2017

Downtown Albuquerque ARTS & CULTURAL DISTRICT

The Creative Workforce of Downtown Albuquerque

Abstract

How do we measure the impact of the Downtown Albuquerque Arts & Cultural District, and how do we assess the needs and goals of those working in creative sectors in Albuquerque?

This survey of 369 respondents who participate in the creative economy of downtown Albuquerque looks at the creative economy of Albuquerque, and the needs of businesses and individuals that define themselves as being part of a creative industry. Data and research presented contributes to the fields of economics, local cultural policy, and arts management, with further implications in sociology and marketing. This survey, however, is not comprehensive, and there is a need to further survey the needs of Albuquerque's creative economy.

Why We Created This Report

As a key part of Albuquerque's urban core, the Downtown Arts & Cultural District invites visitors to explore the area along with helping individual entrepreneurs, artists, organizations, and creative businesses grow their work.

The 2017 creative survey seeks to:

- Learn more about Albuquerque's creatives and businesses
- Provide information on the demographic and socioeconomic status of self-identified creatives and creative businesses in the area
- Identify challenges that artists, musicians, galleries, filmmakers, theaters, bookstores, and other creatives need the most help with
- Create data and research that creatives and an array of stakeholders in arts and culture can use to design opportunities and projects for growth

Among the stakeholders that can use the data presented here:

- Business leaders, governments, and nonprofits seeking to validate opportunities or showcase the impact of Albuquerque's creatives and businesses.
- Organizations creating training, workshops, and resources for creatives

Respondent Demographics

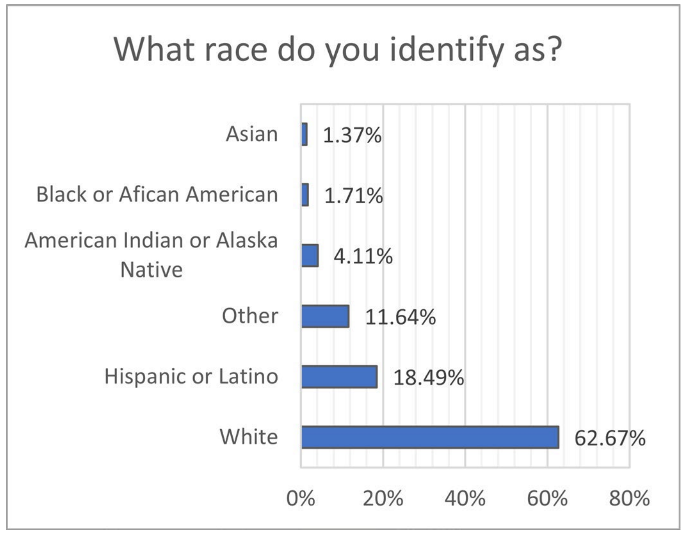

Figure 1: Race

"Other" included people who wrote in multiple races or identified as "mixed" as well as people who wrote in "human."

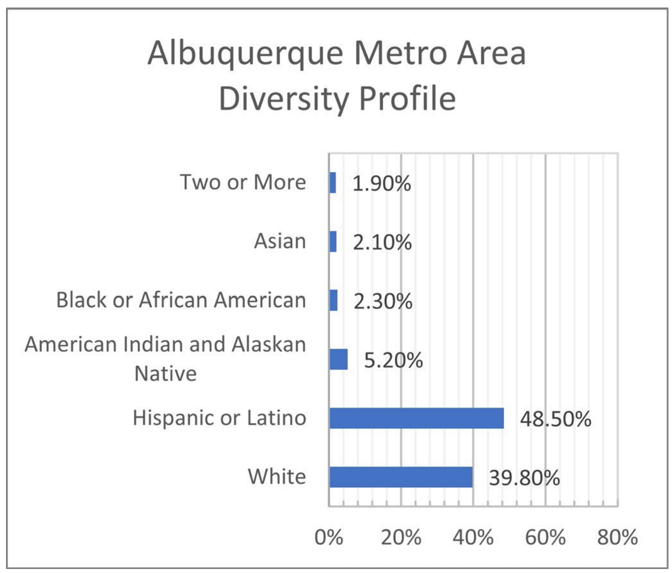

Figure 2: Albuquerque Diversity Profile. Data from https://www.abq.org/demographics.aspx; may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

The Downtown Arts & Cultural District survey was taken by more people who identified as white than is the standard demographic for Albuquerque. It is possible this is due to survey distribution, self-selection of participants, or that the District is made up of more people identifying as white than Hispanic or Latino.

- Individual creatives and creative businesses
- interested in applying for loans, planning expansion, and gaining a deeper understanding of their place in the greater economy of New Mexico

Background

The Downtown Albuquerque Arts & Cultural District is both a place and a program in action: it is a designated area of 30 blocks in Downtown Albuquerque, and as an initiative of DowntownABQ Mainstreet, the District supports the creative economy of Downtown Albuquerque. We accomplish this through promotional support, funding, and grant partnerships.

New Mexico's creative industries are some of the most important to the overall state economy. In 2014, the creative economy employed 5.5% of New Mexicans (about 1 of every 18 jobs in the state) and paid $1.37 billion in wages and salaries, "roughly equal to the total paid by the state's mining industry, and more than the total paid by hotels and restaurants," according to researchers at the University of New Mexico's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) (Mitchell & Joyce et. Al., 2014).

The Research

This survey was created with two very specific goals in mind:

1. To measure the impact of our city's creative economy, and
2. To learn more about the needs of individual creative entrepreneurs and artists, businesses, and organizations in the Arts & Cultural District.

The survey, distributed via social media channels, email, and in person to individuals known to be participating in creative work in the area, asked participants 26 questions, including demographic information, information about their work, business-related needs, and their use of city resources.

Research presented here helps to create a baseline for better understanding the variety of creative industries and businesses that make up the Arts & Cultural District, and to learn more about the make-up of the individuals that live and work in Albuquerque.

One issue faced in Albuquerque and beyond that is

Respondent Demographics

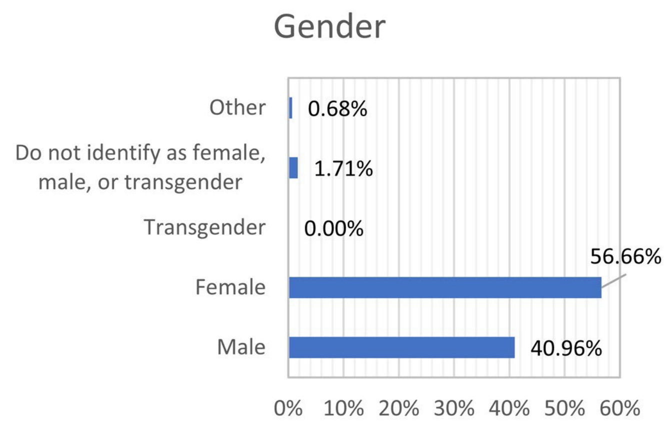

Figure 3: Gender

With almost 57% of respondents identifying as female, there were slightly more who identified as female who answered this survey. 41% of those who answered the survey identified as male.

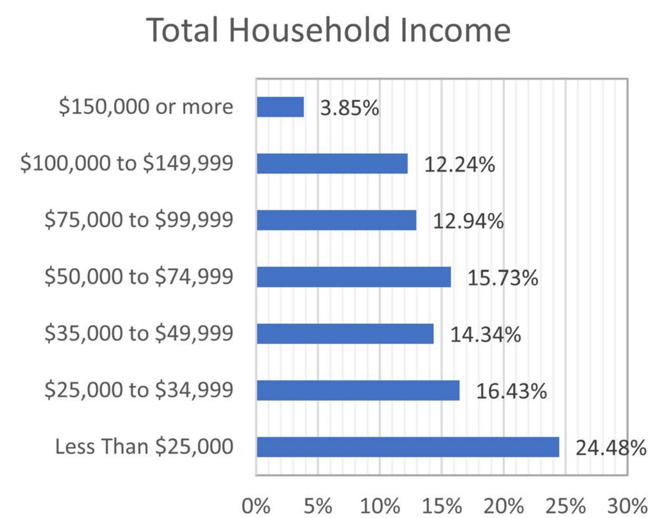

Figure 4: Total Household Income

Almost 25% of respondents reported that they earn less than $25,000 in annual household income. In a recent study on the financial state of visual artists, the median household income was $20,000 - 30,000 per year (The Creative Independent). For comparison, the median household income in the United States in 2016 averaged at $58,000 per year (census.gov).

the term "creative economy." For years, leading researchers and organizations that study the creative economy have struggled to define and even to name this sector of the economy. The general concept of the creative economy is identified in dozens of ways, including:

- Cultural industries
- Creative industries
- Leisure industries
- Entertainment industries
- Content industries
- Copyright protected industries
- Craft industries
- Culinary Industries

With that in mind, this survey was open to individuals in many different industries who defined themselves as being a part of the Downtown Albuquerque Arts & Cultural District and who develop and distribute creative work in the Albuquerque area. A downside of allowing individuals and businesses to self-define as a part of the District is that individuals who were not in creative industries or not located in the physical District might have filled out the survey.

