



2019 Applicant Pool Summary

Authors: Syeda Malliha, Lauren Slone

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Introduction

In a combined effort toward introspection and transparency, we would like to share some statistics from the 2019 application pool below. Along with considering who applied, we wanted to examine *how* MAP's applicants applied. The question of "how" reveals important details that help MAP to continuously improve its application process, from the questions we ask to the answer choices available to applicants. Although this data generates many—sometimes conflicting or confusing—narratives, we hope MAP's constituents will track noteworthy changes alongside us as the grant program evolves to meet the shifting demands of artists and arts organizations.

In terms of data representation, we wanted to orient each data set such that it places the applicant experience in the foreground and guides our future strategy toward their maximal benefit. Over the course of the review process, we will continue to take a closer look at applicant data, the multifaceted narratives present within it (What is present there? What is missing? etc.), and communicate these findings more widely.

While we hope the following data will be both interesting and useful to our constituents, it is important to acknowledge that many data points are *not* included below, namely demographics. MAP did not require the submission of detailed demographic information beyond how artists chose to self-identify or represent themselves as they saw fit throughout the proposal. Due to the varying number of participants in each project, collecting demographics and identifying each member of an artistic, producing, and/or administrative team is extremely complicated and rife with ethical issues. One of our 2020 application goals includes researching the most appropriate and effective way to collect relevant and comprehensive demographic information.

Additionally, although the greater geographical diversity of the 2019 applicant pool is worth celebrating, MAP is also determined to continue brainstorming about what it means to create a robust national program that acknowledges and addresses gaps in access. For 2020's grant cycle, we will look more deeply at geographic representation to determine where we can meaningfully connect in live sessions with potential applicants. A more strategic emphasis on our digital communications platforms may also increase reach where staff cannot be present physically.

Finally, as a national grantmaking organization, various parties often approach MAP with a desire to connect to applicants, to gain more insight into upcoming projects, or to learn more information about who is applying. Although we love making beneficial connections on behalf of (and with) artists when appropriate—and 94.35% of the total applicant pool gave us permission to share content from their proposals—with heightening privacy concerns in today's technological

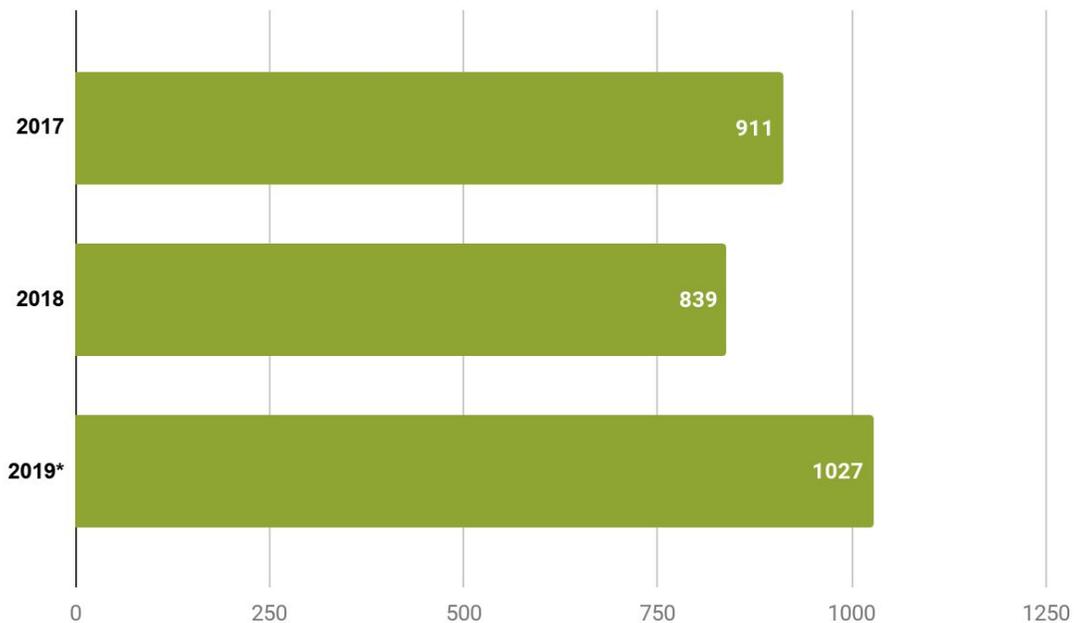


climate we respect the privacy wishes of all constituents. The information we provide below is completely anonymous and unattributed to any specific applicant.

