

National Endowment for the Arts



ARTISTS IN THE WORKFORCE 1990—2005



PART ONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report uses United States census occupation data to analyze artists' demographic and employment patterns. During the 1990s and the first few years of the 21st century, the number of artists grew at about the same pace as the U.S. labor force, keeping the proportion of artists at 1.4 percent of the labor force. This development follows two decades of dramatic growth—the number of artists more than doubled between 1970 and 1990, growing from less than 1 percent of the labor force to 1.4 percent. The U.S. labor force increased by 55 percent in the 1970s and 1980s, partly because women entered the labor force in larger numbers than in preceding decades, and partly because the baby boom generation was entering the workforce during those years.

Since 1990, the share of women artists has grown only slightly. Proportions of Asian and Hispanic artists have increased more significantly. Writers and authors, musicians, painters and architects tend to be older than the average U.S. worker, while many performing artists are younger than average. Artists have college degrees at double the rate of the total labor force. Dancers, announcers, and entertainers have lower educational levels, on average, than other artists, but many of them are enrolled in school. Artists are much more likely than other workers to be self-employed, and more likely than other workers to experience sporadic work hours and gaps in employment. With some exceptions, artists' incomes tend to be lower than those of other professionals, and their incomes have not grown significantly in recent years.

The report begins with a discussion of key findings, followed by 60 supporting tables derived from the 1990 and 2000 censuses and the 2003-2005 American Community Survey. The tables contain detailed information about artists that is not readily available in print or on the Internet. The tables, which appear in the second part of the report, are preceded by a "Guide to Tables and Terms" with definitions of the data. Also included

are three appendices that describe the census-defined artist occupations, the data sources, the accuracy of the estimates, and the new American Community Survey.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Nearly two million Americans are artists.

- 1.99 million Americans identified an artist occupation as their primary job.
- The total excludes many people with secondary employment as artists—an estimated 300,000 Americans.
- Designers are the single largest group of artists,¹ followed by performing artists such as actors, dancers, musicians, and announcers.

(See pages 4–6)

2. The number of artists has kept pace with the growth in the overall labor force.

- After doubling from 1970 to 1990, artists have begun to hold steady as a proportion of American workers (1.4 percent).
- Writers were among the fastest growing artist occupations from 1990 to 2005—growing at twice the rate of the total labor force.

(See pages 7–8)

3. Artists remain highly concentrated in urban areas.

- Half of all artists live in 30 metropolitan areas.
- More than one-fifth of all U.S. artists live in 5 major metropolitan areas: Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Boston.
- But as a percentage of the labor force, artists cluster in a diverse array of towns and cities.

(See pages 13–15)

¹ This category includes exhibit designers, industrial designers, fashion designers, and many other categories detailed in Appendix A.

4. The artist population, like the labor force, is becoming more diverse.

- The percentage of non-Hispanic white artists dipped from 86 percent to 80 percent between 1990 and 2005.
- In 2005, Hispanic, Asian, and Native-American artists accounted for nearly 15 percent of all artists—up 6 points from 1990.
- Over a 15-year period, the proportion of African-American artists has remained steady, at 5 percent.

(See pages 16–17)

5. Artists are generally more educated than the workforce as a whole.

- Artists are twice as likely as the overall labor force to have graduated from college.
- The proportion of artists with degrees is rising—from 51 percent in 2000 to 55 percent in 2003-2005.
- Architects, writers, and producers show the highest education levels.

(See pages 16–17)

6. Artists are 3.5 times more likely than other workers to be self-employed.

- More than one in three artists is self-employed, compared with less than 10 percent of the labor force.
- 40 percent of all musicians work in the nonprofit sector—far more than any other artist group.

(See pages 18–20)

7. Fewer artists have full-year, full-time jobs than other workers.

- One-third of all artists work fewer than 50 weeks a year.
- 28 percent of artists work for less than 35 hours a week.

- Actors have the lowest level of full-year, full-time employment—15 percent.

