

# AUDIENCE OUTLOOK MONITOR

A longitudinal study of audience attitudes about arts  
and cultural events during COVID-19

## Findings for Chicago Cohort

Overview of Results: November 2021



In partnership with



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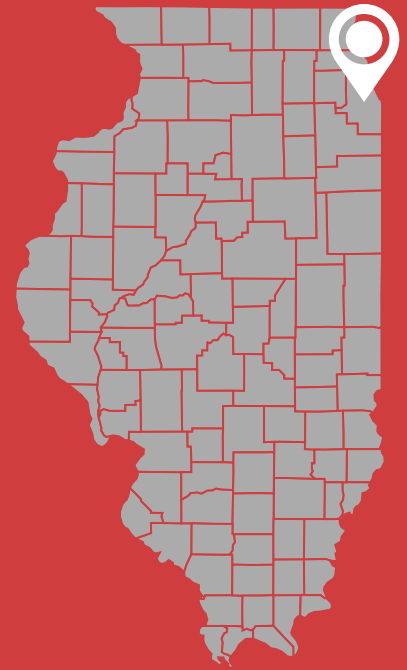
# About the Study

The COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor is a longitudinal tracking study of audience attitudes about going out to cultural events during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The study is being administered by WolfBrown.

League of Chicago Theatres hosted a cohort of 14 organizations for Phase 1 in 2020, and is hosting a cohort of 15 organizations for Phase 2 in 2021.

Participating organizations will deploy the survey either three times or five times in 2021, depending on the size of their database.

This report covers results from the fifth and final deployment, launched November 9, 2021, which generated approximately 1,700 completed surveys.



## Phase 2 Cohort Participants

- Auditorium Theatre
- Black Ensemble Theater
- Chicago Shakespeare Theater
- Chicago Symphony Orchestra
- Goodman Theatre
- Lifeline Theatre
- Lookingglass Theatre Company
- Lyric Opera of Chicago
- Northlight Theatre
- Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- The House Theatre of Chicago
- The Joffrey Ballet
- TimeLine Theatre Company
- Victory Gardens Theater
- Writers Theatre



# Vaccination

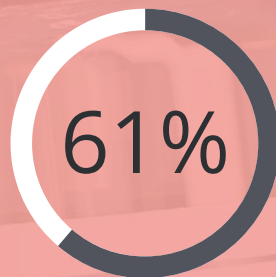


97%

Of respondents are partially or fully vaccinated

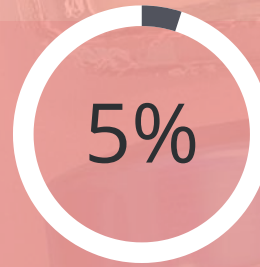
96% in September

When will vaccinated respondents be ready to return to in-person arts and cultural events?