Total number of applicants

In 2019 we received the largest number of submissions in MAP’s program history, 1027! It is difficult to speculate why the number of proposals has increased this year because a significant number of factors contribute to why and when artists and arts organizations decide to apply. MAP does not have a particular goal to increase the number of applicants simply for the sake of demonstrating more “reach” or higher numbers of applications. Rather, we are committed to facilitating a program in which potential applicants from many different communities feel welcome to apply and to distribute available resources equitably.

With respect to co-creating an inclusive experience, since 2015 we have focused less on “outreach” per se, and more on the redesign of the application platform and companion materials, expanding the number of people who participate in the review process, and significantly increasing levels of draft support, feedback, and access to staff for problem solving.





Geographic representation

We would like to provide two maps below for your comparison:

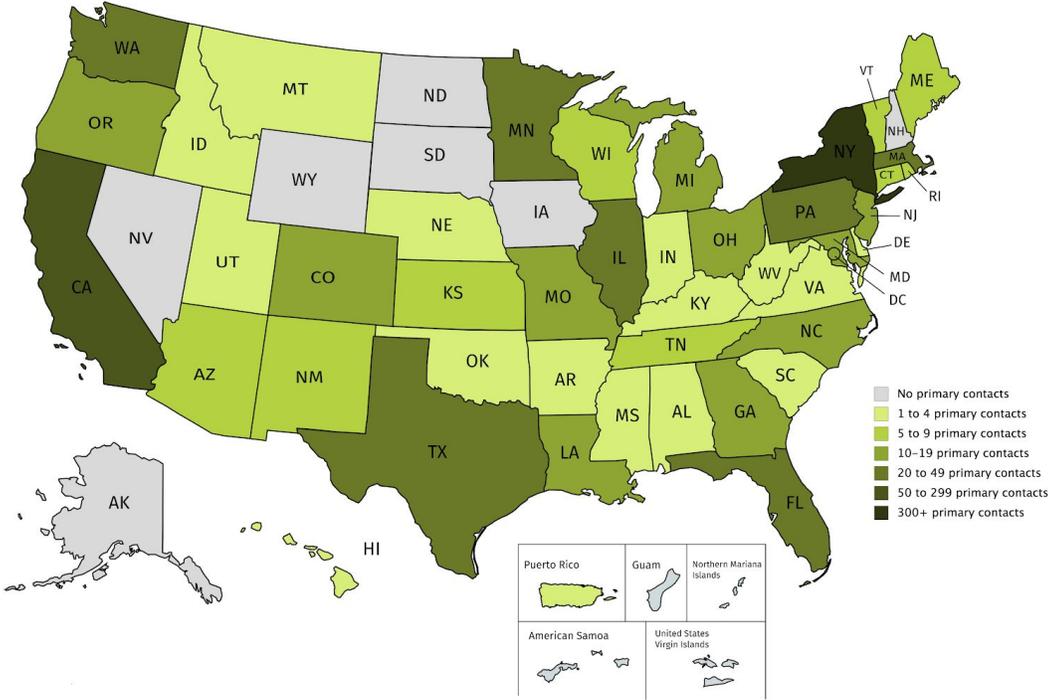
MAP 1) Geographic representation based on the location of the **primary contact** (this may be an artist, producer, presenter, or other affiliate) for each application. This year's primary contacts were based in 42 states, including states that were not represented in the [2018 application cycle](#) such as Alabama, Hawaii, Idaho, Mississippi, and Oklahoma. MAP also received a few applications from primary contacts based in Canada, France, Germany, and Puerto Rico. Similar to the 2018 applicant pool, a majority of the applications came from the Northeast.

MAP 2) Geographic representation based on one of the **projected venue/space/site locations** where the applicant has identified that the project may be shared with a public. The scaled maps below display varying degrees of applications we received. Although many project locations are not finalized at this stage in the planning process, it is important to see where applicants may share the work eventually. Interestingly, proposed project locations covered a wider geographic range than did the locations of primary contacts themselves. As the map below reflects, there were only four states in which projects were not proposed. Given that MAP does not fund entire tours, and can only fund activities leading up to a project's first performance, we only included the first location in the United States listed by each applicant.

