



Status of the Artist in Peterborough

TCRC Researcher: **Anna Currier**

Host organization: **Electric City Culture Council (EC3)**

Collaborator: **Precarious: Peterborough ArtsWORK Festival**

2018 Faculty Supervisor: **Colleen O'Manique**

Department: **Master of Arts in Sustainability Studies | Course Code: 5901**

Host Supervisor: **Su Ditta | TCRC Project Coordinator: David Tough**



Research Question/Topic/Purpose

This project is the first ever comprehensive survey of the socioeconomic status of artists in Peterborough. Kate Story, coordinator of the Precarious: Peterborough ArtsWORK Festival (Nov., 2017), initiated this project in partnership with Su Ditta, ED from the Electric City Culture Council (EC3) in January of 2017 with support from the Trent Centre for Community Research (TCRC). This project is also supported by research data collected by the Peterborough City-County Health Unit's Precarious Employment Research Initiative (PERI).

Methodology

Mixed-Methods Recruitment:

- Survey content was developed by referring to other Status of the Artist surveys and consultation with local artists and experts in community based research.
- Survey was conducted using a mixed-methods design for recruiting participants, including location-based recruitment, and referral snow-ball sampling.
- Location-based referral strategy: During the Precarious Festival a series of events were held at high traffic venues like Evans Contemporary and the Theatre on King.
- Referral snow-ball sampling: EC3, Public Energy and their associates promoted the survey by leaving flyers at local venues, through word of mouth, an email blast to organizations' membership lists, email blasts and online news letters, like those of Public Energy, Artspace, and the Art Gallery of Peterborough and multiple social media platforms.

Findings or Preliminary Outcomes

Age and Professional Artist Career:

- Most artists surveyed are between 25 and 44 years of age.

