



Chicago Independent Media Alliance

CIMA & COVID-19 Report

This report was created the week of March 16th to the 20th after Illinois Governor JB Pritzker's state mandate required all bars and restaurants to close on March 13th. As a response, we reached out to all CIMA members to participate in our survey assessing the financial impact of the COVID crisis on their independent outlets. Twenty eight of 51 outlets responded. We assessed their responses and produced the data below. The Illinois stay at home order was issued on Monday, March 21st the same week we sent our CIMA and COVID-19 report to foundations.

Appendix A

CIMA and COVID-19
28 respondents

Respondents by 'media entity name'
(N=28)

AirGo	Mildsauce.org
CHIRP Radio	NDIGO
Chicago Music Guide	New City
Chicago Public Square	Rebellious Magazine for Women
Chicago Reader	Rivet
Citizen Newspaper Group Inc.	Sixty Inches from Center
E3 Radio	SoapBox Productions and Organizing
GRAB Magazine	South Shore Current Magazine
Growing Community Media	South Side Weekly
Hyde Park Herald	StreetWise Inc.
Inside Publications	Via Times Publication
Invisible Institute	West of the Ryan Current Magazine
Kartemquin Films	Windy City Times
Korea Times Chicago	
La Raza	

Based on last year's March 1-May 1 income from DONORS or MEMBERS, how much decrease do you anticipate for the same time period in 2020?

(N=28)

- **53.6 percent** (n=15) responded none/does not apply.
- **7.1 percent** (n=2) responded not applicable because donor/member structures adopted late 2019 (after March 1-May 1).
- **21.4 percent** (n=6) of respondents who provided estimated dollar amounts indicated they anticipated decreases ranging between \$100 and \$60,000.

[Average amount = \$13,433.33; median amount = \$4,500]

Responses:

\$60,000

\$10,000

\$5,000

\$4,000

\$1,500

\$100 (about \$50/month x 2 months =\$100)

(6 out of 28 responded to this question.)

- **17.9 percent** (n=5) responded they expect decreases in income but declined to estimate a dollar amount or percentage.

Responses:

1. Did not provide dollar or percent estimate (n=2)
2. 'Taking out of pocket expenses'

3. A 'slow[ing]' (not decrease) of 'maybe \$1,000 less than otherwise' of 2+ years' growth trend in monthly subscriber revenue.

Based on last year's March 1-May 1 income from ADVERTISERS, how much decrease do you anticipate for the same time period in 2020?

(N=27)

- **22.2 percent** (n=6) responded none/does not apply.

- **3.7 percent** (n=1) not applicable because advertising structures adopted after March-May 1 of 2019.

- **63.0 percent** (n=17) of respondents who provided estimated dollar amounts indicated they anticipated decreases ranging between \$300 and \$247,175.50.

[Average amount = \$24,788.24; median amount = \$13,000]

Responses:

\$103,000

\$90,000

\$64,000

\$50,000

\$40,000

\$16,000 (n=2)

\$15,000

\$13,000

\$3,000 (n=2)

\$2,600

\$2000 (n=2)

\$1000

\$500

\$300

(17 out of 28 outlets responded.)

- **11.1 percent** (n=3) responded they expect decreases in income but provided estimates as percentages, or declined to estimate a dollar amount or percentage.

Responses:

1. 20-25 percent

Based on last year's March 1-May 1 income from SPECIAL EVENTS/BENEFITS, how much decrease do you anticipate for the same time period in 2020?

(N=28)

- **28.6 percent** (n=8) responded none/does not apply.

- **10.7 percent** (n=3) not applicable for reasons that include 'main fundraising is in September 2020' or 'special event we held was a free event.' - Streetwise, Chicago Music Guide,

- **50.0 percent** (n=14) of respondents who provided estimated dollar amounts indicated they anticipated decreases ranging between \$2000 and \$150,000.

[Average amount = \$17,585.71; median amount = \$8,000]

Responses:

\$150,000

\$16,000

\$15,000 (n=3)

\$10,000 (n=2)

\$6,000

\$2,500

\$2,000 (n=2)

\$1,500

\$900

\$300

(14 out of 28 outlets responded.)

- **10.7 percent** (n=3) responded they expect decreases in income but provided estimates as percentages, or declined to estimate a dollar amount or percentage.

Responses:

1. Did not provide dollar or percent estimate.

Based on last year's March 1-May 1 income from GRANTS, how much decrease do you anticipate for the same time period in 2020?

(N=28)

- **60.7 percent** (n=17) responded none/does not apply.

- **17.9 percent** (n=5) not applicable for reasons that include receiving nonprofit status after March 1-May 1 of 2019, not having received grants, not having applied for grants.

- **10.7 percent** (n=3) of respondents who provided estimated dollar amounts indicated they anticipated decreases ranging between \$10,000 and \$100,000.

[Average amount = \$41,333.33; median amount = \$14,000]

Responses:

\$100,000

\$14,000

\$10,000-\$18,500

- **10.7 percent** (n=3) responded they expect decreases in income but declined to estimate a dollar amount or percentage.

Based on last year's March 1-May 1 income from ANY OTHER REVENUES, how much decrease do you anticipate for the same time period in 2020?

(n=27)

- **55.6 percent** (n=15) responded none/does not apply.

- **3.7 percent** (n=1) not applicable because advertising structures adopted after March 1-May 1 of 2019. [Respondent provided same answer here and to advertising question, above.]

- **29.6 percent** (n=8) of respondents who provided estimated dollar amounts indicated they anticipated decreases ranging between \$50 and \$262,000.

[Average amount = \$36,393.75; median amount = \$1,350]

Responses:

\$262,000

\$20,000++

\$5,000

\$1,700

\$1,000

\$900

\$500

\$50

11.1 percent (n=3) responded they expect decreases in income but provided estimates as percentages, or declined to estimate a dollar amount or percentage.