(See pages 18–20)

8. Artists generally earn less than workers with similar levels of education.

- Artists earn \$6,000 less annually than other “professional” workers.
- Dancers have the lowest median annual income—\$15,000.²

(See pages 18–20)

9. Women remain underrepresented in several artist occupations.

- Four out of five architects and announcers, and almost two-thirds of musicians, producers, and photographers, are men.
- Yet three out of four dancers are women, as are more than half of all designers and writers.

(See pages 16–17)

10. The West and South have seen the greatest growth in artists by state.

- The West was led by Nevada, Utah, Oregon, and Arizona. In these states, the artist population grew at 2.5 to 5 times the rate of that of the U.S. labor force (11.6 percent) from 1990 to 2000.
- Florida and Georgia led the South with a 23 percent growth in artists—double the national average.
- 29 percent of all artists now live in the West, and another 29 percent in the South.

(See pages 9–12)

² These are 1999 median earnings reported in the 2000 census.

Top 10 metropolitan areas¹³ ranked by percentage of artists in the labor force

Total artists		Announcers		Fine artists, art directors, and animators	
1. San Francisco, CA (PMSA)	3.71	1. Alexandria, LA	0.16	1. Santa Fe, NM	1.12
2. Santa Fe, NM	3.36	2. Gainesville, FL	0.13	2. San Francisco, CA (PMSA)	0.55
3. Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA (PMSA)	3.26	3. South Bend, IN	0.13	3. Santa Rosa, CA (PMSA)	0.39
4. New York, NY (PMSA)	3.12	4. Bangor, ME	0.11	4. Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA (PMSA)	0.38
5. Stamford-Norwalk, CT (PMSA)	3.01	5. Panama City, FL	0.11	5. New York, NY (PMSA)	0.38
6. Boulder-Longmont, CO (PMSA)	2.64	6. Abilene, TX	0.11	6. Barnstable-Yarmouth, MA	0.37
7. Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA (PMSA)	2.37	7. Duluth-Superior, MN-WI	0.11	7. Stamford-Norwalk, CT (PMSA)	0.37
8. Danbury, CT (PMSA)	2.28	8. Danville, VA	0.10	8. Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA (PMSA)	0.37
9. Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc, CA	2.25	9. Burlington, VT	0.10	9. Fort Collins-Loveland, CO	0.36
10. Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA (PMSA)	2.16	10. Lubbock, TX	0.10	10. San Luis Obispo-Atascadero-Paso Robles, CA	0.35

Actors		Architects		Dancers and choreographers	
1. Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA (PMSA)	0.34	1. Santa Fe, NM	0.51	1. Las Vegas, NV-AZ	0.16
2. New York, NY (PMSA)	0.17	2. San Francisco, CA (PMSA)	0.50	2. Myrtle Beach, SC	0.12
3. Medford-Ashland, OR	0.13	3. Boulder-Longmont, CO (PMSA)	0.44	3. Honolulu, HI	0.09
4. Orlando, FL	0.08	4. Charlottesville, VA	0.38	4. Flint, MI (PMSA)	0.08
5. Wilmington, NC	0.07	5. Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA (PMSA)	0.37	5. Gadsden, AL	0.08
6. Ventura, CA (PMSA)	0.07	6. Boston, MA-NH (PMSA)	0.36	6. Reno, NV	0.07
7. Jersey City, NJ (PMSA)	0.07	7. Stamford-Norwalk, CT (PMSA)	0.36	7. Orlando, FL	0.06
8. Stamford-Norwalk, CT (PMSA)	0.06	8. Danbury, CT (PMSA)	0.30	8. Anchorage, AK	0.06
9. San Francisco, CA (PMSA)	0.05	9. Trenton, NJ (PMSA)	0.29	9. Tucson, AZ	0.06
10. Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc, CA	0.05	10. Oakland, CA (PMSA)	0.28	10. Jacksonville, NC	0.06

¹³ The general concept of a metropolitan area (MA) is one of a large population nucleus. If an area conforms with the federal Office of Management and Budget's definition of a metropolitan area (MA) and has 1 million people or more, then two or more primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSAs) may be defined within it. When PMSAs are established, the larger MA of which they are part is designated a consolidated metropolitan statistical area (CMSA).

The tables above consist only of MAs and PMSAs, and not CMSAs. For example, the PMSAs of New York, Stamford-Norwalk, and Danbury are all part of New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA. Similarly, the PMSAs of Santa Cruz-Watsonville and San Francisco are part of the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA CMSA.