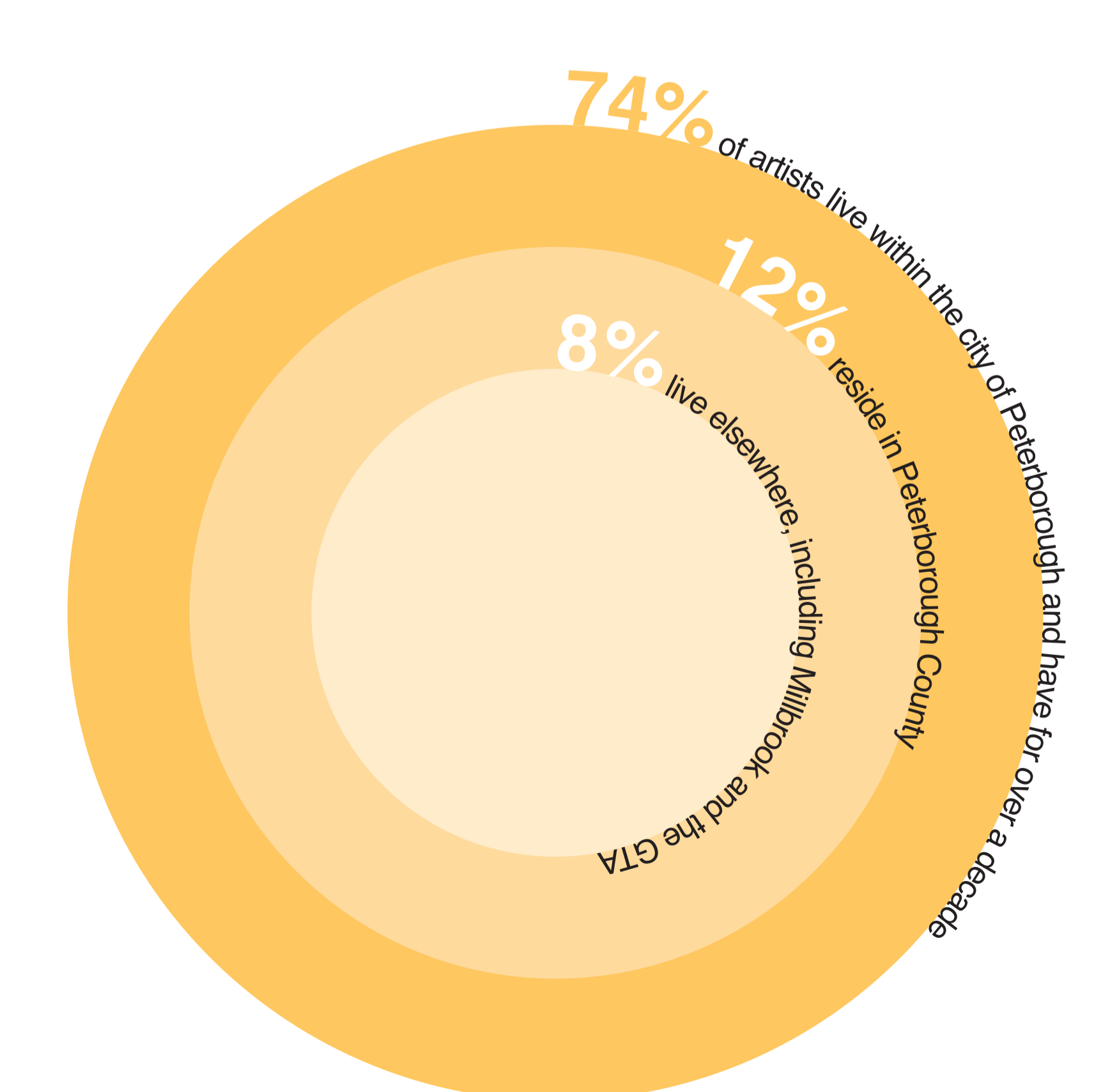


- 82% of artists are professional artists, and were equally represented as emerging, mid-career and established artists.
- Most artists who participated in this survey have been active professionals since they were 25 years or younger, but don't consider themselves mid-career or established until later in life (25-44).

Family Structure

- Over half of artists are married or in a domestic partnership and 27% are single.
- 2/3 of all artists support a family with their income.

