



ARTS CANDIDATE SURVEY

Sample Questionnaire

Written by  ASHEVILLE AREA ARTS COUNCIL

Presented by 

2022 ARTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Asheville City Council & Buncombe County Commissioner Candidates

Below you will find a list of important issues currently impacting our local creative sector. The Asheville Area Arts Council respectfully requests that you complete this survey by April 21, 2022, so that our constituents can better understand your stance on these policy topics.

Candidate Name:

Date:

Q 1: What is your personal background and experience in the arts? (select all that apply)

Instrumental Vocal Visual Dance Theatre Photography Literary Other

Additional Comments:

Arts NC Note: This is a good "warm-up" question. Multiple choices are provided so that the candidate can answer quickly and easily. On the online survey, the multiple-choice response should be required, with the ability to select multiple answers, and the option to provide additional comments. In this case the candidate can give more detail about their arts experience and may also help them feel more connected to the arts before answering the other questions.

Q 2: What arts activities have you attended, participated in, or supported in the last year? (select all that apply)

Music Theatre Visual Arts Dance Literary Arts Other None

Additional Comments:

Arts NC Note: This is another good "warm-up" question. Multiple choices are provided so that the candidate can answer quickly and easily. On the online survey, the multiple-choice response should be required, with the ability to select multiple answers, and the option to provide additional comments. In this case the candidate can give more detail about their arts experience recently and give them an opportunity to share experience with the local creative

community. By having the candidate speak about their recent local connections, it allows them to recognize the arts as a current presence in their life and a hopefully a relevant issue in their campaign.

Background: Americans for the Arts reports Buncombe County nonprofit arts organizations generate \$3.5 M in local government support annually. However, the NC Arts Council's 2019-20 report shows Buncombe County ranks last among tier 3 counties for local government funding for local arts councils at just \$.02 per capita. Average for tier 3 counties is \$.73 per capita.

Q 3: Would you support a plan to increase local government funding to the Asheville Area Arts Council to at least match the state arts funding awarded to Buncombe County (\$61,447 or \$.23 per capita) to support community arts programs for all Buncombe County residents? This would bring the combined state and local arts investment up to \$.46 per capita.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Undecided

Additional Comments:

Arts NC Note: The background provides the context of the economic value of the nonprofit arts which is an effective point in support of public funding for the arts. The background can also provide relative context, in this case comparing public funding for the arts in other counties with a similar economic rating. The question directly asks for support of a specific funding proposal and provides multiple choices so candidates can quickly express their level of support. They also have the option of providing additional comments to explain their response, though that should not be required.

Background: Buncombe County's 74 creative industries were responsible for over 14,000 jobs and \$1.6 B in industry sales in 2019. By 2020, over 1,300 jobs were lost in the Arts & Entertainment industry alone-- the greatest % of job loss from any industry in Buncombe County as reported by the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce. Many arts businesses experienced up to 14 months of closure, and artists/arts organizations are still facing significant pandemic related expenses and revenue losses.

Q 4: Would you support additional relief aid for arts businesses to support recovery and revitalization of the creative sector?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Undecided

Additional Comments:

Arts NC Note: The background provides the context of jobs and economic activity the creative industries provide in order to put the job losses and economic impact of the pandemic into perspective. This question is direct, but without offering a specific funding proposal, and provides multiple choices so candidates can quickly express their level of support for this funding. They also have the option of providing additional comments to explain their response, though that should not be required.

Background: Legislation changing the county's occupancy tax is likely to be introduced in the NC Senate this session. It would potentially reduce the funding dedicated to marketing from 75% to 67%, increasing funding available for community projects to 33%. Expanded funding flexibility included non-capital projects, option for bonding funding, administration and maintenance of TPDF approved projects, and funding for local arts projects.

Q 5: Do you support using this funding to support the maintenance and creation of local arts projects?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Undecided

Additional Comments:

Arts NC Note: Like the background for all the questions, this serves to educate the candidates, however this relates to funding issue that is very specific. By mentioning this possible funding development, awareness is raised not only by the candidate, but also by those reading the survey. The backgrounds for the prior questions have already provide the economic context for local arts, so it is not necessary to repeat it for this question. This question is direct, but without offering specific examples, and provides multiple choices so candidates can quickly express their level of support. They also have the option of providing additional comments to explain their response, though that should not be required.

Background: Affordable Housing is the primary reason for Buncombe County's rising cost of living index (now 106). This is having a large impact on the local creative community, forcing more artists to move their residence and business outside of the county. The 2018 Keep AVL Creative survey, taken by 1,265 individuals and 170 organizations, found that a majority of artists (86%) and arts organizations (78%) need affordable artist housing and/or studio space. 424 responded that they have considered leaving Asheville due to cost of living.

Q 6: Would you support an initiative to create affordable housing/workspace within Buncombe County?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Undecided

Additional Comments:

Arts NC Note: This is a good example of a cross-sector question. The background provides the context of how affordable housing is specifically affecting artists and creatives, though the question is phrased to include the entire county, which acknowledges that others face similar challenges. Cross-sector questions can help your event seem more nonpartisan by addressing issues that affect the entire community and not just your creative community. This question is direct, but without offering a specific proposal, and provides multiple choices so candidates can quickly express their level of support for this issue. They also have the option of providing additional comments to explain their response, though that should not be required.

Background: According to a 2019 report by NeighborWorks America, 80% of individuals' health is determined by the social and environmental conditions in which they live, work and play. We need a shared vision for Asheville- Buncombe County's cultural future that improves the lives of all residents with arts education, neighborhood revitalization, art in public spaces, economic development, and more.

Q 7: Would you support the creation of Asheville- Buncombe County's first Cultural Plan to support the preservation of our cultural assets, and the equitable recovery and sustainable growth of the creative sector?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Undecided

Additional Comments:

Arts NC Note: The background provides a sourced statistic that support the creation of a cultural plan. Suggesting a new or updated arts and/or cultural plan such as this, if your community does not already have one, can be a good way to be sure the work continues after the election. It may also be easier for government officials to support the creation of a plan as it does not necessarily commit them to additional spending in the moment. This question is direct and provides multiple choices so candidates can quickly express their level of support for this issue. They also have the option of providing additional comments to explain their response, though that should not be required.