Ready Now

46% in September



Waiting for others in their network to get vaccinated

4% in September



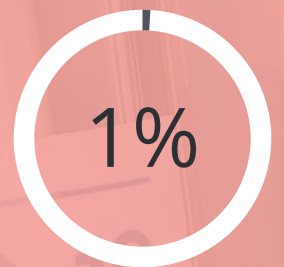
Waiting for low infection rates

45% in September



Waiting for safety measures to be removed

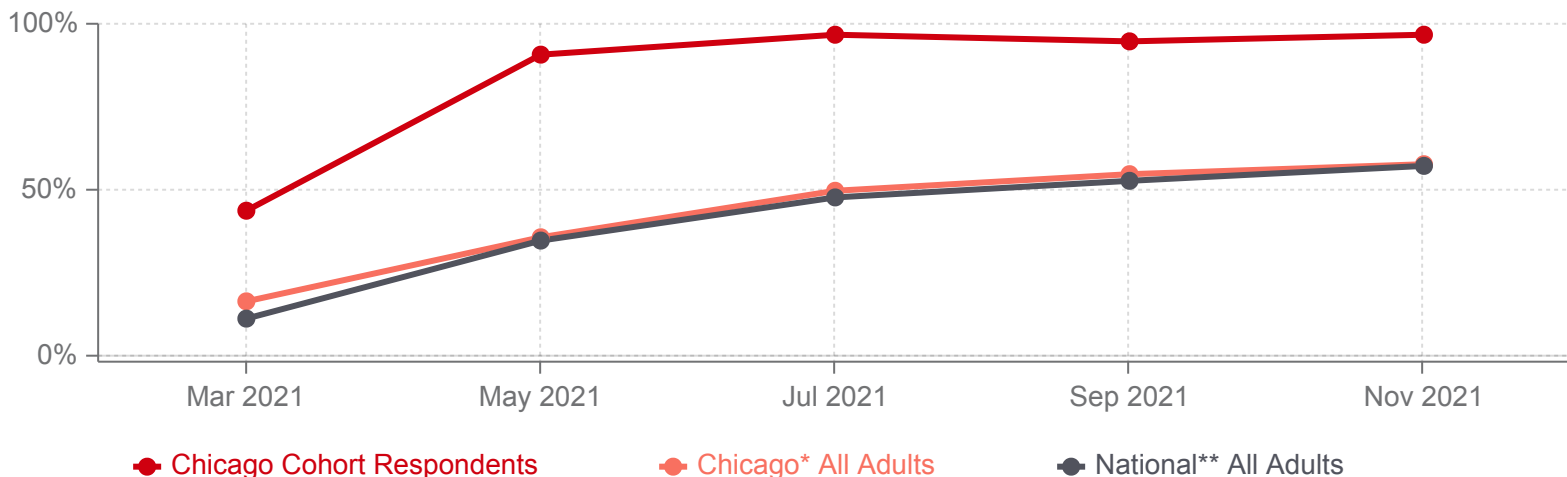
3% in September



Waiting to be certain of immunity

2% in September

## How do respondents' rates of full vaccination compare to national figures?



\* Visit the [Illinois Department of Health](#) website for Chicago vaccine data.  
 \*\* Visit the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) website for national vaccine data.

# Vaccination

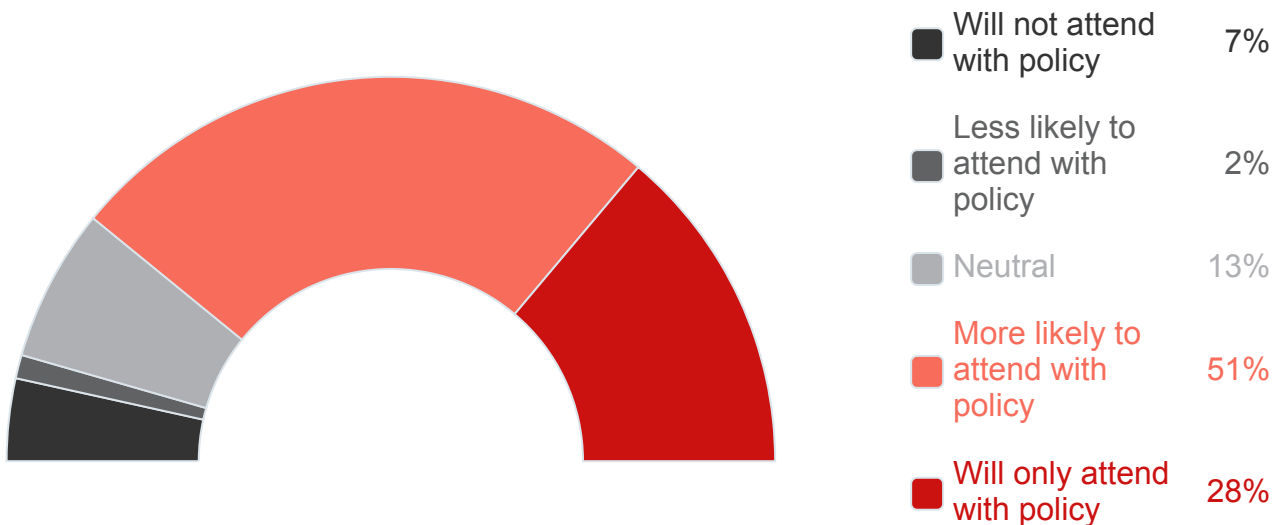
73%

63% in  
September



Of vaccinated respondents reported that they are somewhat or very confident that the vaccine protects them enough for them to resume their normal activities

**In some states arts and cultural organizations are allowed to welcome back larger audiences if everyone in the audience shows proof of vaccination. How would a vaccinated-only admittance policy impact your feelings about attending in-person events?**

