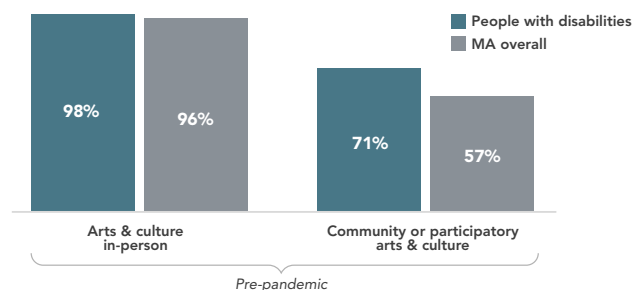


This summary highlights findings from 1,156 Massachusetts residents who identified as having one or more disabilities¹ in a survey of more than 8,000 people across the Commonwealth. It can inform the work of artists, arts organizations, funders, policymakers, arts advocates, and others interested in more deeply connecting arts & culture to the needs and hopes of people with disabilities.

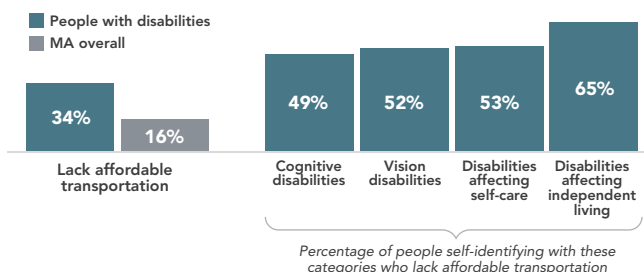
Arts & culture organizations are highly important to Commonwealth residents with disabilities. Over two-thirds (69%) of respondents with a disability rated arts & culture organizations as highly important to them, exceeding the 65% mark for the state overall. In particular, 78% of residents who are blind or low-vision or have a vision impairment rated arts & culture organizations as highly important.

People with disabilities in Massachusetts were extremely active in arts & culture prior to the pandemic. The rate of in-person attendance at events or visits to venues prior to the pandemic was near universal among residents with disabilities, 98% compared with 96% for the state as a whole. However, those with ambulatory disabilities or difficulties doing activities alone that promote self-determination and self-respect (disabilities that affect independent living) participated in fewer kinds of activities: people with ambulatory disabilities, 4.8 kinds of activities; people with disabilities that affect independent living, 4.2; Massachusetts overall, 6.0.

Residents with disabilities joined in community and participatory arts & culture activities at a higher rate than the state overall (71% vs 57%). Their participation was split about evenly across three categories and exceeded state levels in all cases, often significantly: financial support (42% vs. 37% for the state as a whole), direct participation (40% vs. 28%), and activism or protest (40% vs. 20%).

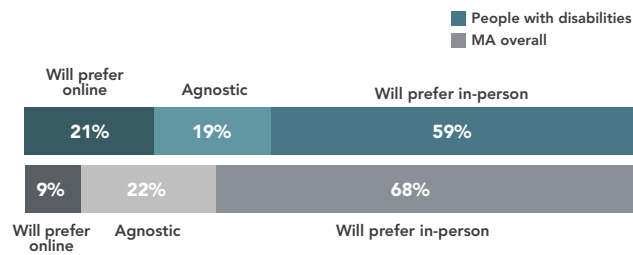


Despite high participation rates, many people with disabilities had issues finding affordable transportation to arts & culture venues. Over a third of those with disabilities (34%) said a lack of affordable transportation prevents them from visiting organizations and attending events as often as they'd like; this figure is more than twice the proportion of state residents overall (16%). Lack of affordable transportation is a particular challenge for people with cognitive (49%) or vision (52%) disabilities as well as those with difficulties conducting self-care activities that promote well-being and health (53%) and those with disabilities that affect independent living (65%).



