



**Harlem Stage**

Diverse Artists. Transformative Art.



## METHODOLOGY

Harlem Stage and The Field launched a research project in May 2018 entitled *Beyond 26%* designed to impact the creation and successful implementation of leadership development programs for arts administrators of color. In 2017, the NY Times reported that while 67% of New York City residents identify as persons of color, only 26% of senior staff members at cultural institutions are people of color. The goal of *Beyond 26%* is to delve into this disparity and illuminate the barriers to advancement faced by aspiring arts administrators of color. To this end, four recent Fellows (two from Harlem Stage and two from The Field's Field Leadership Fund) developed a 25-question, three-part survey for Fellows and Interns of color in New York City.

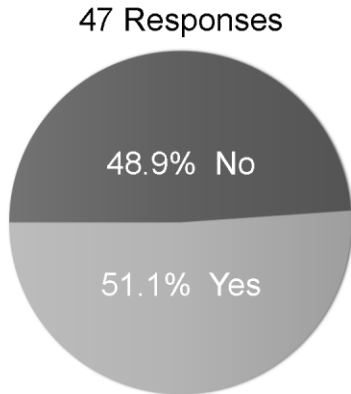
## SAMPLE

We sent the survey to 21 "pipeline providers", organizations<sup>1</sup> committed to developing the careers of arts administrators of color in New York City. The organizations sent the survey to their current or former Fellows and Interns. Participants were not required to identify themselves or their organization, and all survey responses remained anonymous.

We received 85 responses; 47 of which were from persons of color and the remaining were of persons who identify as White/Caucasian. The final sample<sup>2</sup> used for this report were the survey responses of the 47 persons of color.

## FINDINGS

Almost half of the 47 respondents did not get the sense that there would be a pathway to a permanent position in arts administration after their fellowship, with one fellow stating that "my fellowship wasn't structured to be an entry into an organization or job but as a resource to people already working in the field." One fellow mentioned that they believe permanent positions will be available post-fellowship, however, not necessarily in positions of leadership.



Several people mentioned that they don't feel confident that many permanent positions exist and for the few potential job opportunities that do exist, they know that organizations hire from within and "they don't see the people with them retiring anytime soon." Additionally, one fellow noted that they "don't have the connections that the admins have that would make me a viable admin."

The majority, thirty people, felt their fellowship came at the perfect time in their career. One person noted that their fellowship kickstarted their immersion into the entertainment industry and another person mentioned "it came at a time when I was considering my next steps professionally and it exposed me to different types of cultural work." Another fellow mentioned that it was the perfect time because "college was the only time that (they) could afford to work for minimum wage."

Twenty-eight participants felt their fellowship prepared them for opportunities they may have been prevented from otherwise. Many cited the connections they made during their fellowships and access to educational resources as reasons why their fellowships prepared them for opportunities they may have been prevented from otherwise. Some cited "visibility" and the notion that they felt confident and empowered upon completing their fellowships as reasons why they felt that their fellowship program prepared them for opportunities that they may have been prevented from pursuing otherwise.

Ninety percent of respondents were compensated during their Fellowships/Internships. Thirty-seven respondents agreed that their payment was fair, however, many noted that it was fair with the caveats for the "arts sector" or that "a good amount of internships do not offer compensation." Five people mentioned specifically they were either paid minimum wage, had to work overtime and the budget didn't cover additional hours, or had to work additional jobs to make ends meet. In-kind payments kept resurfacing with varying views. Some mentioned receiving other types of in kind compensation, such as "free classes" and "additional training" which made the fellowship payment fair, even if they weren't being compensated monetarily the way they would have wanted. Several people also mentioned the frustration of being compensated on the low end of adequate because "the sector is vastly underpaid" in general.

Participants were asked if they were familiar with The People's Cultural Plan and/or Create NYC's Cultural Plan, and to provide their thoughts. Roughly half of the participants were familiar with one or both documents. Of the participants that provided their thoughts, most preferred the People's Cultural Plan over CreateNYC's Cultural Plan. One participant stated, "The People's Cultural Plan goes a step further in outlining strategies particularly in consideration of the health and livelihood of cultural workers."

Furthermore, when asked whether participants felt that their fellowships made progress towards achieving the goals set forth in each plan, most said "yes." Two participants did not feel that their fellowship program had made meaningful progress towards the goals expressed in the documents. Specifically, one participant cited the compensation as being too low and the program too short.