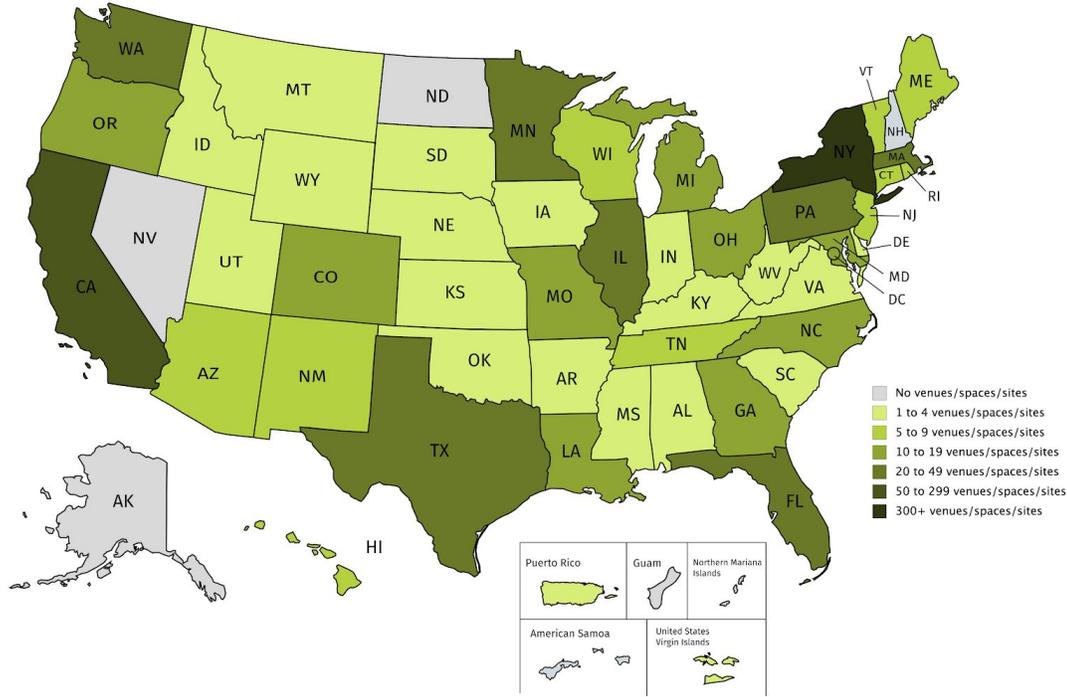
Note: Because we do not require each individual connected to the project to identify where they are based, and some of the information applicants provide about venue is speculative or unconfirmed at the time of submitting an application, we cannot provide the fullest picture of where communities and projects intersect across the United States.

Both maps can be referenced on the following page:

