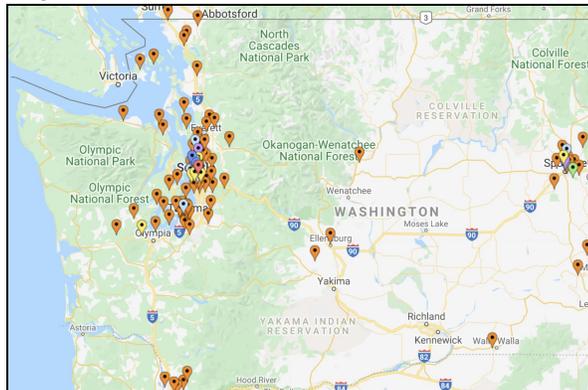


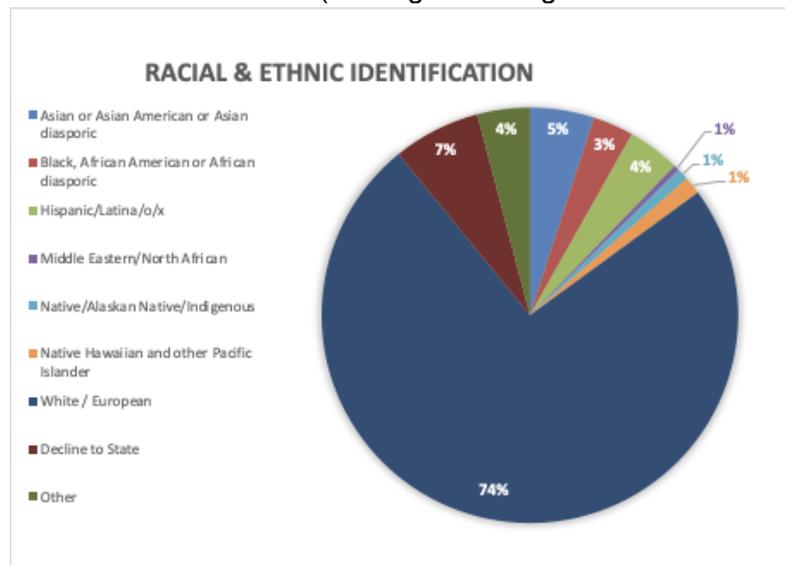
Social Safety Net Survey Findings

Who answered the survey

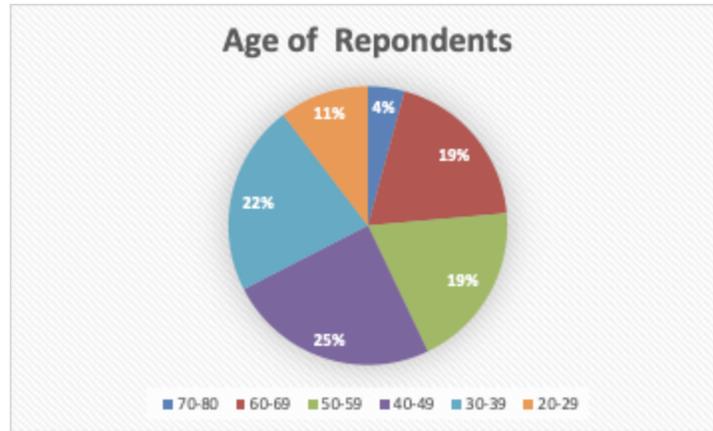
- 309 Respondents began the survey and *Agreed to Participate*, but approximately 220 answered the majority of questions consistently.
- The survey was open from July 15, 2020 - August 10, 2020. The majority of responses submitted were at the end of July (corresponding to the end of the \$600 a week unemployment benefit expiring.)
- 20 Counties were represented
 - (Chelan, Clallam, Clark, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Kittitas, Mason, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Walla Walla, Whatcom, Whitman, Yakima)
 - 58% from King County
 - 16% from Spokane County
 - 8% from Pierce County
 - This corresponds to both population density and where Whipsmart had begun the work of the Creative Economy Research Intensives prior to the pandemic.
- Respondents reported being from 109 unique zip codes across the state



- 74% of Respondents identified as White (although all categories asked were represented)

