



Aurora Ilog & Camille Schenkan, Center Theatre Group

Theatre Alumni Career Survey Conducted Fall 2020

Overview of Survey

- In fall 2020, we administered an online survey that looked at career training provided within higher education theatre programs. It also measured the impact of the pandemic and the social justice uprising on early-career theatre practitioners.
- We conducted a similar survey on career training in 2018 and were able to compare data.



What We Learned

- Unsurprisingly, more than half of respondents had lost work. Of those who were laid off or furloughed from a theatre, 18% were former interns at that theatre; we are experiencing a major disruption of the workforce development pipeline.
- The survey results will guide us toward proactive initiatives to help highly qualified, diverse early-career professionals stay in the field until jobs return.



Who Took the Survey?

- 303 total respondents.
- All graduates of postsecondary Theatre programs in the United States, within the past 10 years (AA/BA/BFA/MA/MFA/PhD).
- Intended to work in live theatre post-graduation.
- Took the survey in October/November 2020.
- 2018 Theatre Alumni Survey had similar guidelines and required respondents to have attended and graduated from a college or university in Southern California.



Methodology & Notes

- Anonymous SurveyMonkey survey distributed to past CTG program participants, higher education partners in southern California and beyond, and in industry-specific groups online.
- All demographic data is self-reported.
- Throughout, groups with fewer than 10 respondents will not appear in segmentation, as the data set is too small. They are included in full group analysis.
- For all questions with multiple choices, respondents could choose multiple options—so percentages are often > 100%.
- We encourage continued study of the anonymous raw data and can provide it to educators and researchers: email education@CTGLA.org.



Gender
Identification

	Percent	Number
Male	19.8%	60
Female	75.91%	230
Nonbinary	3.3%	10
Genderfluid	0.66%	2
Other	0.33%	1
Total Responses		303

Age

	Percent	Number
18-20	0.33%	1
21-29	63.04%	191
30-39	32.34%	98
40-49	2.64%	8
50-59	1.65%	5
60 or older	0.0%	0
Total Responses		303

Ethnicity

Reflective of population
of theatre programs.

	Percentage	Number
Black or African American	5.94%	18
White or Caucasian	84.49%	256
Latinx	8.58%	26
Asian or Asian American	9.57%	29
Indigenous Peoples, American Indian or Alaska Native	2.64%	8
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.33%	1
Middle Eastern or North African	1.32%	4
Prefer Not to Answer	0.66%	2
Not listed (please specify)	1.98%	6
Total Responses		303

Identify as
BIPOC (Black,
Indigenous,
People of
Color)

	Percentage	Number
Yes	20.13%	61
No	79.87%	242
Total Responses		303

First
Generation
College
Student

	Percentage	Number
Yes	21.12%	64
No	78.88%	239
Total Responses		303

Self-Identify
as a Person
with a
Disability

	Percentage	Number
Yes	9.57%	29
No	90.43%	274
Total Responses		303

Self-Identify as
a Person from
a Low-Income
Household

	Percentage	Number
Yes	20.46%	62
No	79.54%	241
Total Responses		303

Parent/
Guardian

	Percentage	Number
Yes	7.59%	23
No	92.41%	280
Total Responses		303

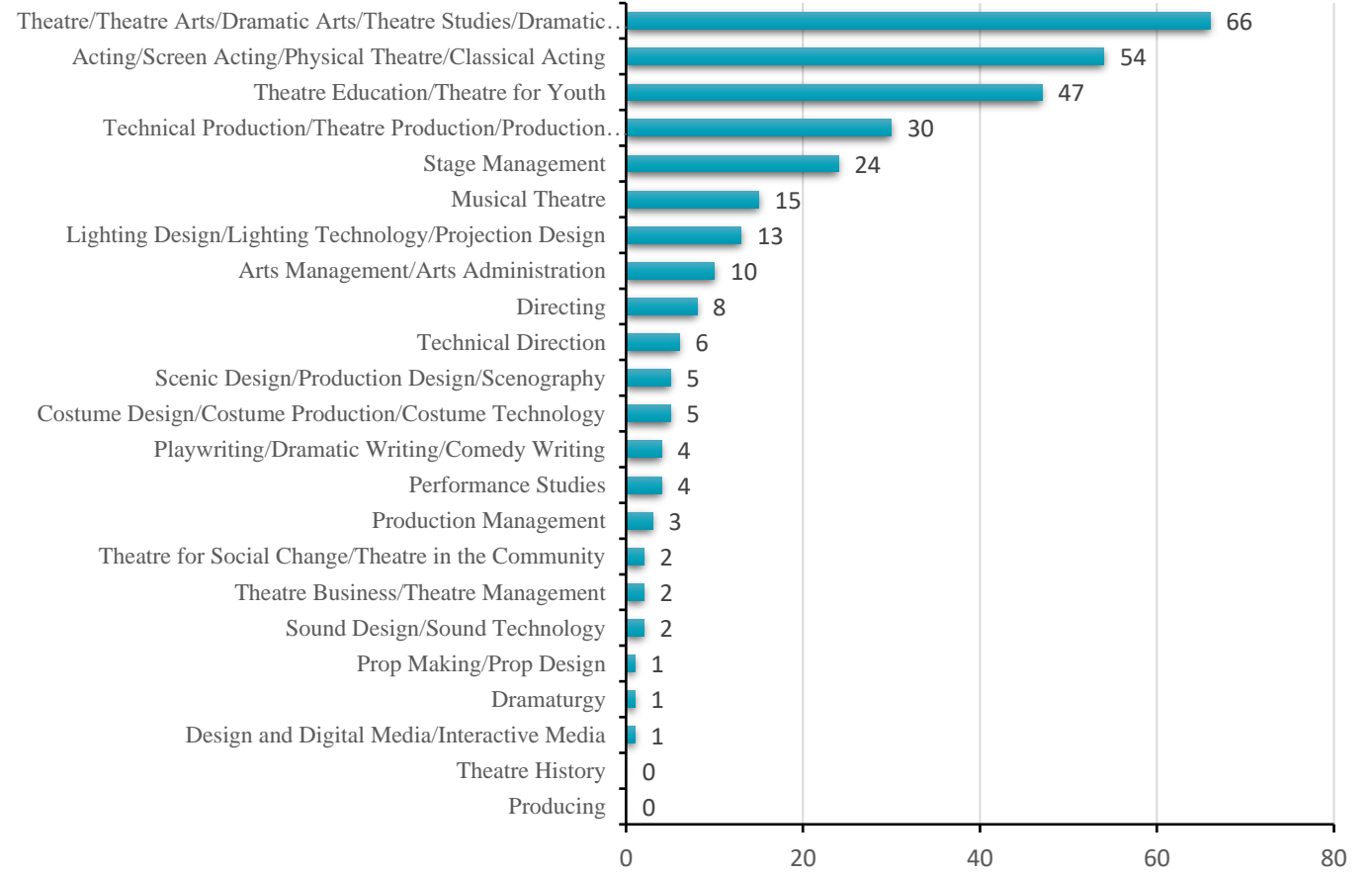
When They
Graduated

	Percent	Number
Within the Past Year	20%	60
1-3 Years Ago	21%	65
3-6 Years Ago	31%	94
6-10 Years Ago	28%	84
Total Responses		303

Focus of Highest Degree Obtained

What was the focus of your highest degree obtained (in a program with "theatre" in the title)?

Total Number of Respondents = 303



120+ Schools Represented

Adelphi University
American Academy of Dramatic Arts
American Repertory Theater at Harvard
Antelope Valley College
Aquinas College
Arcadia University
Azusa Pacific University
Boston University
Bowdoin College
Bowling Green State University
Brigham Young University-Idaho
California Institute of the Arts
California Polytechnic State University, Pomona
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
California State University, Chico
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, Long Beach
California State University, Los Angeles
California State University, Northridge
Carnegie Mellon University
Central Washington University
Chapman University
City College
Claremont Graduate University
College of the Canyons
Columbia College Chicago
DePaul University
Doane University
East Los Angeles College
Elon University
Emerson College
Emory & Henry College
Emory University
Flagler College
Florida State University
George Mason University
Hope College
Humboldt State University
Illinois State University
Indiana University of PA
Ithaca College
Kansas State University
Long Island University
Louisiana State University
Loyola Marymount University
Loyola Marymount University
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Mary Baldwin University
Marymount Manhattan College
Mercyhurst University
Meredith College
Michigan State University
Mississippi University for Women
Mount Holyoke College and
University of Massachusetts
Amherst
New York University
Northwestern
Oakland University
Oberlin College
Occidental College
Pace University
Pacific Lutheran University
Penn State University
Pepperdine University
Point Park University
Purdue University
Rutgers University
Saddleback College
Sam Houston State University
San Diego State University
Skidmore College
Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville
Southern Oregon University
SUNY GENESEO (State University
of New York College at Geneseo)
SUNY PURCHASE (State
University of New York at
Purchase)
Syracuse University
Texas State University
The Boston Conservatory
The City College of New York
The College of William & Mary
The New School
The New York University
Steinhardt School of Culture,
Education, and Human
Development
The University of Arizona
The University of Texas at Austin
The University of the Arts
Trinity Western University
UNC Greensboro
University at Albany - SUNY
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los
Angeles
University of California, Riverside
University of California, San
Diego
University of California, Santa
Barbara
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Denver
University of Georgia
University of Houston
University Of Idaho
University of Iowa
University of Kansas
University of La Verne
University of Massachusetts
Amherst
University of Minnesota Duluth
University of Missouri-Kansas
City
University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill
University of Southern California
University of Southern
Mississippi
University of Tennessee
University of Texas at Dallas
University of Texas at El Paso
University of Utah
University of Vermont
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin - Eau
Claire
University of Wisconsin -
Platteville
University of Wisconsin-Stevens
Point
University of Wyoming
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and
State University
Wake Forest University
Washington College
Wesleyan University
Western Washington University
William & Mary
Yale University School of Drama

Geography

- More than a third graduated from school in California, followed by high percentages from New York and Connecticut.
- March 1, 2020, 40% were pursuing work in California, 23% in New York.
- In fall 2020, 35% were living in California, 20% in New York.