MAP 1: Primary Contacts



MAP 2: Venue/Space/Site Location

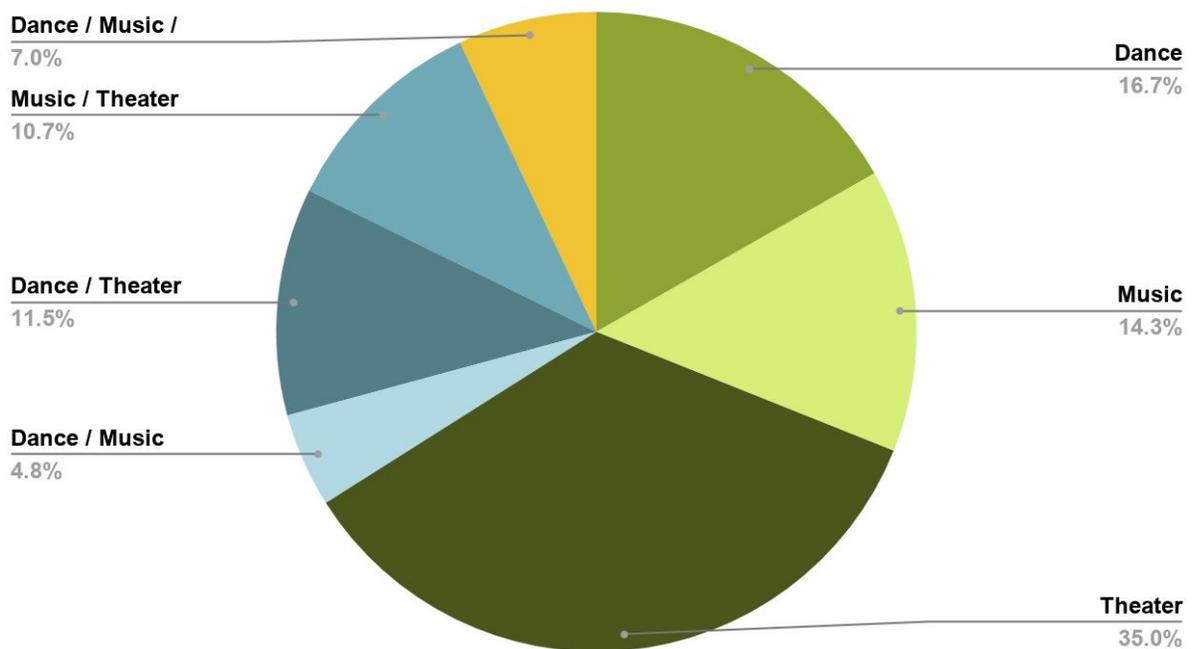




Discipline identification

Applicants were asked to identify who might best understand their project through the option to choose any combination of dance/performance specialists, music/performance specialists, and theater/performance specialists. Similar to the 2018 applicant pool, most applicants selected a single discipline, with the majority selecting theater. Dance and music were represented in roughly equal parts. Only a small minority felt that their work would be best understood by all performance specialists in all three disciplines.

Note: MAP does not assume this is the way artists would necessarily describe themselves or their ways of working beyond the MAP application context. MAP staff use the selection only to pair reviewers with the most relevant experience to each proposal.

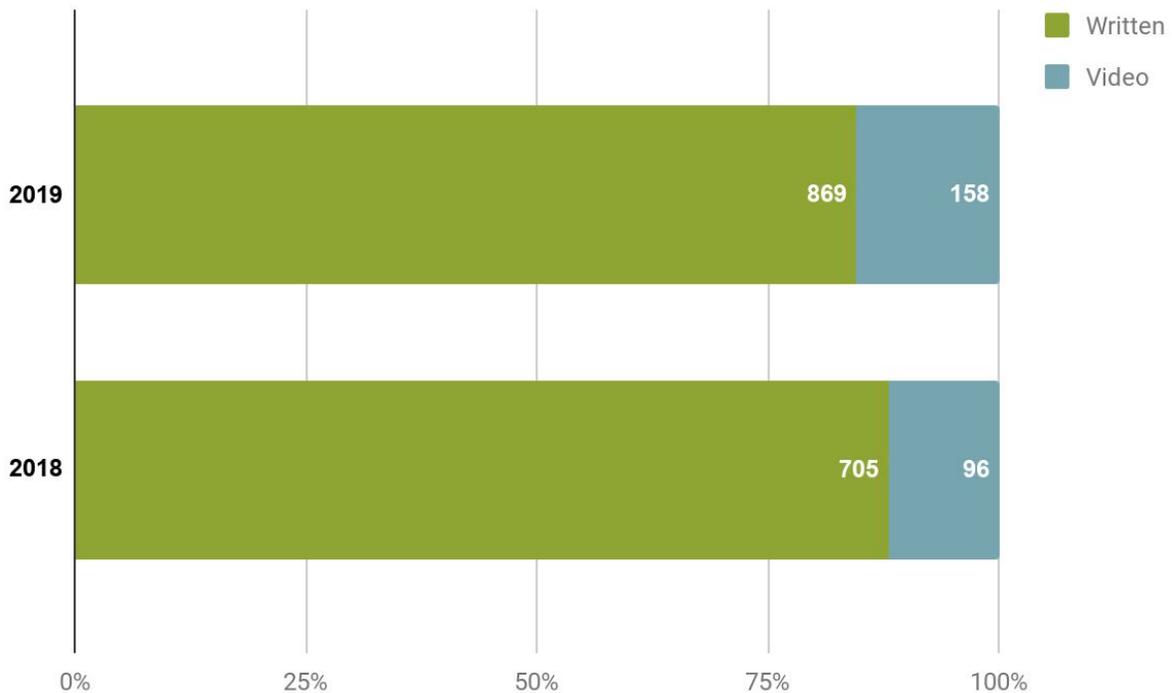




Artist statement format (video vs. written)

For the past two grant cycles, MAP has been experimenting with format choice. Applicants can submit their artist statement in either a written or video format. While the majority of applicants included written artist statements, this year, more than 15% of MAP’s applicants submitted video artist statements (up by 3.4% since 2018).

