



## AWARDEE SURVEY 2008-2013

**56**  
Awardees

**\$844,000**  
Distributed

**3Arts**  
180 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 329, Chicago IL 60601

**3arts.org**

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*“The 3Arts Award launched my career.”*

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*“The **vote of confidence** that I received from the 3Arts Award continues to bolster me and help me feel that my work is worth doing.”*

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*“The award has **brought a financial stability** to my life that I have never had before.”*

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*“It helped me realize that what I do has merit and that **I could do anything I set my mind to.**”*

\*

*“Receiving the 3Arts Award was **one of the most important markers in my career.** Not only because of the monetary help, but because the theater community viewed me differently. I was taken more seriously as an artist. **It made all the difference.**”*

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2011 3Arts awardees onstage, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

## OUR MISSION

Founded in 1912, with a history centered on women artists, 3Arts is a nonprofit organization that supports artists working in the performing, teaching, and visual arts in the Chicago metropolitan area, including women artists, artists of color, and Deaf and disabled artists. By providing unrestricted awards, project funding, residencies, professional development, and promotion, 3Arts helps artists take risks, experiment, and build momentum in their careers over time.

## WHAT IS A 3ARTS AWARD?

Since 2008, we have been supporting Chicago artists with unrestricted cash grants, or **3Arts Awards**, on an annual basis.

In the first six years of the program, our awards were \$15,000 each. In 2014, we increased the award to \$25,000. The number of annual awards has varied from six to twelve, before settling at ten per year beginning in 2012. Our awards are unrestricted, no strings attached, cash grants. Artists may use them to defray expenses, pay off debt, purchase equipment, and focus on their creative process—or in any way they see fit.

### Selection Process

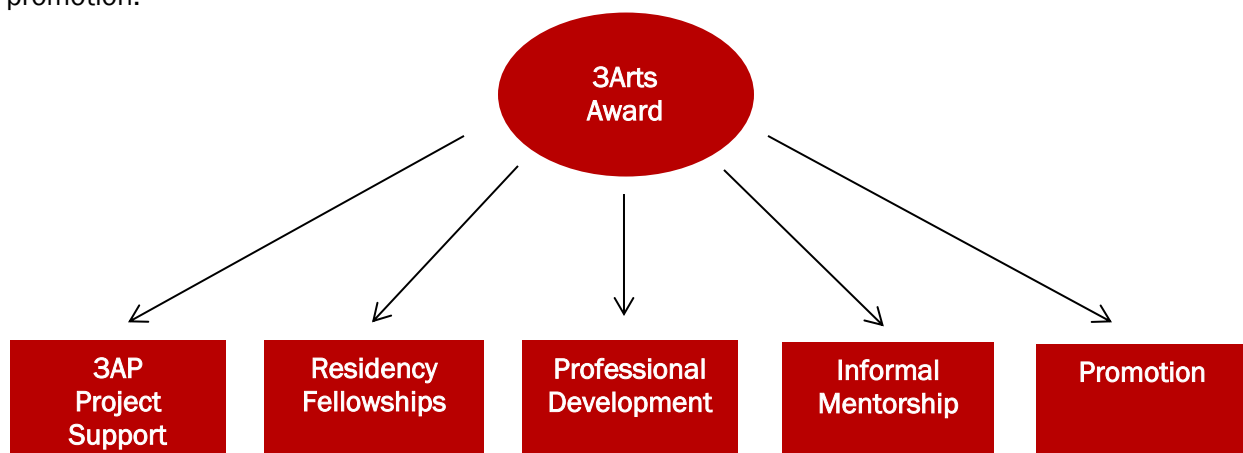
Awardees are selected through a nomination and jury process. Approximately 100 artists are nominated each year by 35 anonymous nominators. The nominators themselves are Chicago-based artists, arts advocates, curators, and presenters who are acutely knowledgeable about artists working in a wide variety of communities in the greater metropolitan area. Once nominated, artists are invited to submit applications to be considered for an award. Five discipline-based jury panels review the applications and select the award recipients. Each jury panel consists of one local and two out-of-state judges who convene in Chicago to select two awardees in each discipline: dance, music, teaching arts, theater, and visual arts.



**Monique Haley**  
2012 3Arts/McCormick Family  
Foundation Awardee

### More Than Cash

An unrestricted cash grant is significant on its own, but our awards offer more than that. They are the entry point to an array of tiered, multiyear support structures and programming designed to help artists build momentum in their careers. Once artists receive 3Arts Awards, they become eligible for project support, residency fellowships, professional development, informal mentorship, and promotion.