We see a move away from the traditional centers for live theatre (as well as film/TV), and greater diversity of location.



Workforce Readiness

Workforce readiness is a student's ability to step directly from college into a career in theatre and includes skills as diverse as understanding how and where to find jobs, financial literacy, knowledge of union structure, and entrepreneurship/self-marketing training.

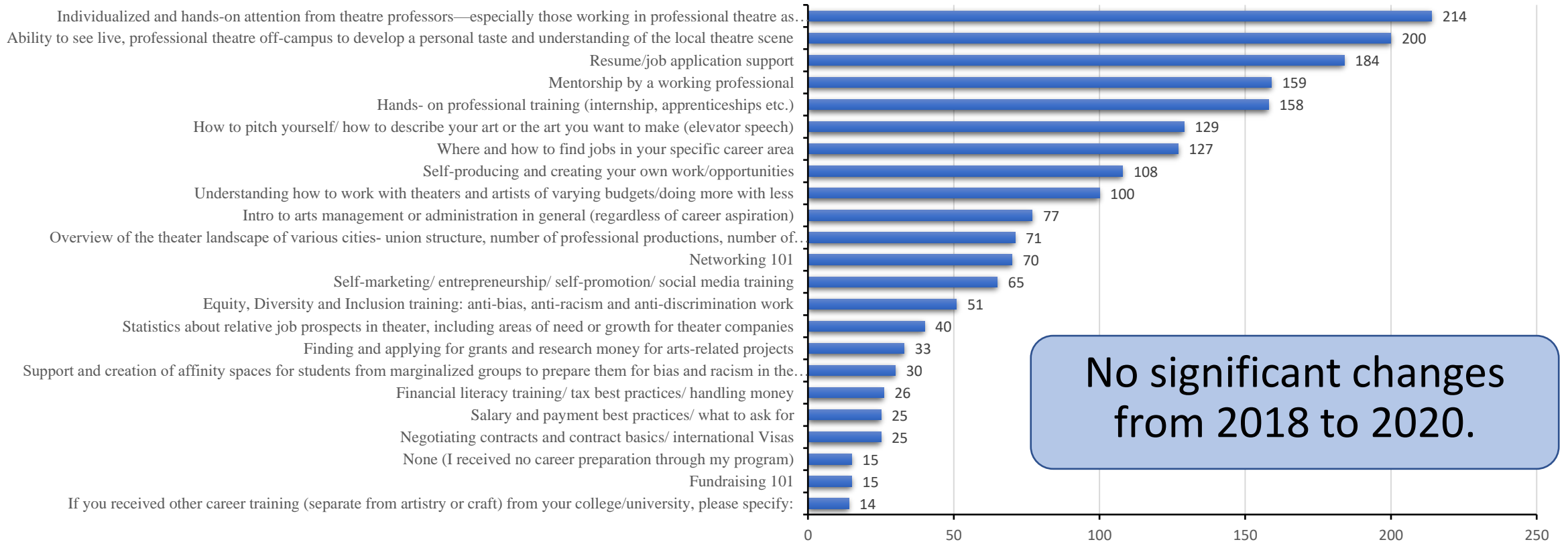
While elements like craft, theatre history, technical skills, and artistry are crucial components of a theatre education, this is a separate important skillset.

Workforce Readiness & Training Options

- Resume/job application support
- Financial literacy training/ tax best practices/ handling money
- Self-marketing/ entrepreneurship/ self-promotion/ social media training
- Where and how to find jobs in your specific career area
- Statistics about job prospects in theater, including areas of growth for theater companies
- Mentorship by a working professional
- Hands- on professional training (internship, apprenticeships etc.)
- Overview of the theater landscape of various cities- union structure, number of professional productions, number of Equity contracts & which house offer EMC points
- Negotiating contracts and contract basics/ international Visas
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training: anti-bias, anti-racism and anti-discrimination work
- Support and creation of affinity spaces for students from marginalized groups
- Self-producing and creating your own work/opportunities
- Fundraising 101
- Intro to arts management or administration in general (regardless of career aspiration)
- Salary and payment best practices/ what to ask for
- Networking 101
- How to pitch yourself/describe your art or the art you want to make (elevator speech)
- Understanding how to work with theaters of varying budgets/doing more with less
- Finding and applying for grants and research money for arts-related projects
- Ability to see live, professional theatre off-campus
- Individualized and hands-on attention from theatre professors

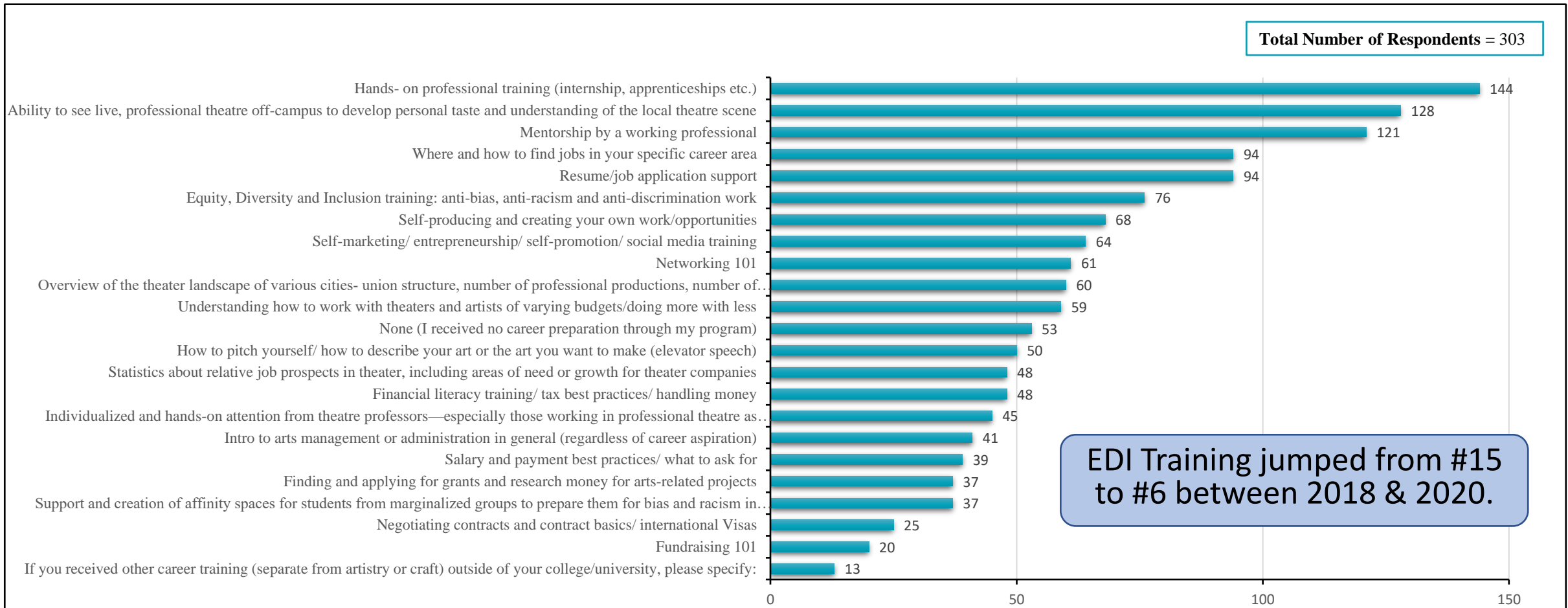
Career preparation received in school

Total Number of Respondents = 303



No significant changes
from 2018 to 2020.

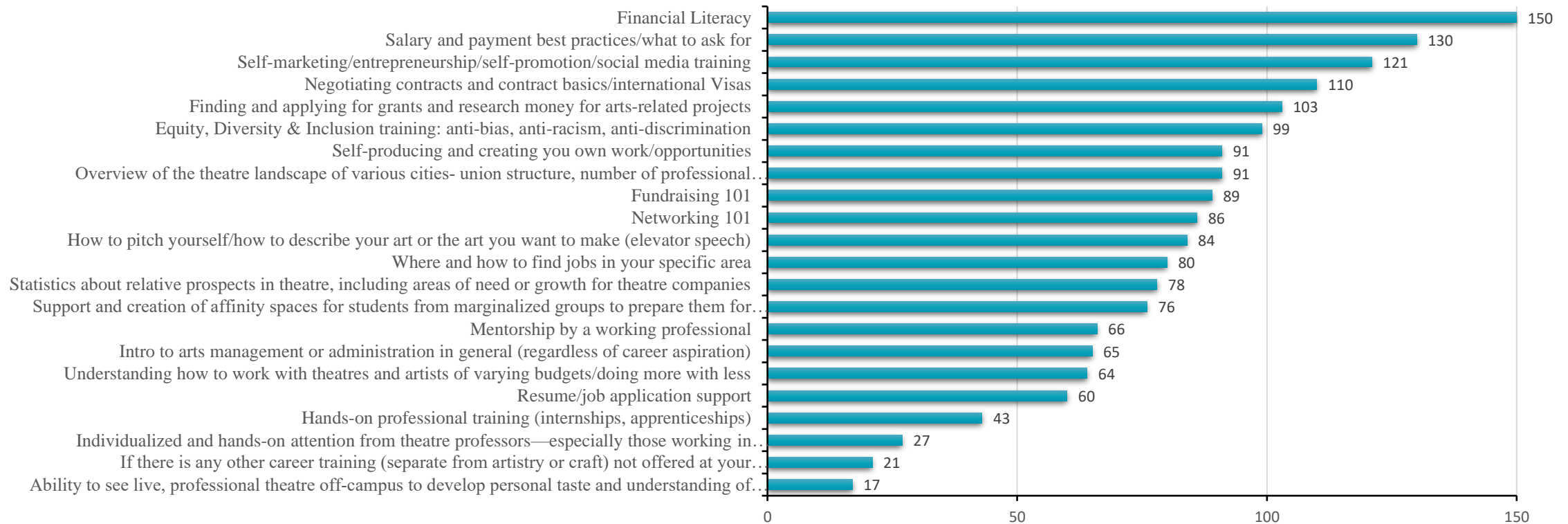
Career preparation sought off-campus



Career training NOT offered by your school that could have better prepared you for the events of the past few months (working in theatre on March 1)

Strong focus on financial literacy and the business of theatre. Note in 2018, EDI ranked #9 and is now at #6.