Although we do not have statistics that speak to whether or how format choice impacts reviewer scores, MAP is interested in continuing to explore how the application can become ever more expansive in the options that artists can use to represent their work.



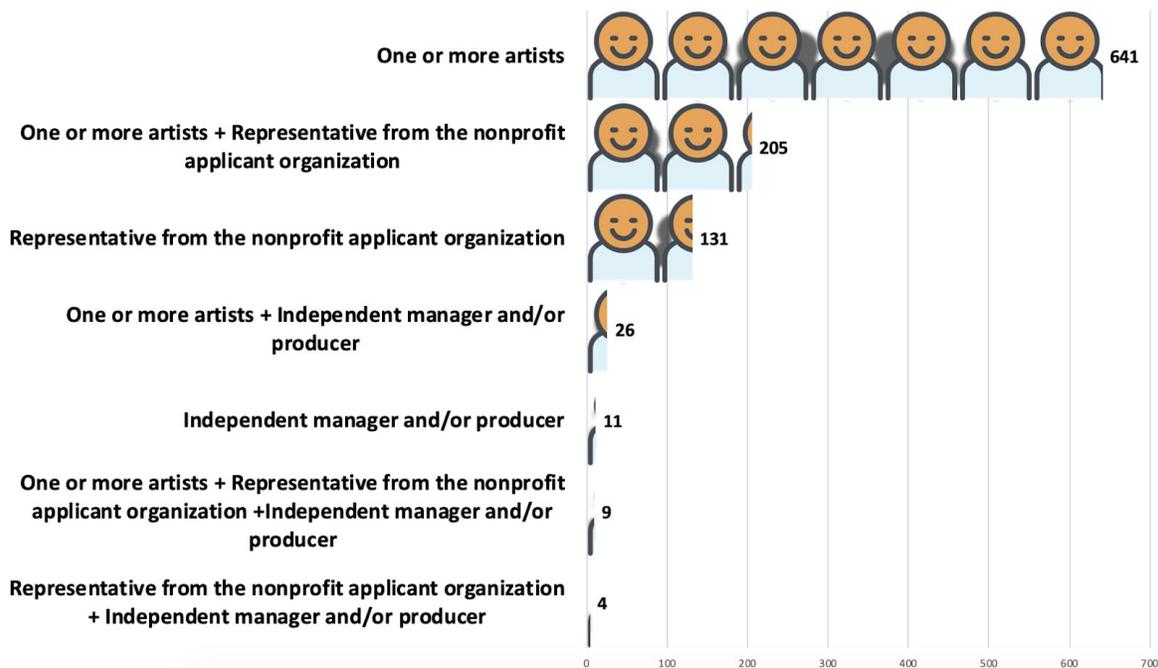


Project description author

Because the application writing process is often a collaborative effort between varying parties and we do not want reviewers to assume they know whose perspective is being expressed, applicants were asked to choose any combination of the following options to delineate who wrote the project description:

1. One or more artists
2. Representative from the nonprofit applicant organization
3. Independent manager and/or producer

The vast majority (**641**) of application descriptions were written from the perspective of the artists themselves. While a small percentage of artist applicants within that subset have their own 501(c)(3)s and/or producing infrastructures, it's interesting to note that many more artists than producing or presenting institutions are seeking resources at MAP for project development.





