



What is the issue?

The scale and impact of the Latinx/é arts and cultural field are unknown and likely underestimated. At present, there is neither a comprehensive database of Latinx/é-focused arts organizations nor a systematized way of learning about them. An incomplete picture of the Latinx/é arts ecosystem makes it difficult to understand organizational needs and target resources equitably.

What is the research context?

The National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC) understands that reliable data affirms the significance of organizations working within the Latinx/é arts and culture landscape and aims to offer a more comprehensive reflection of this field.

This study builds on a 2019 NALAC report describing the Latinx/é arts and culture landscape. Conditions shifted markedly between 2020 and 2024, including shifts in public discourse and funding landscapes. This report provides a timely baseline of the realities in this period for Latinx/é organizations.

Research Approach

The National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC) and researchers from NORC at the University of Chicago surveyed organizations founded by, led by, and/or serving Latinx/é people across the United States and Puerto Rico. The survey was distributed to organizations in NALAC's network and to organizations sourced through a purchased list of Latinx/é businesses, a self-nomination system, and a peer-nomination system. 439 organizations responded.

What are the research findings?

Researchers found that since 2020, nearly three in four organizations reported increased demand for their programs. Organizations also worked to increase staffing, improve staff compensation, and expand program reach. More than 70 percent of organizations formed

Research brief based on *A Mirror and a Map: Reflecting Organizational Realities and Navigating Change among Latinx/é Arts and Culture Organizations* by Mitchell R. Barrows, Gwendolyn Rugg, Ryan Buechel, Jill Gandhi, and Michał Dzitko.

partnerships with sectors including youth development, health, and immigration. Despite these efforts, almost half of the organizations reported that they could not meet demand in the last fiscal year due to funding, staffing, or resource shortfalls.

While these organizations are growing, their growth is not always sustainable. The greatest challenges for surveyed organizations—about half of which operate with budgets under \$100,000—related to cash flow, managing growth, and access to physical space, needs shared with many across the arts sector. Securing unrestricted (flexible) revenue was a top challenge for respondents; more than one-third reported that less than 20 percent of their revenue was unrestricted. This funding allows organizations to cover operational costs, address organizational needs, and invest in further growth.

Of the organizations surveyed, just over two-thirds reported a 501(c)(3) nonprofit structure. A smaller number of organizations said they operate under fiscal sponsorships or LLCs. Others wrote in their structures, which included S corporations, C corporations, municipal entities, public institutions, unincorporated collectives, grassroots groups, and individual artist projects.

Organizations surveyed are largely powered by majority

Latinx/é-identified staff (more than three-quarters for each type of role), with a median of one full-time and two part-time staff members, and at least eight volunteers. Approximately a quarter of surveyed groups reported no paid full-time staff whatsoever, underscoring how critical part-time staff and volunteers are to operations.

Suggested Brief Citation

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Read More

[A Mirror and a Map: Nurturing Organizational Realities and Navigating Change among Latinx/é Arts and Culture Organizations - Report and Resource Toolkit](#). By Mitchell R. Barrows, Gwendolyn Rugg, Ryan Buechel, Jill Gandhi, and Michał Dzitko. <https://www.mirrorandmap.nalac.org/>

Implications for Stakeholders

- **Arts funders** could expand general operating support and recognize the outsized role of small- and mid-sized organizations in community ecosystems. Given the prevalence of volunteer and part-time labor, funders can be mindful of funding requirements around documented staff time. Given that about a third of organizations operate outside of a 501(c)(3) structure, funders can also reconsider nonprofit status as a funding requirement.
- **Non-arts funders and policymakers** could consider opportunities to explicitly weave in arts organizations for funding eligibility and encourage partnerships with arts organizations, given their expanded reach through existing cross-sectoral partnerships.
- **Field advocates and policymakers** could use this report to support policy campaigns and coalition-building efforts and to identify opportunities for equitable investment in Latinx/é organizations. Field advocates can help emphasize that these groups are located in communities, run by communities, heavily sought out during times of crisis by people in their community, and yet they are insufficiently recognized and funded.

The study this brief is based on was funded by The Wallace Foundation as part of its Advancing Well-Being in the Arts initiative. The initiative seeks to support and document the essential role that arts organizations rooted in communities of color play in the U.S. arts ecosystem. The original research and findings summarized in this brief are those of the researcher and do not necessarily reflect the views of the foundation.