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The Year in Review

2020-2021 was a year of uncertainty, unforeseen challenges, and new adaptations, especially for the arts & cultural sector. After the closing of Urbano’s studio space and embarking on a transition to virtual/hybrid programming, Urbano has worked hard to remain close to and foster reciprocity within our community. We strive to give to our community as much as they give to us, even if only through screens for the time being.

This year’s curatorial theme, **Radical Care**, focused on fostering healing and radical acts of kindness. We explored how we heal, process grief, and persevere throughout the COVID-19 public health crisis. We wanted to be active participants in exploring how contemporary artistic practices can be wielded to manage exhaustion in our communities and the burnout of our students, and to advocate for self-care as part of the healing process.

We worked with four Artists-in-Residence (AiR) to achieve this goal, starting with AiR **Sheila Novak** and her project "CoVictory Gardens." Youth Artists explored a new, socially-distant way of creating a community-engaged art practice by exploring the methods and tools to cultivate their own garden. To adapt to the circumstances, we developed a supply kit with all materials to deliver to our students, including gardening supplies as well as the necessary art-making tools to develop this project. The final presentation of this Youth Artists Project (YAP), "From Our Garden to Yours," was showcased virtually among the students’ family and friends. AiR **Sam Richardson**’s project, "When We See Each Other," kicked off 2021 with the role of portrait photography in self-healing. Youth artists learned how to produce art within practices of care by developing their own weekly photographic journals, and envisioning how they and their communities would have liked to be represented at the current moment. Simultaneously, AiR **Gabriel Sosa** worked with youth artists to explore language as a medium for healing in the project "Reading the Public Space." He led discussions on the role of language in public art and a series of prompts for the students to create their own artwork in and inspired by public space. Our 2021 residencies ended with the Spring Youth Artists Project, "Care Matters: Media Tools for Urban Kinship" led by AiR **Mark Anthony Hernández Motaghy**, which focused on the agency of printed matter in public spaces. As a final project, youth artists created a series of posters incorporating drawing, graphic design, and a collective typography developed in conjunction with guest artist Julia Schaefer.

Complementary to our artist residencies, we hosted two Workshops. "We Heal" was created by artist **Nora Valdez** in collaboration with the Cancer Sickle Cell Support Programs at Boston Medical Center, patients from the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, and youth from the Urbano Project. They created collages, mandalas, poems, and personal prayer flags to promote peace, compassion, and strength in themselves and their peers. The second workshop was led by **Hannah Niswonger**, founding director of Pots on Wheels! (POW!). "POW! Radical Care in Clay" explored the exchange of care practices while introducing techniques of applying images to clay. The final event was held in-person at Evans Way Park. Participating youth exhibited their pottery and learned how to glue and repair damaged pieces.

Finally this year, we also incorporated a community conversations series, *Create, Connect, Catalyze*, held virtually on Zoom and curated by Urbano’s scholar-in-residence, **Raquel Jiménez**. The series aimed to understand, reflect on, and chart new courses for civic change through the arts. Sessions were hosted by Jiménez and eight guest transdisciplinary artist-educators, and beautifully documented through sketchnotes by artist Alexa Kutler.

We are grateful to have survived this challenging year with the thoughtful support of our donors, collaborators, and audiences. We look forward to continuing our civically-engaged art practice and envisioning a new year that returns gradually to in-person gathering. In the meantime, we embrace a mixed model that traverses the virtual and physical realms.



Founder + Executive Artistic Director

Guiding Principles

Mission

Urbano is a nonprofit that brings together practicing artists, local youth, and community members to learn and experiment through place-based projects. We foster public and participatory art as a vehicle for personal transformation, community cohesion, and social change.

Our projects consist of Artists in Residence, Youth Projects, Workshops, and Community Conversations, all of which intersect around an annual curatorial theme.

Guiding Principles

Target Population	Participating Youth High School Students (majority are BPS, all students attend public schools) Live in the Greater Boston area, with over 81% residing in Boston (primarily from Dorchester, Roslindale, Roxbury, Hyde Park, West Roxbury, West End, South End, South Boston, Back Bay, Brighton, Allston, East Boston, Mattapan) Ages 14 - 19 Often from low-middle income families Interested in creating art Interested in social change Interested pursuing the arts as a career	Community Members Audience and participants From Greater Boston, and digitally national and international From diverse backgrounds interested in civic engagement, social and environmental issues, place-based education and the arts	Socially Engaged Artists Often BIPOC Interested in social justice issues and participatory art practices Interested in art education	
	High-Quality Contemporary Arts Experiences Offer high-quality arts experiences, including opportunities to develop an awareness and appreciation of contemporary arts and the role the arts play in society and to effect social change	Artists as Engaged Citizens Challenge artists to express a strengthened identity as active, powerful, and engaged citizens of the city of Boston Engage youth with difficult subjects in hopeful ways	Creative Youth Development Support youth to explore and pursue their passions and develop as young people with the greatest chance for social and personal success Develop a corps of positively engaged youth who serve as leaders in their communities	Community Cohesion Promote civic engagement through participatory and publicly sited works of art that address the major issues of our time, and develop synergy among diverse groups
Program Goals	Artists' Projects, Exhibitions, & Workshops Year-long Project Theme provides conceptual connections among concurrent projects and programs	1. Youth Projects & Workshops Youth learn to create collaboratively through studio exploration and experimentation guided by professional artist(s) Youth and lead artists work in partnership, contributing to the conception and production of a final project	2. Artists-in-Residence Selected through an open call, AiRs provide diverse perspectives on Urbano's annual theme through exhibitions, workshops, and public participatory projects	Virtual Events and Artistic Interventions Socially-engaged practices to create dialogue with diverse audiences around important issues affecting the community
	Strategies	1. Youth Projects & Workshops Youth learn to create collaboratively through studio exploration and experimentation guided by professional artist(s) Youth and lead artists work in partnership, contributing to the conception and production of a final project	2. Artists-in-Residence Selected through an open call, AiRs provide diverse perspectives on Urbano's annual theme through exhibitions, workshops, and public participatory projects	Virtual Events and Artistic Interventions Socially-engaged practices to create dialogue with diverse audiences around important issues affecting the community
Participants' Outcomes	Youth will: Develop skills and understanding related to Contemporary Arts Practice and issues of social change Hone professional attitude towards work with an emphasis on quality Participate in process to develop the narrative of an idea Engage and gain proficiency in creating and thinking critically about contemporary art Gain public speaking and presentation skills; empowerment to speak, create, be heard Engage in personal reflection on work and participation in critique Show openness to interact and collaborate with those who are different from themselves Develop constructive risk-taking skills	Artists will: Engage in the studio and community as empowered agents of social change Communicate ideas of change through commissioned works in collaboration with youth artists Explore the visual, social, and political language of contemporary art Identify as artists who are a part of the larger global contemporary art community Develop understanding of issues across racial, social, and cultural barriers Enhance relationship building skills	Community will: Participate in events and gatherings, and make connections between contemporary art and social change Come together to appreciate diverse perspectives and cultural expressions	
	Organization's Impact	Urbano Project inspires a new generation of leaders in urban communities who are compassionate, explorative, civically engaged, creative thinkers actively committed to breaking down social barriers (of language, race, gender, religion, etc.) through art Urbano Project creates high quality arts learning experiences that are cross-disciplinary and collaborative, resulting in publicly sited and participatory art works. These works challenge assumptions about contemporary art, education, and art's role in creating social change Urbano Project contributes to Boston's civic and cultural life by building bridges between urban communities and the contemporary arts		

