

# **AMPLIFY**ARTS

**IMPACT OF AMPLIFY ARTS'  
GRANTS PROGRAM REPORT**

# **Evaluating the Impact of Amplify Arts' Grant Support: Marking 5 Years of Amplify Arts' Artist Grants Program.**

**Catherine Brown Evaluation Services  
(2022)**

# ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

This evaluation project was funded by Amplify Arts to more fully understand the impact of grant-based efforts to date, to inform improvements to their current and future grants-based efforts, and to provide one starting point for future strategic planning conversations.

This project would not have been possible without the knowledge and experience of many. Special thanks to the artists and arts administrators who volunteered their time to participate in interviews, all anonymous survey respondents, and Amplify Arts staff.

The views expressed in this evaluation report are those of the author and should not be attributed to Amplify Arts or other organizations.

# *ABOUT*

Amplify Arts is an incubator for just and equitable futures in the arts. We foster solidarity, criticality, and collectivity to support artist-driven change.

At Amplify Arts, we believe art and culture are essentials, not luxuries. We know artists significantly shape the social, economic, and environmental facets of our city. They propose new ways of responding to the collective challenges we face, distill complex concepts into emotionally resonant formats, and help us envision more just and equitable futures. Their work deserves critical and financial support.

**AMPLIFYARTS**

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# ABOUT ARTIST GRANTS

## 2017-2022\*

### MICRO GRANTS

**92 AWARDS TO DATE  
AT \$250-\$500**

Support for capacity-building items(eg. supplies, research, travel, equipment/software, etc; one-time award

### GENERATOR GRANTS

**27 AWARDS TO DATE  
AT \$1,000-\$1,500**

Support for curated group shows or similar collaborative work; further support from Amplify for promotional and network support and curatorial assistance

### PUBLIC IMPACT GRANTS

**5 AWARDS TO DATE at  
\$10,000 over 2 years**

Provides funds/support to artists whose work processes civic engagement, community informed collaboration and creative problem solving to understand the complexities of systematic change

### ARTIST SUPPORT GRANTS

**12 AWARDS TO DATE  
AT \$5,000**

Unrestricted money to enhance or improve artistic practice

*\*In 2023, Amplify Arts will offer 20 Artist Grants at \$500-\$1,000 and 6 Generator Grants at \$1,500*

# ***THIS EVALUATION RESPONDS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:***

- 1) What has been the impact of Amplify Arts' grant support on individual artists in the Omaha metro area since the inception of the program 5 years ago?**
- 2) How has Amplify Arts' Artist Grants program supported the development of a thriving arts ecosystem?**

# ***THE EVALUATION FINDS THAT:***

**Amplify Arts' grants support to individual artists has had a strong, consistent, positive effect at the individual and network levels.**

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**Amplify Arts' Artist Grants Program has and continues to play a crucial role in supporting the development of a thriving arts ecosystem in Omaha. One mechanism for this is the *grant funding* to artists that Amplify Arts provides. Amplify Arts is among only a few organizations specifically focused on the Omaha arts ecosystem that also provides grant funding to artists. A role providing such funding may be especially important and relatively rare in Omaha.**