We asked participants what creative service they provided, and included a number of options from writing and editing to food service, but also gave them the option to write in their own words how they identified themselves. This survey is as much about collecting the hard numbers, demographic information, and income generated for individuals by creative industries in Albuquerque as it is about capturing how these individuals see themselves.

Participants were asked to provide a zip code to better understand how many participants live in the Arts & Cultural District (zip code 87102) and how many live in other areas of Albuquerque and larger Bernalillo County. Individuals that do not live in the Arts & Cultural District were still invited to participate in the survey, as the research seeks to analyze data from anyone identifying as part of the creative economy in downtown Albuquerque.

The Survey

This survey consisted of 26 questions. When questions had the potential to be open-ended or were multiple-choice, there was an "other"__________option for participants to fill in their own answer. This survey included 369 respondents after six weeks of survey circulation.

Summary

This survey contains valuable information about our downtown creative community. This includes:

- Resources utilized to grow business
- Desired resources for creative entrepreneurs and artists
- Ideal workspace costs
- Infrastructure available (housing and transportation) within the downtown area

The survey also raises questions:

- What kind of community support does downtown's creative workforce need?
- What is the monetary distinction between creative production versus creative consumption? More information is needed about downtown's creative consumption to better understand how community members who are not producing creative work are engaging with the creative economy (e.g: buying artwork, buying theatre tickets, attending concerts).
- What would attract artists and creatives to live downtown?
- How did survey participants hear about the survey? Could more participants be included to ensure responses from a diverse group of respondents?
- How can we refine our understanding of the resources creative entrepreneurs are using to build their businesses (incubators, accelerators, small business loans) and the resources they employ to reach customers (social media, advertising, print advertising)?

For the Arts & Cultural District, there are implications as to how we can integrate these findings into our annual work plan. In the fall of 2018, the District's committee will be examining our work and creating a strategic plan that takes these findings into account and structures our 2019 work around addressing the needs and challenges of our creative community.

Location

The zip code for the Downtown Arts & Cultural District is 87102. Although almost a quarter of responses came from the Downtown Albuquerque area itself, the wider location spread of responses shows that Downtown Albuquerque is a destination for commuters who live in other areas of Albuquerque, and that the Downtown Arts & Cultural District reaches the greater Albuquerque Metro Area as well as the Downtown center. This is valuable to the Downtown Arts & Cultural District because it shows that they potentially have a wider impact on the city of Albuquerque and that many people consider themselves part of this community rather than only those who live downtown.