Guiding Principles

Theme

Radical Care

How do we share practices that foster community care and participation and make this line of human-centered work public through art? Through the lens of Radical Care, Artists-in-Residence and Teaching Artists who use the process of making as caring explored and created forms of care for themselves and their communities and reimagined technological and non-technological forms of togetherness, resulting in virtual and hybrid meetings and events.



Programs

Artists-in-Residence (AiR)

Youth Artist Projects

Workshops

Conversation Series

Programs

Artists-in-Residence

Each year Urbano welcomes 3-4 Artists-in-Residence: **emerging, mid-career practicing artists recognized for their innovative, critical, socially engaged practice.** Resident artists develop a 10-week long **Youth Artist Project** related to their individual work which serves as a tool for teaching and community dialogue. Due to COVID-19, resident artists presented their final projects via Zoom, in conjunction with the youth artists' final projects.

Programs

Artist-in-Residence



Sheila Novak

Sheila Novak is an interdisciplinary artist and arts administrator living and working in Boston. Her projects create spaces and opportunities for others to explore how we can grow and connect, how vulnerability can bring us into more authentic relationships with each other, and what healing looks like on individual and communal levels. Currently, Sheila serves as the Public Art Project Manager for the Greenway Conservancy. She has eight years of experience in the nonprofit arts sector intersecting creative practice with public art, creative placemaking and arts equity. Novak is committed to producing and creating art in social and public spaces.

In 2018, Sheila was awarded the New England Fellowship with National Arts Strategies shortly after arriving in Boston from Minneapolis. Beforehand, she served as Artist-in-Residence at Hennepin County Medical Center (2015 - 2017), as well as an Artist-in-Residence in Ecology, Spirituality, and Community at Holden Village (2014). She received her B.A. in Studio Art from St. Olaf College in 2012.

[Website](#)
[Instagram](#)

Programs

Artist-in-Residence



Sam Richardson

Sam Richardson is an interdisciplinary artist working primarily in photography, as well as video, sound, and writing. They are based in Los Angeles, CA. As an image-maker working in a documentary-informed practice, Richardson strives to unlearn, break open and find new ways of creating images that interrogate collaboration and photographic relationships in the context of the body, trauma, and care. They utilize their experience as a Crisis Counselor to survivors in the ER of New York City, abolitionism, and personal history to enter their work with a practice of care and investigation into a personal and shared experience. Sam’s work has been shown at Studio Voltaire in London,

ACUD Galerie in Berlin, Metrograph NYC, and Bard College in upstate New York. Sam has been an Artist-in-Residence at Room and Board and UnionDocs (UNDO) in NYC and has collaborated on organizations and projects such as JusticeLA, California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP), Bard Prison Initiative, and the Women’s Prison Association.

[Website](#)
[Instagram](#)

Programs

Artist-in-Residence



Gabriel Sosa

Gabriel Sosa is an artist, curator, educator, and linguist based in Boston. Through a multi-disciplinary practice that includes drawing, video, and public installation, he combines interests in translation, memory, and social justice to explore how the use of language subtly and consistently shapes our everyday experiences. His work has been shown at the Tufts University Art Galleries; O, Miami Poetry Festival; Centro Cultural Español, Miami; La Fábrica de Arte Cubano, Havana; A R E A, Boston; and the Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco. He was one of the curators of the Area Code Art Fair 2020, the first art fair focused on artists with ties to New England, and has also organized

exhibitions at the Nave Gallery in Somerville and Haley House in Roxbury. Gabriel has been an Artist-in-Residence at Lugar a Dudas, Cali, Colombia; Santa Fe Art Institute, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Mass MoCA; and Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, Santa Cruz, CA. He is currently a Now + There Accelerator Fellow and a Visiting Lecturer at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

[Website](#)
[Instagram](#)

Programs

Artist-in-Residence



Mark Anthony Hernandez Motaghy

Mark Anthony Hernandez Motaghy works between architecture, urbanism, art, and new media. Mark is one-half of the spatial practice *If So Then*. They strategically “fake it” as a practice model, which has taken form through experiments in speculative urban interventions to fictional co-working organizations. They also co-launched the event *Labor Party*, exploring alternative models of spatial production focused on working and playing together, hoping to learn new ideas for collective authorship and forms of interrelated stewardship.