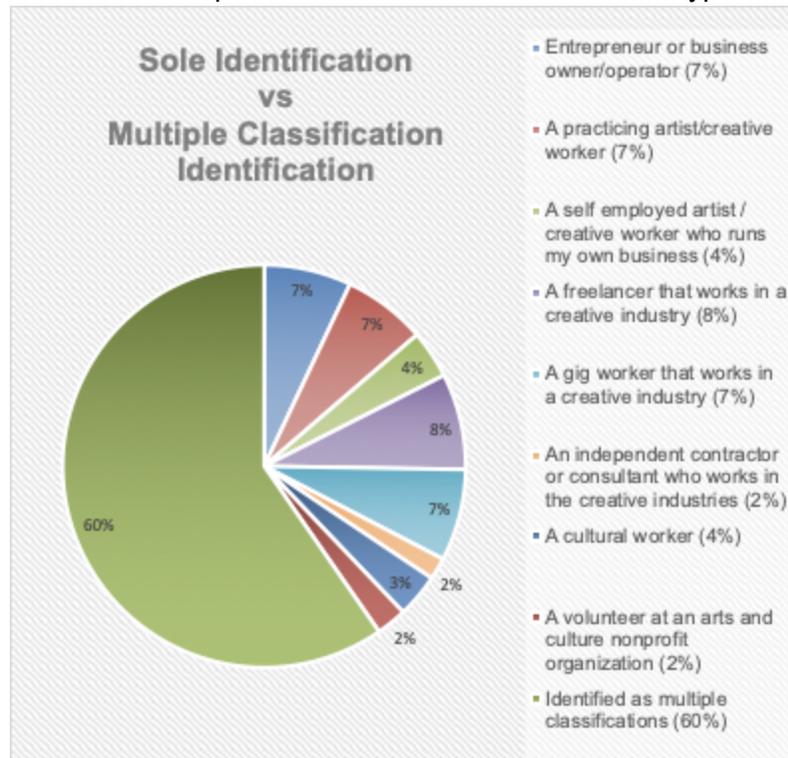


- Gender Identification: 49% as female; 42% as male; 5% as non-binary
- Age: 12.7% were 65 or older; 87.3% were between 20-64 with a pretty even distribution between 30-70.

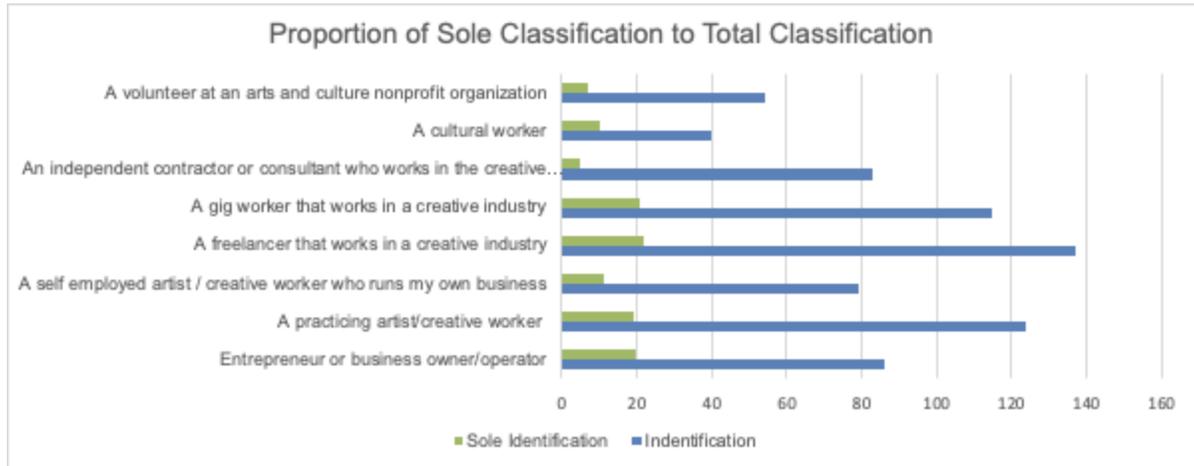


Need for clarity of classification / nomenclature

- 60% of creative workers who responded identified as more than one type of classification.