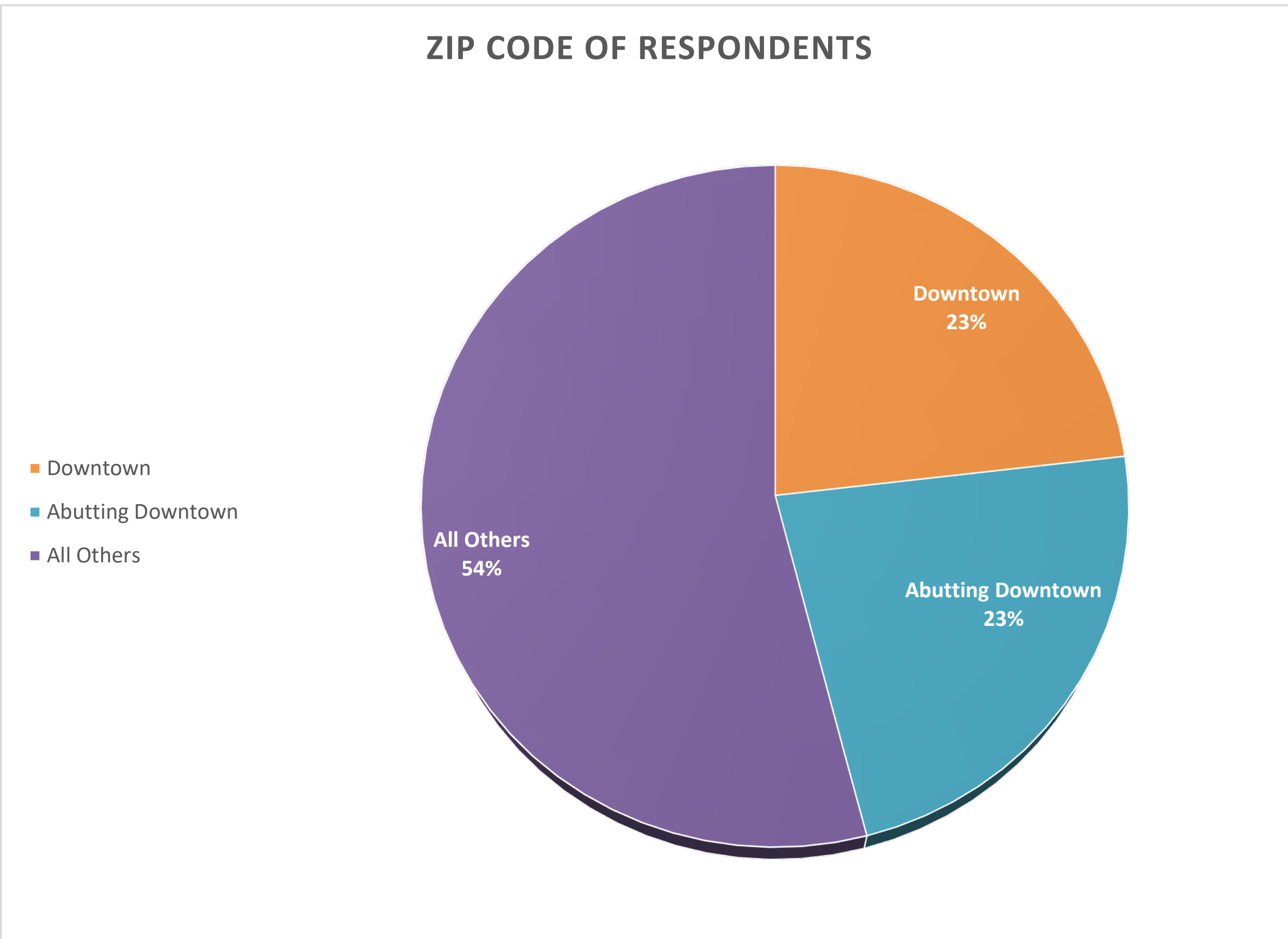

Figure 5: Zip Codes of Respondents

Distribution of Zip Codes

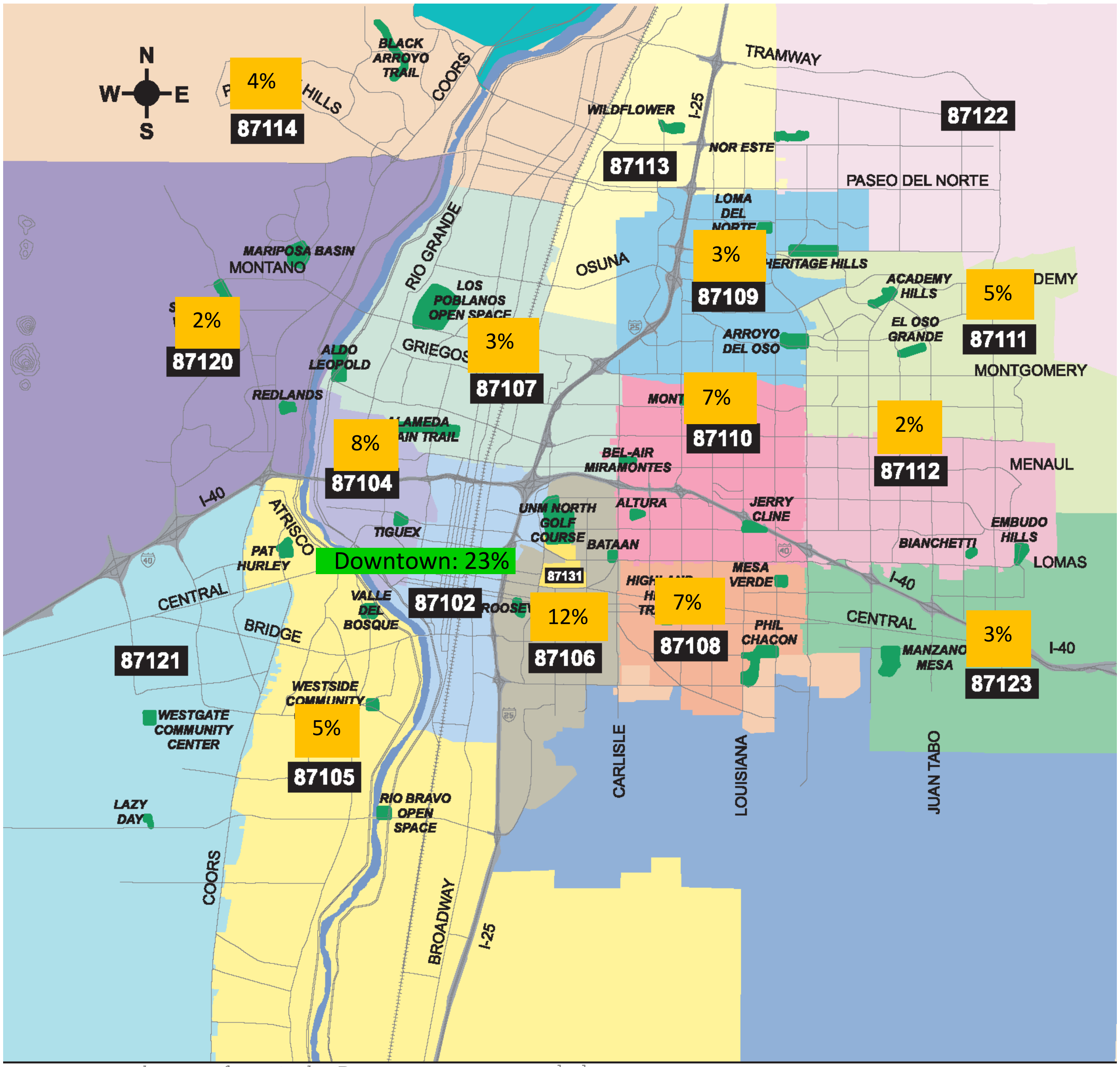

Figure 6: Distribution of Zip Codes. Percentages are rounded.

Transportation

Although Albuquerque is one of the least pedestrian-friendly cities (Uyttebrouck, 2016), more participants bike and walk to work than take public transportation.

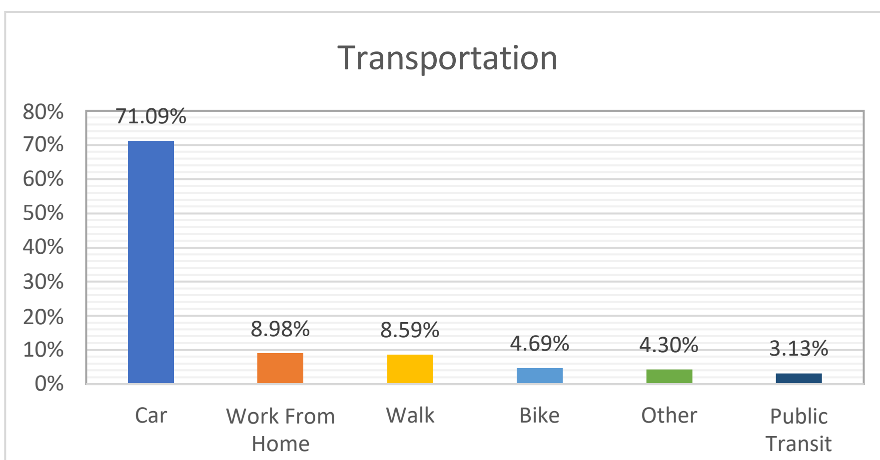

Figure 7: Transportation to Work

Figure 8 shows that the majority of participants find getting to work either extremely convenient or convenient, and less than 10% find transportation to work extremely inconvenient or inconvenient. So although 71% of participants drive to work, their commute is still mostly convenient.

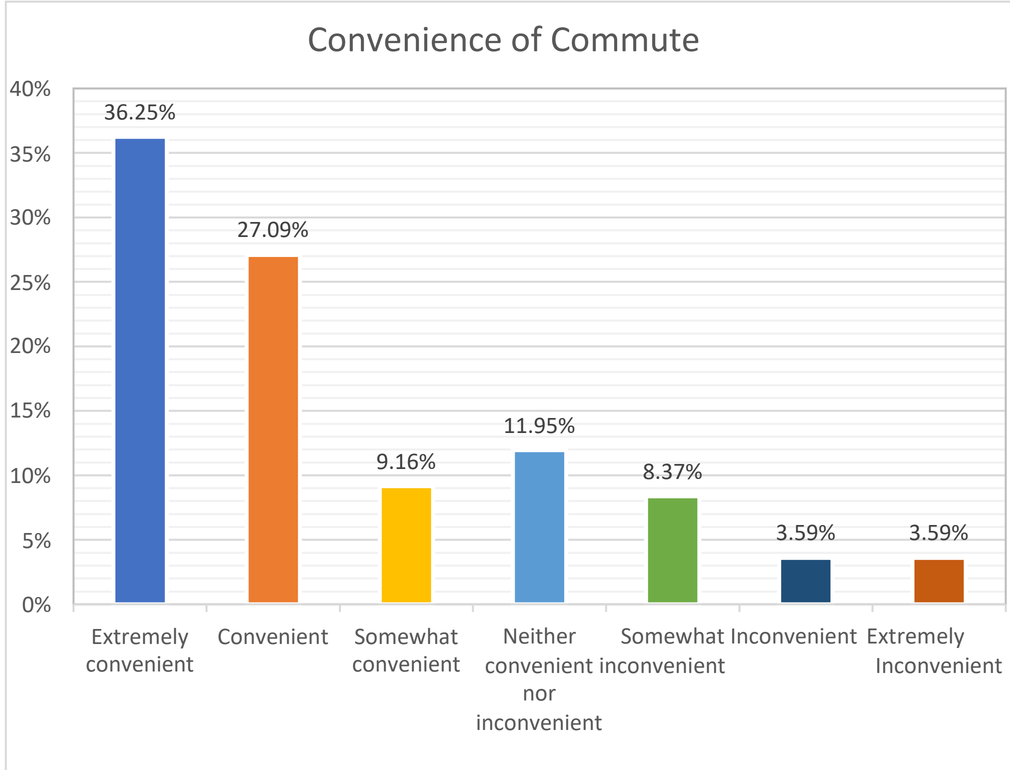

Figure 8: Convenience of Commute

Employment in Downtown Albuquerque's Creative Economy

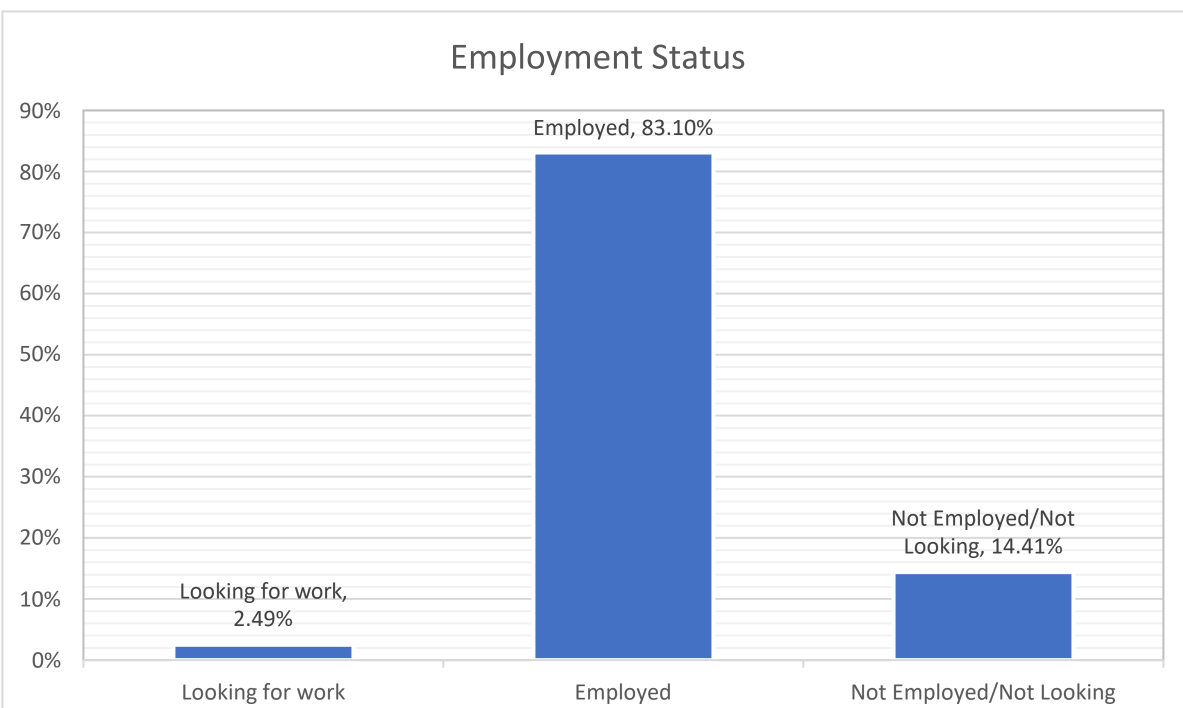

Figure 9: Employment Status. "Not Employed/Not Looking" includes students, those who are retired, homemakers, and those who are unable to work.