Total Number of Respondents = 233
Skipped = 15






Survey Respondent Quote:

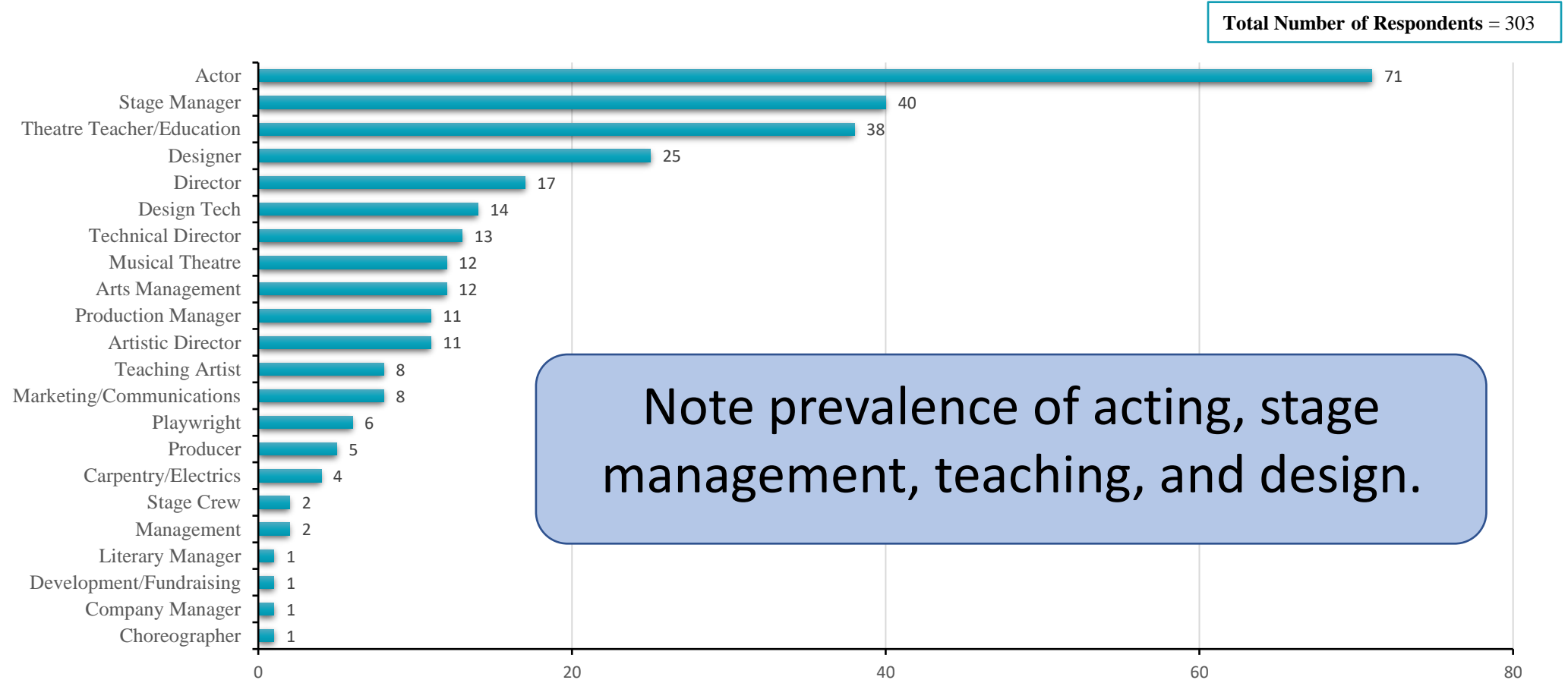
“I think the lack of education around finances and making a living as a freelancer is truly egregious. All theatre-related programs should be required to teach students about the financial realities of pursuing work in this field (including taxes, income sources, quality of life in a given city on a given salary, etc).

“I also think it's critical that programs prompt students to interrogate the scale on which they wish to make their art - i.e., would self-producing work with friends on the side of a separate ‘day job’ be satisfying, or is full-time employment as an artist the goal, or something in between?

“These are very different realities, and particularly for private institutions whose tuition is through the roof, it's unacceptable not to discuss the various art-to-other-work ratios students might need to consider upon graduation.”

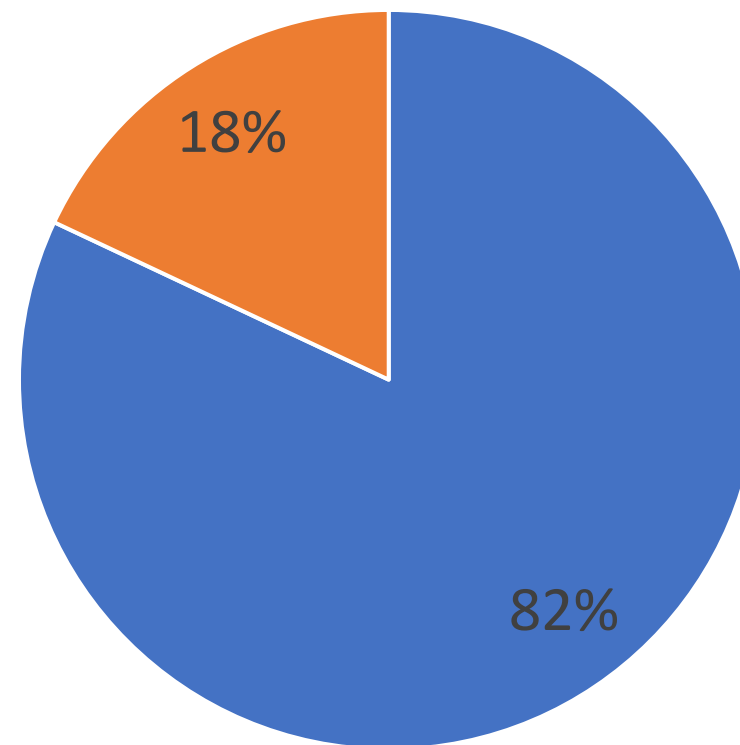


Desired career path within live theatre upon graduation



“As of March 1, 2020, were you actively pursuing a career in live theatre? (This can be live theatre, or theatre + TV/film or related industry)”

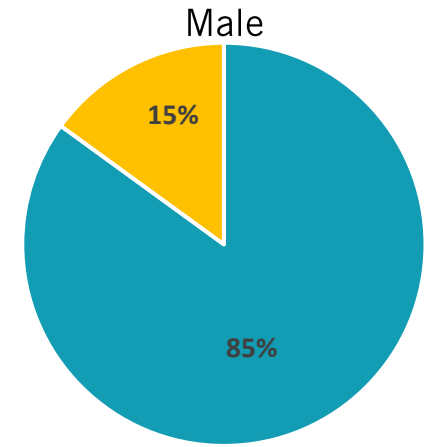
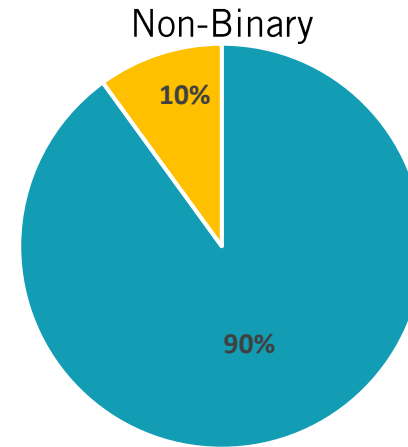
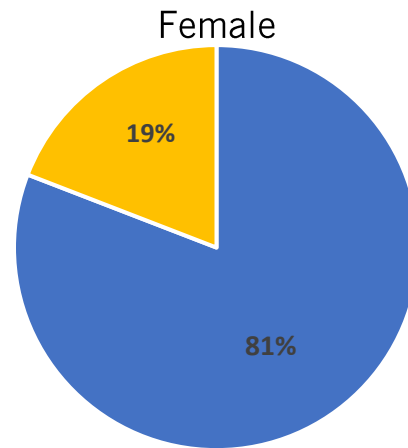
303 Respondents



■ Yes ■ No

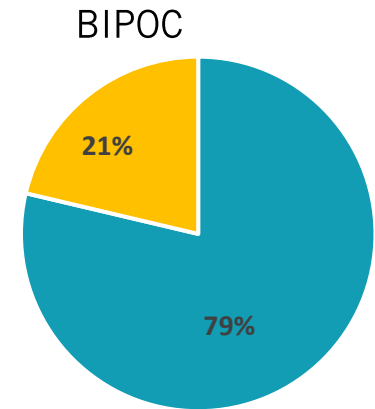
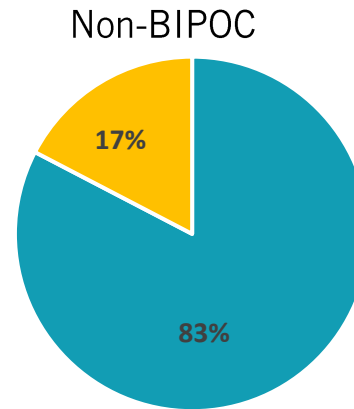
Let's do some segmentation:
who had already left the field, pre-pandemic?