## TAKING A DEEP DIVE

In 2016, we surveyed the 56 artists who received a 3Arts Award from 2008 to 2013, the first six years of our grantmaking program.

Typically we survey awardees one year after they receive the award, which provides us with timely reflections on how the funds were used and other aspects of our support.

While the annual surveys are always useful, we wanted to explore more thoughtfully the long-term effects in order *to gauge our impact over time.*

### What we wanted to know:

- Has 3Arts support made a difference in artists' lives?
- Has it led to creative and professional leaps?
- Does this award make artists feel more connected to Chicago?

The feedback we received from artists gave even more depth to what we were asking. Artists shared with us the impact of the award on them personally, in their careers, and in their artistic practices.

With this report, we hope to summarize the ways in which an awards program like ours has had an indelible impact on the livelihoods of artists, particularly women artists, artists of color, and artists with disabilities.

It is equally important for us to learn from this process what we can be doing better in order to amplify our support for artists and strengthen the communities in which they live and work.



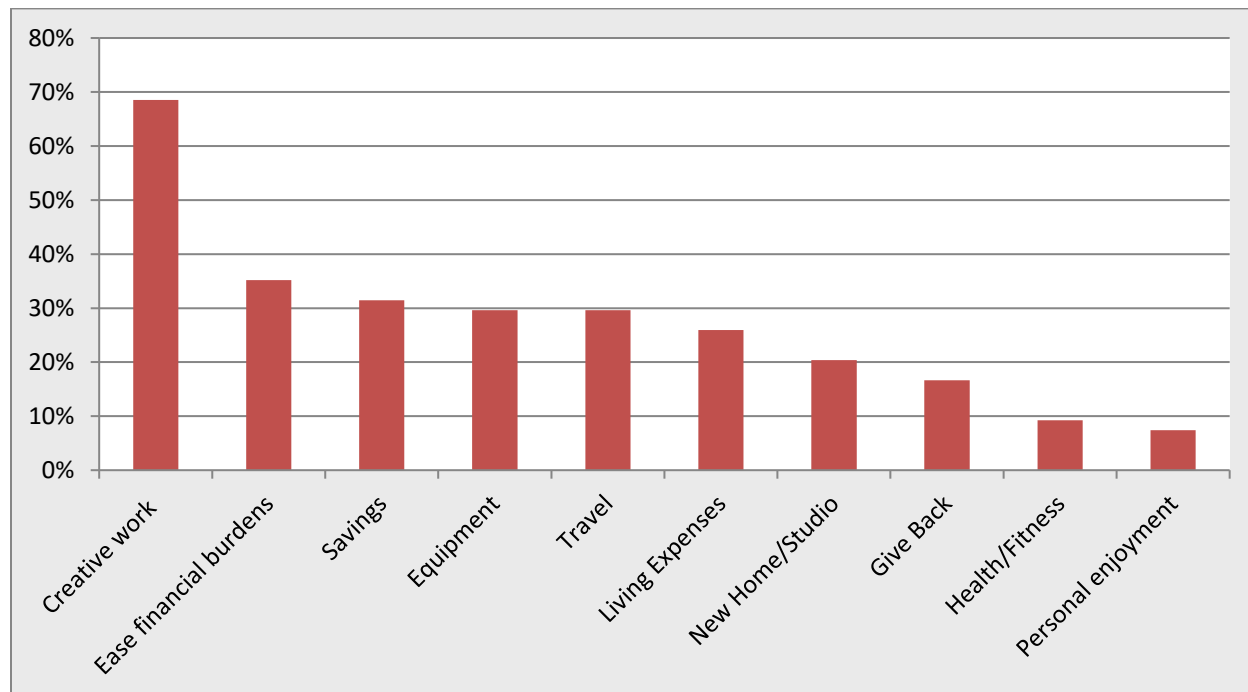
**2008 awardees** at the inaugural 3Arts Awards celebration



2009 awardees **Tanya Saracho**, **Lurrie Bell**, and **Michael Patrick Thornton** at the 3Arts Awards celebration

## HOW WERE THE FUNDS USED?

While there is no right or wrong answer to this question, it is instructive to see trends over time with this kind of unrestricted support for artists. In nearly every case, artists reported using the funds for more than one purpose.