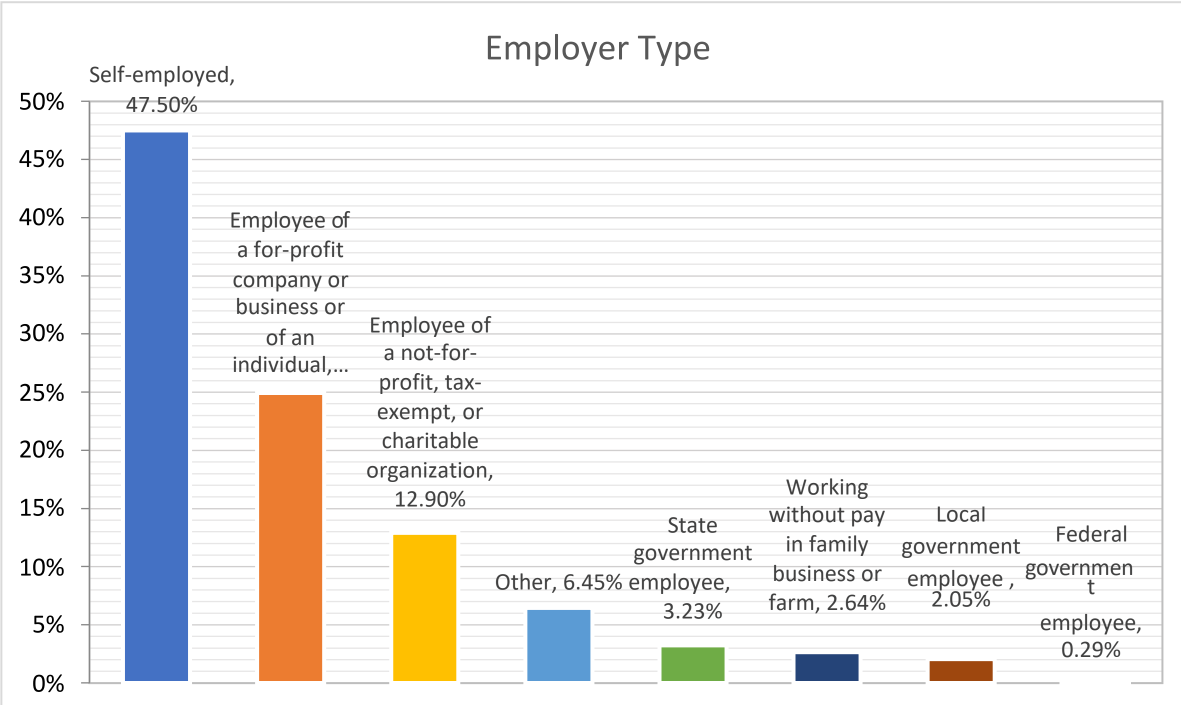

Figure 10.: Employer Type. Respondents answered the question by identifying what best describes their employer type. They could choose more than one answer.

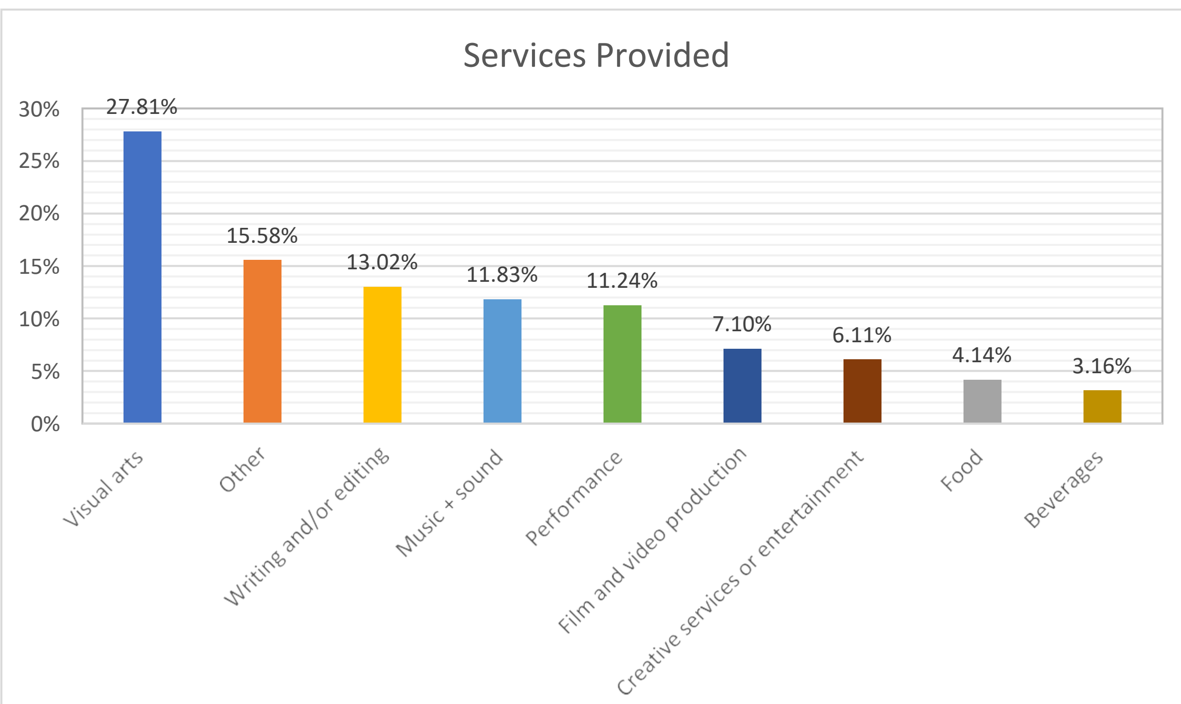

Figure 11.: ***Services Provided.*** A large portion of respondents selected "other" as their service type and wrote in anything from web developer to architect. This category was meant to allow people who might not provide a tradition creative service to still specify what they do.

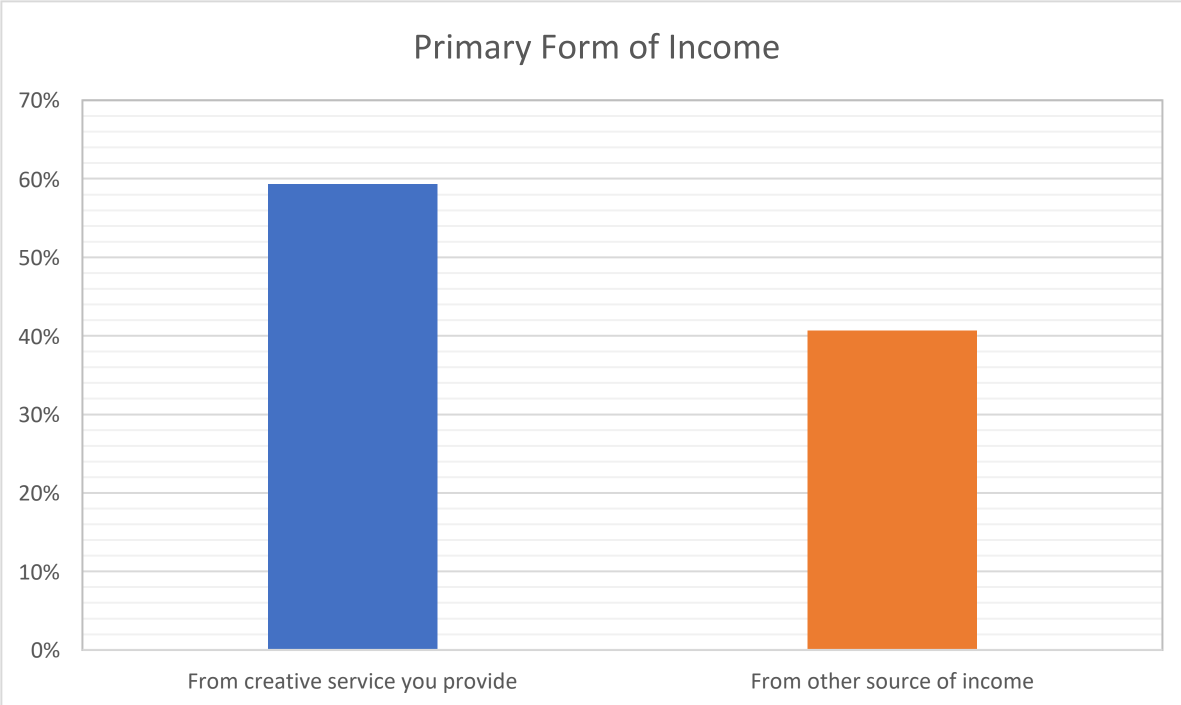

Figure 12:: Primary Form of Income. Respondents were asked if their primary form of income was from the service they identified above (meaning that more than 50% of their income comes from the service they identified).