Project & venue/space/site relationships

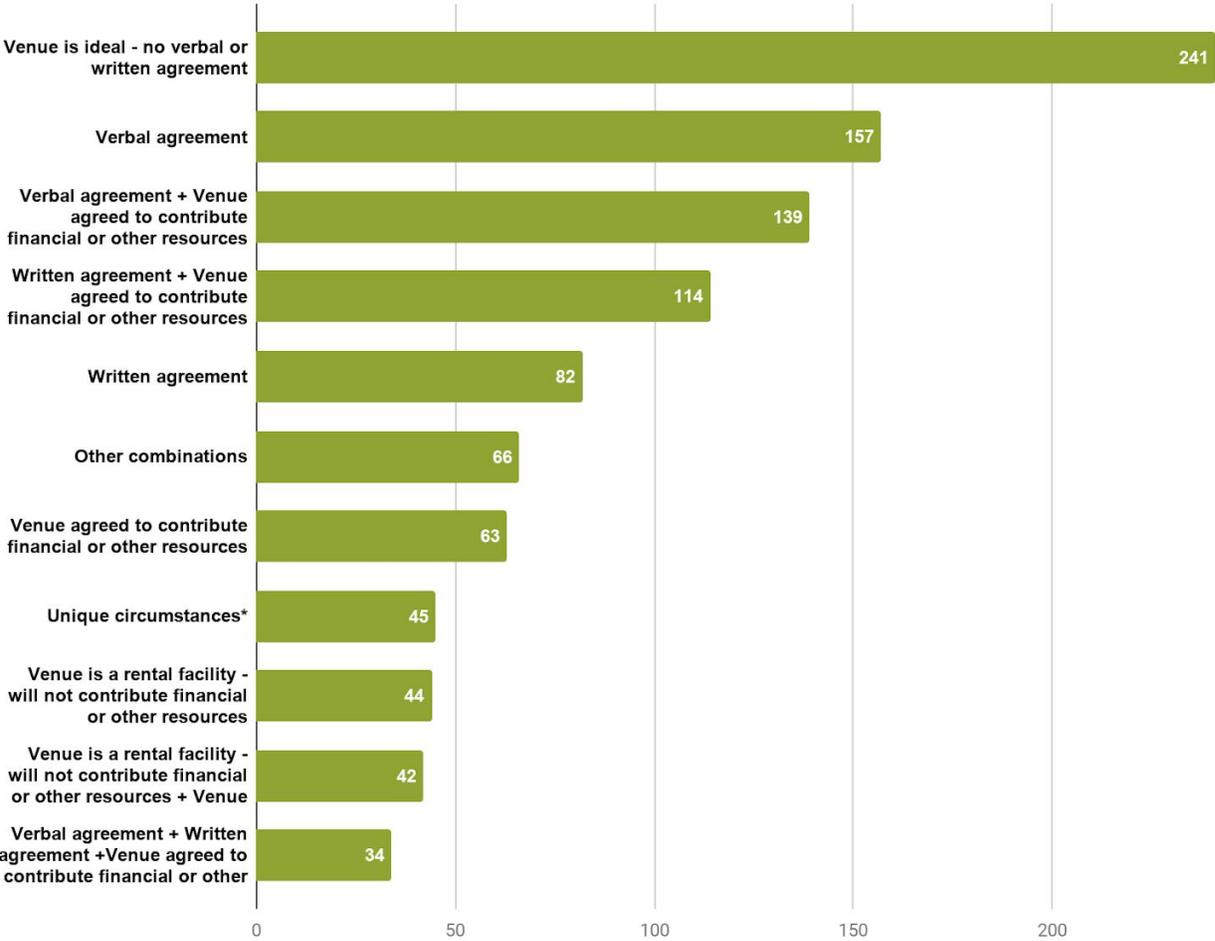
We invite applicants to submit proposals at every stage of project development (meaning they can apply to initiate the project, develop it further, or bring it to its completion). This means that some will know about distribution (where the project will take place) and some won't for any number of reasons. All of those variations are welcome from an eligibility and alignment standpoint. There is not a single, desirable threshold or standard that applicants must meet. However, because of that degree of variation, it can be difficult for reviewers to gain any understanding of relationships between projected venue/space/site and the proposed project.

As a way to help with this issue, applicants were asked to describe this relationship through one or a combination of the following options:

1. A verbal agreement is in place between the venue/space/site and the proposed project.
2. A written agreement is in place between the venue/space/site and the proposed project.
3. The venue/space/site has agreed to contribute financial or other resources to the proposed project.
4. The venue/space/site is a rental facility and will not contribute financial or other resources to the proposed project.
5. The venue/space/site is ideal for the proposed project. No verbal or written agreement is in place.