- **The majority of artists (69%) used the award to support creative work.** This included purchasing supplies, new instruments, and research materials, as well as helping to cover the costs of music recordings or taking time off from a day job to focus on making new work.
- **35% used the award to ease financial burdens,** such as relieving debt like student loans or other major expenses.
- Approximately one-third of the artists used the award for **savings, equipment, travel, and living expenses.**
- 20% used the award for **new home or studio expenses,** including covering a down payment on a new home, purchasing a new car, or new/expanding studio quarters.
- 17% used a portion to **“give back.”** This included things like supporting other artists’ creative endeavors, donating to a collaborator’s project, helping to contribute to artist fees, or simply taking the time to thank someone by taking them to dinner.

*“I was able **to make several bodies of work** without worrying about income at my usual frantic level...as a disabled person that is huge.”*

\*

*“I was able for a short time **to live freely without worry**. I felt confident. I felt secure. It gave me a taste of what my life could be.”*

\*

*“It allowed me **to create a savings account** that I have been able to replenish. And with the equipment inventory I bought, I can not only create more interesting work, but I don't have to invest as much on every show.”*

\*

*“It helped me eat and pay my rent while I **continued writing plays**. I would have struggled immensely if I hadn't gotten this award.”*

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*“It allowed me to travel my work in an international exhibition, which I would not have been able to do without the award. It also lifted some of the weight of having to pay bills and allowed me to put more money into purchasing supplies for my art making.”*



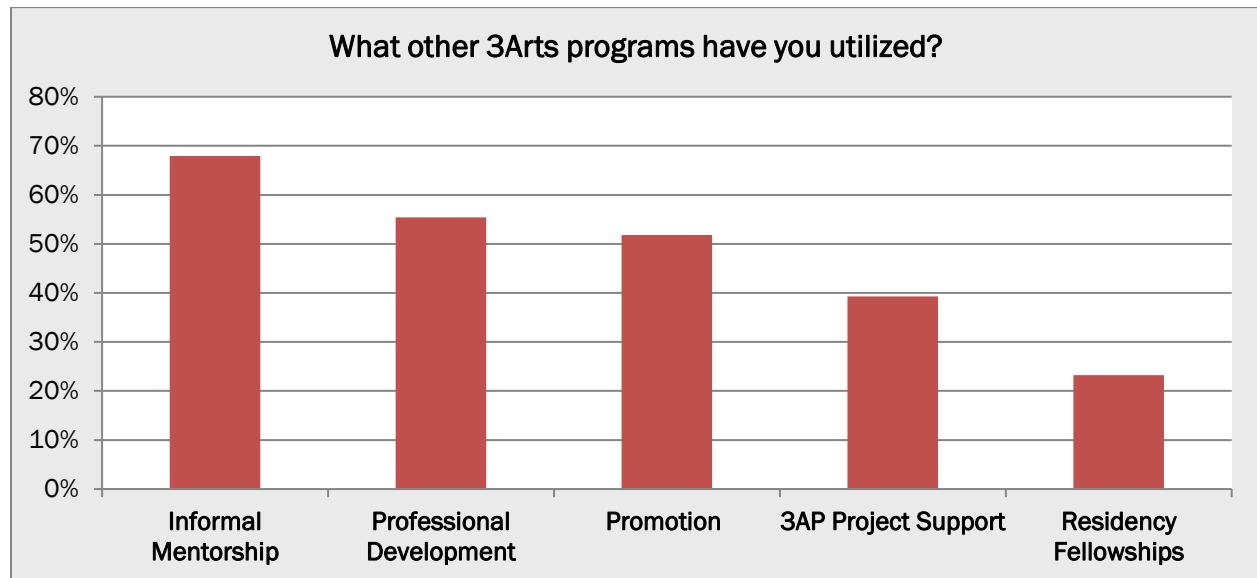
**Nicole Mitchell** (2011 awardee) at that year's awards celebration



**Lurrie Bell** (2009 awardee) with Matthew Skoller at the 2010 awards celebration

## BEYOND THE CASH, DOES THE OTHER SUPPORT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

We describe our awards as being more than just the cash. But we wanted to know the extent that our other programs are utilized and helpful to awardees.



During the period covered in this survey, some of our programs were still in their nascent stages, including the 3AP crowdfunding platform and the residency fellowships. Many awardees who have yet to take advantage of these opportunities expressed an interest in doing so down the line.