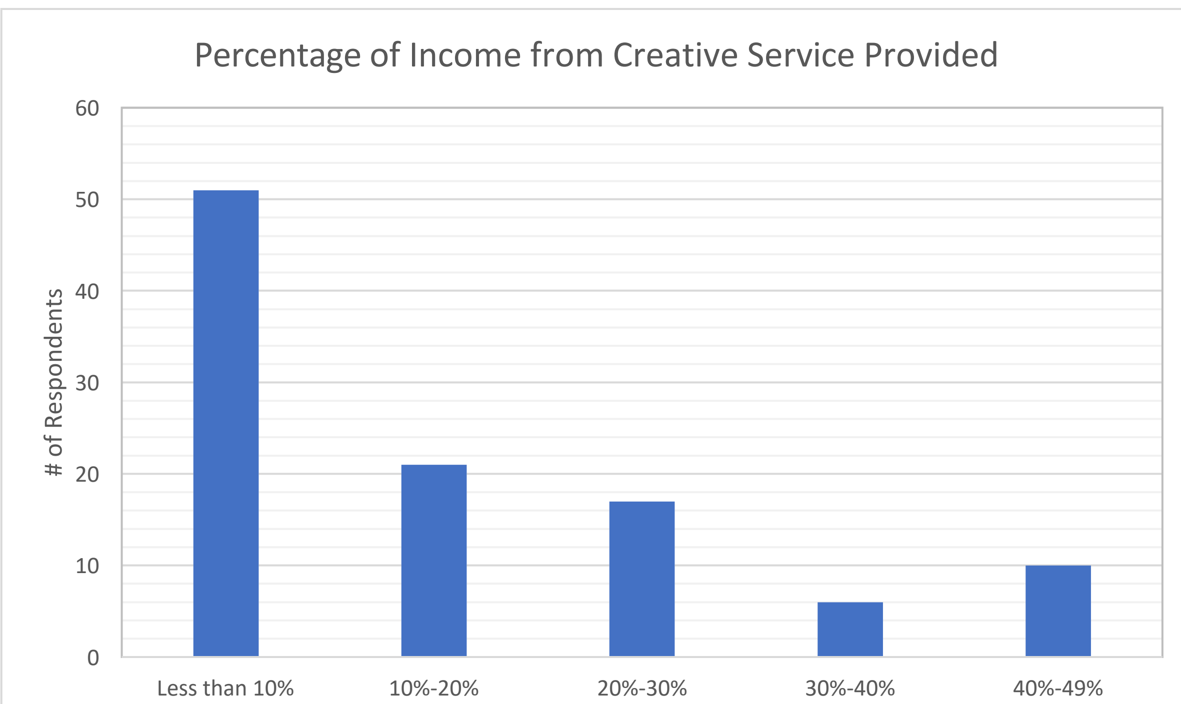

Figure 13: Percentage of Income from Creative Service. If respondents indicated that their creative services didn't provide at least 50% of their total income, they were asked to indicate how much income their creative services generated.