- Of those who identified as only a single classification, freelancer slightly pulled ahead but was essentially equal to gig work, practicing artist, and entrepreneur.
- When looking at the proportion of those who identified solely as a classification among everyone who identified as that classification, cultural workers and entrepreneurs had the largest proportion of close to 25% of those who identified that way.



- Those who identified as a practicing artist / creative primarily also identified as a freelancer over half of time -- as did those who identified as gig workers or independent contractors. Entrepreneurs and self-employed primarily also identified as a practicing artist / creative.

Practicing Artist / Creative



Entrepreneur



Gig Worker



Freelancer



Self Employed



Independent Contractor



- Most Respondents worked in many creative industries with a few exceptions (there was not a lot of overlap in glass and glazing contractors and other industries.)
- There was a great deal of mutual identification between the disciplines of theater workers; motion picture production workers; and independent artists, writers, and performers as might be expected. They also all saw themselves as freelancers and creative gig workers, and self-employed, but the percentages tipped in different directions.
 - Motion picture workers predominantly identified as freelancers.
 - Theater workers predominantly identified as creative gig workers.
 - Independent artists, writers, and performers saw themselves first as practicing artists, then equally as either a self-employed creative who runs their own business and a freelancer.
 - Roughly a third of theater workers; motion picture production workers; and independent artists, writers, and performers also identified as an independent contractor.

Why is this important? It affected access to unemployment or perceived access

- 83% of respondents made over 50% of their income from their creative work. 61% said that 100% of their income came from their creative work.
- Prior to the state's pandemic shut down, 76% of respondents were employed in some capacity in their creative industry.
- As of July 1, 70% of respondents' employment status had changed. 46% had been laid off, furloughed, out of work, or reduced hours. 24% had become an independent contractor, freelancer, or self-employed.
 - 62% of respondents expected to receive 50% or less of their annual income from freelance, self-employed, or independent contractor work by the end of the year.
- Unemployment was the most accessed social service in the survey and was rated the most helpful resource to sustain their creative career, but 51% of those who attempted to access it said the process was challenging with many comments about how they didn't know if they were eligible and that the system didn't fit their type of work. 49% were delayed, rejected, or had repayment demands. Some gave up trying.
- 80% of respondents were unsure or did not feel as if the duration of unemployment benefits would cover their needs.
- The 2nd most helpful resource listed to sustain their creative career was community building and artist solidarity. 67% got help with the unemployment system from friends, family, nonprofits, or unions.
- Unemployment insurance; financial assistance; and community building and artist solidarity remained the top three resources named to sustain individuals creative work through June 2021.
 - This was true across all worker classifications
 - This was true across most disciplines with a few exceptions
 - Architectural services favored new clients over unemployment
 - Graphic designers favored equipment and supplies over unemployment.
 - Glass and glazing contractors sought retraining
 - Music publishers ranked accessing an online marketplace the highest

After unemployment, access to health insurance remains a concern

- Last year 93% of respondents reported having health care, as of July 1 of this year that number fell to 66% with 24% indicating their coverage is at risk. 3% indicated that they had already lost coverage as a direct result of the current crisis.
 - Health insurance rated the third most helpful resource between March 1- July 1, 2020 to maintain creative work. It continues to be rated one of the top five most important resources through 2021 only slightly behind community building.
 - 63% of respondents were somewhat or very concerned about their ability to maintain insurance over the next six months.
 - 75% reported being concerned with the cost of premiums or out of pocket expenses.

Opportunities

Creative workers who responded to this survey were largely well educated, with 73% indicating they had a bachelor's degree or higher. They value community. Prior to the pandemic, the majority of them earned their living working in the creative industries. There continues to be a lack of understanding of the social safety net opportunities and limitations available to them. Additionally, the self-identification of these non-traditional jobs into classifications such as gig worker, freelancer, or self-employed lead to questions of benefit eligibility, frustration, and fear.

As a result of this survey, Whipsmart has identified three key opportunities to help creatives sustain their work:

- Continue to work with state agencies to clarify the classification of creative workers and advocate for the needs of the creative sector.
- Establish a common language around creative work so that there is a recognized understanding of classification and its implications.
- Encourage statewide community building with intentional engagement of underserved communities.