**3Arts Fellowship** opportunity at Djerassi Resident Artists Program in Woodside, California



**3Arts professional development workshop** on financial management for artists



Our **3AP (3Arts Projects)** program helps artists finance new creative work through crowdfunding and a built-in 3Arts matching grant



**3Arts promotes awardees** through social media, e-newsletters, and advertising

“Having a relationship with 3Arts has **connected me to resources, networks, and support systems** that have enriched my work as a playwright in direct and indirect ways.”

\*

“I really appreciated the **financial workshops** that 3Arts continues to provide. I didn't learn about managing my personal finances at home or at school. **I've learned about it through 3Arts.**”

\*

“I couldn't have imagined **how much continued support I would receive** from 3Arts. It has been present when momentum has slowed or resources were low. The moments when I really needed it.”

\*

“One of the greatest aspects about 3Arts is that artists are not forgotten. It's not about, "Here is some money. Do with it as you please." It's more like, "Here is a reward for the work you have done, **now allow us to help you do more of it.**”

\*

“**My 3Arts residency afforded me the space and time** that I sorely needed to begin work on a performance project I'd been thinking about for a very long time. It also placed me in the midst of other accomplished practitioners, and that was profoundly stimulating.”



New dance work by **Vershawn Sanders Ward** (2013 3Arts/Southwest Airlines Awardee) supported on our 3AP platform

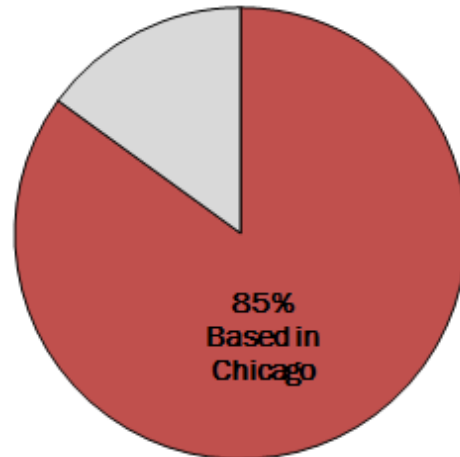
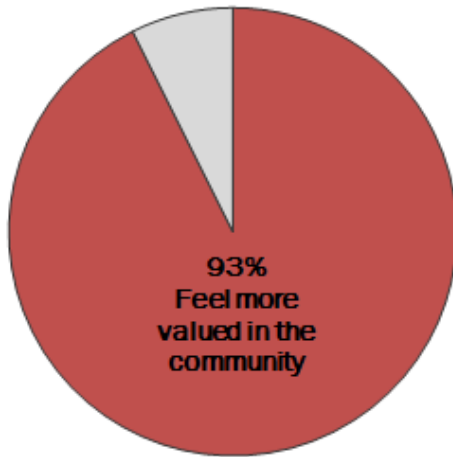


**Cheryl Lynn Bruce** (2010 awardee) on a 3Arts residency fellowship at the Robert Rauschenberg Residency program



## RECOGNITION IN CHICAGO, AND BEYOND

What does the recognition as a 3Arts awardee mean to artists? How does this affect the way they feel about their community in Chicago?



93% of artists said that receiving the 3Arts Award made them feel more valued in their community, underscoring **the importance of having an award of this magnitude in Chicago.**

In some ways this may correlate to whether artists remain based here. **85% of awardees in this survey live in the Chicago metropolitan area.**

At the same time, it is equally valuable when awardees gain national and international recognition. In another question, 93% of awardees said they felt it was important to know that they were selected by a jury panel comprised of national leaders in their creative fields.



**Alana Arenas** (2008 awardee) speaking at the 2009 awards celebration



Guests at the 3Arts Awards celebration in 2009

***“3Arts awardees are ambassadors for Chicago!** It makes me proud to travel the world and inform audiences about 3Arts and what it has done for me and other artists in Chicago.”*

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*“The prestige that is associated with the award allows us **to be the very best that Chicago takes pride in honoring every year.**”*

\*

*“The 3Arts Award and unrestricted grant was **the most prestigious I have received in my career.** I have won only one other monetary award for my work. It was tremendously important to be singled out by my peers and nationally-recognized artists.”*

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*“The recognition empowered me. I felt stronger, validated, capable of **reaching for more and expecting more from myself.**”*