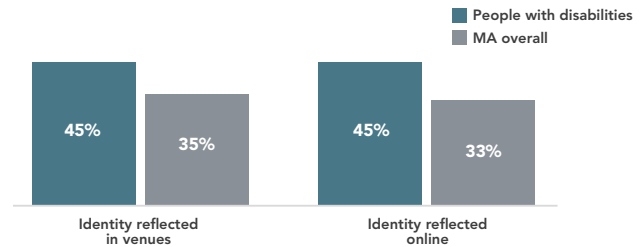
During the pandemic, residents with disabilities continued to be highly engaged in arts & culture through personal creative activities and online. Participation in personal creative activities during the pandemic was nearly universal for those with disabilities (98%), above the already high level of 93% for the state overall. Online engagement with arts & culture involved 83% of residents with disabilities, again a higher percentage than for the state overall (74%). Online involvement was especially high (94%) for those identifying as blind or low vision or having a vision impairment. People with disabilities were far more likely to have paid for some of the digital arts activities they engaged with than residents of the state as a whole (42% vs. 27%).

In the future, some residents with disabilities, especially those with vision disabilities, would prefer to engage with arts & culture online rather than in-person. Over a fifth of Commonwealth residents with disabilities (21%) expected to prefer digital programming compared to in-person events. This rate is more than twice the 9% of state residents overall who expect to prefer online over in-person involvement in the future. In-person participation is preferred by 59% of people with disabilities, while 19% are agnostic and hold no definite preference. For those identifying as blind, low-vision or having vision impairments—of whom 94% had done something related to arts & culture online during the pandemic—more than half (55%) said they would prefer online to in-person events in the future.



Most individuals with disabilities want to see their culture or heritage reflected in venues and experiences.

Residents with disabilities are more likely than state residents overall to believe it's important to have a local arts & culture venue that is reflective of their identity (45% vs. 35%). Among those engaging in arts & culture online, people with disabilities are particularly likely to value online arts & culture activities that reflect their culture or heritage (45% vs. 33% for the state overall).



Residents with disabilities are somewhat more likely than the state as a whole to believe systemic racism is present in arts & culture organizations.

On average, 46% of Commonwealth residents with disabilities believe there's systemic racism in the arts & culture sector, compared with 32% for the state as a whole. People with disabilities rate systemic racism as especially high for theaters (56%), world and folk music (56%), art museums (56%), natural history museums (54%), and dance groups (50%).

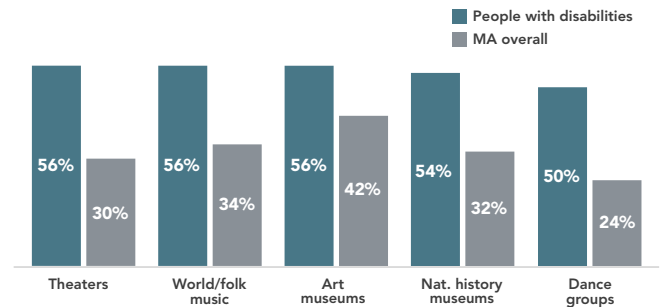


Photo by Mickey West Photography for Abilities Dance Boston.

LEARN MORE

Access the full report, *Culture + Community in a Time of Transformation: Focus on Massachusetts*, published December 2021, as well as findings specific to multiple Massachusetts regions and population groups, national results, and regional briefing recordings at bit.ly/CCTTBarr.

1 Among Massachusetts residents with disabilities in this sample, 33% identify as deaf or hard-of-hearing or have a hearing impairment, 28% identify as blind or low-vision or have a vision impairment not fully corrected with glasses, 24% identify as having a physical or mobility disability or impairment, 23% have difficulties with activities such as bathing or dressing or other self-care disabilities, 13% have a cognitive disability or impairment, and 12% require the presence of a personal care attendant in public or have an impairment that affects independent living. While this sample is adequate to make statistical inferences across groups, the percentage of respondents with disabilities is not representative of the prevalence of persons with disabilities in the state overall. For a more complete accounting, visit: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-and-us-disability-facts-statistics-2020/download>.