They are currently a research candidate at MIT School of Architecture and Planning, investigating kinship networks, informal economies, and the politics of care.

[Website](#)
[Instagram](#)

Programs

Youth Artists Projects

Youth Artists Projects are ten-week-long explorations of social issues through art led by an Artist-in-Residence. Throughout each project, students receive high-quality, in-depth contemporary arts and virtual studio classes modeled on college-level seminars. These projects range across a broad spectrum of visual and performing arts practices.

Curricula are developed in response to national and state art education standards and emphasize conceptual exploration, experimentation, revision, collaboration, and technical skill. Students participate in selecting concepts, and designs for their art, and take responsibility for the process.

At the end of each program, students present their projects through Zoom and virtual exhibits, involving mixed-media, spoken word, creative writing, and visual arts installations.

Programs

Youth Artists Project

CoVictory Gardens



Artist-in-Residence:
Sheila Novak
Summer 2020

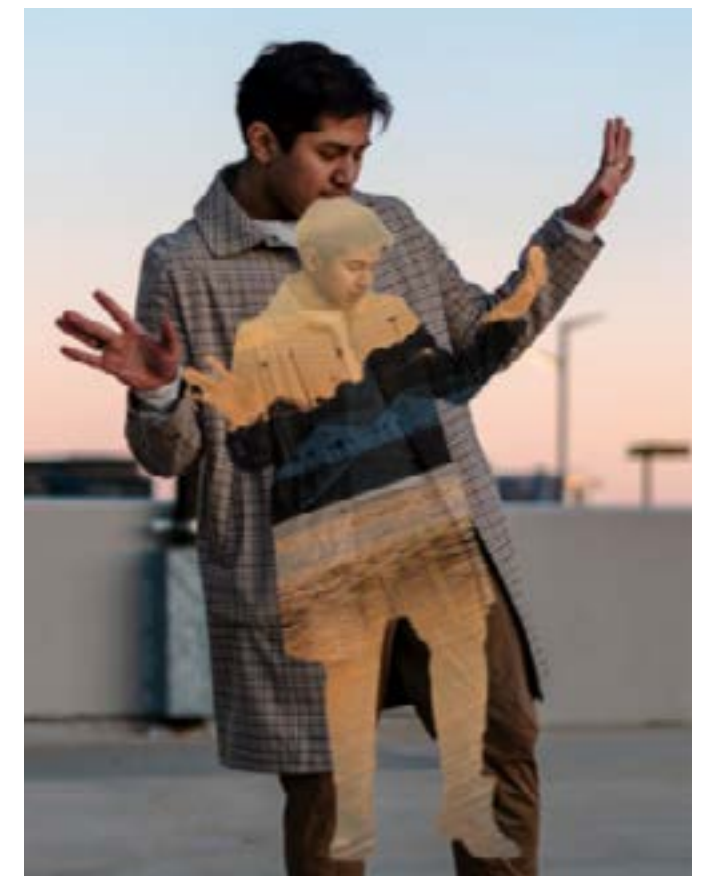
Youth Artists explored many aspects of a socially engaged art practice, as well as the methods and tools to cultivate their own garden. From **exploring the history and implication of social art practices and creating their own garden**, to engaging with specific skills such as logo design and interviewing, **Youth Artists built tools for creating their own socially engaged art projects**. The final presentation of the YAP: "From Our Garden to Yours," was showcased virtually.



Programs

Youth Artists Project

When We See Each Other



Artist-in-Residence:
Sam Richardson
Winter 2021

Youth Artists learned how to produce art within practices of care by creating their own weekly photographic journals, engaging in histories of photographic collaboration, and envisioning how they and their communities would have liked to be represented at that current moment.

Programs

Youth Artists Projects

Reading the Public Space



Artist-in-Residence:
Gabriel Sosa
Winter 2021

Through a series of collaborative workshops, readings, and conversations, youth artists explored language as a medium for healing through two components: a seminar-style series of discussions on the use of language in public art, and a series of prompts that served as a point of departure for the students to create their own work in and inspired by public space. For his final AiR project, Gabriel presented a series of graphite “rubblings” drawings made in public space that he developed during his residency through a Zoom conversation with Urbano staff. The conversation will be adapted into a bilingual mini publication.



Programs

Youth Artists Projects

Care Matters: Media Tools for Urban Kinship



Artist-in-Residence:
Mark Anthony Hernandez Moteghy
Spring 2021

This Urbano YAP focused on the agency of printed matter in public spaces in the current moment of crisis and its capacity to circulate messages of care and solidarity. The program worked as a collaborative experiment around building self/collective care through workshops and reading discussions focused on art and media. For their final project, youth artists created a series of posters incorporating drawing, graphic design, and a collective typography from found typefaces in their communities, developed in conjunction with visiting artist Julia Schaefer.



Programs

Workshops

Urbano's **Teaching Artists** lead Workshops that introduce cohorts of 10-15 youth or a small community to artmaking related to the annual theme.

Workshops include introductions to new artist techniques, research into social issues related to the teaching artists' work, and art-making. Final projects from these workshops are presented virtually via a public Zoom event, or in-person in a socially-distanced manner.

