



FY22 YouthReach Final Report

Creative Youth Development

About YouthReach

YouthReach is the longest continually running support program for Creative Youth Development work in the United States. Started in 1994, the program has invested more than \$15 million across more than 100 organizations in its 28-year history. In FY23 the program will extend funding from 71 organizations to 86 Creative Youth Development programs that focus on infusing youth development with creative experiences in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences.

This report describes the challenges and success that Creative Youth Development organizations faced between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, and the hopes they have for the coming year. As organizations continued to wrestle with the COVID-19 pandemic, many utilized the innovative practices that they cultivated over the last two years as they attempted to return to a “new normal.” Continuing with creative yet costly technologies, resourcefulness, an increased need for professional mental health services, and flexibility for staff and students at the center of their work, 69 organizations reported from across the Commonwealth representing a wide range of ages, disciplines, and environments. There were many challenges in FY22 that will require long term support to navigate. As one organization summarized,

“These additional expenses, coupled with schedule delays/cancellations associated with emergence of new Covid variants/surges, the demand to create and disseminate quality digital programming; and general audience hesitancy to return to in-person programming has greatly impacted our ability to recover at pre-pandemic operations. These trends are shared across the Arts & Culture sector, and we anticipate a 3-5 year trajectory to full recovery.”

Three Key Findings in FY22:

Three key findings emerged from the 69 YouthReach Final Reports in FY22 that highlight areas of challenges and need. These challenges and needs are summarized below, articulated best by direct quotes from reporting programs. All quotes below are from these reporting organizations.

- **Staffing Challenges:** Organizations faced numerous challenges related to the pressure of staff burnout, staff absenteeism, turnover and leadership attrition. In addition, organizations said they faced pressures related to new in-house

program costs and constantly changing schedules related to staff sick leave.

“We took advantage of the opportunities to apply for emergency support in the early part of COVID-19, but these have become scarce over the past year. We expect the need for basic needs support (utilities assistance, rent assistance, food support, hygiene products, etc.) to persist for the young Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) young people enrolled in our programs.”

- **Mental Health:** Organizations faced increased pressures related to the mental health needs of the young people they served and demands on staff to increase their communication and support of families for issues of food insecurity, housing, and basic health needs.

“Our staff and participants would benefit greatly from engaging with training and receiving resources surrounding mental health programming and support. Connections with local mental health organizations, programming exploring mental health coping mechanisms, and bilingual (English/Spanish) mental health resources would all be appreciated.”

- **Consistent Networking and Support:** Organizations shared that they welcome more professional development resources to support their staff, their teens, and alums. They also desired more opportunities for networking with other creative youth development organizations, schools and universities via convenings, etc.

“The most important support exists between team members working together to ensure goals are met, but oftentimes changing gears to simply prioritize the social-emotional health of everyone involved. In particular, the MCC’s Creative Youth Development Teaching Artist (Network) felt like a lifeline and a form of mutual support among CYD workers. More programming like this could be very beneficial for building strong connections in the field.”

YouthReach Participant Demographic Information

An overview of the youth involved with Creative Youth Development programs in Massachusetts includes:

of youth served in FY22: **8780**

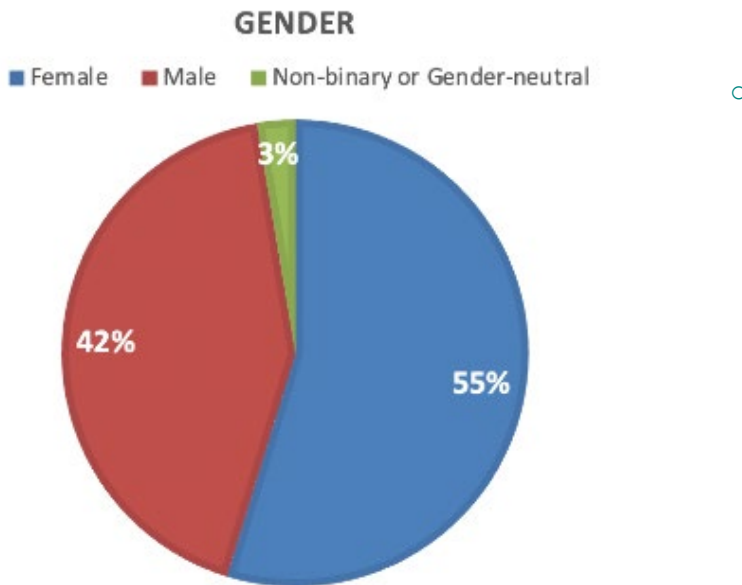
79% identified as BIPOC (Black or Indigenous People of Color)

of youth served in FY21: **8072**

82% identified as BIPOC

FY21 saw a 17.8% drop from the FY20 enrollment numbers in Creative Youth Development programs in Massachusetts. Recruitment was a consistent concern for programs who were unable to do peer to peer recruiting or in-person recruiting with community partners. The 9.1% increase in FY22 is a positive sign that we will be watching closely in the coming year in the hopes that the numbers can return to pre-pandemic levels.

Numbers - 69 reporting out of 71



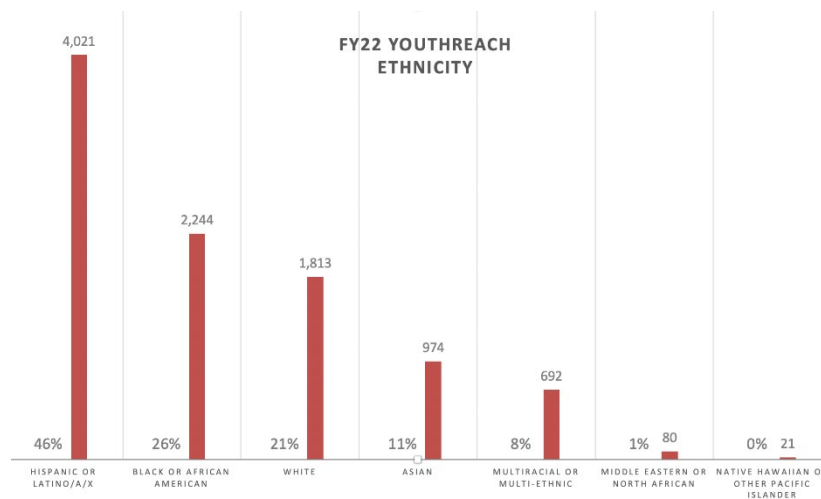
Gender

- Female 55% 4807
- Male 42% 3741
- Non-binary or Gender-neutral 3% 232

TOTAL: 8780

Ethnicity

79% of participating youth identified as BIPOC



Other Aspects of the CYD Population

- 60% - Youth living in an economically depressed urban area.
- 49% - Youth facing neighborhood violence
- 33% - Youth living in a home a where English is not the primary language spoken.
- 21% - Youth with disabilities (physical, cognitive, or learning)
- 19% - Youth living in public housing
- 8% - Foreign-born youth
- 5% - Department of Mental Health clients
- 2% - Department of Children and Families (foster and adoptive care)
- 1% - Department of Youth Services clients, others involved in the juvenile justice system
- 24% - Other not listed above

Seniors and Alums of CYD

- 7% - Number of high school seniors participating in CYD programs,
- 51% of CYD organizations have programs that have a process offering formal support graduates
- 90% of seniors graduated High School
- 2% of seniors plan on entering the military
- 73% of seniors have plans to attend college or a technical school next year