When asked what it is that funders, programmers and producers need to know in order to increase equity, diversity and inclusion among arts administrators in the arts and cultural sector of NYC, fellows offered similar feedback. The fellows agreed that funders, programmers, and producers need to be diverse themselves and “take some type of ongoing racial equity, undoing racism training” so that they can learn “their blind spots and racial biases.” Continuously learning about race, power and privilege is necessary in order to understand what the work is about and what it will take to eliminate inequity from our institutions.

There were several calls for funders to trust new + black + queer + POC-run organizations, not just the big organizations that have multi-million dollar budgets. One person stated that “it all starts with the recognition of the major disparities in funding allocations to CIGs in general as well as a greater historical appreciation for the ways that smaller non-profit cultural institutions serving diverse communities beyond Museum Mile and Manhattan have been treated. Additionally, the realization that these issues are not just terms but mandates for action that require concrete policies and specific change in areas such as recruitment and staffing.”

This brings up the next point that was touched on often- the need to shift hiring processes and office culture once black and brown employees are hired. One fellow stated “simply trying to choose more diverse candidates won't cut it. They need to reach a wider audience of applicants and look more towards the root of the problem.” Another fellow mentioned that there's “a learning curve that needs to be addressed and handled. There are people who don't contribute to equity, diversity, and inclusion that get in positions that people who don't have a way in the door would be great at.” Fellows also mentioned that these two issues can't be observed in a vacuum, and acknowledged that this work “requires hard discussions and not simple mission statements, and that the work has to be reflected on and off the stages.”

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite frustration with low compensation and a feeling that there was no pathway to a permanent position in arts administration after their fellowship, the majority (75% of respondents) felt their fellowship program contributed, or will contribute, to greater diversity, equity and inclusion among arts administrators in the arts and cultural sector of NYC. Changes in how and who funders fund, and how organizations implement organizational wide culture changes will impact whether equity in arts administration can become a reality-it will determine whether or not we can get beyond the 26%.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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<sup>1</sup> Organizations who received the survey: Laundromat Project (Create Change), CCCADI, A Blade of Grass, Urban Bush Women, NYFA, Gibney Dance, The Lark (Van Lier New Voices Fellowship), EMC Arts, Harlem Stage, Downtown Brooklyn Arts Admin Fellowship, Pentacle, Field Leadership Fund, Epic Theatre Ensemble Expanding Epic NEXT Arts Leadership Initiative, Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC) Early Career Training Program, New 42nd Street The New 42 Fellowship Program, New York Theatre Workshop 2050 Administrative Fellows Program, Roundabout Theatre Company Theatrical Workforce Development Program, Theatre Development Fund TKTS Apprenticeship Program, and ACRE.

<sup>2</sup> Over half, 53%, of the respondents were in their twenties, whereas 23% were in their thirties and 23% were 40 and over. One respondent was 19 years old. Participants were asked to self identify their gender based on an open ended question. Approximately 81% identified as female, 13% as male, and others included Femme, Nonconforming Female, and Binary. Participants were asked to self identify their race based on an open ended question. Just over half of the respondents, 51%, were Black/African American, 19% were Latino and 10% were Asian. Other race self-identified were Multiracial (6%) and Afro Latino, Afro Caribbean, Afro Caribbean, Native American, South American, Middle Eastern, Cuban (sic), Mexican, Native American (each approximately 2%). The majority (40%) of respondents had obtained a bachelor's degree, followed by approximately 28% with a master's degree. About 26% obtained a high school diploma or equivalent, and 4% had a PhD. Of the 17 respondents (36%) who chose to offer additional identities in an open-ended question, 41% identified as LGBTQ, 18% as demi/pansexual, 12% as asexual, and others included heterosexual, Caribbean, Garifuna, Daughter of the South and Human Being. A relatively equal amount of respondents identified as either artists (32%) or both artists and managers (34%). About 19% identified as manager/administrators, and 15% as other (technicians, students, creative art therapist, arts advocate). Roughly half (53%) of all fellowships were 6 months or less. Approximately 15% were seven months to a year, and almost 30% were over a year long. The majority of the respondents, about 70% felt that their fellowships were just right in terms of length whereas 23% felt theirs was too short. Only 4% felt that their fellowship was too long, and one respondent was still in their program. The data shows a fairly equal distribution of participants that were students, recent graduates or mid-career professionals during their fellowships. Participants who considered themselves mid-career professionals slightly outnumbered the other two groups.