

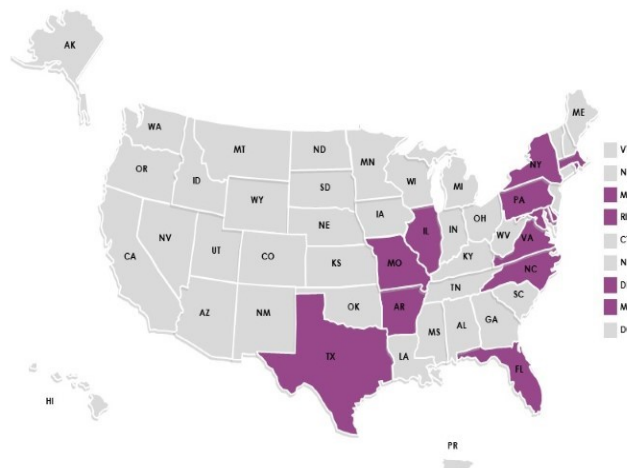
Your Question:

A federal agency asked for information on reopening plans for local arts organizations that work in arts education.

Our Response:

COVID-19-related school and state closures and re-openings have impacted community-based arts organizations. In July and August 2020, the Arts Education Partnership collected survey data on reopening plans from 16 community-based arts education organizations to document the guidance being followed or created by the organizations. Responses came mainly from organizations in the Northeast, Southeast and Midwest regions of the U.S. and focused on each organization's:

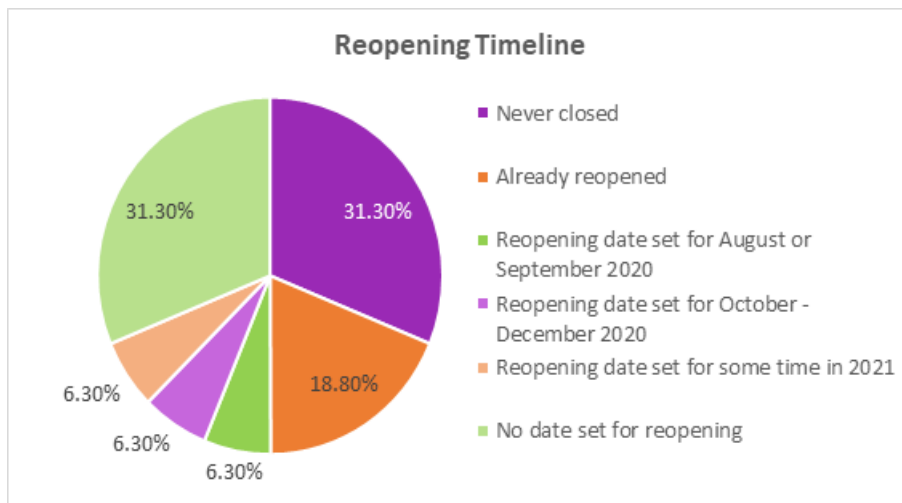
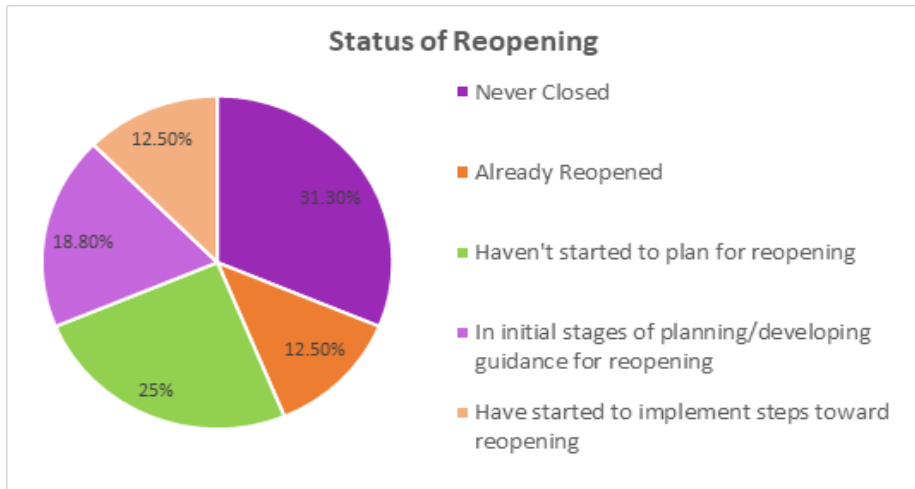
- Status and timeline of reopening.
- Decision-making process.
- Source of guidance in making reopening decisions.
- Additional details related to reopening plans.