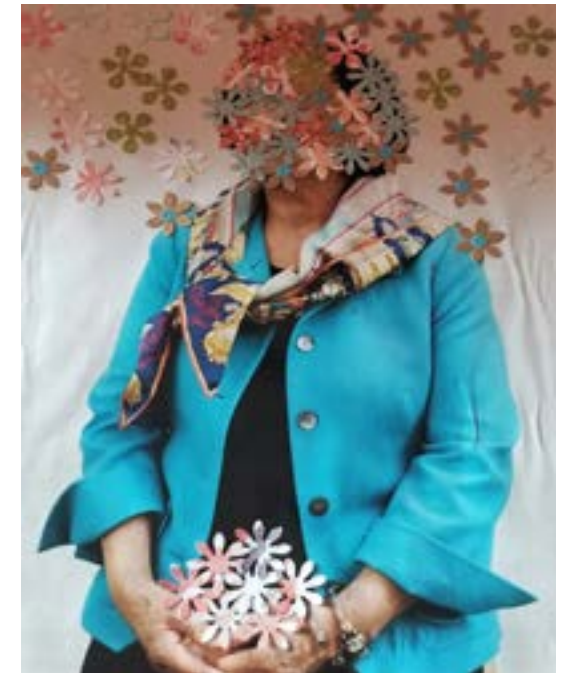
Programs

Workshop

We Heal



Teaching Artist: **Nora Valdez**
Fall 2020



We Heal is an art project created by artist Nora Valdez in collaboration with the Cancer Sickle Cell Support Programs at Boston Medical Center. The artist also invited patients from the Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Urbano youth artists to participate. Patients, youth, and the artist explored the topic of healing by reviewing images, words, people, and foods that brought comfort and aid healing. They created collages, mandalas, poems, and personal prayer flags to foster peace, compassion, strength, delight, and wonder and to spread goodwill. Nora created an artbook of participant projects, and a documentary co-produced by artist Donte Thomas about the project.



Nora Valdez is a born and raised Argentinian and Boston-based artist who has been working and exhibiting for thirty years. Since the beginning of her practice, Valdez has used sculpture and installations to create images that reflect on the nature of change, the life of the individual, and the natural or societal forces that buffet our souls. Most recently, her focus has been on the nature of home, the immigrant experience, and roots/ rootlessness.

Programs

Workshop

POW! Radical Care in Clay



Teaching Artist: **Hannah Niswonger**
Spring 2021

This 8-week drawing and ceramics course explored radical care while introducing techniques of applying images to clay. Projects included a variety of direct drawing techniques, and transfer printing, decal making, and using stencils. Youth artists explored visual storytelling and collaboration through the influences of pop-art, graffiti art, and comic book art while working together on a series of stories on ceramic tiles and hand-built pottery. The final event was held in-person at Evans Way Park. Participating youth exhibited their pottery and learned how to glue and repair damaged pieces.



Hannah Niswonger is the founding director of Pots on Wheels! (POW!), a collaborative group of functional potters who seek to connect their love of pots with all kinds of people by bringing shows, projects, and collaborations directly to communities via mobile gallery/project space.



Programs

Conversations



Guest Artists:

Noor Jones-Bey &
Emeka Ekwelum

Paloma Valenzuela

Sam Richardson &
V Haddad

Gabriel Sosa &
Sara Daniela Rivera

Cierra Kaler-Jones &
Black Girls SOAR Youth

Create, Connect, Catalyze
March 31 – May 25, 2021

What can artmaking contribute to civic life in our current moment of crisis?

Curated by Urbano scholar-in-residence **Raquel Jiménez**, *Create, Connect, Catalyze* was our first community conversation series aimed to create space to understand, reflect on, and chart new courses of civic change through the arts. Sessions were hosted via Zoom by eight guest transdisciplinary artist-educators. Each conversation invited participants to experience and examine a wide range of community-driven artistic practices through the lenses of cultural work, grassroots activism, and the guest artist’s socially-engaged practice. All sessions were recorded in-house and sketched by Brooklyn-based artist **Alexa Kutler**.

CCC #1: Radical Care and Healing

How can our creative practices hold space for rest, reflection, and affirmation? Guest artists **Emeka Ekwelum** and **Noor Jones-Bey** led a participatory workshop that drew on traditions in Black feminist praxis and collaborative virtual artmaking to address this question.



CCC #2: Representation, Power, and Joy

Former Urbano Artist in Residence, **Paloma Valenzuela** discussed whose stories we constantly tell and how we can engage in creative practices that allow us to share more just, joyful, and robust stories. Valenzuela invited the public to explore these questions through a series of storytelling exercises.



CCC #3: Identity and Solidarity

Artists **Sam Richardson** and **V. Haddad** shared their ongoing project *Self Portrait Service* and invited the public to think critically about how creative photographic practices can help us unpack our personal stories and community connections.



CCC #4: Restorying Public Life

Recent Artist-in-Residence **Gabriel Sosa** and former Teaching Artist **Sara Rivera** invited the public to participate in an evening of creative writing and conversation drawn from the artists' public art practices and the role of language and expression in political discourse. Writing prompts explored how we can use the power of creative expression to acknowledge the present, while shaping a more hopeful future.



CCC #5: Creative Youth Development

In this conversation we learned from Dr. **Cierra Kaler-Jones** and youth researchers Michaela and Rayven from **Black Girls SOAR**, a youth participatory action research collaborative that combines oral history and imaginative storytelling to envision the future. Together, we discussed the role of imagination in movements for social change and considered how we can work together to support the next generation of artists, creators, and thinkers.



Scholar-in-Residence: **Raquel Jimenez**
Spring 2020



Raquel Jiménez is a PhD candidate at Harvard University, Boston-based educator, and **scholar-in-residence** at Urbano Project. Raquel's work focuses on young artists and the creative learning communities that support them. This interest is reflected in her dissertation research, a multi-year investigation that examines how youth engage with public artmaking practices to reimagine the post-industrial forces undermining their community, and how community arts education structures this process. Raquel teaches courses on art and culture at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, collaborates with local artists on public art initiatives, and has held a variety of positions in nonprofit arts organizations.