TABLE 44
Top 50 metropolitan areas ranked by number of artists as a percent of the labor force, 2000

Rank of MSA by artists as a percent of the labor force	Metropolitan Area	Total civilian labor force	Total artists	Total artists as percent of labor force
	Total in United States	137,668,735	1,927,400	1.40
	Total in Metropolitan Areas	109,004,137	1,685,403	1.55
	Percent in Metropolitan Areas	79.2	87.4	
1	San Francisco, CA PMSA	955,020	35,470	3.71
2	Santa Fe, NM MSA	78,013	2,625	3.36
3	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	4,307,710	140,620	3.26
4	New York, NY PMSA	4,268,149	132,990	3.12
5	Stamford-Norwalk, CT PMSA	181,171	5,455	3.01
6	Boulder-Longmont, CO PMSA	169,889	4,485	2.64
7	Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA PMSA	137,684	3,265	2.37
8	Danbury, CT PMSA	117,533	2,674	2.28
9	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc, CA MSA	193,717	4,359	2.25
10	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA PMSA	1,319,309	28,535	2.16
10	Nashville, TN MSA	661,550	14,295	2.16
12	Boston, MA-NH PMSA	1,823,510	38,885	2.13
13	Bloomington, IN MSA	64,641	1,308	2.02
14	Orlando, FL MSA	840,083	16,835	2.00
15	San Luis Obispo-Atascadero-Paso Robles, CA MSA	116,558	2,320	1.99
16	Jersey City, NJ PMSA	297,490	5,895	1.98
17	Santa Rosa, CA PMSA	239,432	4,680	1.95
18	Barnstable-Yarmouth, MA MSA	76,793	1,484	1.93
19	Fort Collins-Loveland, CO MSA	142,884	2,730	1.91
20	Austin-San Marcos, TX MSA	688,517	12,935	1.88
21	Madison, WI MSA	255,876	4,735	1.85
22	Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA MSA	1,024,868	18,850	1.84
23	Oakland, CA PMSA	1,207,247	22,120	1.83
23	Ventura, CA PMSA	367,496	6,725	1.83
23	Orange County, CA PMSA	1,409,925	25,795	1.83
26	Bergen-Passaic, NJ PMSA	686,064	12,450	1.81
26	Lawrence, KS MSA	57,880	1,049	1.81
28	Charlottesville, VA MSA	81,134	1,459	1.80
29	San Diego, CA MSA	1,319,474	23,510	1.78
29	Medford-Ashland, OR MSA	87,115	1,550	1.78
29	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV PMSA	2,663,850	47,360	1.78
32	Sarasota-Bradenton, FL MSA	256,566	4,545	1.77
32	Gainesville, FL MSA	113,192	2,005	1.77
34	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	1,678,218	28,685	1.71
34	Honolulu, HI MSA	408,644	6,979	1.71
34	Bremerton, WA PMSA	104,461	1,784	1.71
37	Albuquerque, NM MSA	349,108	5,920	1.70
38	Trenton, NJ PMSA	180,201	3,020	1.68
39	Naples, FL MSA	109,375	1,830	1.67
40	Provo-Orem, UT MSA	174,405	2,900	1.66
41	West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL MSA	510,018	8,435	1.65
41	Tucson, AZ MSA	391,724	6,460	1.65
41	Portland, ME MSA	135,247	2,230	1.65
41	Burlington, VT MSA	96,076	1,584	1.65
41	Missoula, MT MSA	53,701	884	1.65
46	Asheville, NC MSA	115,164	1,880	1.63
46	Eugene-Springfield, OR MSA	166,046	2,705	1.63
46	Wilmington, NC MSA	120,067	1,954	1.63
49	State College, PA MSA	68,399	1,109	1.62
50	Las Vegas, NV-AZ MSA	760,390	12,270	1.61
50	Salinas, CA MSA	179,620	2,894	1.61
50	New London-Norwich, CT-RI MSA	148,388	2,390	1.61
50	Miami, FL PMSA	1,009,419	16,225	1.61

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000 Special Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) tabulations.