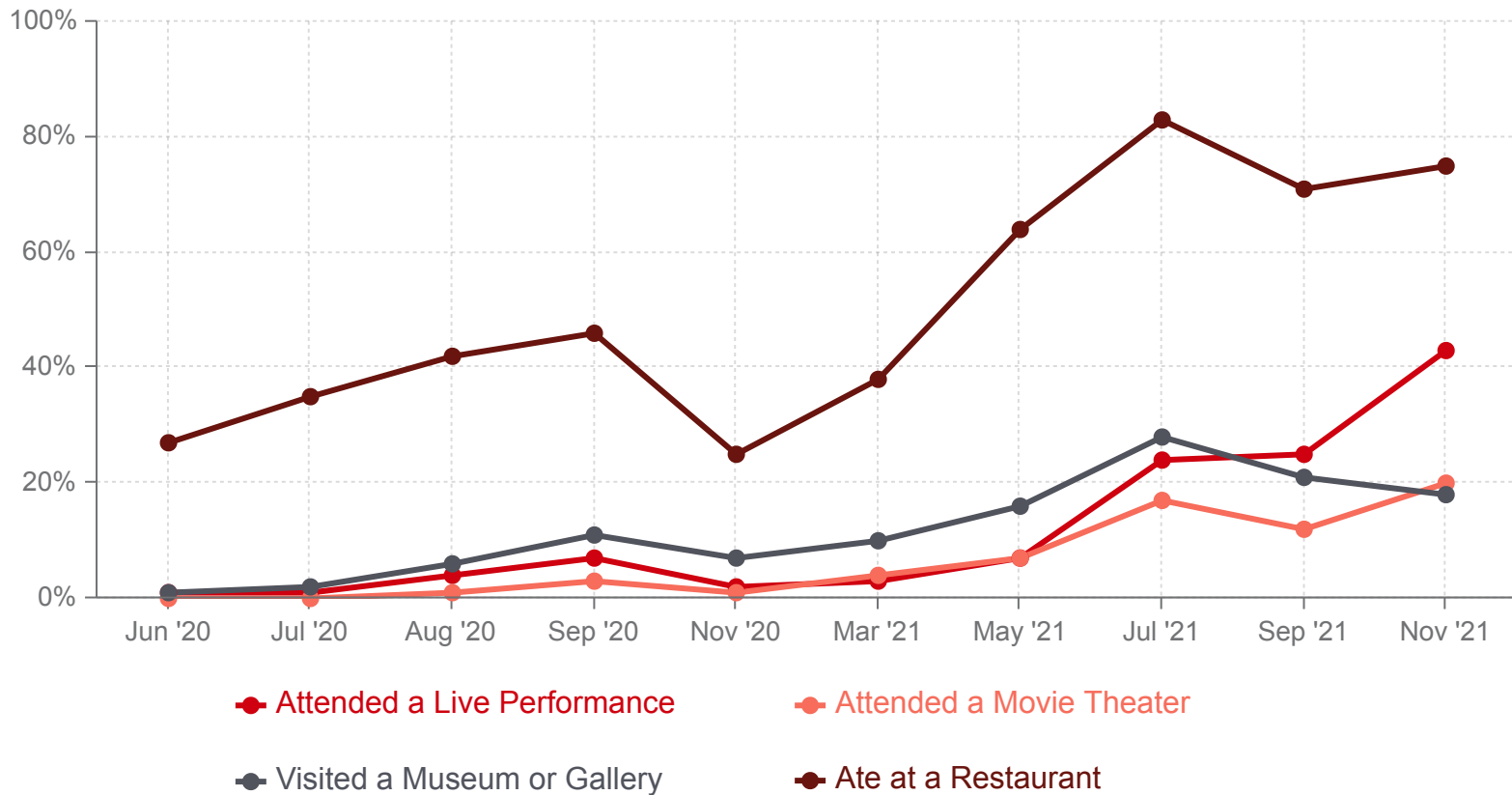


*"Requiring the disclosure of private medical information as a condition of allowing access to public accommodation is no more legal than requiring disclosure of banking records. This survey has multiple references to 'privacy policy' and 'private information', so you are clearly aware of the paradox."*

*"Although vaccinations are not 100% proof of not getting COVID, usually these individuals are more inclined to also wear their mask and abide by guidelines. Hence, I would feel more comfortable knowing that they're probably as precautious as I am right now."*

# Returning to In-Person Programs

Have respondents attended in-person events in the last two weeks?



