

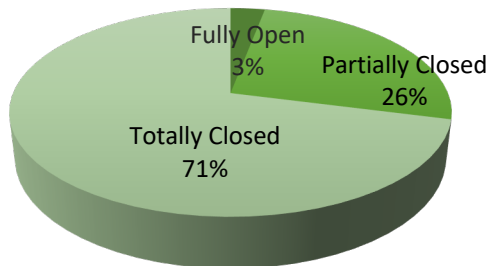
## COVID-19 Garden Impacts April 2020 Survey Results

To further elucidate the impacts of garden closures amid the pandemic, we administered an April 2020 survey. Our previous (March 2020) survey confirmed that public gardens were impacted heavily by COVID-19.

Between April 15 and 30, two hundred and seventy-three (273) gardens responded to the second survey. Results follow.

1. Almost all gardens are still closed. Only 3% (8) of reporting member gardens remained fully open, similar to the March 2020 survey results (4%; 11). Additionally, many gardens shifted from March to April from partially to fully closed, 60% to 71% (192).

Gardens' Closed/Open Status as of  
April 30



2. Gardens mainly closed from mandates, but it was also viewed as “the right thing to do”.

Federal recommendations combined with citywide and statewide mandates for shelter-in-place were cited by 67% (155) of reporting gardens as the reason they closed. An additional 9% (20) were mandated by their parent institution (e.g. universities). Taken together, approximately 3 of 4 gardens (76%) were mandated to close. While “Staff Concerns” were also cited at 40% (92) as a justification but only 2% (4) of gardens cited “concerns regarding insurance” as a reason for closure.

Over half (54%) of reporting gardens felt the decision to close “was the right thing to do.” This desire to do the right thing and assist during the pandemic went beyond closures as *many gardens donated PPE to hospitals and emergency responders, flowers to local nursery homes and hospitals, and/or provided free virtual educational services*. This is strongly indicative of the connections many public gardens have with their communities.



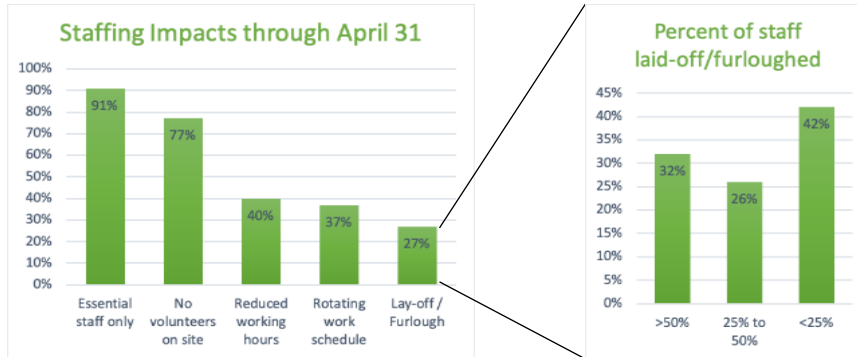
Photo: The Stevens-Coolidge Place

3. Garden staffing impacts are severe.

Staffing impacts were far-reaching with 91% (210) of gardens reporting essential staff only working on-site. Furthermore, 40% (84) of respondents cited reduced hours and 37% (77) were on rotating work schedules.

While there were concerns following the March survey that staff layoffs and furloughs would increase with time, April survey respondents reported only 27% (62) of gardens had resorted to staff layoffs or furloughs, down slightly from 30% of gardens in March. Of those, 32% (20) reported layoffs or furloughs of greater than 50% or more of their staff, while 26% (16) saw between 25%-50%.

Other staffing concerns were the inability to hire seasonal staff and hiring freezes, putting strain on those employees who remained at work. In addition, 77% of gardens suspended on-site volunteer programs. Volunteers make significant contributions to member gardens, providing 1 additional hour of labor for almost every 6 hours worked by garden staff based on benchmarking data.



Impacts of COVID-19 on staffing as a percent of respondents (n = 231). Respondents who laid-off or furloughed their employees (n= 63) further provided information as to the percent of employees affected.

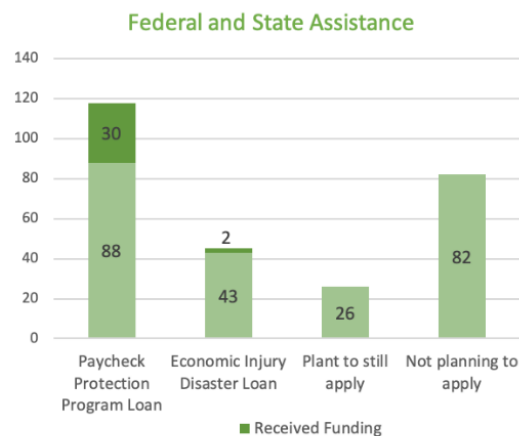
4. Continued expenses to barely maintain collections combined with a potentially grim financial picture for earned, contributed, and even public revenue are in the forecast.

*Our gardens are incurring significant expenses while attempting to maintain their fragile and at-risk living plant collections.* Benchmarking data shows that Horticulture and Facilities Expenses alone are collectively \$42M per month, yet only account for about 27% of a garden's total expenses (600 gardens; 3-yr average).

*Little or no earned or contributed revenue is occurring which normally makes up over 90% of a garden's total income.* Earned revenue estimates were similar to March 2020 survey results as 87% (199) of gardens cancelled some programming and greater than 56% (111) of reporting gardens had cancelled **all** programming. Contributed revenue generating opportunities also decreased with 65% (150) of gardens cancelling fundraising events and 57% (128) noting a reduction in membership sales.

*The much-heralded CARES Act created public funding for many in the form of loans and grants, but many gardens are left out.* A slim majority of gardens (53%) had already applied to receive federal, state, or local government assistance. While another 11% planned to do so well over a third (36%) said they were not planning to apply for any at all. Being a subsidiary of a larger parent organization like a City/County/College/University was a common reason. Of those who applied for

assistance, the vast majority (85%) applied for loans through the Small Business Administration (PPP or EIDL Loans). Only 21% of responding gardens had received approval for either/both loans at the time of the survey. The federal grant picture was less clear. Only 17 (9.8%) gardens had already applied for federal grants or planned to do so. It remains to be seen if gardens qualify or pursue grant programs for agencies such as NEA, NEH, and IMLS that received relatively small amounts of funding through the CARES Act.



Assistance applied for, number of respondents still planning to apply, or those not planning to apply. Number of respondents who have received funding is indicated in dark green.

Donations, funding, and alternative grant opportunities are needed to sustain public gardens while they are closed and also to assist them during their reopening processes so they may serve those who look to them for healing and restoration.