Segmentations of
Previous Data:
Who Had Already
Left the Field,
Pre-Pandemic?



Female-identified theatre professionals are slightly more likely to leave the field within 10 years of graduation.

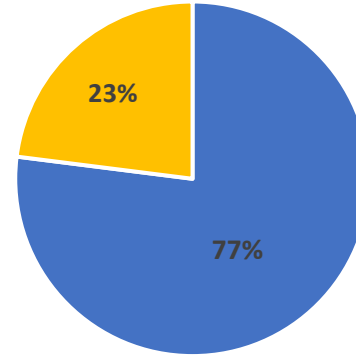
Segmentations of
Previous Data:
Who Had Already
Left the Field,
Pre-Pandemic?



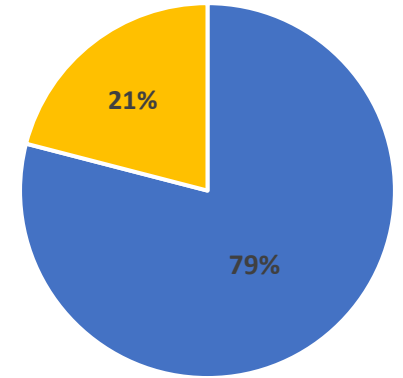
BIPOC theatre professionals are slightly more likely to leave the field within 10 years of graduation.

Segmentations of Previous Data: Who Had Already Left the Field, Pre-Pandemic?

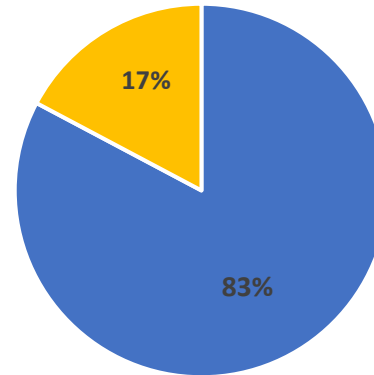
1st Generation College Students



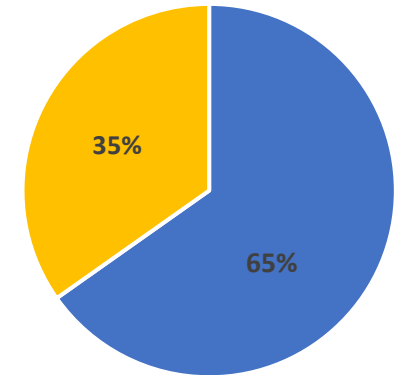
Low-Income



People with a Disability



Parent/Guardian



Biggest impact: only 65% of parents/guardians were still in the field (17% below full group).



Survey Respondent Quote:

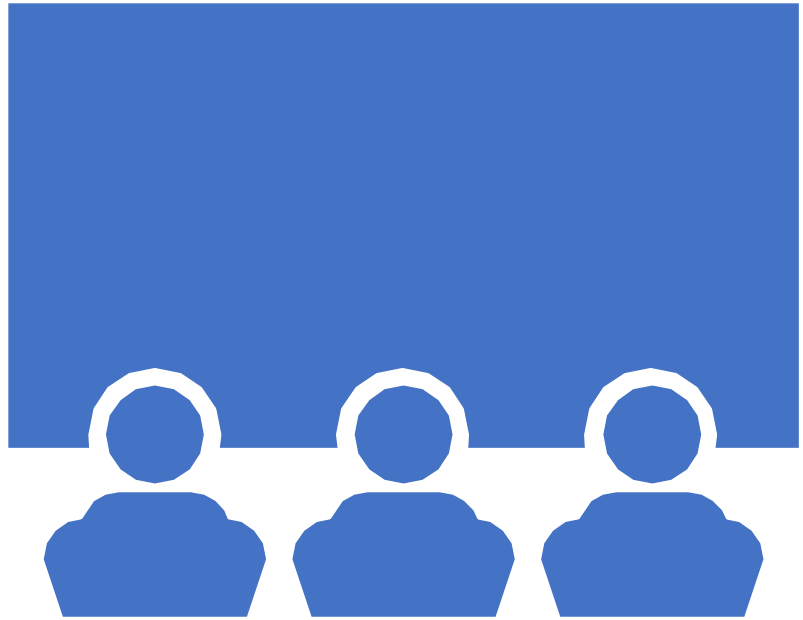
“I think the biggest thing I missed in my undergrad, despite the strength of the program, was the ‘brass tacks’: how do I do my taxes as an artist? How do I become eligible in each of the various unions and when is it worth it, GRANT WRITING, what an artist makes [annually], etc.

“There's an idea often perpetuated in theatre (particularly acting programs) where you should only do theatre if you're okay with being dirt poor and sacrificing your soul, which accompanies the underlying feeling that if you're doing something else you're ‘failing.’

“I think it's super important to demonstrate the reality, which is that the VAST majority of theatre artists have multiple kinds of art, projects, and gigs which keep them financially stable.

“And having multiple passions/careers IS OKAY.”



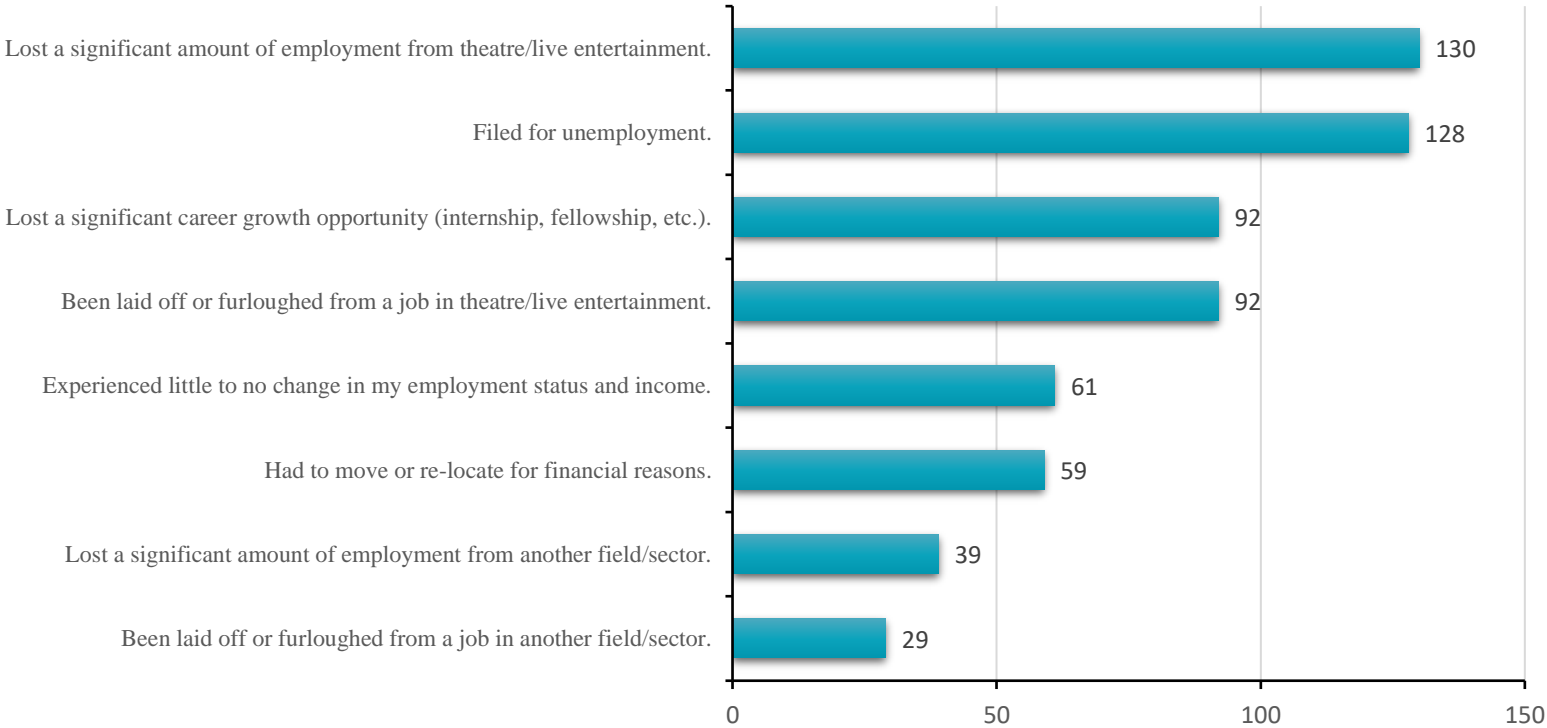


Survey Logic: Those
Actively Pursuing a
Theatre Career as
of March 1, 2020
(248 Total)

Please check any of the following statements you agree with. "Between March 1, 2020 and the current date, I have..."

56% have lost work, and 56% have filed for unemployment.

Total Number of Respondents = 233
Skipped = 15



Segmentation does not show that specific groups are being disproportionately impacted (with exceptions).