Many people report eating in restaurants, but not going to theaters quite yet. Why do you suppose some people feel comfortable going to restaurants but not theaters?

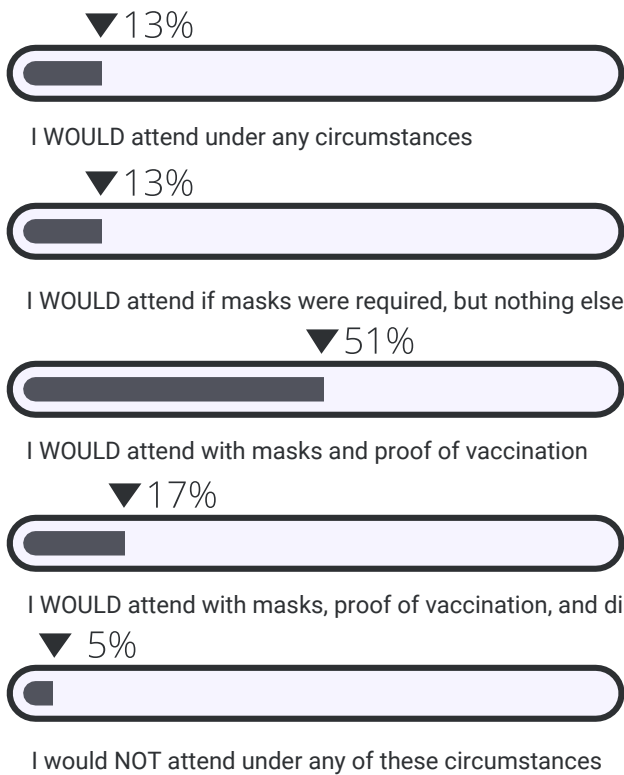
*"I think people want to go unmasked. I don't agree with going unmasked, but I think others do. Eating is a socially allowed activity where there are no masks. Theaters rightfully require masks, so some people won't go there. I believe masking in theaters is the right thing to require!"*

*"If the theater requires proof of vaccination and mask wearing at all times I believe that a theater is safer than a restaurant where patrons are unmasked while eating and talking unmasked, so I don't understand why anyone would feel more comfortable going to a restaurant than attending live theater. Also all theaters in my area require proof of vaccination or negative test result therefore making theater even safer than restaurants, which are less likely to require proof of vaccination."*

# Returning to In-Person Programs

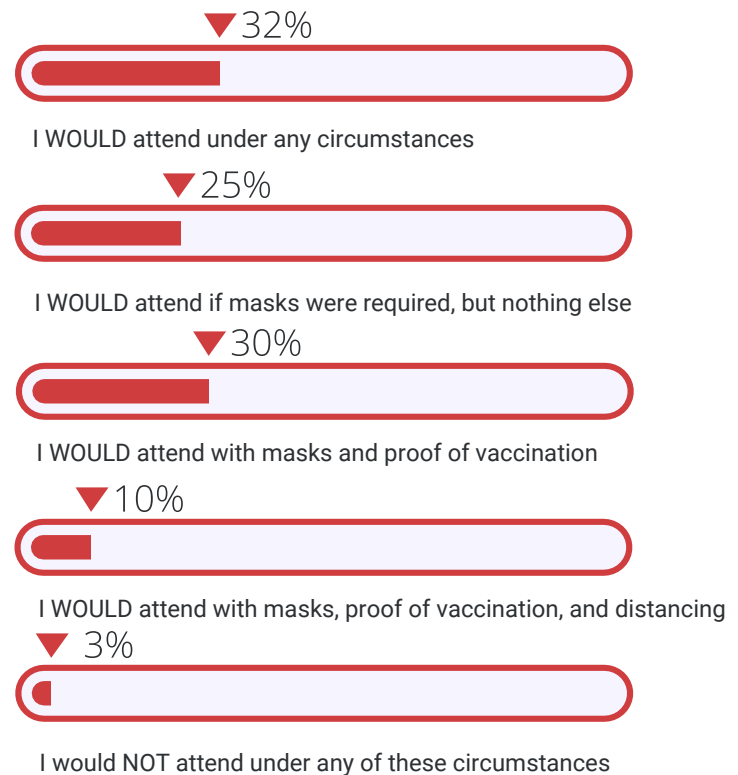
## Indoor Events

What are the minimum level of health safety measures that you require in order to attend an indoor cultural event this week?