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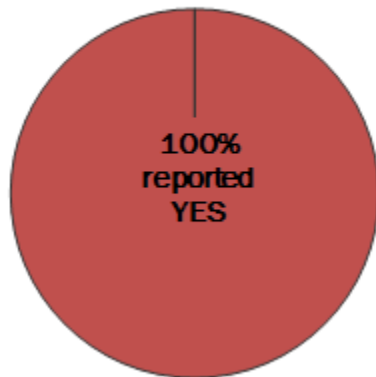
*“At some point I began to wonder, “Am I any good?” It's very easy to get discouraged. But this award **made me feel affirmed and genuinely worthy of calling myself an actor.** The two biggest gifts of the award are the financial gift and the affirmation by your community.”*



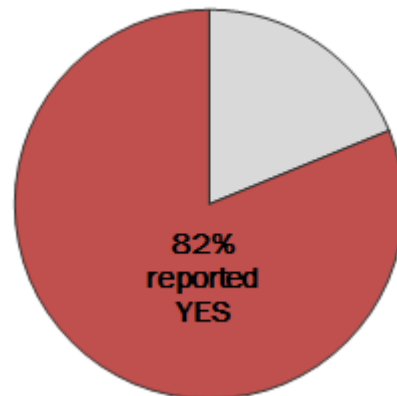
2012 3Arts awardees with staff members

## BOOSTING CONFIDENCE AND CAREERS

Did receiving a 3Arts Award boost your confidence?

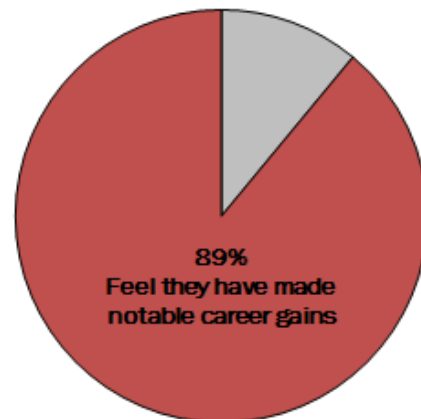
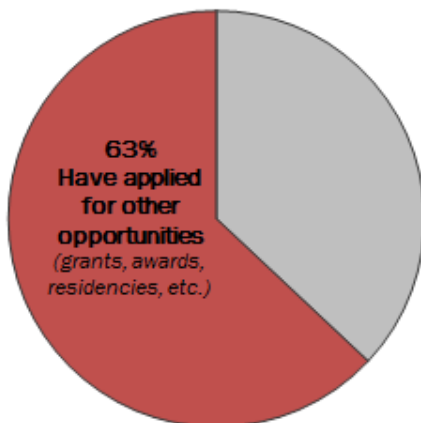


Did receiving a 3Arts Award boost your career?



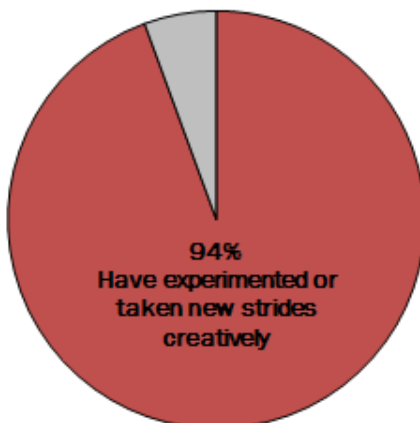
It is important to us that we take no credit for an artist's successes unless she or he tells us that 3Arts has made a difference. The fact that **100% of artists said the award increased their confidence** is revealing. For 82%, there is a direct link to the award also boosting their career.

## WHAT STRIDES HAVE ARTISTS MADE?



The majority of artists have pursued other opportunities and gained traction in their careers since receiving the 3Arts Award.

**94% of artists have taken new creative strides.** This is a remarkable testament to the ways in which awards programs like ours enable artists to invest in their creative practice.



In another questions, **94% also said that having an unrestricted grant like ours is important.** In many cases, the ability to use the award in whatever way they choose **gives artists the freedom to take risks they may not otherwise.**

"I've **become more ambitious**, both in terms of pushing the conceptual underpinnings of my work and by being part of a program that is trying to change the funding parameters of arts organizations."

\*

"The award provided confidence to keep moving forward and to **continue taking creative risks**. It has also helped me actualize more immediate and long term goals as a practicing artist."

\*

"Being a 3Arts awardee has been a **significant factor in my securing full-time employment** in the field of arts education."

\*

"I have been able to grow my theatre company by leaps and bounds thanks to the award."

\*

"The award put me on the **"radar"** of other funders and artistic folks so that my name was known."

\*

"The grant came at a critical time and enabled me to build a studio and be more self-sufficient. Having the tools I needed **allowed me to make new kinds of experiments** and delve into areas that I had not previously had the resources to explore."