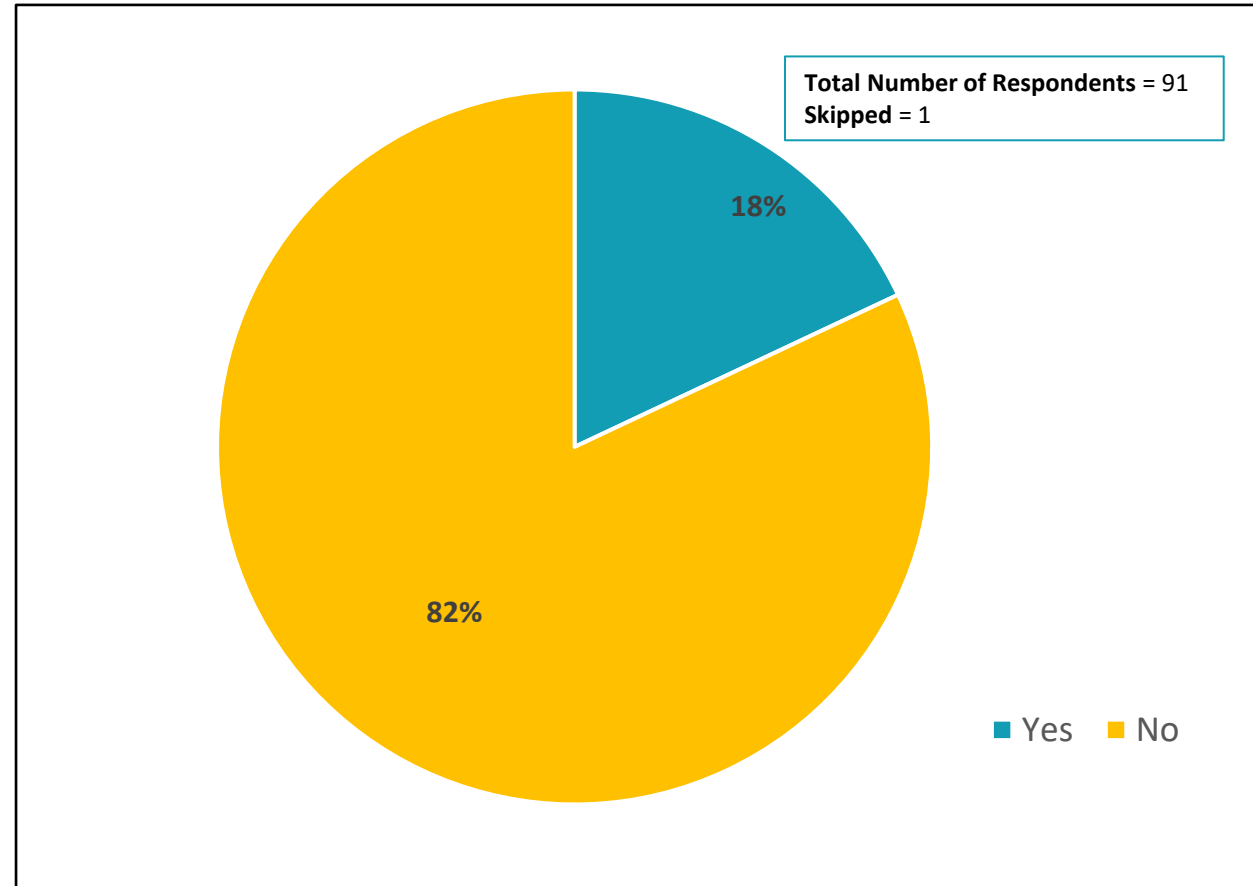
GREEN – most common option across segments

YELLOW – highest % in column (option w/in group)

BLUE – highest % in row (group w/in option)

	Female	Non-Binary	Male	BIPOC	Non-BIPOC	People with Disability	Low Income	Parent/Guardian	1 st Gen. College
Experienced little to no change in my employment status and income.	24%	13%	35%	38%	23%	13%	30%	43%	36%
Lost a significant amount of employment from theatre/live entertainment.	55%	63%	59%	51%	57%	52%	55%	57%	47%
Lost a significant amount of employment from another field/sector.	17%	13%	17%	21 %	16%	13%	23%	14 %	11%
Been laid off or furloughed from a job in theatre/live entertainment.	36%	25%	54%	19 %	45%	35%	43 %	29%	42%
Been laid off or furloughed from a job in another field/sector.	12%	13%	15%	15%	12%	13%	16%	14%	11%
Filed for unemployment.	53%	63%	61%	49%	56%	52%	57%	29%	56%
Had to move or re-locate for financial reasons.	27%	13%	20%	19%	27%	43%	20%	14%	18%
Lost a significant career growth opportunity (internship, fellowship, etc.).	45%	38%	22%	28%	42%	52%	36%	21%	29%

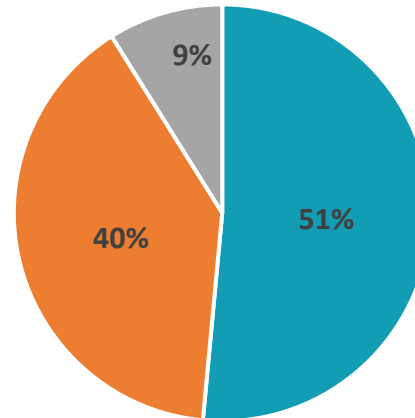
If you experienced a layoff or furlough from a job in theatre, were you a former intern/fellow/ apprentice of that theatre?



18% of those who were laid off were former interns at that theatre. This is a significant interruption of the workforce development pipeline.

Have the past few months changed your career goals?

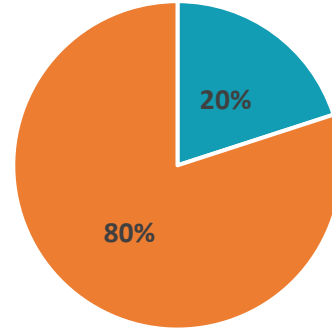
Total Number of Respondents = 233
Skipped = 15



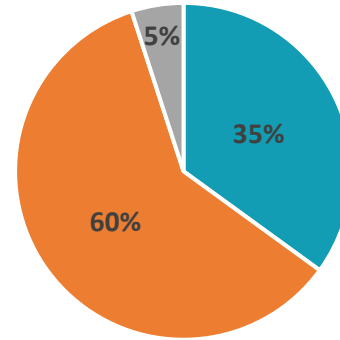
- I am still actively pursuing a career in live theatre.
- I plan to go back to pursuing a career in live theatre within the next two years/as theatres re-open, but have shifted my career focus for now.
- I have made the decision to no longer pursue a career in live theatre.

91% of the respondents that were actively pursuing a career in live theatre as of March 1, 2020 plan to continue to pursue a career in live theatre.

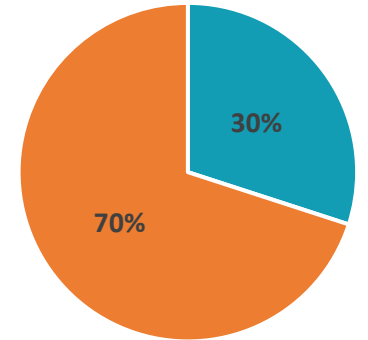
Let's examine the 9% who said they had made the decision NOT to return to live theatre.