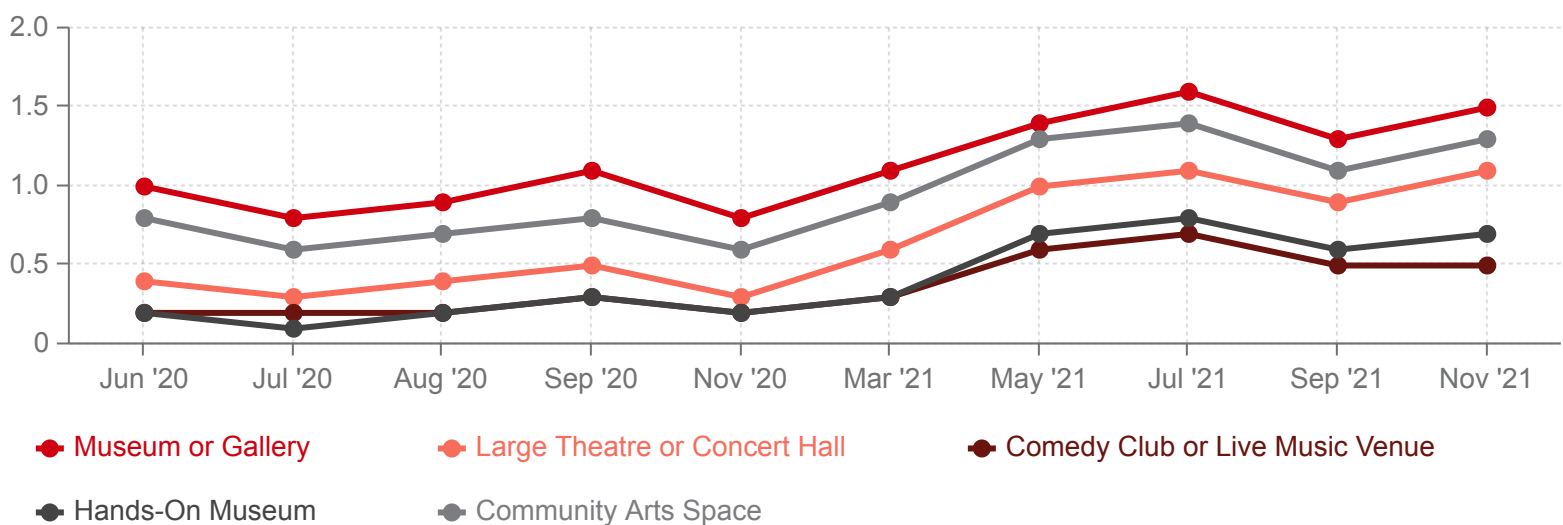
## Outdoor Events

What are the minimum level of health safety measures that you require in order to attend an outdoor cultural event this week?



