

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
CULTURAL WORKFORCE FORUM**

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Summary of Proceedings

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Contents

Preface.....	3
Summary of Proceedings	4
Panel One: What We Know About Artists and How We Know It	4
Panel Two: Putting the Research to Work	7
Panel Three: Widening the Lens to Capture Other Cultural Workers	11
Summary and Recommendations for Future Research	16
Appendix One: Meeting Agenda	23
Appendix Two: Participants List	25
Appendix Three: Recommended Reading	27
Appendix Four: Sources of National Occupational Data	34
Appendix Five: Research about Artists in the Workforce: A Labor Perspective	36

Preface

Since late 2009, the National Endowment for the Arts has maintained an archived webcast of the Cultural Workforce Forum, an event sponsored by the NEA's Office of Research & Analysis. The webcast and related materials, including a list of participants and a guide to research resources, are available here: <http://www.nea.gov/research/Workforce-Forum/index.html>

A year and a half has passed since the convening. It featured, among other topics, discussion of a valuable new tool for cultural policy-makers and researchers: the U.S. Census Bureau's annual American Community Survey (ACS), which has replaced the decennial census surveys as a source of detailed occupational data.

The NEA is now preparing a research report on the artist workforce as identified through ACS for the years 2005 through 2009. The report will include data on the number and characteristics of American adults who work in one of 11 artist occupations as their primary job (by most hours worked per week). Scheduled for release in the fall of 2011, the report also will present findings about the various industries and sectors in which artists are employed, and it will explore similar variables for Americans who obtained an arts degree from college.

The report will provide a format for subsequent annual reporting by the NEA on artist workforce trends. In doing so, the report will extend the Arts Endowment's decades-long inquiry into the status and vitality of artists as a segment of the U.S. labor market. The NEA's most recent, comprehensive report of artist employment appeared in 2008. Since then, the NEA has published research on women artists, artists and the recession, and, most recently, artist employment projections through 2018.

As the NEA begins to tackle new research questions arising from American Community Survey data, it is instructive to revisit the absorbing dialogue that occurred in late 2009 between researchers and policy-makers, arts organizations and artist unions. The Cultural Workforce Forum voiced many themes and topics that the NEA's Office of Research & Analysis aims to address with future research, in 2011 and the years beyond.

For instance, how can we better track artist jobs as secondary employment? What kinds of non-artist occupations should we routinely track, and how? Which occupations can be called "creative," and where should we look for these workers? How can new technologies, data sources, and methods assist researchers to answer these questions?

This document, a summary of proceedings from the November 2009 forum, makes no attempt to resolve such queries; instead, it unleashes many more. Prepared by independent consultant Deirdre Gaquin, and edited by NEA research staff, it outlines questions for the next generation of publicly funded research about artists and cultural workers. Problems range from the definitional issues cited above to the identification of artists and cultural workers not found in existing datasets. Over the next several months, through its Office of Research & Analysis, the NEA will resume these challenges in earnest.

Summary of Proceedings

Panel One: What We Know About Artists and How We Know It

The first panel consisted of three presentations:

- *NEA Research on Artists in the Workforce* by Tom Bradshaw, National Endowment for the Arts
- *Artist Labor Markets* by Gregory Wassall, Northeastern University
- *Artist Careers* by Joan Jeffri, Columbia University

NEA Research on Artists in the Workforce

The opening presentation reviewed the NEA's historic role in studying artists as a sizeable segment of the U.S. workforce. NEA Research Officer Tom Bradshaw¹ explained that the NEA's studies in this area fall into three kinds. One kind uses primary data collected from specific artist groups, such as choreographers, visual artists, or jazz artists. The second involves data collection through membership surveys of artist organizations, such as unions or service organizations. The third category of study uses secondary data culled by statistical agencies such as the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The NEA's 2008 report, *Artists in the Workforce: 1990 to 2005*, falls into the third category. By utilizing data from the U.S. Census Bureau (from 1970 onward) and prior NEA analyses, the report identifies two million artists.² The NEA has identified 11 artist occupations from the U.S. Census Bureau's occupational classification system.³ It is important to note that people who have more than one job are counted only for the job in which they work the most number of hours. Yet artists typically work multiple jobs. Bradshaw explained that, when compared with other workers, artists tend to have high education levels and self-employment rates. Compared with workers who have similar levels of education, however, artists have relatively low incomes and they work fewer hours per week and weeks per year.