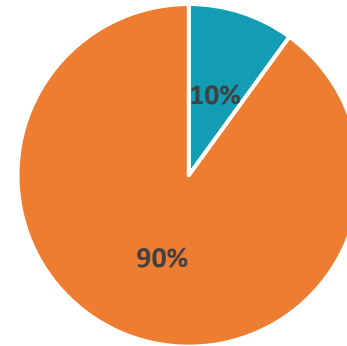
■ BIPOC ■ Non-BIPOC



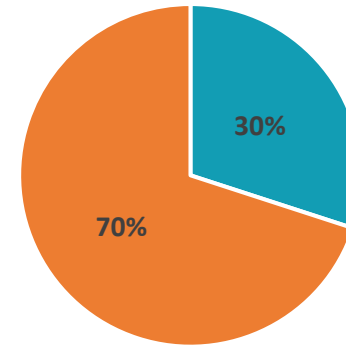
■ Male ■ Female ■ Nonbinary



■ 1st Generation College Student ■ Not



■ Person With Disability ■ None

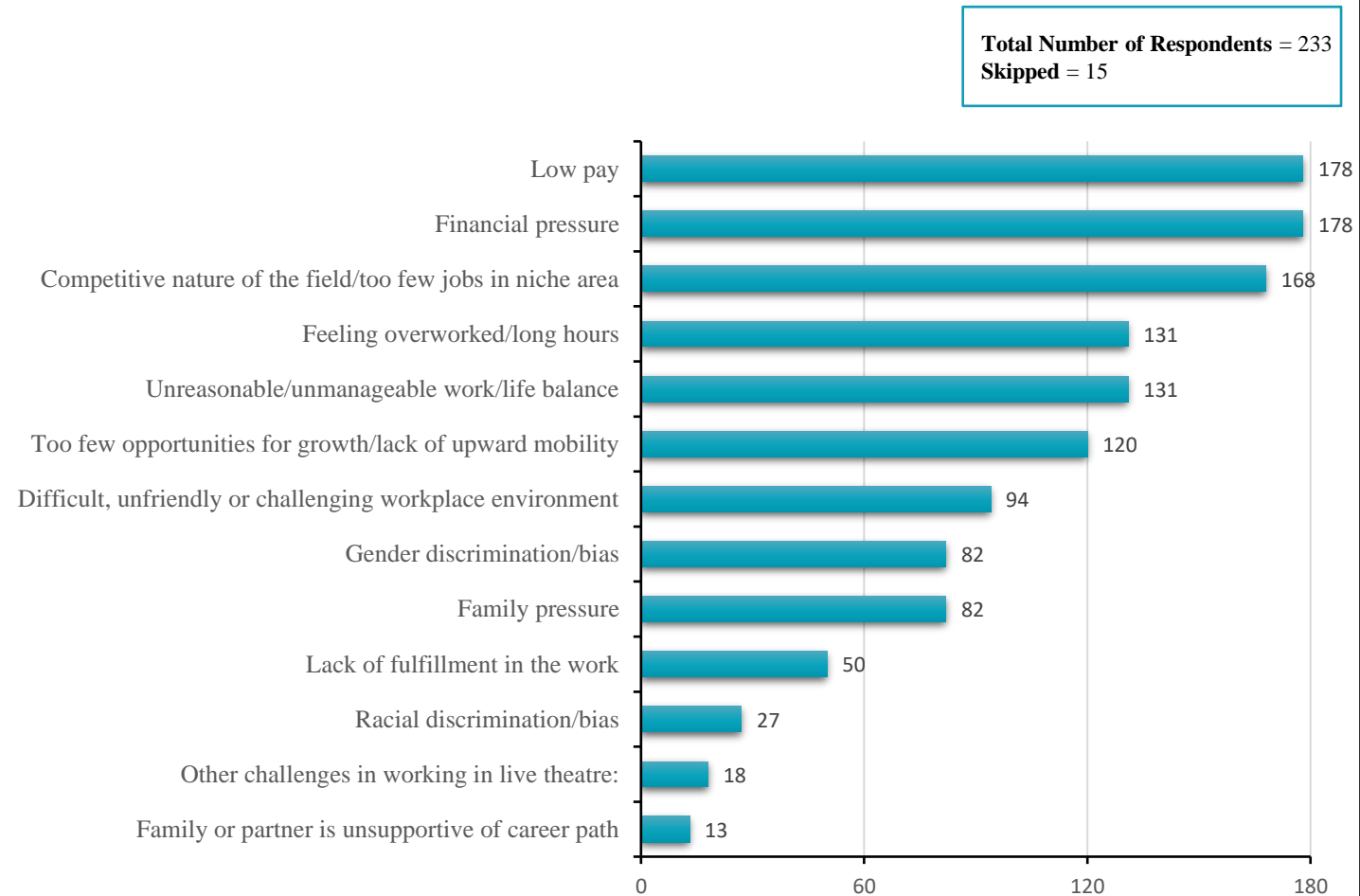


■ Low-Income ■ Not

These percentages reflect the overall demographic breakdown of survey respondents; this does not seem to be impacting specific demographics disproportionately.

Which, if any, of the following challenges have you faced in pursuing a career in live theatre, PRIOR TO MARCH 1, 2020?

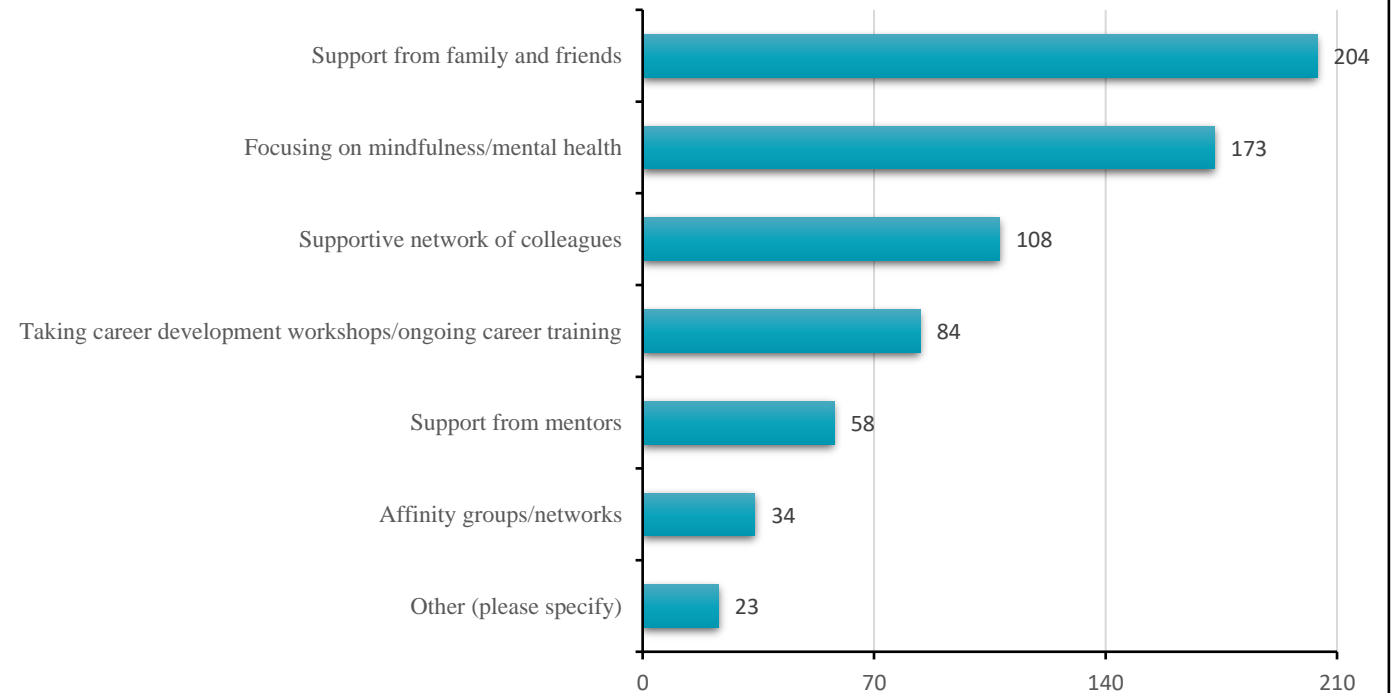
Note alignment with the training they wished they had received in school: financial literacy, how to find jobs, business of theatre knowledge.



How have you coped with the challenges of the past few months?

Primary support comes from family, friends, and focusing on health. Mentors and affinity groups/networks trail behind.

Total Number of Respondents = 233
Skipped = 15





Slider Questions

- Purpose: to gauge whether respondents agreed or disagreed with the presented statements
- Slider positions represent the general mean/average of respondents' answers
- Demographic group comparisons are included if the average had a difference of 8+ points on the slider

I believe there is a place for me in the American theatre.

Total Number of Respondents = 232
Skipped = 16

No

Unsure

Yes



Mean - 75

I believe that racism and prevalence of white supremacist culture are major issues in American theatre.

Total Number of Respondents = 233
Skipped = 15

No

Unsure

Yes



Mean - 90

I believe that post-pandemic, the live theatre industry will have a stronger focus on anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion.

Total Number of Respondents = 233
Skipped = 15

No

Unsure

Yes



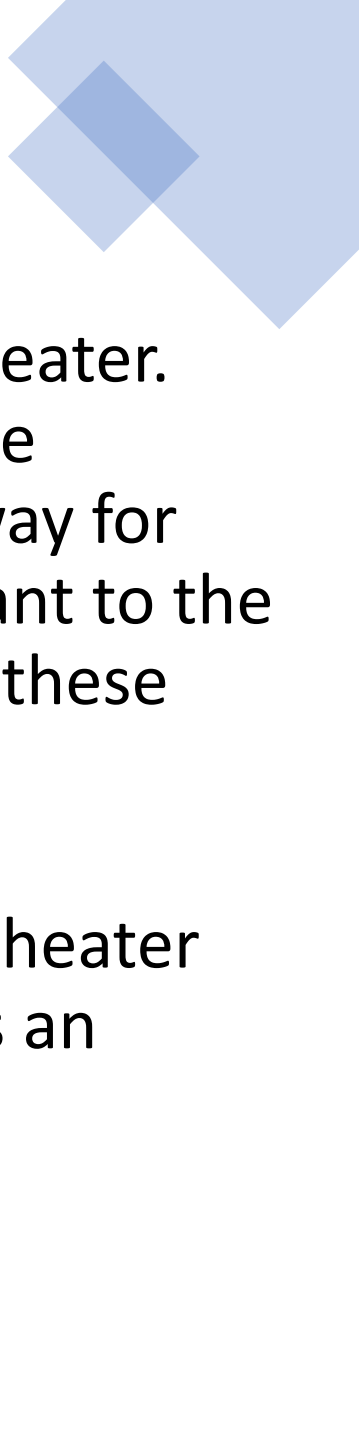
Mean - 70



Survey Respondent
Quote:

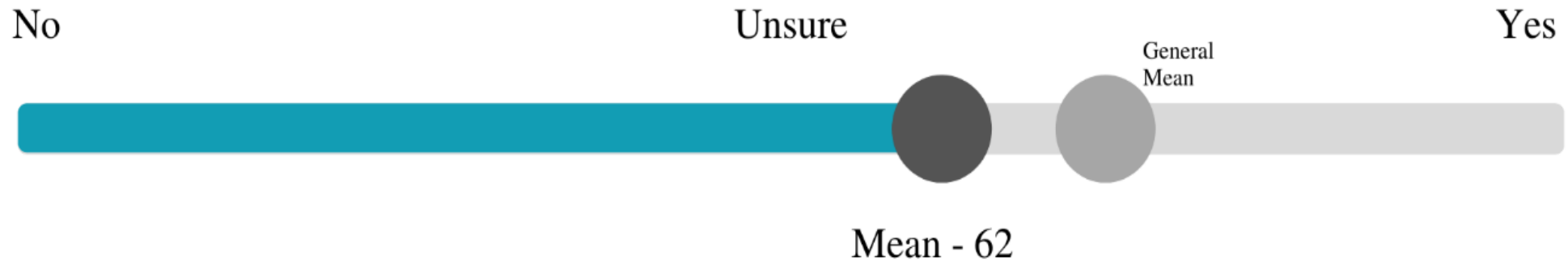
“I am still in theater. I plan to stay in theater. Over the last few months it has become increasingly apparent to me that the way for theater to ‘survive’ is to become relevant to the youth of America who are on fire with these justice movements.

“From racial justice and equity to environmental sustainability I believe theater has a real opportunity to come back as an industry that leads by example.”



BIPOC COMPARISION - I believe that post-pandemic, the live theatre industry will have a stronger focus on anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion.

Total Number of Respondents = 47
Skipped = 14



I believe that post-pandemic, the live theatre industry will come back relatively unchanged.