## Comfort Level Attending Different Cultural Facilities

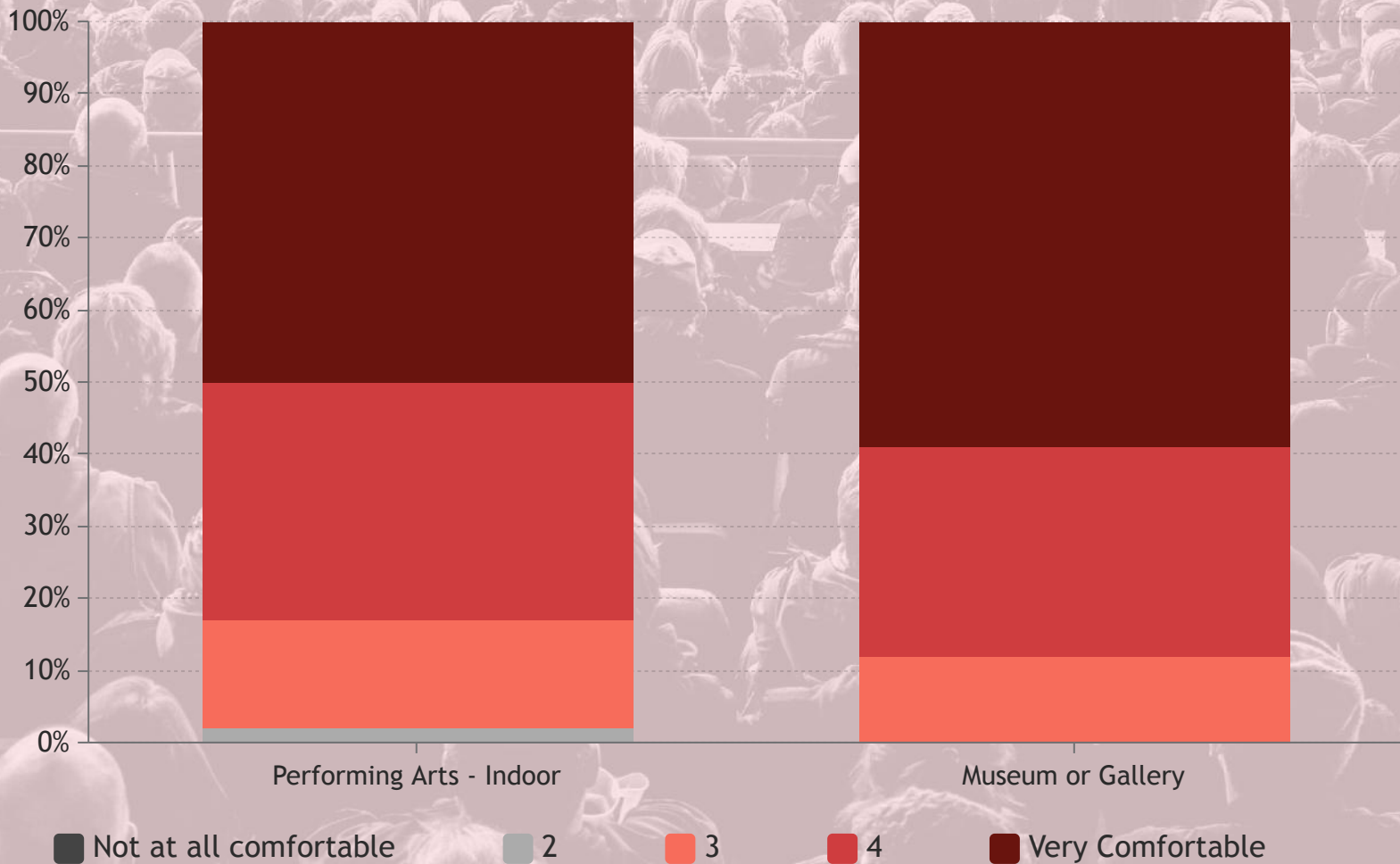
0 = Not Comfortable and 2 = Very Comfortable





# In-Person Experiences

How comfortable did respondents feel at in-person events?



## What would have made respondents feel more comfortable?

*"... They talked the talk and reiterated their requirements several times, but still there were those in the audience that were unmasked for the majority of the performance. Unless the ushers are in the hall and willing to call out the offenders, what can venue do?"*

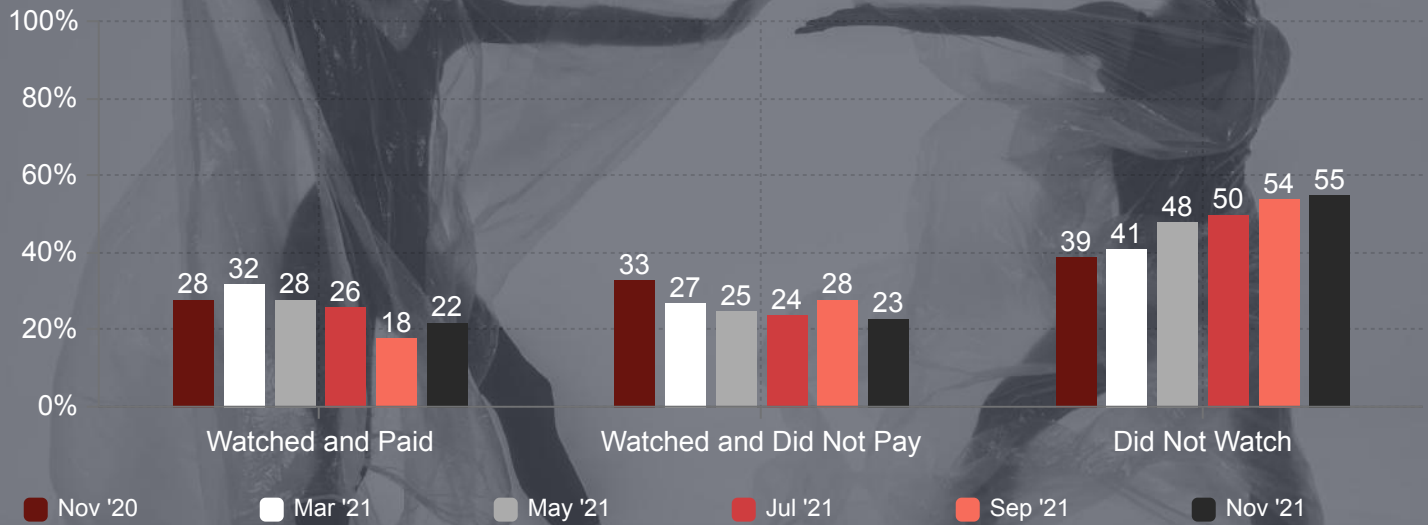
*"More distance between seats. I believe they said the theatre was at 85% capacity but they didn't have space in between the seats and instead closed off entire sections."*