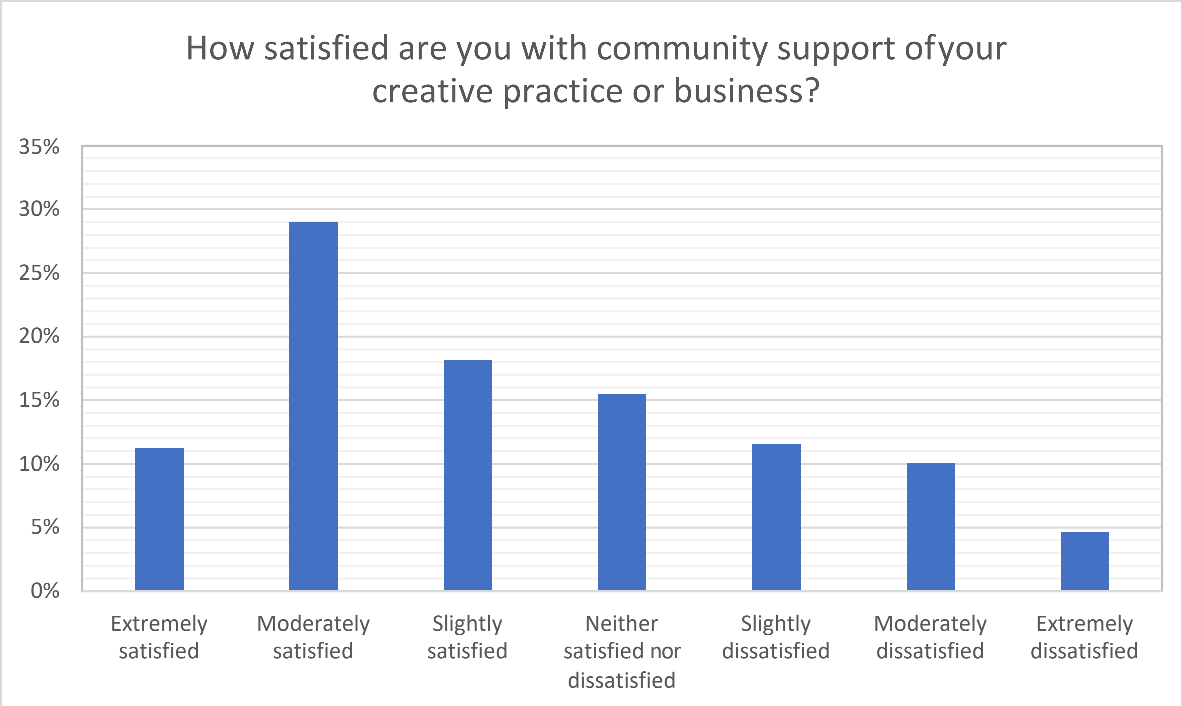

Figure 14: Satisfaction with Community Support

Challenges & Priorities for Creative Work Downtown

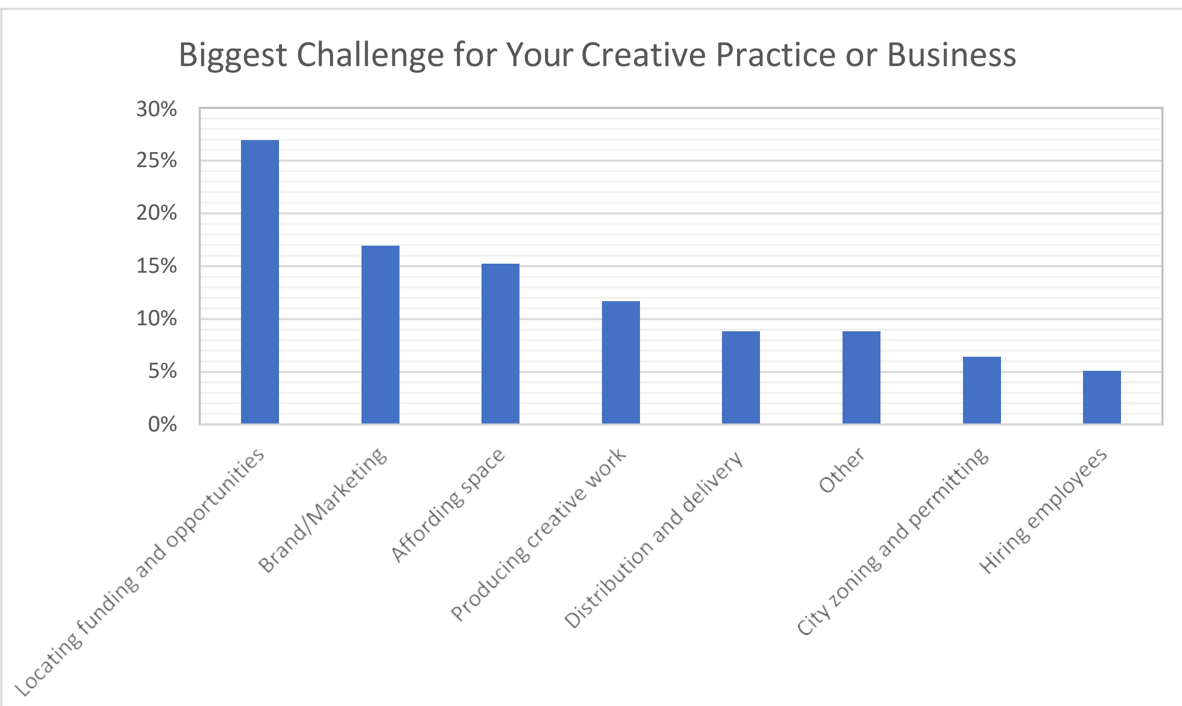

Figure 15: Biggest Challenge for Creative Practice or Business

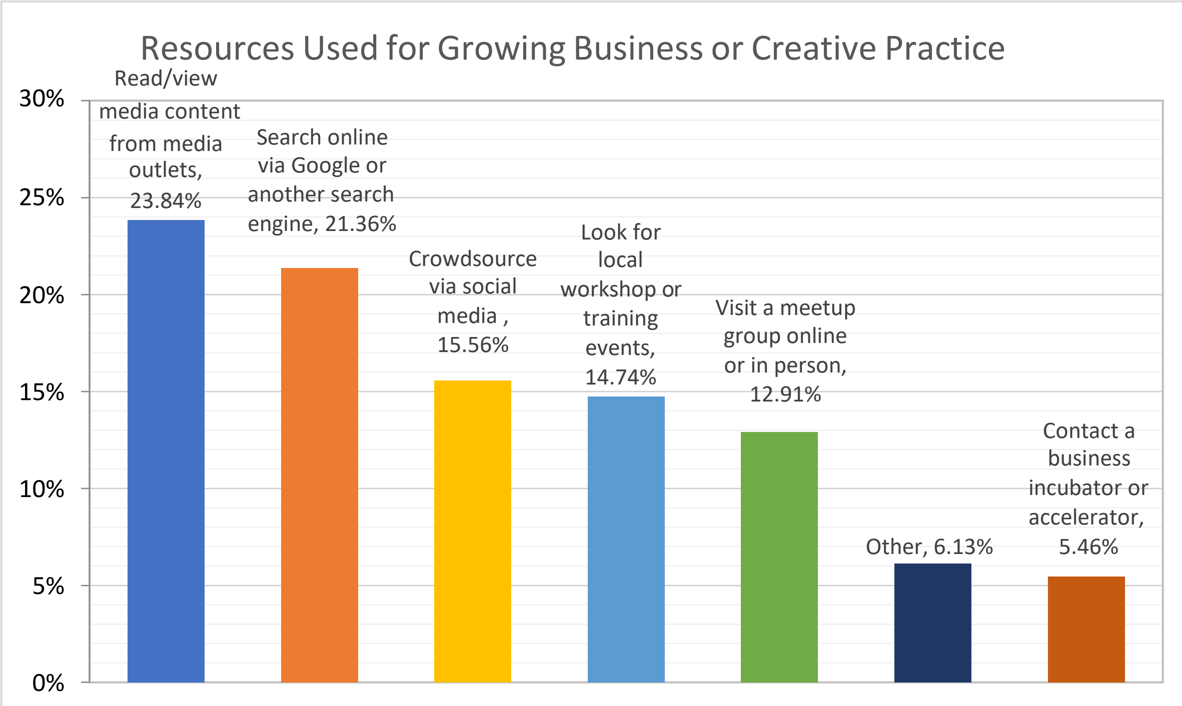

Figure 16: Resources Utilized

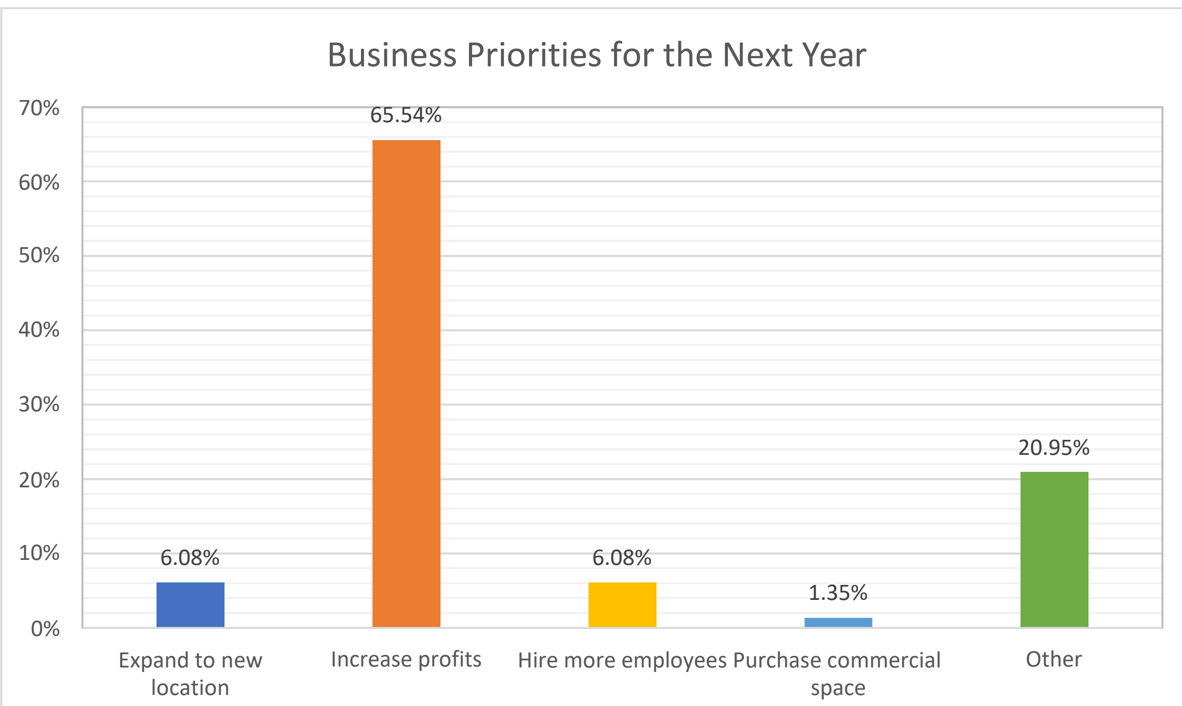

Figure 17: Business Priorities. Respondents who identified as a business were asked about their priorities for next year. "Other" included priorities like branding, marketing, or funding.

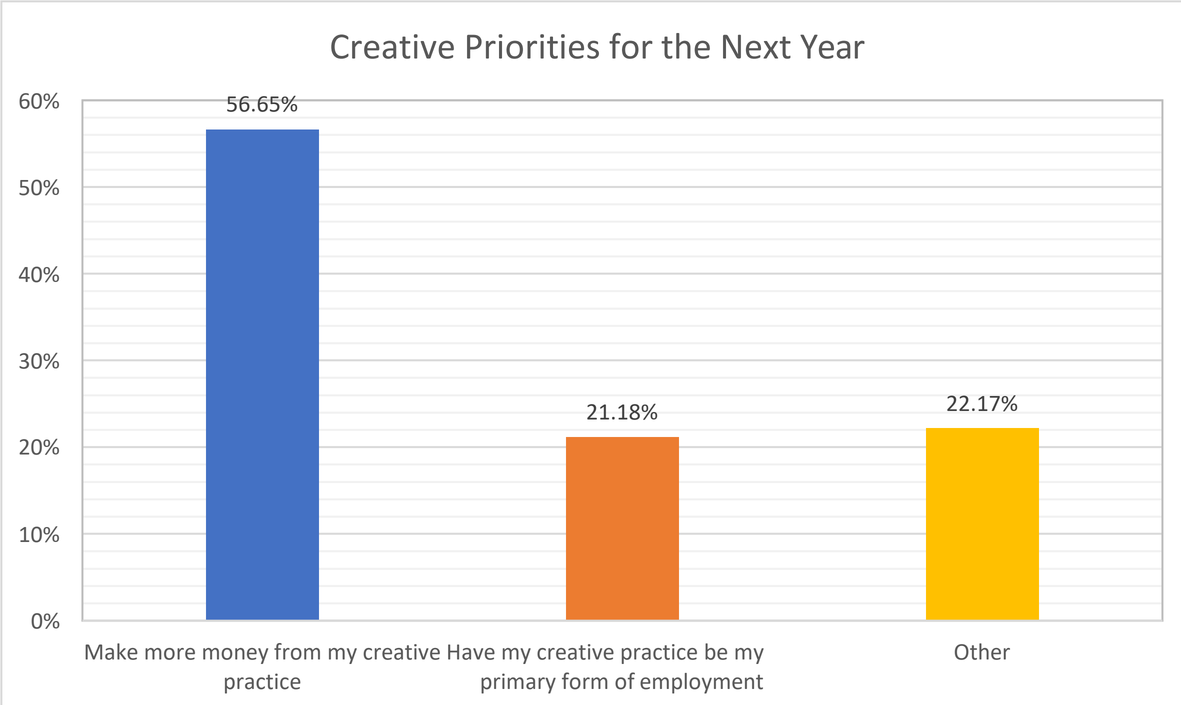

Figure 18:: Creative Priorities. Respondents who identified as a creative were asked to identify their priorities in the coming year. 22.17% of respondents filled in the "other" category with responses like becoming recognized, being more creative, and networking.