**Monique Haley** (2012 3Arts/McCormick Family Foundation Awardee) with dancers

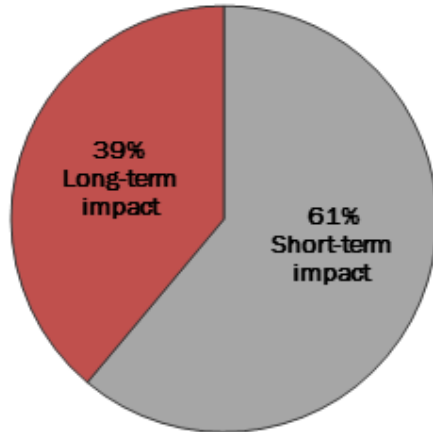


**Riva Lehrer** (2008 awardee) in her studio

## FINANCIAL IMPACT ON ARTISTS

What kinds of effect did the cash award have on the financial status of artists? **61% reported a short-term impact** and **39% reported a long-term impact**.

While receiving one sizable award may not be a permanent “cure all,” this response motivates us to consider if there are other ways we can help artists become sustainable over the long-term.

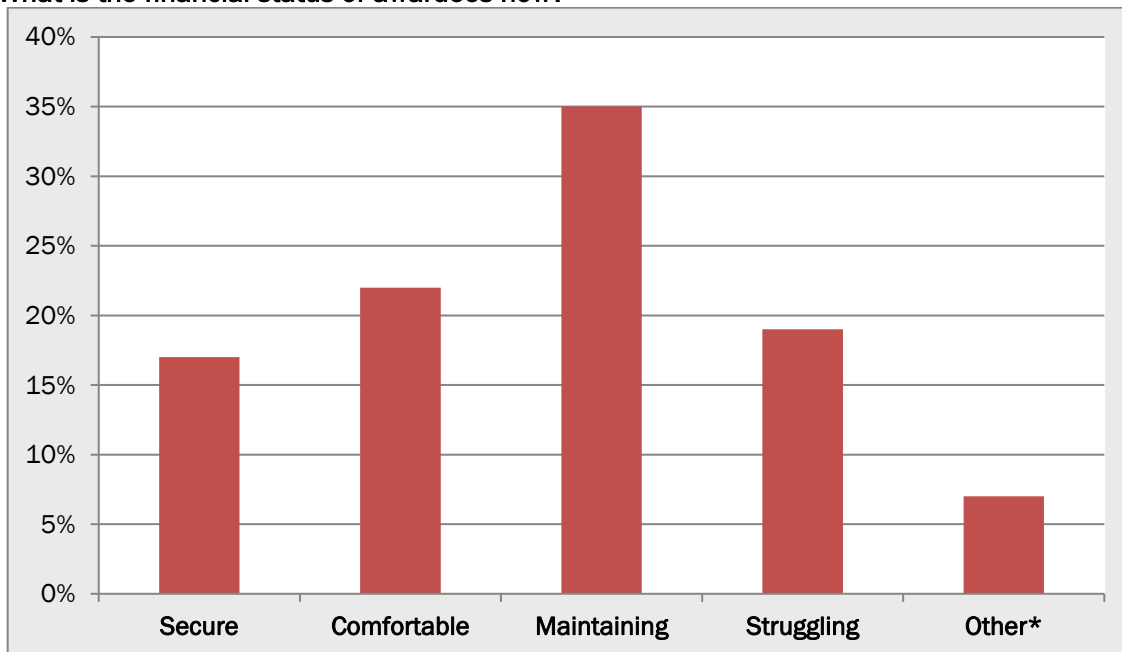


During the period covered by this survey, the 3Arts Award was \$15,000. In 2014, we increased it to \$25,000 to offset the tax burdens for artists and the increasing demands on their livelihoods.



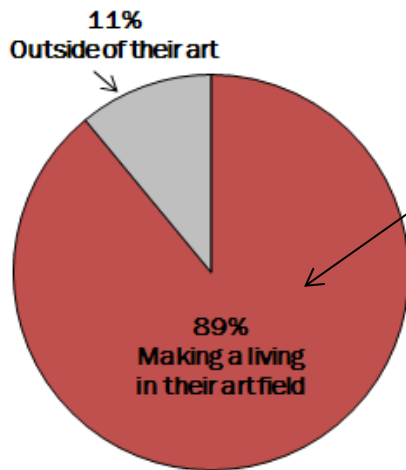
**Miguel Aguilar** (2012 3Arts/Siragusa Foundation Awardee) with his family

### What is the financial status of awardees now?



\*Other: Four awardees chose this category, explaining that they: feel relatively secure with a university faculty position but otherwise are maintaining; have “great looming debt from college;” are currently unemployed; and felt the term “tenuous” was more appropriate to their situation.

