, J.D. or similar doctoral degree
- Certificate or Diploma, please specify:
- None
- Other

25 (For artists only) Do you rely on your artistic work to support your everyday household expenses?

- Yes
  - Less than 25%
  - 25%
  - 50%
  - 75%
  - 100%
  - Decline to state
- No

26

During your experience with this disaster, did one of the definitions of an individual with a disability apply to you?\*

Yes

No

A. If yes, which one of these categories applied?

A physical impairment that substantially limited a major life activity

A mental impairment that substantially limited a major life activity

\*The Americans with Disabilities Act defines an individual with a disability as a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, (2) has a record or history of a substantially limiting impairment, or (3) is regarded or perceived by an employer as having a substantially limiting impairment.

This is the end of the survey. We sincerely thank you for your time and efforts in taking this survey.

If you know of others in your arts community that were impacted by the disaster that should take this survey, please share this link to the survey with them.

If you would like to receive a copy of the final case study report, please list your email address here: or visit the [\*Kentucky Arts Council's website\*](#) for updates in Summer 2023.

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# KENTUCKY ARTS IN DISASTER

AN IMPACT REPORT

— 2024 —