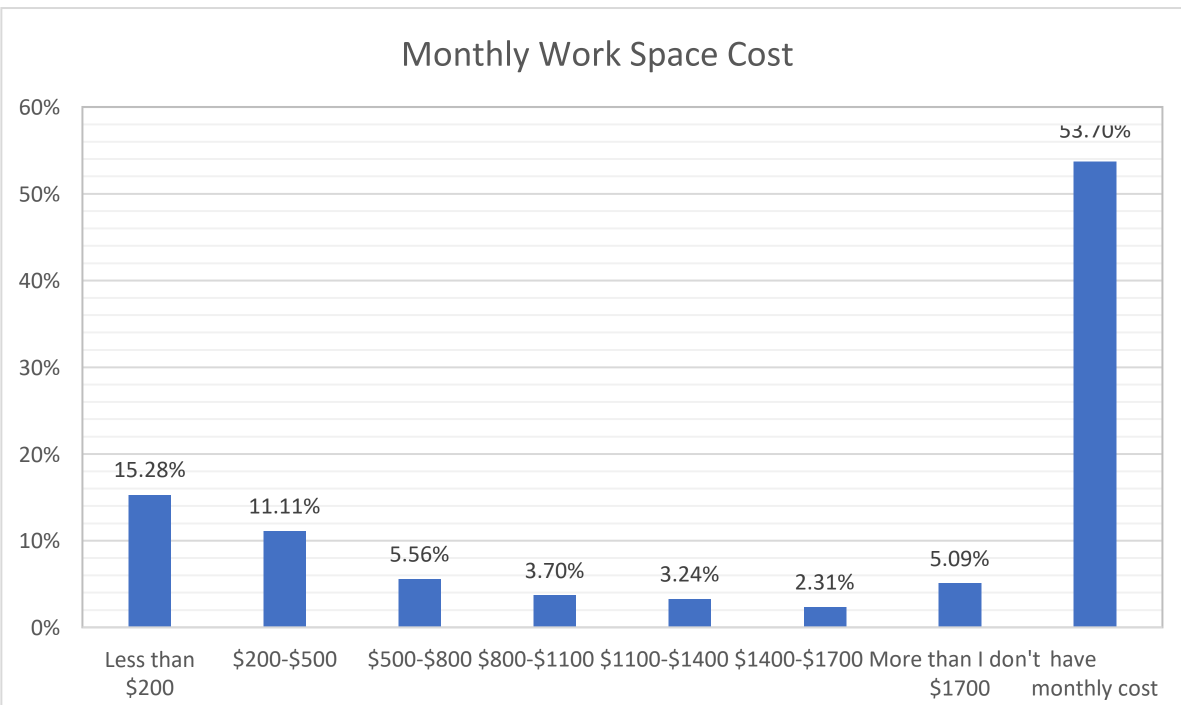

Figure 19: Monthly Work Space Cost

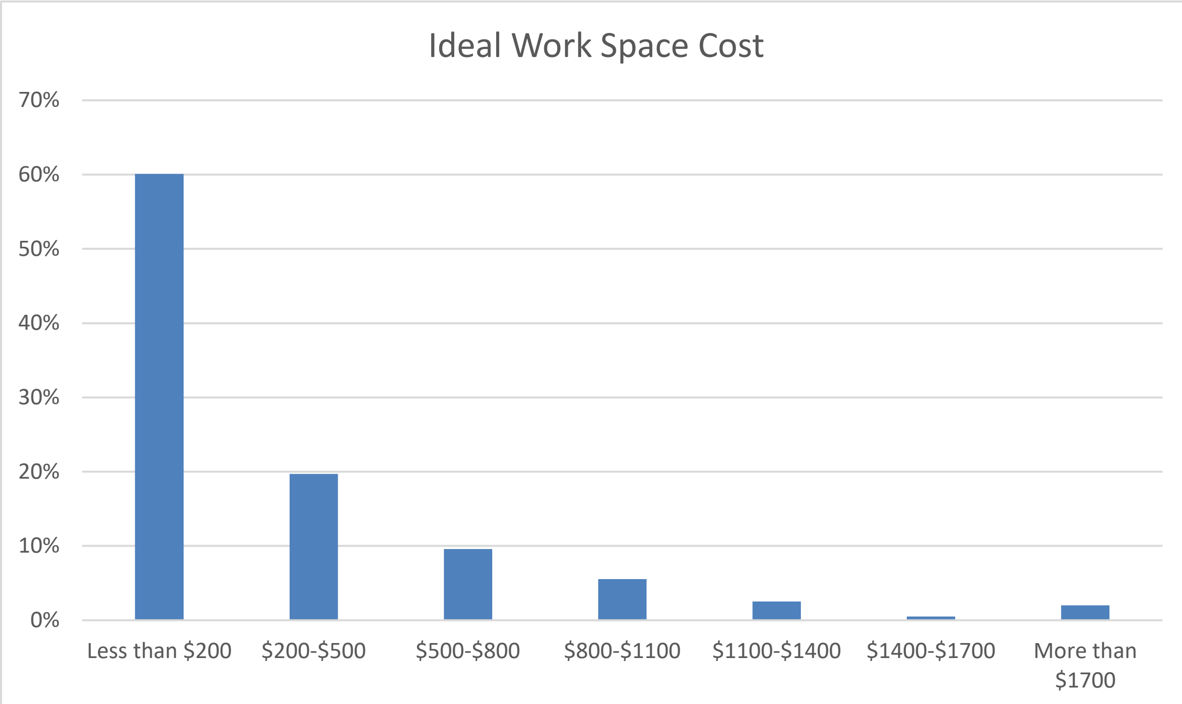

Figure 20: Ideal Work Space Cost

Respondents identified their ideal work space as less than $200 per month. Several coworking or studio spaces in the vicinity of downtown Albuquerque average at around $300 per month.

- Free Range - $7/one week, $99/month for a desk, $179/month for dedicated desk, $399/month for private office
- Fat Pipe - $15 one day, $75 one week, $150/month for 2 days/week, $200/month for 3 days/week, $300/month for unlimited access
- Harwood - $175-$375/month
- Factory on 5th – starts at $225