## HOW DO AWARDEES MAKE THEIR LIVING NOW?

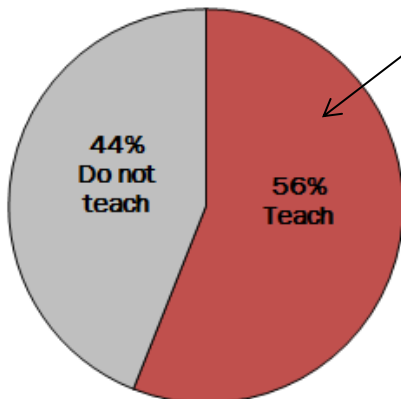


Of these artists, the **majority (63%) hold one or more part-time jobs**. Many make their living as freelance musicians, actors, dancemakers, or exhibiting artists. Several hold adjunct or part-time teaching positions as well.

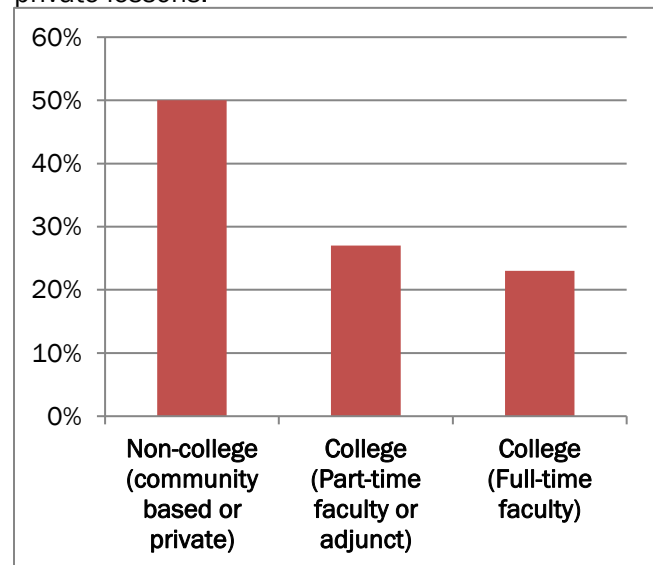
The remaining **(26%) have full-time salaried positions**, either in arts faculty or in administrative roles at arts organizations.

Six awardees (11%) rely on income outside of their art field to make their living.

## How many artists rely on teaching for their livelihoods?



Of the artists who teach, the **majority (50%) do so outside of college settings** for community-based organizations conducting workshops or offering private lessons.



## WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO FOR ARTISTS?

This survey provided an additional outlet for awardees to tell us what more we could be doing to support them and other Chicago artists. Here's what they shared with us:

### More Professional Development

- *"The [financial/tax] information really changed a lot for me and thinking about the business of being an artist. I think it would be great to have more opportunities to learn about that."*
- *"I have noticed in the workshops I have attended that most of us are humble and modest, while others are go-getters and aggressive in terms of getting noticed, getting money, sponsors, and residencies. How can we, the humble ones, be more aggressive?"*
- *"How does an artist continue to make work in times of intense external stress? It becomes the thing that is left to the wayside, out of survival. If the art making is not tied to your coping mechanisms, does it still mean you are an artist?"*

### Connections with Other Awardees

- *"I wish there were a way to work with other awardees/fellows. It would be excellent to have more opportunities to work alongside other recipients. It seems difficult to see each other with everyone leading busy lives."*
- *"The one thing I would really like is an occasional, relaxed social opportunity to connect to the other artists."*

### Presentation Opportunities

- *"It would be very helpful if 3Arts awardees had access to centrally-located, free venues to present regular programs."*
- *"If 3Arts is looking for new initiatives, one could be for the funding of new presentations of previously created work. As a composer, there are opportunities to get funding for new work, but it's more difficult to get support to do new performances of work that is already completed. To be able to produce a work more than once deepens the value for audiences and also deepens the artistic development of the work."*
- *"I think there may be opportunities that the awards can come attached to an art-work space. The cash award with an immediate opportunity to exist in that art form can be beneficial to the career of an artist."*