*"Despite their requirements, we were crammed into the entry with only one person scanning tickets. Then, the man immediately to my left in the row ahead of me continued to wear his mask incorrectly, despite being reminded multiple times. I'm not sure how they can deal with the latter without unduly disturbing the performance, but the first two operas I attended, entry was swift and smooth, despite the lines. I hope to find they have redressed this issue at my next visit."*

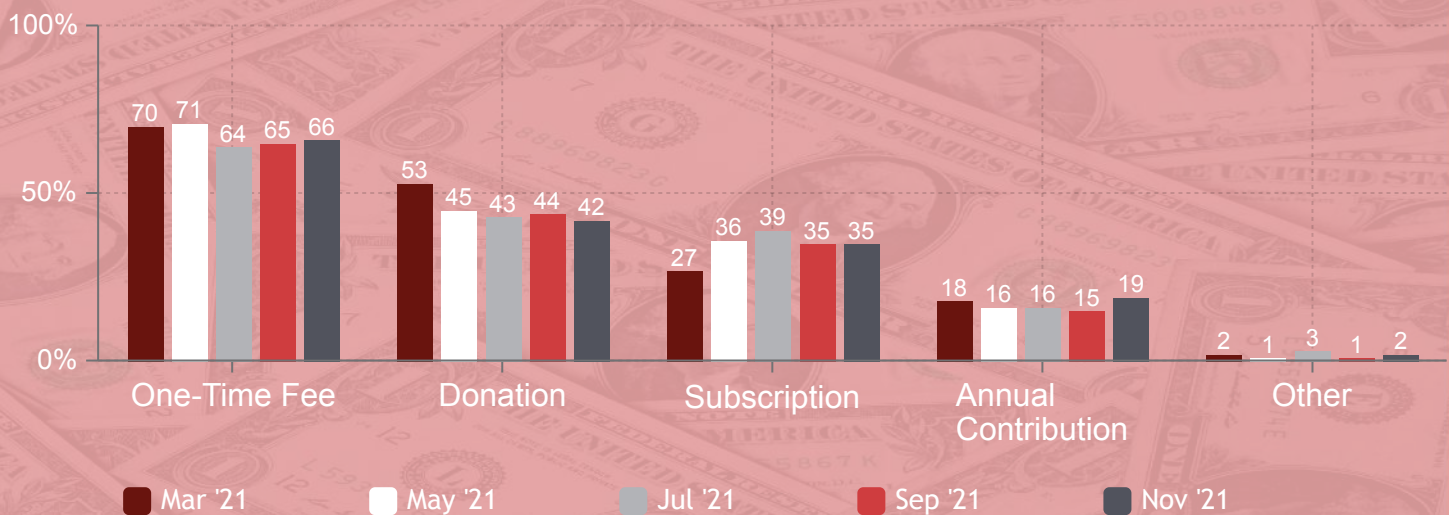


# Engagement With Digital Programming

How did respondents engage with online cultural programs in the last two weeks?



How did respondents who paid for online cultural programs purchase those programs?



For more information about this study or to view results from cohorts around the country and internationally visit [audienceoutlookmonitor.com](https://audienceoutlookmonitor.com).

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