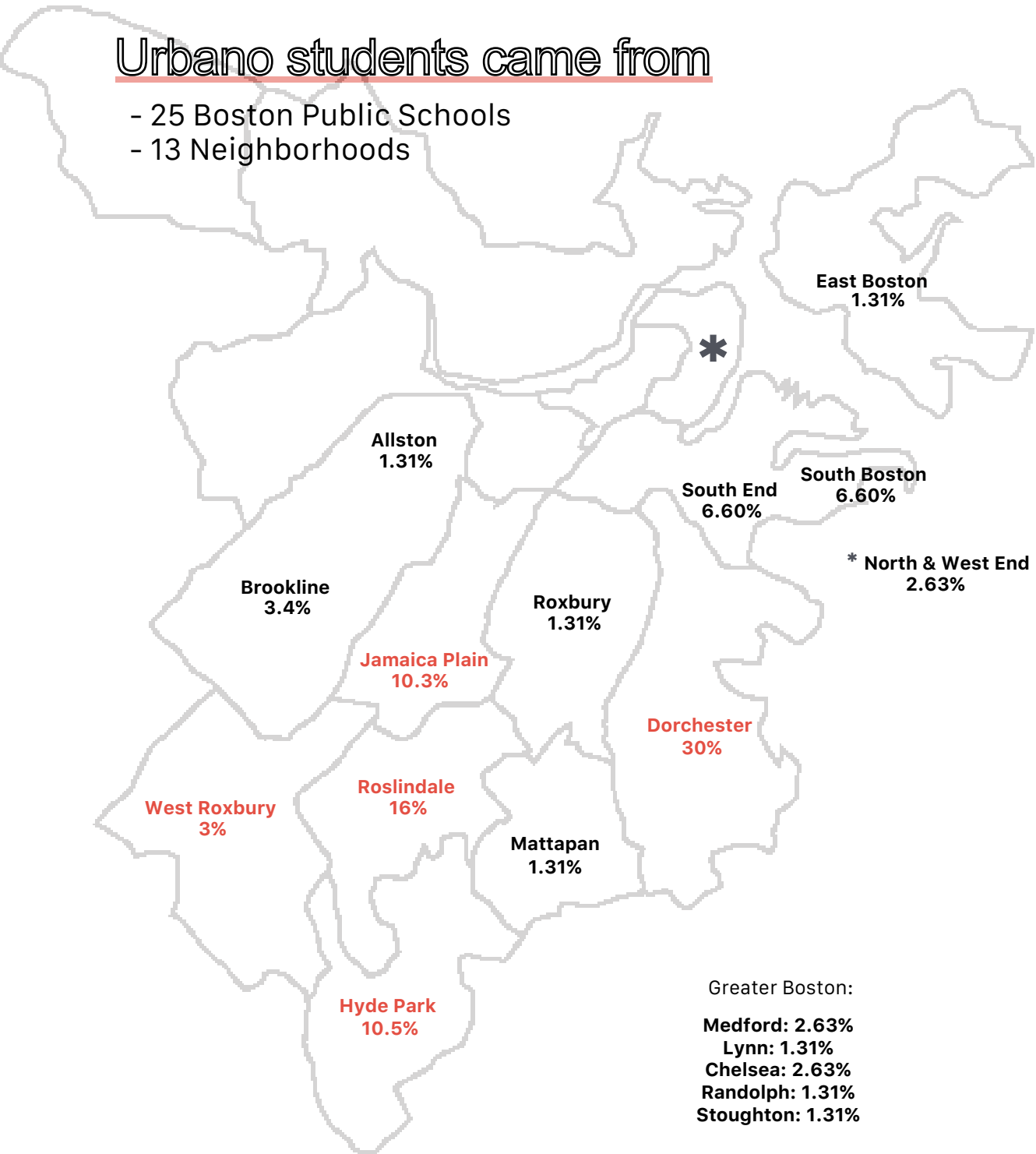
Evaluation & Data

Urbano's creative placemaking approach through critical pedagogy and studio training works as a catalyst for developing artistic skills central to stimulating students' curiosity for exploring the issues in their communities through art.

Urbano's offerings are unique, and for the majority of students, our programs represent the only arts or after-school opportunity available to them. Our students go beyond learning studio skills, to build a collaborative project with practicing artists and civic leaders to have a positive impact on their communities.