# FINDINGS

**Use of grant funds**

**Impact of Artist Grant Program**

**Feedback on Artist Grant Program**

**About Omaha's Arts Ecosystem**

**82% used grant funds to purchase supplies & equipment to support practice and broaden their reach**

## ***FINDING:***

**Grant funds are most frequently used to make equipment purchases and compensate collaborators**

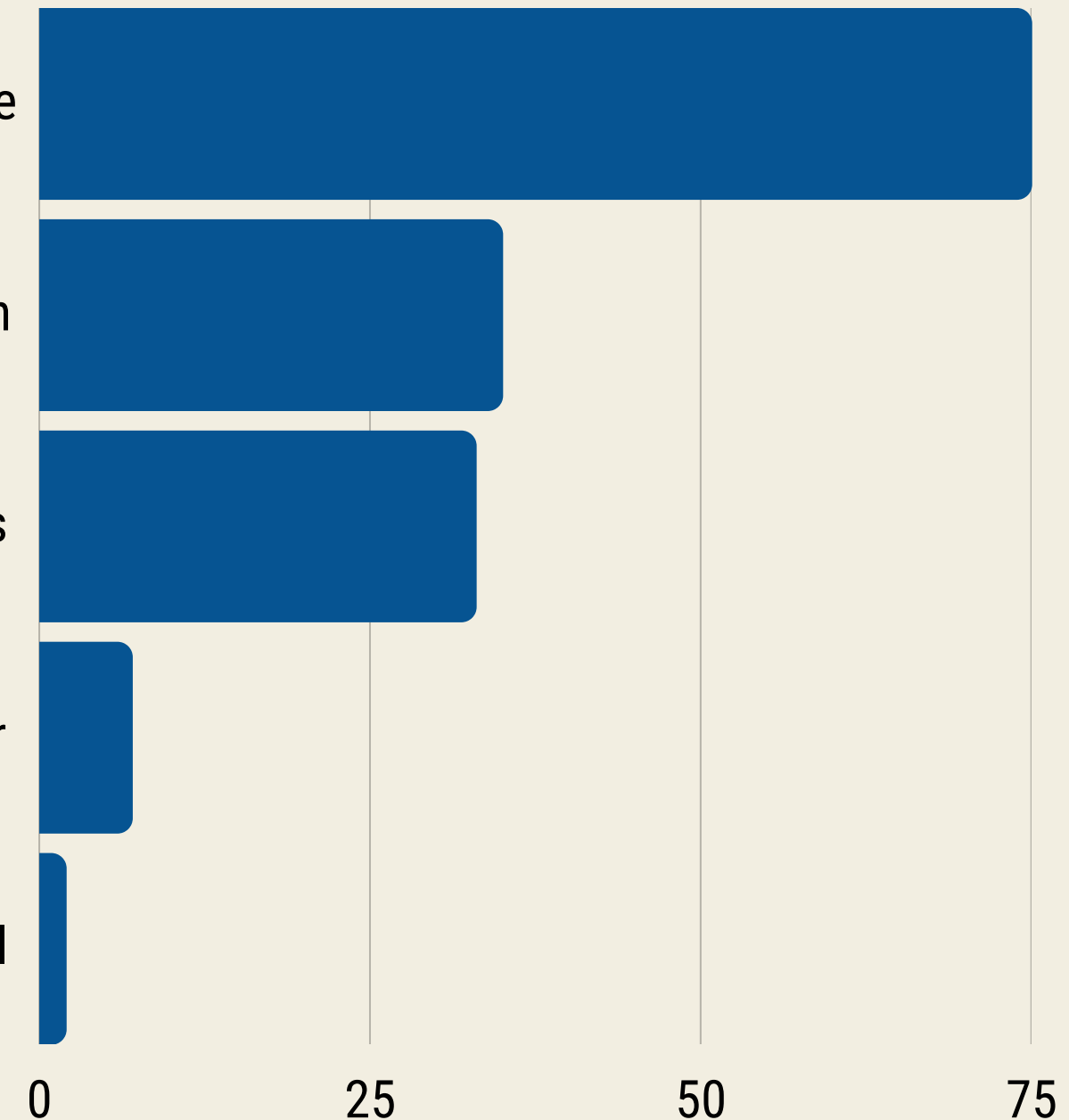
To purchase supplies/equipment that directly supported my practice

To obtain supplies that broadened my reach

To compensate other artists

To take a class/similar

To defray the cost of travel



**33% used grant funds as a means to compensate other artists with whom the grantee was collaborating**



# ***FINDING:***

**All grant recipients reported that the grant and associated experiences made a positive impact at the personal and professional level**

**73%**

**REPORTED THE GRANT:**

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**"Increased my belief in myself as an artist"**

**64%**

**REPORTED THE GRANT**

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**"Reduced my stress (for example, by offsetting cost of living expenses and/or allowing me to focus on my work in a new way)" AND "Increased my visibility as an artist in the Omaha area"**

**62%**

**REPORTED THE GRANT**

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**"Expanded my knowledge, skills, and abilities"**





