

Media Arts Assistance Forward Fund

Supported by the New York State Council on the Arts Electronic Media/Film & Visual Arts Program
in Regrant Partnership with Wave Farm

Summary Report on Findings from the 2020 Forward Fund Field Inquiry

The Forward Fund

The Media Arts Assistance Forward Fund (MAAF Forward Fund) is addressing the role of technology in the current transition of public engagement, with a focus on technical strategies for regenerative organizational online development. With limited resources, we are looking to help organizations advance remote operations through quick turnaround and flexible support.

The Forward Fund is a response to the unprecedented challenges of our time. Knowing that reliance on remote communications has become increasingly critical in 2020, MAAF also recognized that *living online* is a transition for many arts and culture organizations that requires a variety of resources and flexible support.

NYSCA EMF and Wave Farm saw this as a moment of opportunity to envision a more humane relationship with technology and the potential of public engagement online.

The core concept of the Fund is *RE-ENVISION, PLAN, DESIGN* and focuses on the role of technology in public engagement, supporting strategies for online development.

Granting \$42,000 over two deadlines of July 1 and October 1, 2020, the Fund has successfully granted 44 organizations with awards ranging from \$500 to \$2,000.

The Forward Fund is named for the remarkable commitment of our media arts and culture organizations and individual artists, and to the many contributions they make in moving ahead with a regenerative world view.

Forward Fund Field Inquiry

Understanding there is no better voice than that of arts organizations to identify their own pressing needs, EMF and Wave Farm designed a very simple field inquiry asking three basic questions.

The results of the Field Inquiry informed new FY2020 MAAF Guidelines, offering support for learning about different platforms, models and methods; planning for and implementing online and virtual programming; and audience engagement design.

Following is an overview of findings. Complete results of the Field Inquiry, with the full list of responding organizations can be found in the form of raw data ([here](#)).

Overview of Findings

Of the 184 organizations queried, 61 returned with rich and thoughtful replies. When asking what is the primary need in growing public engagement through technology, MAAF received a long list of narrative answers. In the analysis, seven common categories of essential requirements were identified across respondents in order to move quickly and effectively to online programming.

Three Basic Questions

1. What is your organization's primary need in terms of growing public engagement through technology at this time?

2. Which of the following is your most urgent need at present?

- *Technology development for online public engagement*
- *Organizational development such as strategic planning and board development?*

3. Let us know what one resource your organization can share with others - material, virtual, intellectual, creative.

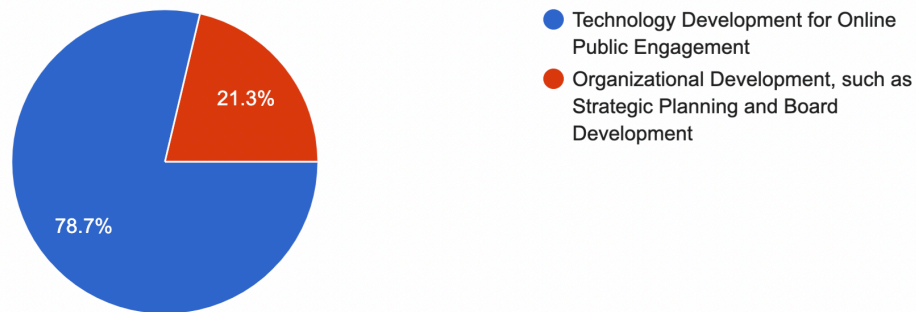
Summary of Essential Needs & Elements of Transitioning Online

- PLATFORMS – Different platforms for different functions: online streaming / public engagement technology / earned and unearned income
- LEARNING - Knowledge and training / switching to virtual and online / learning how to plan and present / new ways to engage community
- EQUIPMENT – Appropriate technology / upgraded computers / private VPN network / cyber security assessment / production & post capabilities
- CONNECTIVITY - Faster Connectivity / access in general / reaching offline communities and strategies for engaging audiences without high-speed connectivity
- PRESERVATION - Digital conservation / Server / Cloud Storage; Migration of Organizational Archives to Online Platforms; Adopt Digital Asset Management Systems
- PROGRAMMERS & DEVELOPERS – New online programming / content
- TICKETING - Online seating / ticketing management interface

When asked to choose between two primary categories of support, technology or organizational, Technology Development garnered 78.7 % of responses, with Organizational Development at 21.3%.

2. Which of the following is your most urgent need at present?

61 responses



Resource Sharing

The response to resource sharing, whether material, virtual, intellectual or creative, yielded 59 responses offering a vast array of talent, expertise, knowledge and skill, displaying a remarkable generosity of community and collegial support.

It is apparent from this, that organizations in a time of need, also have the ability to pool together, demonstrating an untapped potential for re-envisioning and designing a more equitable future.

In Closing

EMF and Wave Farm would like to thank NYSCA for its ongoing support of this Regrant Partnership through the Media Arts Assistance Fund. And in particular, a special appreciation to those media arts organizations who contributed to the Field Inquiry, offering a thoughtful response to the benefit of all.

NYSCA Electronic Media/Film (EMF) in Partnership with Wave Farm, supports organizations engaged with technology as an art form, as well as individual artists, in all regions of New York State. This partnership, through the Media Arts Assistance Fund (MAAF), provides unique and critical support with a focus on sustainability and public engagement.

Thank you, Karen and Galen

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