Notably, most of the 2019 applicants had no verbal or written agreement with a venue/space/site and very few had both written and verbal agreements. Many projects have multiple venues or venues not yet discerned, leaving them uncertain about venue logistics. Furthermore, the relationships between artists and venue/space/site can be vague and/or imbued with power imbalances. This may or may not have a direct correlation with the pattern of artists as the majority applicant, rather than commissioning/producing/presenting organizations.

The chart can be found on the following page:

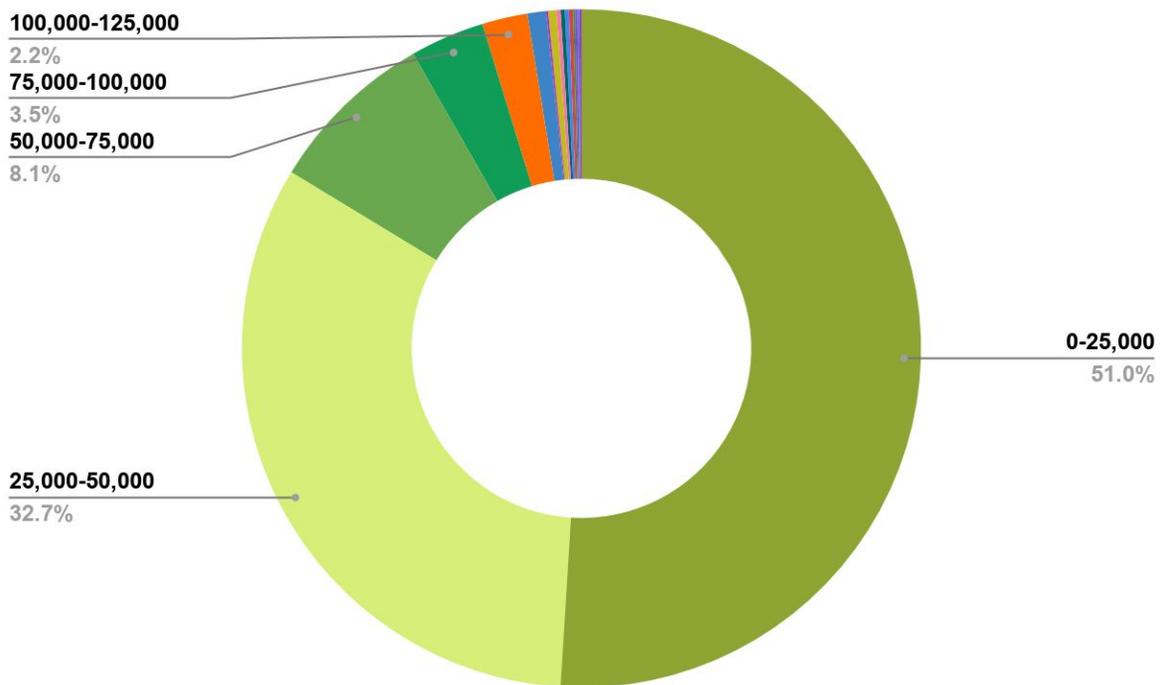


**We labeled applications for which none of the options were applicable as “Unique circumstances.”*



Projected expenses

MAP can fund up to 30% of total project expenses. On average—and depending on the scale of each unique budget—grants tend to cover 20-22% of total project expenses. This year in addition to budget detail, we asked applicants to identify explicitly what 30% of their projected expenses will be, so that we could have a slightly better understanding of scale across the applicant pool. The following chart breaks down those ranges:



Overview across 1027 project budgets:

- **Total** of 30% of expenses = \$37,783,064.41
- **Average** of 30% expenses = \$36,789.74
- **Maximum** of 30% expenses = \$818,444.70
- **Minimum** of 30% expenses = \$675.00

By and large 30% of projected expenses for most applicants were less than \$50,000, with a majority in the \$0-\$25,000 range. That more than half of applicants fell under the \$0-\$25,000 speaks on some level to the scale of work being created within MAP's applicant pool, as well as the need for support for projects working in this range.



Multi-Arts Production Fund

mapinfo@mapfund.org

[@themapfund](#)

Conclusion

At MAP, systems building and re-building is one of our top priorities, and we know that the best systems are built through constant collaboration and a plethora of perspectives. As we expand this data we welcome any and all feedback. Please email mapinfo@mapfund.org to send us your thoughts.