In addition, NEA Research Note #97, *Artists in a Year of Recession: Impact on Jobs in 2008*,⁴ found that the increase in unemployment during 2008 was greater for most artists than for other "professional" occupations.⁵ Even architects and designers, who tend to have low levels of unemployment, were hit hard by the economy due to declines in the construction industry.

¹ Tom Bradshaw left the NEA in December 2010.

² The 11 artist occupations that the NEA has identified are: architects; art directors, fine artists, animators; designers; actors; producers and directors; dancers and choreographers; musicians and singers; announcers; writers and authors; photographers; and other entertainers and performers.

³ <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/ioindex/overview.html>

⁴ <http://www.nea.gov/research/Notes/97.pdf>

⁵ In January 2010, after the Cultural Workforce Forum, an update to this Research Note found that unemployment increased and labor force participation decreased more among artists than among the labor force as a whole. See <http://www.nea.gov/research/Notes/97-update.pdf>

Artist Labor Markets

Greg Wassall of Northeastern University presented on **Artist Labor Markets**. His talk used U.S. Census data to provide an historical perspective on artists from 1940 to the present. According to Wassall, Census definitions of artist occupations have changed through the years, making trend comparisons difficult. For example, a code change in 2000 made it impossible to identify college teachers by subject. Wassall reiterated that Census Bureau data pertain to the occupation in which the person has worked the most hours; this methodology, he noted, has the potential to miss many artists.

Wassall's analysis of the years prior to 1970 shows that many of the trends identified in NEA's *Artists in the Workforce* report are not new: through the decades, artists have been more likely to be self-employed, to work part-time hours, and to have higher unemployment rates and lower incomes than other professionals. He noted that many artist occupations fall into a "winner-take-all" scenario whereby very few actors, musicians, authors, and other artists are high income-earners.

Group Discussion

Subsequent discussion centered on the process of identifying artist occupations via large government datasets. Some participants noted that the existing categories are often inadequate for comprehensive research on artist occupations.

Some participants suggested that researchers studying artists should make an effort to provide feedback to the interagency groups that produce the taxonomies used to inform artist definitions. (For example, although occupation and industry coding schemes have been defined to capture all occupations, they are redefined each decade.) Yet participants agreed that researchers should also recognize the limitations of large, household surveys, which cannot include questions aimed specifically at artists. Other topics discussed were the lack of detailed data on secondary occupations—a key issue for artists, who often work more than one job—and whether the time that performing artists spend in auditions would qualify as "hours worked."

Artist Careers

Shifting the focus away from large government databases, Joan Jeffri of Columbia University⁶ spoke about **Artist Careers**, drawing from her many discrete surveys of artists.⁷ In particular, she discussed her studies of jazz musicians in four cities and aging visual artists in New York City.⁸ Both efforts used an innovative sampling method called Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS). With RDS, the survey begins with a small number of respondents, and each respondent is given coupons to distribute to colleagues. Through this method, one jazz vocalist led to 110

⁶ As of September 1, 2011, Joan Jeffri will be affiliated with the National Center for Creative Aging in Washington, D.C.

⁷ <http://arts.tc.columbia.edu/rcac/>

⁸ The three-volume study can be found here: <http://www.nea.gov/research/JazzExecSummary.pdf>, <http://www.nea.gov/research/JazzII.pdf>, <http://www.nea.gov/research/JazzIII.pdf>

jazz musicians. An added benefit is a measure of how people are socially networked to each other. The study of jazz musicians also utilized a sample from the American Federation of Musicians, permitting analysis of differences between union and non-union musicians in terms of characteristics such as employment patterns and health insurance.

Jeffri concluded by outlining challenges of studying specific artist groups, including the critical question of how to define a professional artist. Key definitions chosen by participants in 20 years of studies tended to align with the statement “I make a living as an artist” among performing artists, and “I have an inner drive to make art” among visual artists. She addressed the NEA directly by expressing her preference for the agency to focus on artists, rather than expanding its scope to include “cultural workers.”

Artist Research—Union Perspectives

The final speaker on the first panel, David Cohen of the AFL-CIO’s Department for Professional Employees, presented **Artist Research—Union Perspectives**.⁹ Cohen proposed that the primary goal of research on artists is to enable policymakers at the federal, state, and municipal levels to serve arts professionals more effectively. He stressed the importance of good data and collaboration among government agencies, foundations, arts organizations, unions, and frontline professionals to design research questions.

Cohen also recommended more longitudinal studies and time diaries—methods that could better track career arcs, the impact of changing media technologies, and the interaction of multiple occupations and sources of income. The results of such studies could then be used to improve questions for and interpretation of more general survey data.