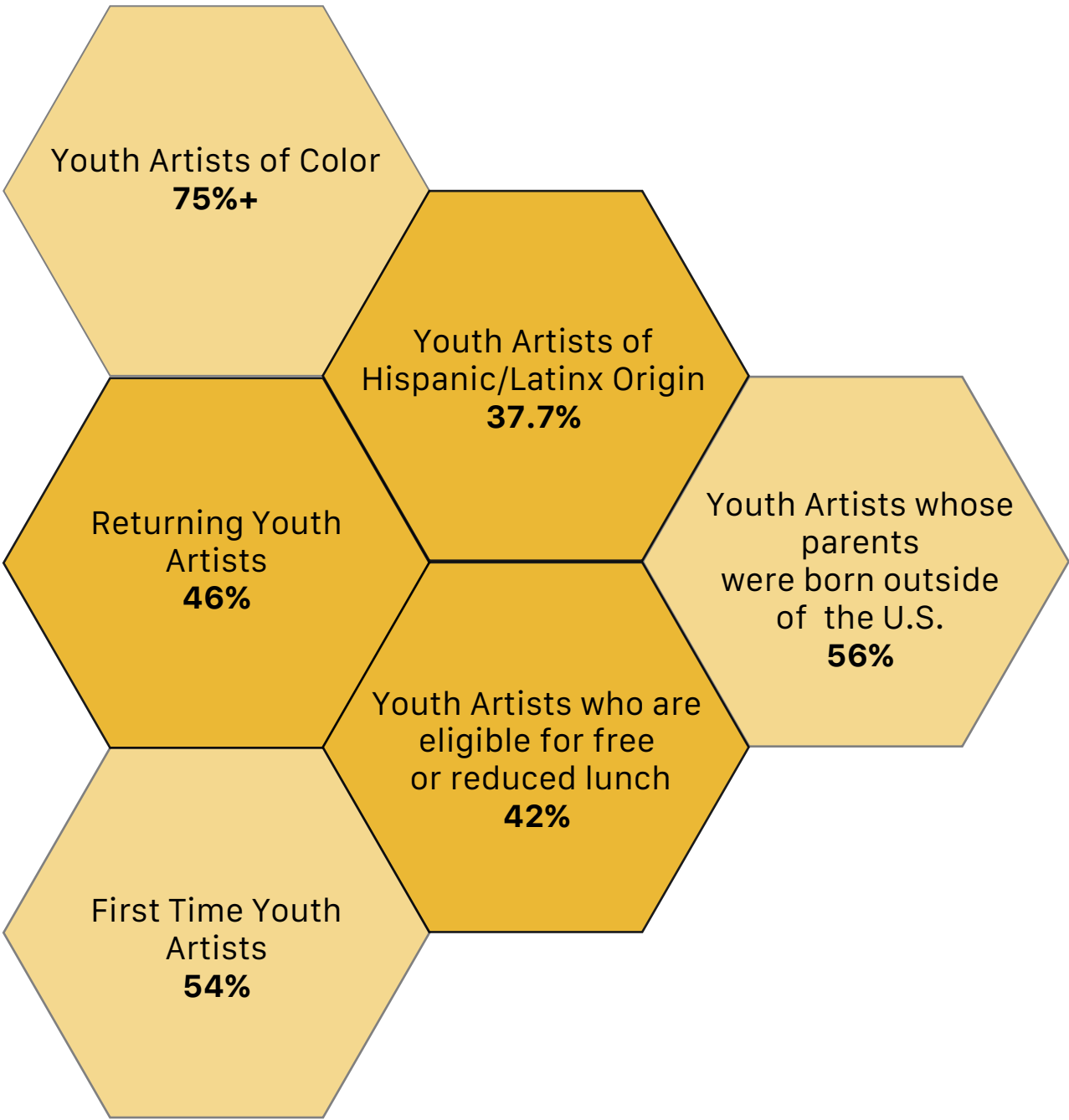
Evaluation & Data

Demographics



Evaluation & Data

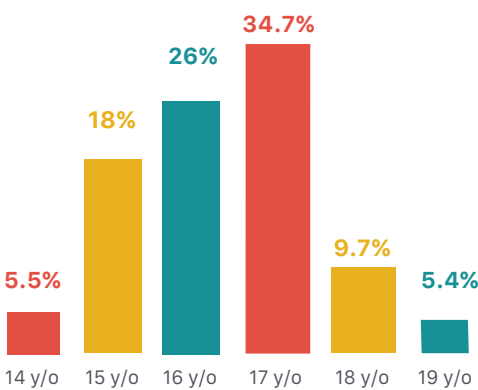
Demographics



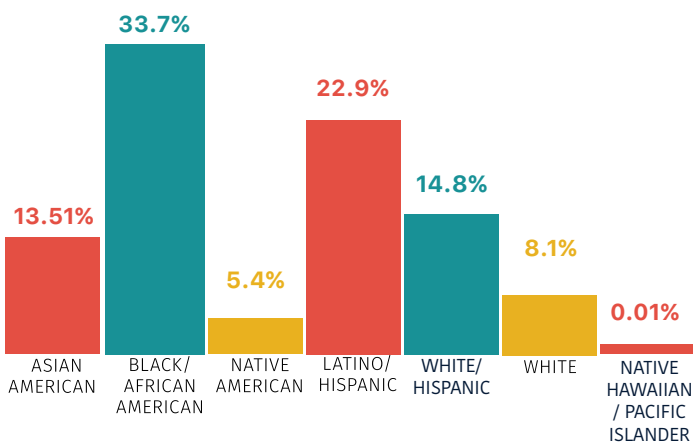
Evaluation & Data

Demographics

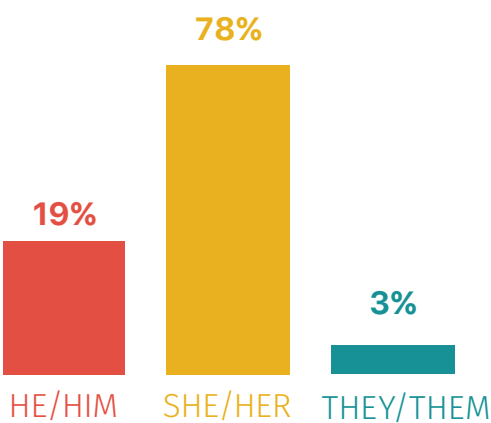
Age



Race & Ethnicity



Gender Pronouns



Evaluation & Data

Youth Programs

"I want to connect with other youth and collaborate with ideas on art that correlate with social justice and current issues facing our community."
—Youth Artist, Spring 2020

We use entry and exit surveys for participants to gather demographic information, self-reported development in the arts, social skills, plans for the future, and community involvement.

The entry and exit surveys are only given to participants in programs that take place over multiple days. Teaching artists use rubrics and tools to assess each individual youth artist's artistic and personal growth relative to his/her/their starting point.

*** The following stats are based on 34 responses corresponding to Summer 2020 and Spring 2021 surveys.**

Evaluation & Data

Youth Programs

Goal

Promote civic engagement through participatory art that address the major issues of our times, and develop a corps of positively engaged citizens who serve as leaders in their communities.