Status of Reopening and Reopening Timeline

Of the 16 respondents, five organizations never closed, and two had already reopened before responding to the survey. Among the remaining nine organizations, four have not started to plan for reopening, three are in the initial stages of planning and two are beginning to implement their plans. Two of the organizations in the initial stages of planning intend to open in fall/winter 2020, and one

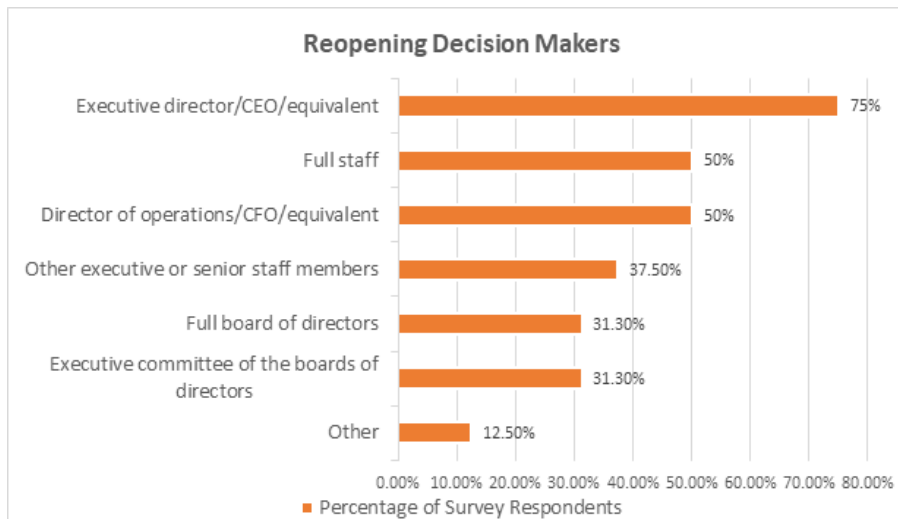
organization is delaying its reopening until 2021. One of the organizations that never closed has stayed open virtually in congruence with the local school district, and another organization that opened earlier in the year but had to close is now reopening again.



Takeaway: Organizations are considering multiple factors in their decisions to reopen, and those factors vary based on the communities where the organizations work.

Organizational Decision-Making

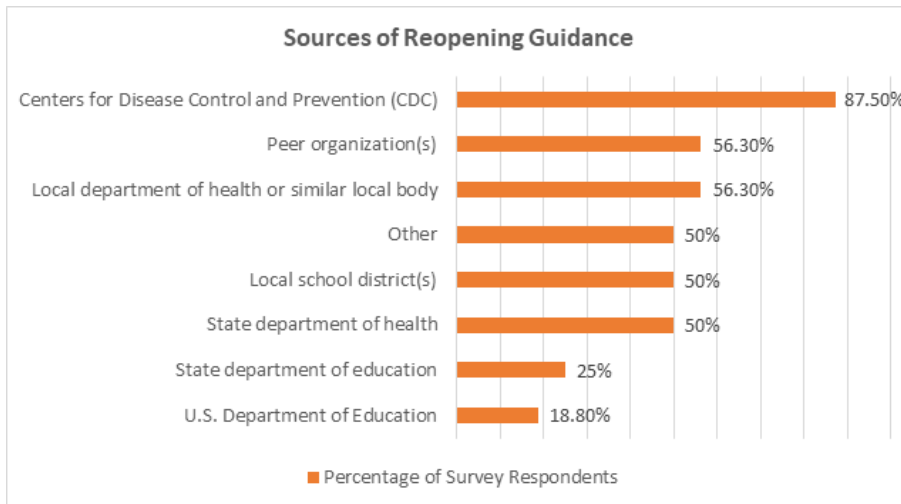
Most organizations surveyed indicated that the executive director, CEO or an equivalent of the organization made the decision for reopening. Of those, eight also included the director of operations or CFO, and six included other executive or senior staff members. Ten organizations included the board of directors or an executive committee of the board of directors in making the reopening decision. Eight organizations included input from the full staff in the reopening decision, and for one of those organizations the full staff were the only decision-makers.



Takeaway: Organizations are spreading decision-making responsibilities among multiple staff and board members.

Source of Guidance for Reopening

Organizations have looked to a variety of sources for guidance on reopening. Almost all the organizations reported that they consulted [guidance](#) from the CDC, and many looked to both local education agencies and peer organizations. One organization noted that they were able to find more detailed guidance from the [World Health Organization](#).



Takeaway: Organizations are consulting sources of information at multiple levels — international, federal, state and local — to guide their decisions. Almost all organizations are seeking information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Other Details

Reopening is a complex process for many organizations, and many respondents shared ongoing concerns related to the following areas:

Education Commission of the States strives to respond to information requests within 48 hours. This document reflects our best efforts, but it may not reflect exhaustive research. Please let us know if you would like a more comprehensive response. Our staff is also available to provide unbiased advice on policy plans, consult on proposed legislation and testify at legislative hearings as third-party experts.

- Safety of staff members, children and educators.
- For organizations that do regular work with or in schools, lack of access to teachers or students due to guidelines related to building capacity and/or social distancing requirements.
- Concerns about virtual engagement, including the degree to which rich programming can be conducted in this way.
- Financial impacts related to loss of revenue or costs associated with added safety measures.

Many organizations are still in the process of creating and refining reopening plans. The COVID-19 [policy](#) from the [AOY Art Center](#) in eastern Pennsylvania highlights considerations that some arts organizations are making to serve their communities.