**Total Number of Respondents = 232
Skipped = 16**

No

Unsure

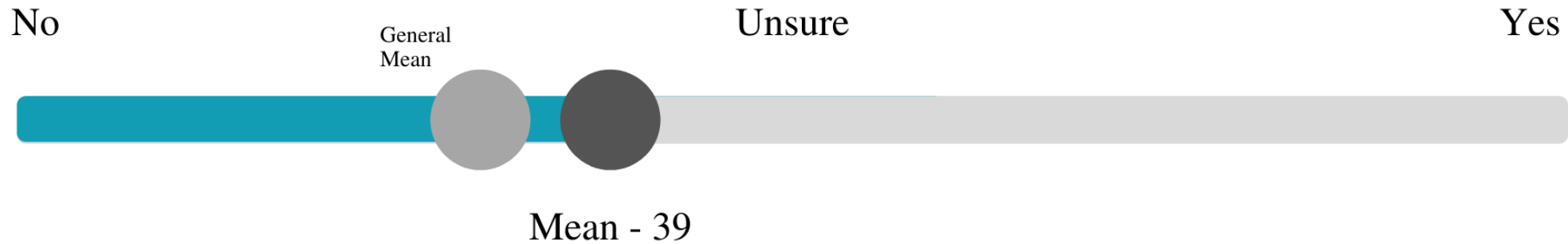
Yes

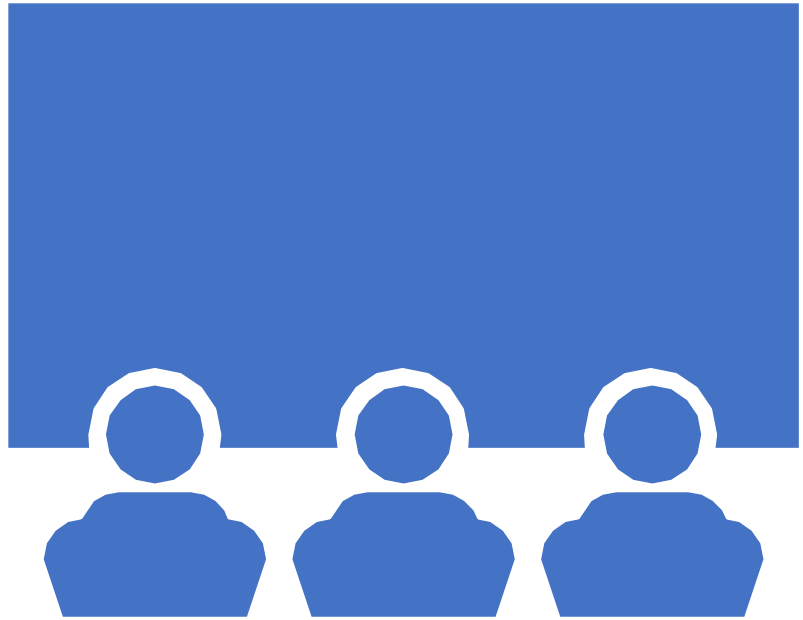


Mean - 31

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY COMPARISON - I believe that post-pandemic, the live theatre industry will come back relatively unchanged.

Total Number of Respondents = 23
Skipped = 1



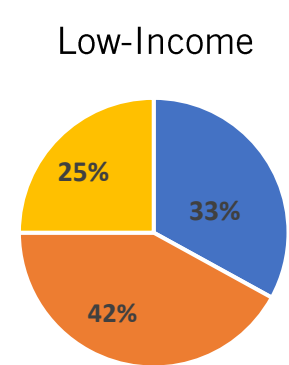
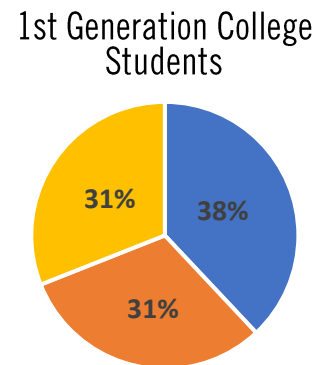
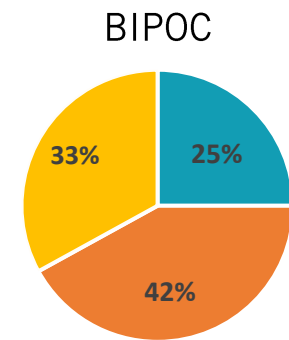
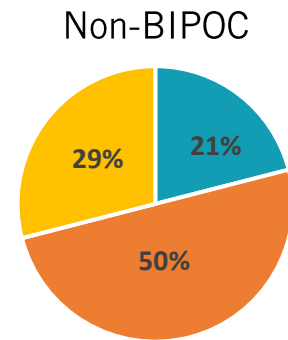
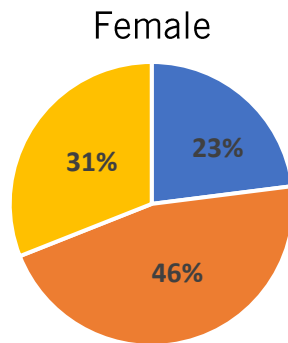


Survey Logic: Those
NOT Actively Pursuing
a Theatre Career as of
March 1, 2020
(55 Total)




Are you more or
less likely to
return?

	Percentage	Number
I am MORE likely to return to live theatre than I was on March 1, 2020.	22%	11
I am LESS likely to return to live theatre than I was on March 1, 2020.	48%	24
There has not been a change.	30%	15
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS		50
SKIPPED		5

Are you more or less likely to return:
Demographic Segmentation



“LESS” likely to return to live theatre is majority for those that self-identify as female, non-BIPOC, BIPOC, Low-Income. 1st Generation are a little “MORE” likely to return.

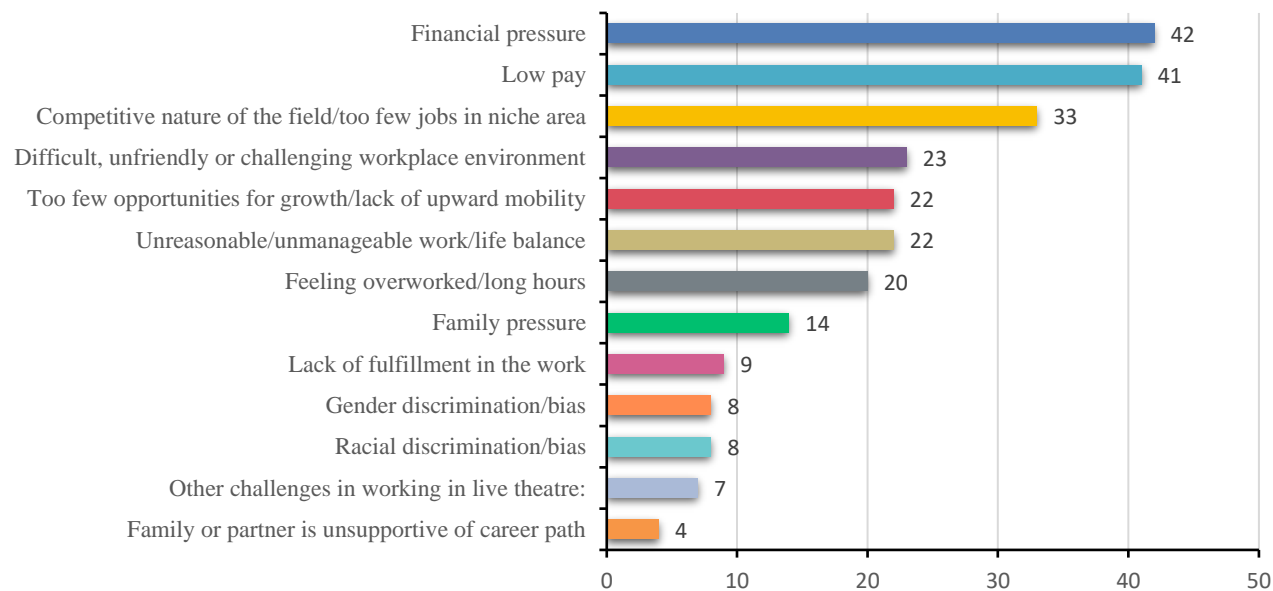
-  I am MORE likely to return to live theatre than I was on March 1, 2020.
-  I am LESS likely to return to live theatre than I was on March 1, 2020.
-  There has not been a change.

Which, if any, of the following challenges have you faced in pursuing a career in live theatre (those who were NOT working in live theatre)

Very similar responses compared to those who were still working in live theatre.