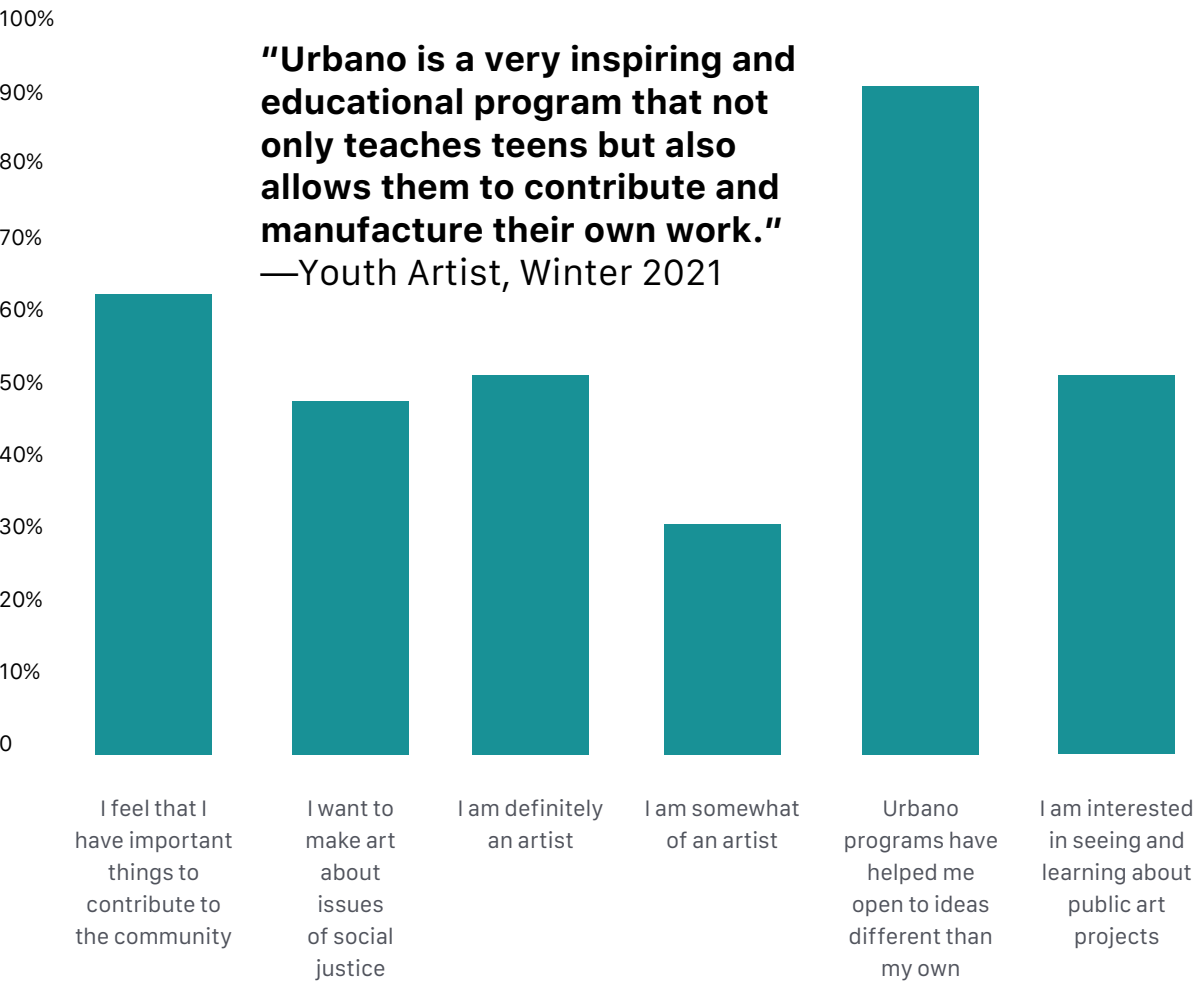
"Urbano is a very inspiring and educational program that not only teaches teens but also allows them to contribute and manufacture their own work."
—Youth Artist, Winter 2021

Evaluation & Data

Youth Programs

Goal

Offer high-quality arts education experiences, including opportunities to develop an awareness and appreciation of contemporary arts and of the role the arts can play to effect social change.