“

**These grants made me want to live in Omaha despite having no intentions of staying when I first moved here...**

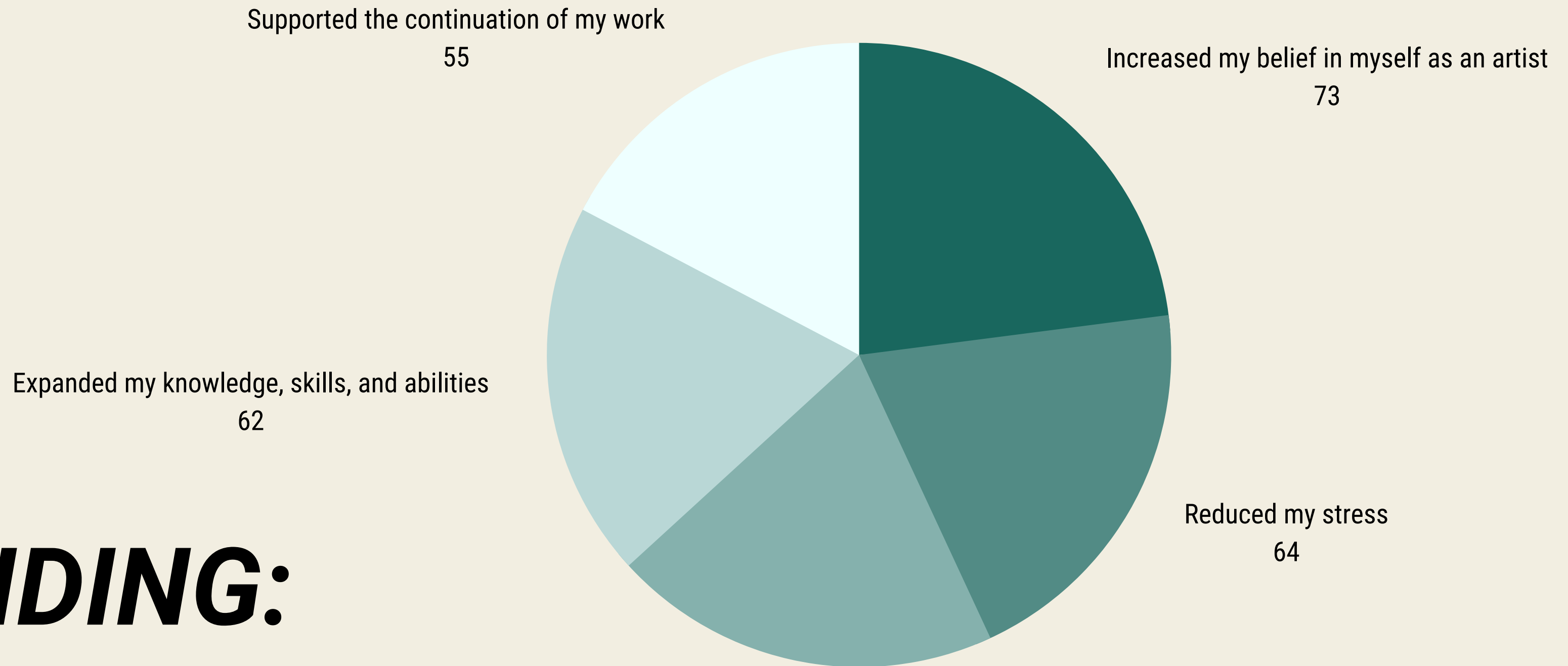
They made me want to stay not for the potential of more grants or support from Amplify/other orgs, but for the communities, places, and political projects they introduced me to and meaningfully integrated me into.”



# ***FINDING:***

**Grants other than Micro Grants were especially impactful in increasing artists' visibility in the Omaha area**

*In interpreting this figure, note that survey respondents were able to indicate multiple types of impact.*