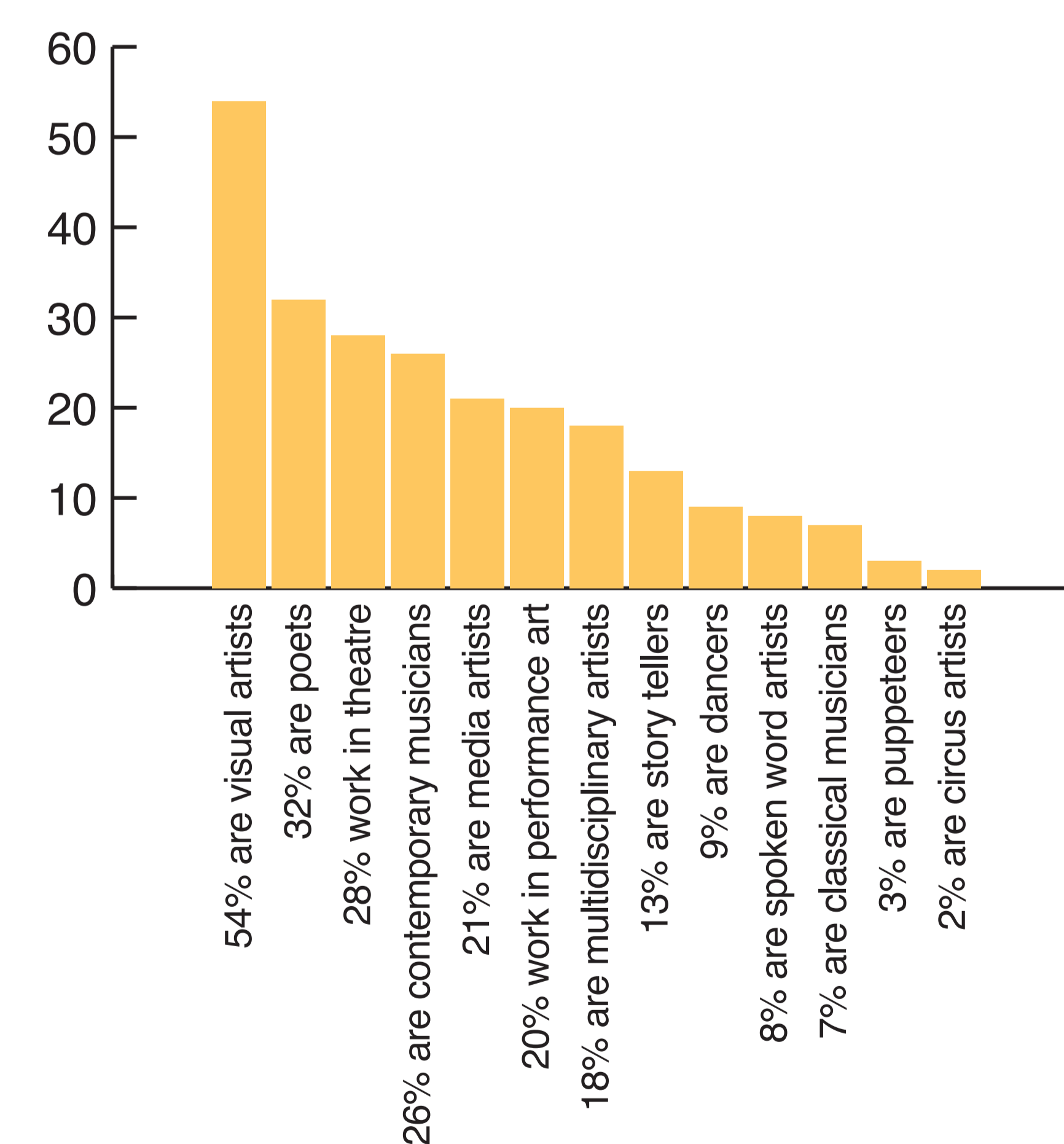
Where Artists Live and Work



Identity Profiles

- 52% of artists are female, 41% male, 4% non-binary, and 3% "other".
- 10 out of 226 respondents are Indigenous artists.
- 95% of artists are white, 5% are people of colour.
- Nearly half of artists are living with an ability altering condition affecting their mental or physical health.
- The representation of artists from minority groups including race, sexuality and gender orientation was low, raising the question of whether these statistics are accurate or whether there were barriers in place for certain artists to participate.

Artist Profiles by Discipline



Most artists in Peterborough are working in predominantly individualistic disciplines like visual art, poetry and music, typically unprotected by unions and guilds that provide funding, education and labour rights policy and advocacy.

Income

- 50% of artists have a total before-tax income of less than **\$25,000** a year, with less than 20% coming from their work as a professional artist.