Challenges Faced While Pursuing a Career in Live Theatre

Total Number of Respondents = 50
Skipped = 5



Segmented by Demographic Groups

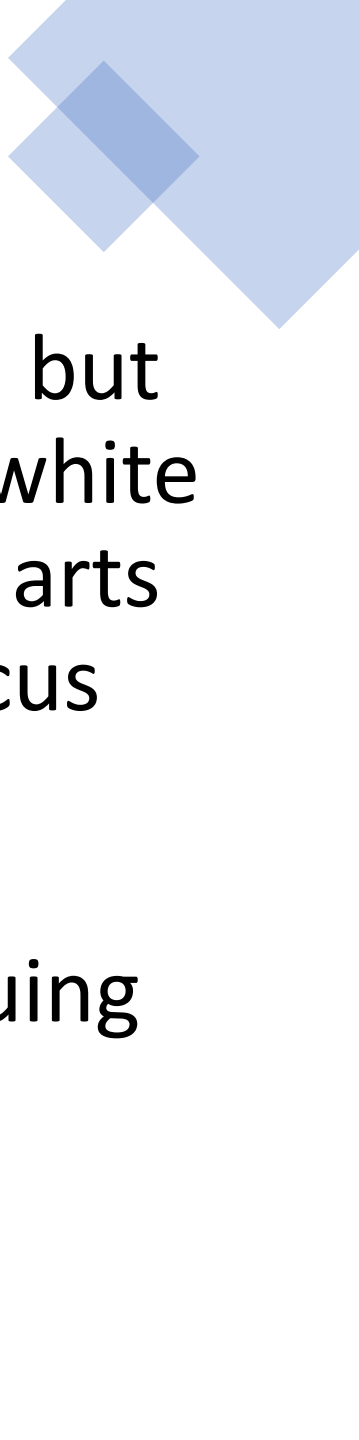
Challenges faced while in the field:

1. Financial Pressure and Low Pay are most common across all groups (scoring almost above 80% of respondents across the groups)
2. Competitive nature of the field/too few jobs in niche area continues to present as a top 3 for all groups
3. Important to note: Racial Discrimination/Bias, Family pressure, and Too Few Opportunities/Growth come as a top 4 for BIPOC-identified respondents AND Lack of fulfillment was **not** chosen in BIPOC



Survey Respondent
Quote:

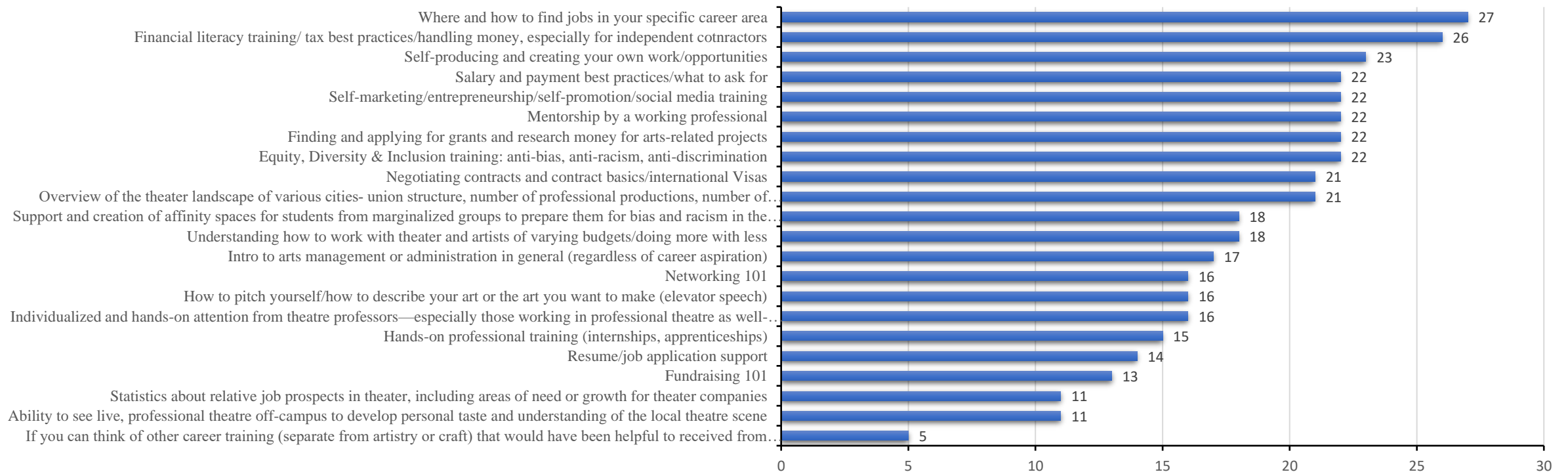
“I used to want to be an actor, but the institutional barriers non-white people face in the performing arts discouraged me. I chose to focus on my writing, editing, and administrative skills and experiences instead of continuing to train as a performer.”



What career training NOT offered by your school could have inspired/enabled you to stay in the field longer? (NOT working in theatre March 1)

Finding jobs and financial literacy top the list. EDI Training jumped from #21 (lowest) in 2018 to #8.

Total Number of Respondents = 50
Skipped = 5






Survey Respondent Quote:

“My education trained me brilliantly in how to hone my own talents and how to cooperate with others in creating. It did not, however, afford me any aid as to how to transition from university (where projects were plentiful) to a career (where jobs are tough to come by and require an immense sense of self and ability to sell oneself).

“I did not feel prepared to market myself or network and found my lack of preparation so discouraging I did little to pursue a career in theatre...”



Segmented by Demographic Groups

Training that might have helped them stay in the field longer:

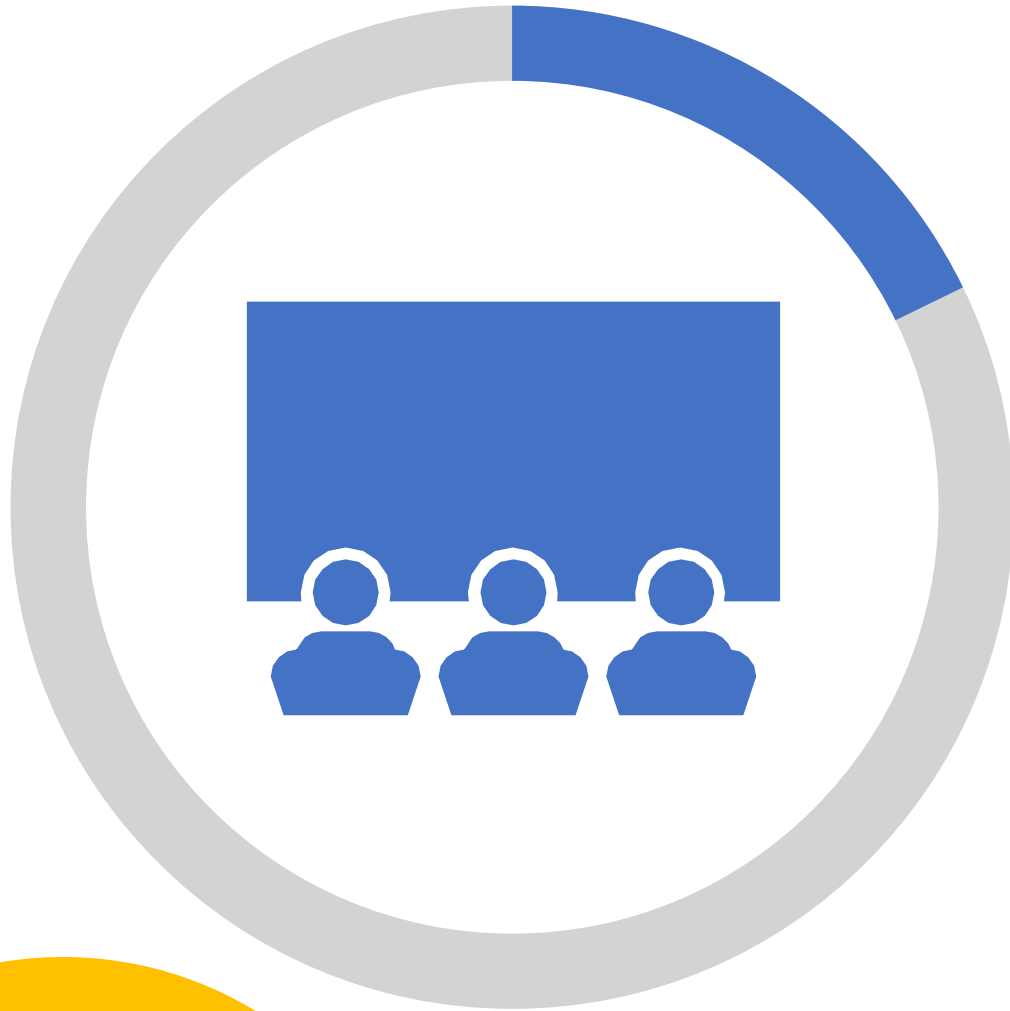
1. BIPOC – EDI Training comes at the top
2. 1st Gen – Financial Literacy and EDI Training come at the top
3. Low Income – EDI Training comes at the top
4. Where and how to find jobs in your specific area is a notable top 5 answer across groups

Conclusions: The Challenge



- As a field, we face a pipeline crisis as a significant percentage of next-generation theatre artists, makers and managers begin to question the viability of a career in theatre.
- More than half of those surveyed had lost employment; of those who had been laid off by a theatre, 18% were former interns of that theatre.
- Simultaneously, the field is calling for more diversity and access in all areas of our work.
- We are all going to be ‘staffing up’ simultaneously, and need to be ready to support and nurture new team members.

Conclusions: The Challenge



- On average, respondents felt **more confident** in the statement “racism and white supremacist culture were major issues in American theatre” than they did about there being a “place for them in American theatre.”
- Maintaining resources for and connection with students and alumni is vital during a time when so many are questioning their place in this field. This is particularly important for those who identify as a members of a marginalized group.

Conclusions: Paths Forward

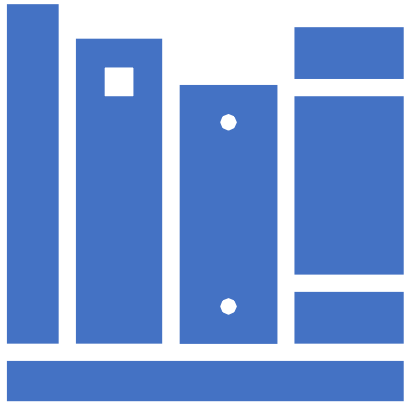


- To maintain and strengthen a diverse pipeline, higher education organizations *and* the live entertainment field must commit to supporting early-career theatre practitioners' career readiness skills, notably:
 - Financial Literacy
 - Job-Search Skills
 - EDI Training
 - Understanding of the Business of Theatre/Art
- We need to plan support systems for newly-hired individuals entering our administrative and artistic spaces.

Conclusions: CTG's Role

- Delaying return of in-person workforce programs
- Focusing on existing staff and workforce program alumni
- Continuing virtual programs to support students and early-career individuals
- Supporting the re-hiring and onboarding process





Q&A



For a copy of the Theatre Career Alumni Survey Fall 2020 anonymous raw data, please email Aurora Ilog at education@ctgla.org.