“

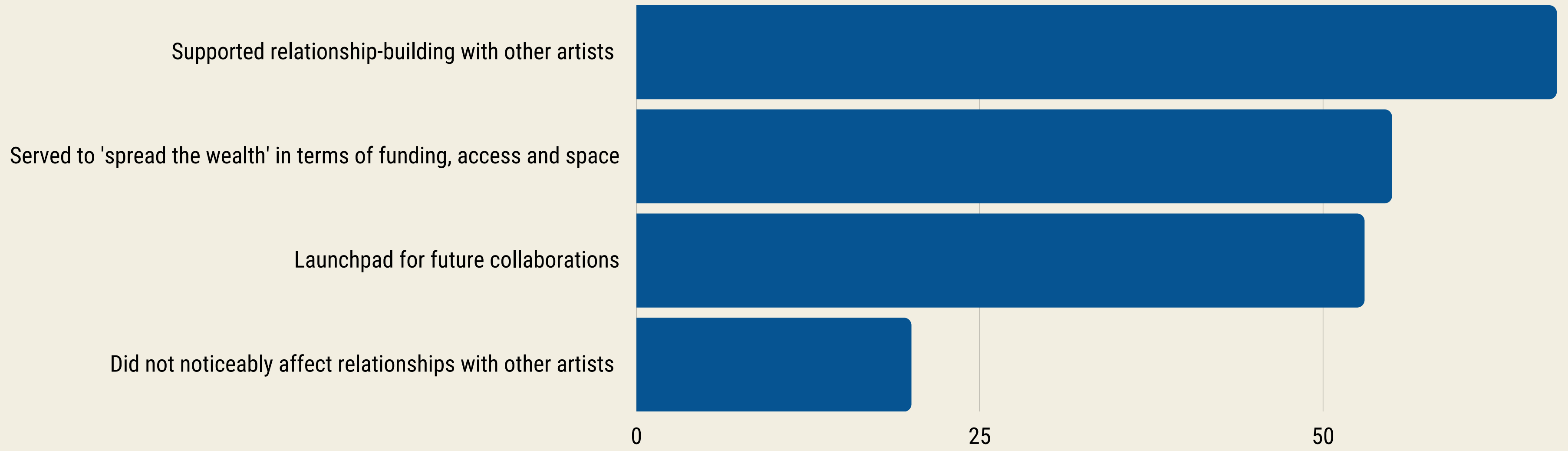
**Amplify has given me a voice and a place in the Omaha arts and culture scene without actively being out there in person very much, which is...really it's the only reason I think why I'm...in the position I'm in today here.”**

-Grantee [in response to the personal and professional difference made as a result of the Amplify Arts grant received]

# ***FINDING:***

At the network level, grants were especially impactful in affecting relationships among and between artists

**67% reported grant funding supported relationship-building with other artists**



# ***FINDING:***

## **Respondents saw positive, community level impacts from grants**



60%

“Increased adults’ excitement about and understanding of the arts”

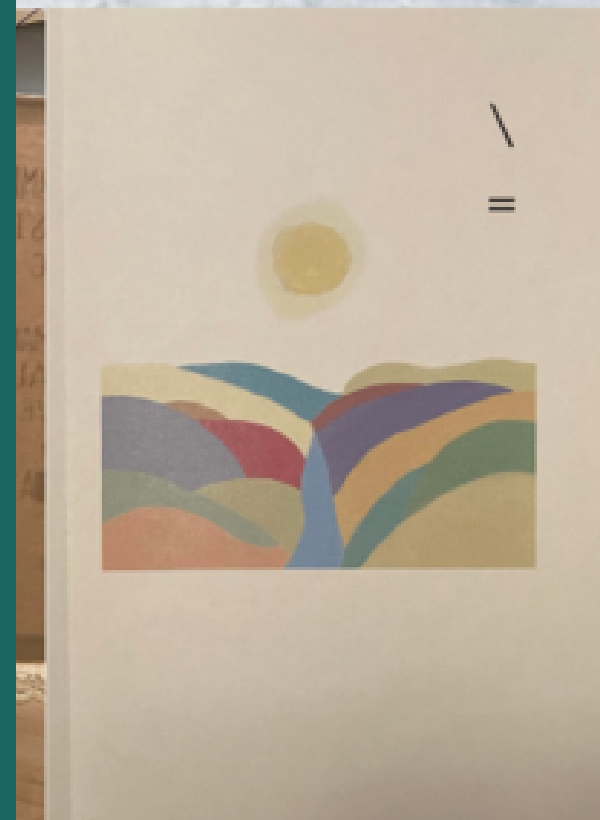
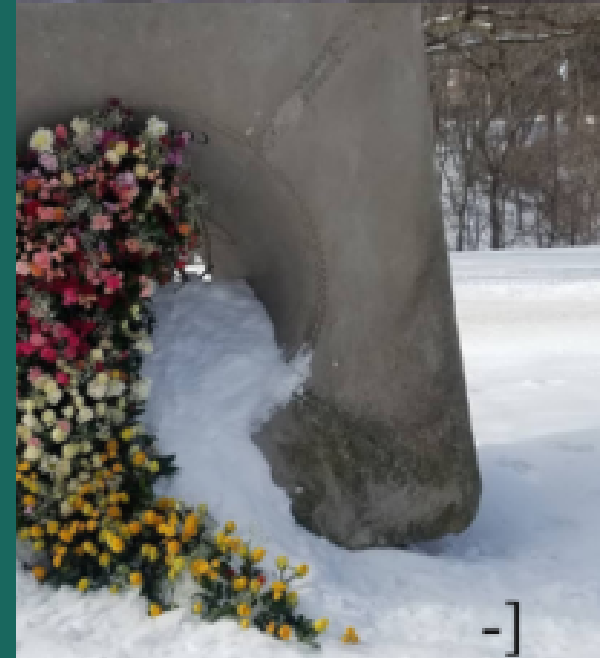