Responses:

1. 20-25 percent

2. Did not provide dollar or percent estimate

Do you anticipate any layoffs as a result of this crisis?

(N=28)

- **64.3 percent** (n=18) responded ‘no.’

- **7.1 percent** (n=2) declined to estimate or are looking at other measures first, such as temporary reductions to salaries or reprieve on monthly rent/occupancy payments.

- **14.3 percent** (n=4) responded ‘yes.’

Responses:

4 (n=2)

2-3 (n=2)

- **10.7 percent** (n=3) declined responding ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ e.g., ‘really hard to say right now.’

- **3.5 percent** (n=1) responded ‘...we are reducing contractor hours. We anticipate reducing payroll by \$15,000+.’

Do you have needs to cover COVID-19? Please explain cost and what for.

(N=15)

- **26.7 percent** (n=4) responded they need additional funds to cover costs for additional reporting on COVID-19.

Responses:

1. “A small grant would cover reporting on this in LGBTQ communities.”

2. “Yes. It needs to be sep[a]rate from regular editorial.”

3. “Yes, we produce these stories for our clients.”

4. “I would love for us to be able to afford up to \$1,500 in reporting on the impact on domestic violence shelters and organizations, as well as the child abuse hotline and child welfare nonprofits, and the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center, which conducts in-person interviews

with children victims of sexual violence and trauma. It's one of the darkest sides of this crisis, covering some of the most at-risk communities, and I fear it won't get covered adequately.”

40.0 percent (n=6) responded they need additional resources to cover costs, including organizational, associated with the impacts/risks imposed by COVID-19.

Responses:

1. “Yes, for the community. No idea right now.”
2. “We need direct financial subsidies for vendors who are seeing declines in sales, people in our STEP program that are potentially losing jobs, direct financial support to our organization to keep the doors open, provide food, hygiene supplies, access bathrooms and a safe space to get off the street. Lastly, donations of goods including soap, hand sanitizer, and packaged food items.”
3. “KTQ is concerned about the impact of the virus on our work if a staff member should get sick or be required to care for an ill family member. While we can't predict this impact, the organization would be in a position where we continue to pay salary/benefits to the employee on leave while also needing to pay for contract labor to ensure we continue to raise money and execute our commitments to funders and program participants. In addition, our community of core filmmakers, who are primarily freelancers, is already reporting difficulty with maintaining anticipated work so we are also exploring ways to support them through these lean and difficult months.”
4. “Yes, if we continue to lose the majority of our advertising revenue, we will need to find a new revenue stream to make sure we can continue to operate. We might need an additional ~10k to be able to cover overhead costs and salaries during this period.”
5. “Yes, I need money to setup an at home studio so I can successfully record & broadcast. I have been using public facilities but that is no longer an option. Cost - \$8,000
We are working on trying to support artists whose exhibitions, shows, and events have been canceled--get them written about, published, and archived.”

20.0 percent (n=3) responded ‘no.’

Responses:

1. “No we will not be covering Covid-19.”
2. “No.”
3. “No, thank you very much. No expenses to report due to Covid-19.”

13.3 percent (n=2) did not indicate whether they anticipate additional costs connected to COVID-19.

Responses:

1. “Unfortunately, we have not and do not anticipate on covering Covid-19 unless cases become close within coverage areas.”
 2. “Our entire newsroom spent the past week covering COVID-19. Impact on schools, government, parks, libraries, restaurants, churches, non-profits, families. We produced well over 30 stories along with dozens of digital news updates.”
-

Anything else you would like us to know?

(N=18)

16.7 percent (n=3) indicated needs for immediate help.

Responses:

1. “Send help.”
2. “Thank you for doing this! As an org that covers a lot of arts and culture, we're needing to pivot to news more quickly than we were anticipating, and any help will be greatly appreciated. To survive we need a media small business stimulus package. We need ads form the city agencies, that would be helpful at this time.”

22.2 percent (n=4) indicated concerns about COVID-19-related long-term losses of financial resources.

Responses:

1. “These losses may go up as more events are canceled if the restrictions continue.”
2. “A large percentage of our display ad revenue is event related. Entertainment, school open houses, health fairs, church events. That revenue is gone and will be for months.”
3. A true estimation I going to be difficult until after we pass the tipping point of this pandemic and can look realistically at the cost of the necessary recovery ahead.”
4. “We have significant concerns about the effects of COVID-19, but financially, given that most of our funding is existing grants, we’re more concerned by decreases in philanthropy after May 1st, 2020 due to the economic fallout of current events.”

16.7 percent (n=3) responded not applicable or other.

Responses:

1. “We can produce audio and/or video stories that cover Corona.”
2. “We all need to learn to live with out checking account balance.”
3. “N/A”

44.4 percent (n=8) expressed appreciation for CIMA organizing efforts, including specific to COVID-19.

1. “Thanks for asking!”
2. “Thank you for all of your work in this moment of instability!”

3. "Thanks you & keep well!"

4. "Thank you for doing this!"

5. "Yes, I cannot thank you enough for this wonderful opportunity to be a part of CIMA, I just wish circumstances were different, not just for independent publishers, but also of course with Covid-19 and its tremendous effect that everyone is experiencing. If there is anything I can do to help, I am always happy to assist. Thank you once again and I hope you and everyone over at the Chicago Reader stays healthy! Sincerely Dennis M. Kelly."

6. "Thank you for spearheading this - we are happy to provide additional information as needed!"

7. "Thank you for putting independent media first."

8. "I hope you're all doing alright over there--and thank you for all that you're making happen quickly! Please let Sixty know if there's anything we can do to help."