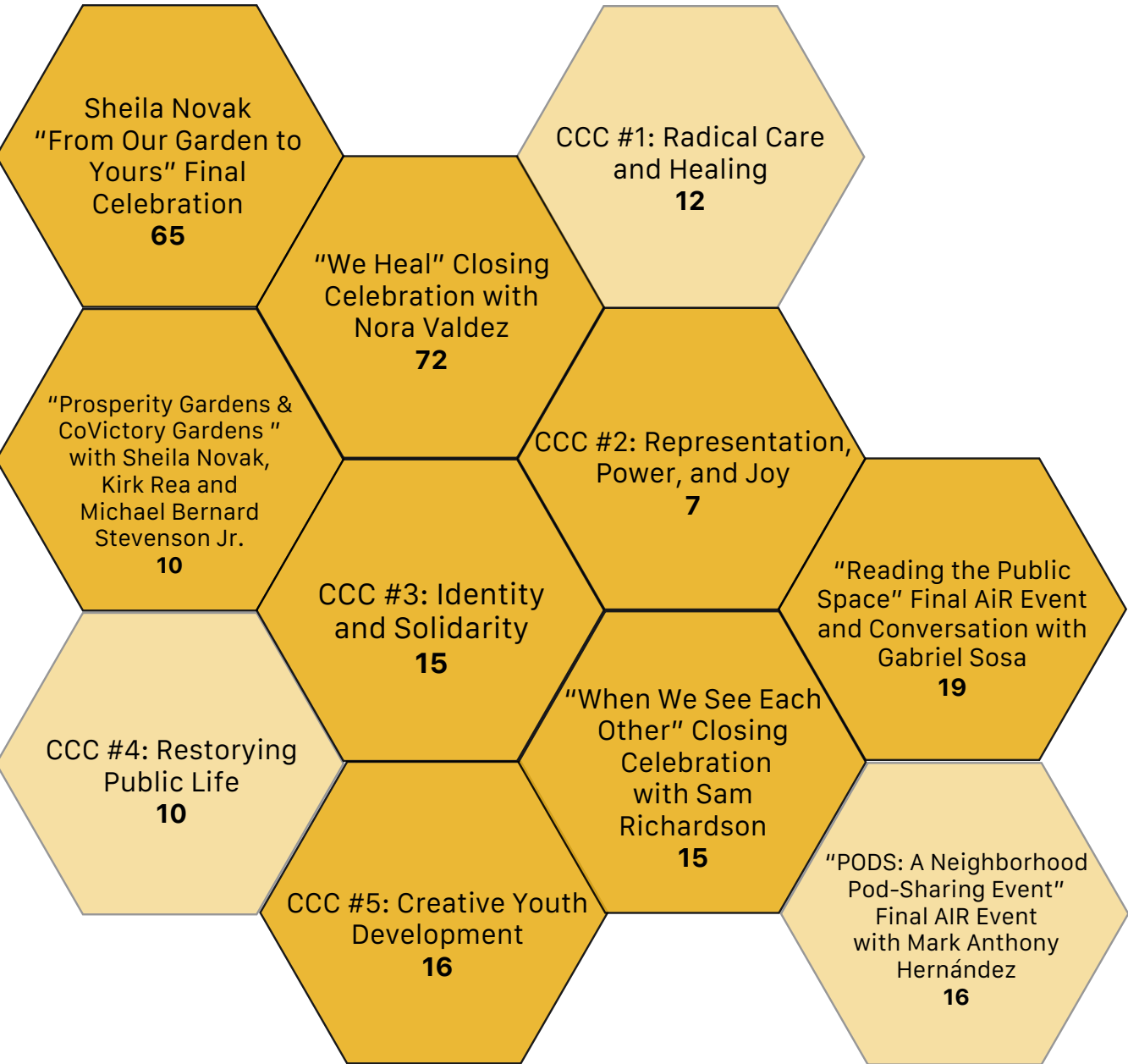


"I appreciate that Urbano educators curate spaces where youths are able to fully express themselves without societal restraints."
—Youth Artist, Winter 2021

Evaluation & Data

Audience

In FY21, Urbano held 12 virtual events at no cost, serving 250+ audience members.



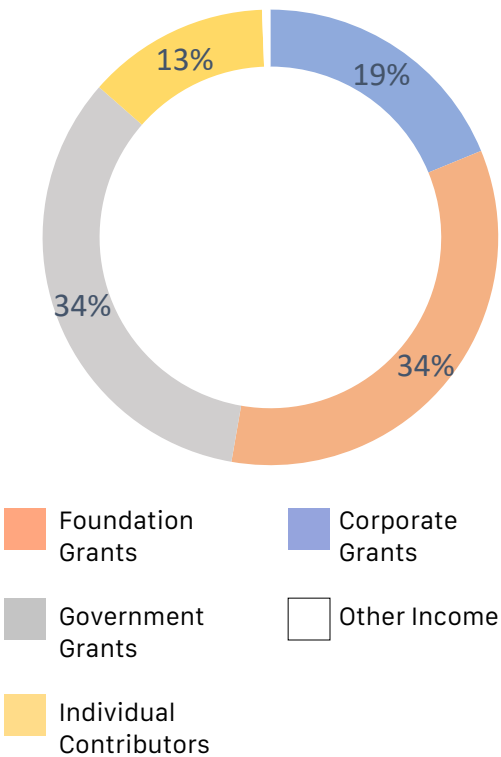
Financials FY20

Revenue & Expenses

Income

Corporate Grants	\$47,600
Foundation Grants	\$85,950
Government Grants	\$85,400
Individual Contributors	\$32,805
Other Income	\$1,500

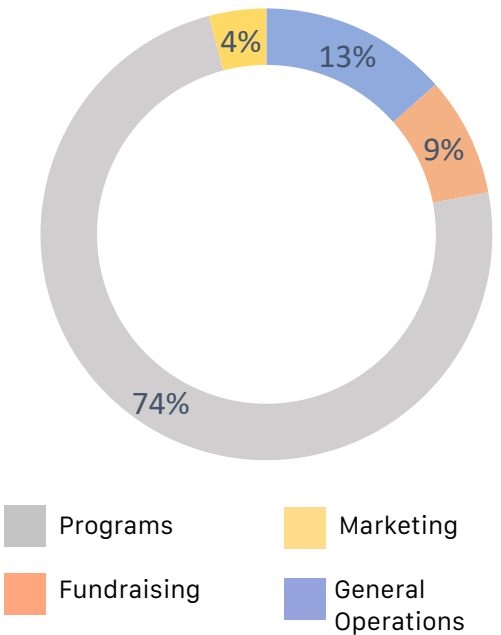
Total Income: \$253,255



Expenses

General Operations & Administrative	\$25,595
Fundraising	\$16,235
Programs	\$140,356
Marketing	\$7,790

Total Expenses: \$189,976



Financials

Partners & Supporters

We are grateful to our funders, donors, partners, and dedicated board, without whose support Urbano's FY21 programs and operations would not have been possible!

Board Members

Todd M. Gershkowitz (Board Chair)
Etty Padmodipoetro (Treasurer)
Betty Fulton
Nina Berger

Community Collaborators

Boston Medical Center
Pots on Wheels! (POW!)



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