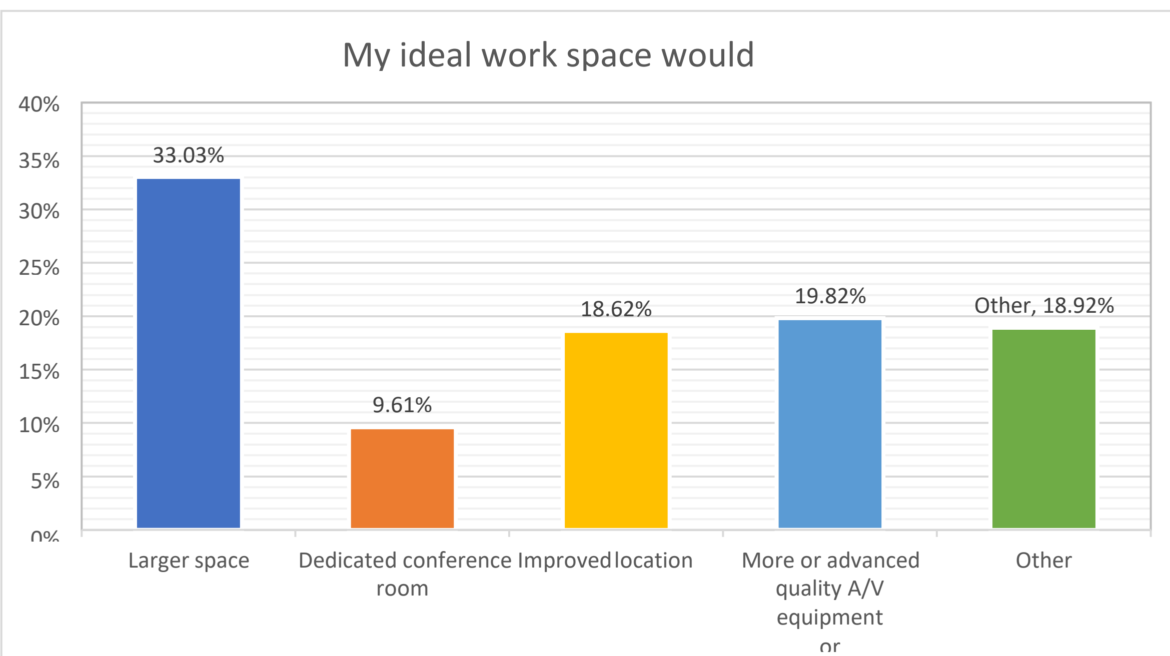

Figure 21: Ideal Work Space

Cost of Housing

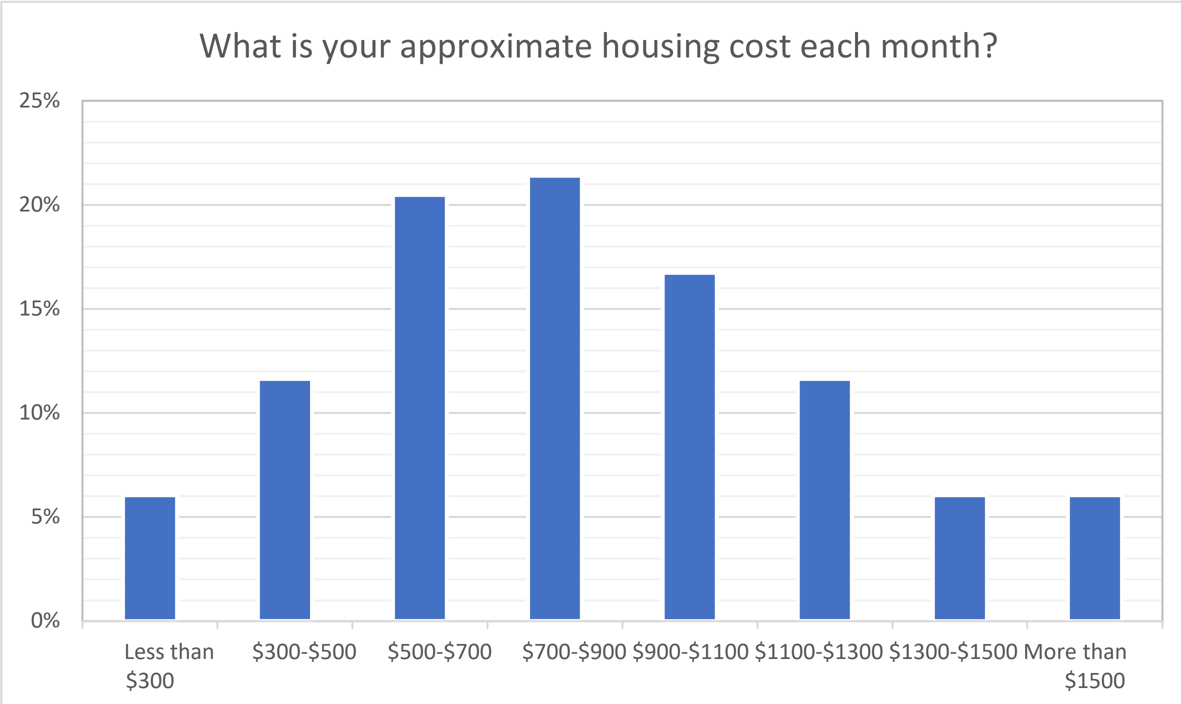

Figure 22: Monthly Cost of Housing

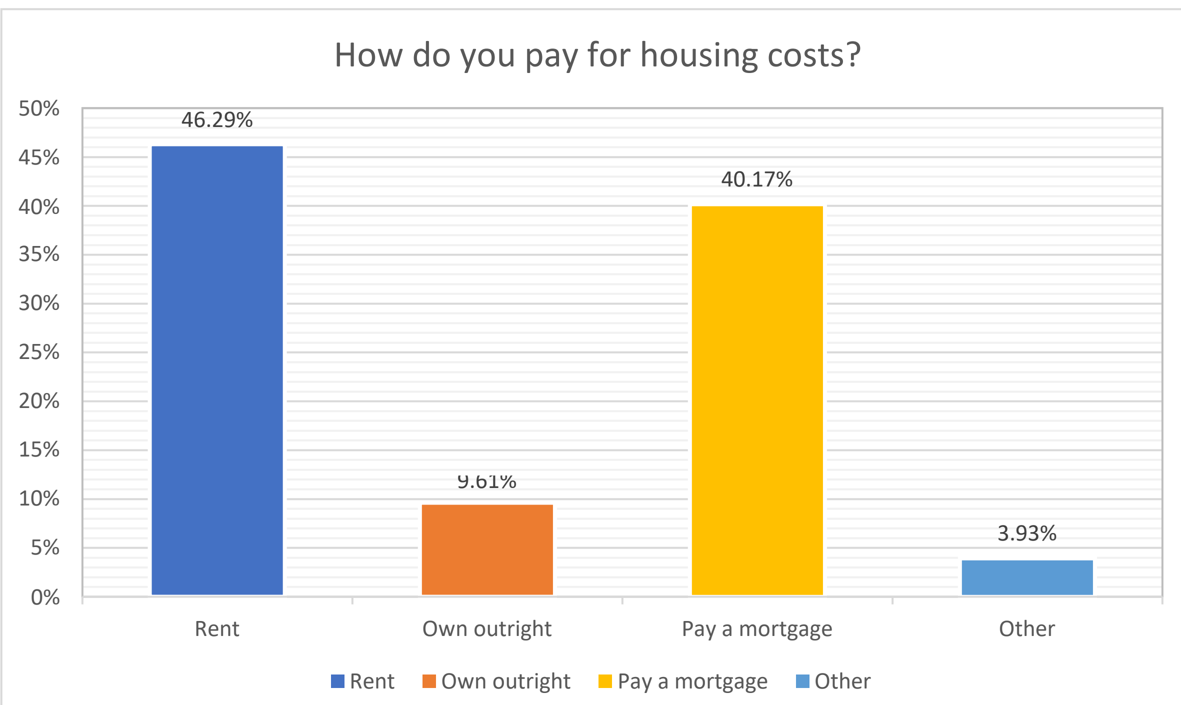

Figure 23: Paying for Housing

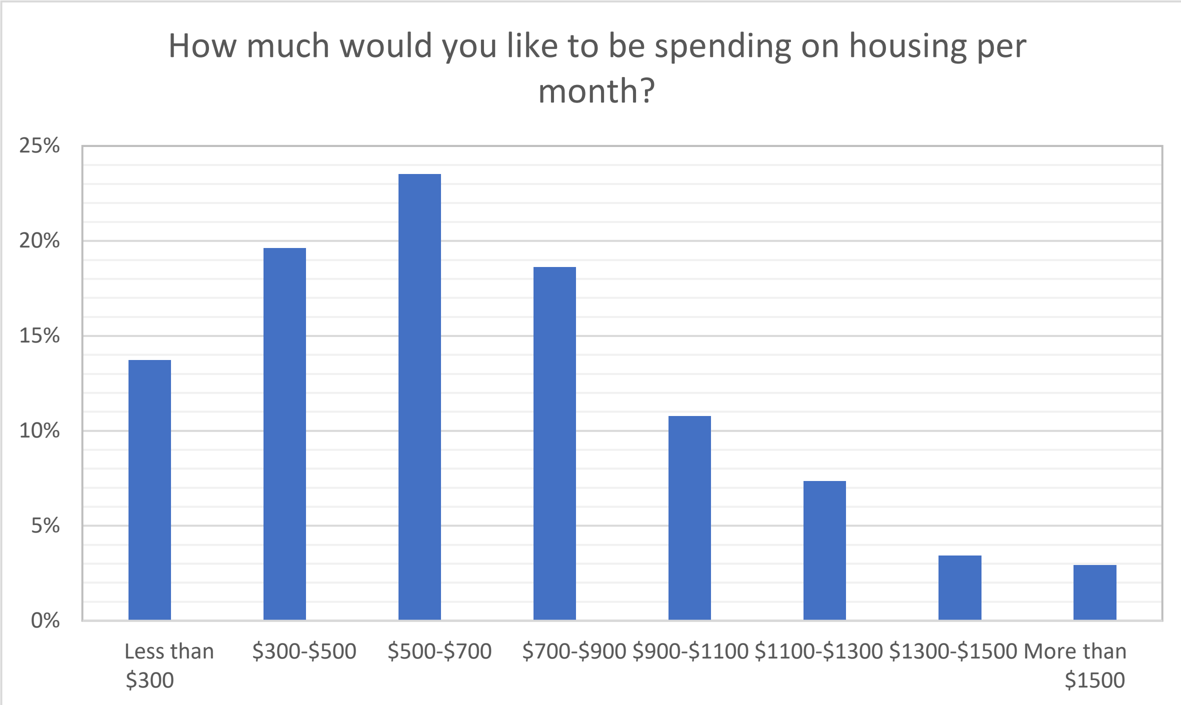

Figure 24: Ideal Monthly Housing Cost

Works Cited:

Mitchell, Jeffrey and Gillian Joyce. "Building on the Past, Facing the Future: Renewing the Creative Economy of New Mexico." (2014). https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/bber/21

Uyttebrouck, O. (2016). “New Mexico is No. 1 in Pedestrian Deaths.” Albuquerque Journal. Retrieved from: https://www.abqjournal.com/785135/nm-no-1.html

Initial research and analysis provided by Claire Stasiewicz, Arts & Cultural District Intern, with additional compilation and edits by Lane Cuthbert, Arts & Cultural District Community Development Coordinator, and the Arts & Cultural District Committee.