55%

“Decreased barriers to accessing the arts (for example, by taking a performance to where people were already, or by eliminating costs to attend an event)”

# Strengths of the Omaha Arts Ecosystem

- A culture where the willpower of a few people can make things happen
- Local, community-focused arts organizations
- Accessibility and support for emerging artists



# ***FINDING:***

## **Respondents agree on the top areas for growth in Omaha's arts ecosystem**

1

Increasing the amount of funding that goes directly to artists and artistic practice, as opposed to institutions that support the arts.

2

Providing public support for the arts (for example, more visible city-funded public arts projects, an arts director position in a local government organization)

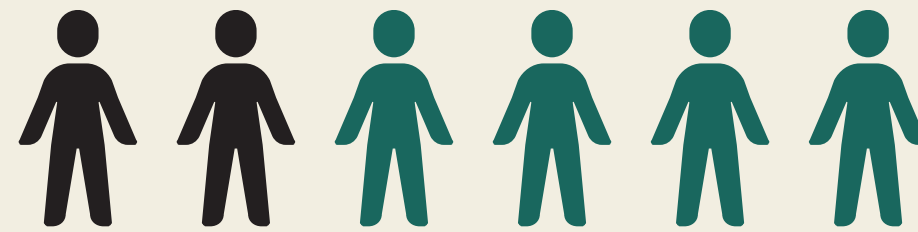
3

Making the arts accessible for all audiences (for example, people with different income levels, different physical abilities, young adults, young families)



# ***FINDING:***

**Respondents generally see other cities as better supporting the arts**



**1/3 OF ALL  
GRANTEES**

Disagreed or strongly disagreed that Omaha has a thriving arts ecosystem when compared to these cities: Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Kansas City and Minneapolis

# ***FINDING:***

## **Talking about the Omaha arts ecosystem means talking about race**

“

*I think we have not figured out how to break down the borders of...segregation yet. And I know a lot of other places are very similar. But I think we still don't know how to invite-- outside of the leadership aspect— I think we don't know how to break down the barriers to invite other audience members and make our audiences more diverse as well. Because it's not just enough for you to be telling Black stories to a community where its majority of theater patrons are White. It's telling Black stories that also include Black audiences and Hispanic audiences and Middle Eastern audiences and Asian audiences."*

# ***FINDING:* Lack of funding to artists is an issue in Omaha**

<b>CITY</b>	<b>Grants to Individual Artists or Collaboratives Identified</b>	<b>Size Range</b>	<b>Includes Public Projects</b>
<b>Atlanta</b>	5	\$1,000-\$15,000	YES
<b>Austin</b>	5	\$1,000-\$625,000	YES
<b>Chicago</b>	15	\$300-\$5,000	YES
<b>Kansas City</b>	12	\$6,000-\$185,000	YES
<b>Minneapolis</b>	1	NA	YES

As indicated by survey responses about growth areas for Omaha, a review of other cities' funding for the arts suggests that less funding to artists is available in Omaha than in these other locations.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**It is recommended that Amplify Arts and other organizations and people seeking to develop a more sustainable, just, and thriving arts ecosystem for Omaha consider the following:**

Increase funding to artists in Omaha.

Increase public support for the arts in Omaha.

Make the arts accessible for all audiences

Create opportunities and processes that put artists and artists' voices in a leadership position.

Build on the strengths of Omaha's arts ecosystem.

# Evaluation Approach

This evaluation used a mixed methods sequential design. Specifically, this evaluation began with one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with current and former Amplify Arts grantees. Through these conversations and through exploratory, inductive content analysis of the data, categories were developed around:

- How grantees used grant funds;
- The difference made (if any) from grant funding at the individual, network, and community levels;
- The strengths and growth areas for Omaha's arts ecosystem; and
- What a thriving arts ecosystem for Omaha might look and sound like.

A survey was then fielded, with survey questions and responses framed in a way that was reflective of the categories that emerged from the initial interviews. A total of 68 survey responses were received; the overall response rate for the survey was 38%. Respondents included both grantees and other key partners such as arts administrator, philanthropists, donors and Amplify Arts board members. Also, language and wording from the interview conversations were used to craft survey questions and responses.

[Full Report Available here](#)