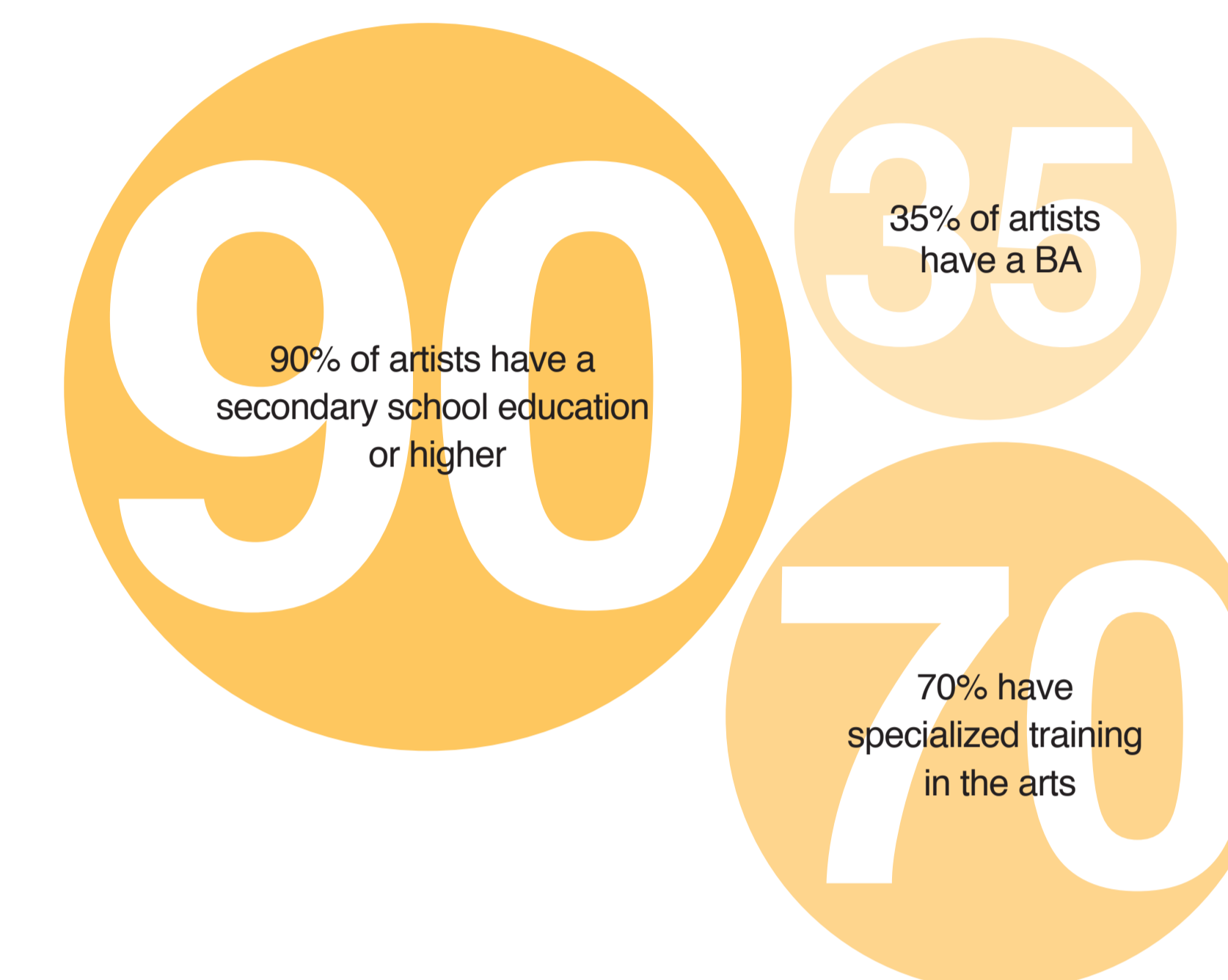
*According to the 2016 Peterborough census, the median after-tax income was **\$27,754**, nearly \$3,000 above the average artist.

- Over 80% make less than **\$50,000** a year from all income sources combined.

* Low income for private households in Peterborough ages 18 to 64 was **\$48,865**.

- Out of **226** respondents, only 161 receive benefits (i.e. health, pension & RRSP), and several collect ODSP.

Education



Career Profiles

In addition to their independent work as artists, nearly half of artists work in another sector of the arts, from administration and marketing to arts education. For those who work outside the arts sector, the highest concentrations were in retail, the service industry and education.

Advancing the Status of the Artist in Peterborough

The following were the highest rated initiatives suggested to advance the status of the artist in Peterborough. Each can be implemented on a local scale with the support of the municipal government.

- Increased municipal operating funding to local arts organizations
- Municipal grants to individual artists
- Incentives to landlords for affordable studio space
- Increased project funding
- physical and social accessibility to arts spaces
- Greater accessibility to arts spaces
- Promoting arts sector and connecting arts community

Next Steps

1. Host a public incubator with those who agreed to follow-up research, to explore ways of utilizing survey outcomes as evidence for new policy, research and other initiatives aimed at improving the lives of artists and the creative sector in Peterborough.

2. Secure funding for more complex data analysis of survey findings so that detailed correlations between data sets and themes among individual responses can be explored. I.e. comparing income among demographics related to age, gender, and race.

77% of respondents agreed to participating in future research.