2013 3Arts awardees, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

## 3ARTS AWARDEES

### 2008

**Alana Arenas**  
*Theater*



**Amy Briggs**  
*Music*



**Juan Angel Chavez**  
*Visual Arts*



**Josephine Lee**  
*Music*



**Riva Lehrer**  
*Visual Arts*



**Tekki Lomnicki**  
*Theater*



### 2009

**Lurrie Bell**  
*Music*



**Sara Black**  
*Visual Arts*



**Leslie B. Dunner**  
*Music*  
Northern Trust Awardee



**David Leggett**  
*Visual Arts*



**Tanya Saracho**  
*Theater*



**Michael Patrick Thornton**  
*Theater*





## 3ARTS AWARDEES

2010

**Tatsu Aoki**  
*Music*



**Cheryl Lynn Bruce**  
*Theater*



**Robin Hewlett**  
*Visual Arts*



**Nicole Cabell**  
*Music*

Northern Trust Awardee



**Jessica Hudson**  
*Teaching Arts*



**Larry Lee**  
*Visual Arts*  
Chandler Family Awardee



**Rachel Ries**  
*Music*



**Jamil Khoury**  
*Theater*



**Cecil McDonald Jr.**  
*Teaching Arts*



**Luis Romero**  
*Visual Arts*



**Jamie Topper**  
*Teaching Arts*



**Eddie Torres**  
*Theater*



## 3ARTS AWARDEES

2011

**Alberto Aguilar**  
*Visual Arts*



**JoVia Armstrong**  
*Teaching Arts*  
Siragusa Foundation Awardee



**Kareem Bändealy**  
*Theater*



**Regina Harris Baiocchi**  
*Music*



**Regin Igloria**  
*Teaching Arts*



**Lisa Lindvay**  
*Visual Arts*  
Chandler Family Awardee



**Norman Long**  
*Visual Arts*



**Ami Saraiya**  
*Music*



**Nicole Mitchell**  
*Music*



**Alison Siple**  
*Theater*



**Jacqueline Williams**  
*Theater*



**Mirtes Zwierzynski**  
*Teaching Arts*



## 3ARTS AWARDEES

2012

**Miguel Aguilar**  
*Teaching Arts*

Siragusa Foundation Awardee



**Dee Alexander**  
*Music*

Southwest Airlines Awardee



**Heather Gilbert**  
*Theater*



**Monique Haley**  
*Dance*

McCormick Family  
Foundation Awardee



**Halena Kays**  
*Theater*



**Lanialoha Lee**  
*Music*



**Harold Mendez**  
*Visual Arts*

Stan Lipkin & Evelyn Appell  
Lipkin Awardee



**Maria Vergara**  
*Visual Arts*



**Nejla Yatkin**  
*Dance*



**Avery R. Young**  
*Teaching Arts*  
Merrill Lynch Awardee



## 3ARTS AWARDEES

2013

**Marta Garcia**

*Teaching Arts*

Stan Lipkin & Evelyn Appell  
Lipkin Awardee



**Mierka Girten**

*Theater*



**Lisa Kaplan**

*Music*



**Irena Knezevic**

*Visual Arts*

Chandler Family Awardee



**Ronnie Kuller**

*Music*



**Michel Rodriguez Cintra**

*Dance*

McCormick Family  
Foundation Awardee



**Vershawn Sanders-Ward**

*Dance*

Southwest Airlines Awardee



**Robert Schleifer**

*Teaching Arts*

Siragusa Foundation Awardee



**Kelli Simpkins**

*Theater*

Merrill Lynch Awardee



**Cauleen Smith**

*Visual Arts*

Lydia Yun Lee & Lisa Yun Lee  
Awardee



“The **profound sense of worth** the 3Arts Award bestowed upon me cannot adequately be described. I was moved to tears when I was notified that I had been selected and it is an enduring sense of pride.  
**It validates the work I have done, do, and will do.**”

\*

“I feel **emboldened to be a better artist because of it.** It made me think about how much I have learned and grown and how hard I have worked over the years.”

\*

“It means that I will **continue to have a purpose** in my arts community and it drives me to continue moving forward with my work. It means that I am **part of a distinguished community of artists** that are helping change America's conversations around race, ethnicity, gender, and representation.”

\*

“Being an awardee reminds me that my path is important, and that **I have a responsibility to make good on the recognition** 3Arts has given me.”

\*

“The 3Arts Award is very prestigious and **something Chicago artists hope to attain.**”



2010 3Arts Awardees with staff and board members