Cohen emphasized that unions can bring value to research on artists through collaboration in order to: design and refine research; map and propel outreach to research respondents; and check that respondents hear a researcher’s questions as the researcher intended them.

Group Discussion

In the discussion that followed, a participant asked Cohen for the best way to solicit cooperation from local unions in light of their strong need to protect member privacy. Cohen explained that it is essential to show how the research will benefit union members. The value of comparing characteristics of artists who are union members to those who are not was also discussed, as was the question of surveying former union members about their reasons for dropping membership. Further questions addressed Jeffri’s recent research on aging artists. For instance, was there any consideration of partnership with agencies that focus on health and aging to address some of the medical issues that surfaced during the study? What were the financial assets of aging artists who were still practicing their arts?

⁹ See Appendix Five for a labor perspective on research about artists in the workforce.

Panel Two: Putting the Research to Work

The second panel of the day consisted of four presentations:

- *Cultural Vitality: Investing in Creativity* by Maria Rosario Jackson, The Urban Institute
- *Artists in the Economic Recession* by Judilee Reed, Leveraging Investments in Creativity
- *Teaching Artists Research Project* by Nick Rabkin, NORC at University of Chicago
- *Strategic National Arts Alumni Project* by Steven Tepper, Vanderbilt University

Cultural Vitality: Investing in Creativity

Maria Rosario Jackson of The Urban Institute spoke about **Cultural Vitality: Investing in Creativity**, which focused on artists who pursue “hybrid” work.¹⁰ Hybrid workers are artists who function at the intersection of the arts and other sectors, even those not characterized as cultural. While they may be employed by non-artistic organizations, their actual work meets their personal artistic goals. Jackson explained that hybrid work may offer more stability than traditional artistic work environments. She has discovered that hybrid workers are often motivated by a desire to be of service to their communities and to address societal issues outside the arts field. Although the concept of hybrid work has been around for a long time, it may be especially suited to today’s economy with respect to technological innovation, environmental concerns, and heightened interest in community service and civic engagement.

Teaching artists represent one of the most identifiable forms of hybrid work, and one of a few that have some formalized education and professional development opportunities. Jackson’s studies indicate that hybrid workers often feel isolated due to a lack of professional networks and access to employment opportunities. Finally, gathering reliable data on artists performing hybrid work can prove more challenging than gathering data on artists in more conventional arts careers.

Artists in the Economic Recession

Next, Judilee Reed of Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC) spoke about **Artists in the Economic Recession**. LINC is a 10-year initiative to improve artists’ ability to make work, build social capital, and contribute to democratic values. LINC operates four basic programs.

- The *Creative Communities Program* offers local challenge grants to help communities address issues such as space, health insurance, healthcare, training and professional development for artists, as well as information infrastructures and direct support of artists.
- *Space for Change* is designed to support and promote culturally equitable and affordable facilities for artists where they might live and/or work.
- The *National Artists Health Insurance Healthcare Initiative*, implemented in close partnership with the Actors Fund, connects artists with the information services they need to obtain affordable health insurance and health care.
- *Artography* is a funding and documentation program, administered by LINC on behalf of the Ford Foundation, to support artistic practice through the lens of demographic change.

¹⁰ <http://www.urban.org/publications/411311.html>

Reed reported on the 2009 *Artists and the Economic Recession Survey*¹¹ that LINC conducted with the Helicon Collaborative and the Princeton Survey Research Associates. In partnership with 35 arts service organizations, LINC distributed the survey to 75,000 artists and received 5,300 completed surveys in the first wave (a second group—using a snowball survey method—had not yet been analyzed). These 5,300 responses were weighted to reflect the national population of artists, based on Census Bureau estimates.

The survey produced a wide variety of information on artists' employment, education, income, health insurance, resources, and attitudes. Two-thirds of the artists held at least one job that did not involve art-making, and about half reported a decrease in their art-related income from 2008 to 2009.

Many respondents used the Internet to network, to locate information and services, and to expand training and skills, but no respondents cited selling work on the Internet as an activity they performed often. Many were concerned about loss of income, rising debt, low morale, and loss of healthcare. When asked which resources would be helpful, artist-respondents cited grants and fellowships, showcases, networking opportunities, supplies and equipment, marketing assistance, and business counseling. Due to the richness of the data, LINC and Helicon are considering further research to analyze employment patterns, Internet usage, health insurance and health care, and other topics.

Group Discussion

Many participants showed interest in Jackson's definition of hybrid artists. Jackson offered two examples. One is a sculptor who works to turn water treatment facilities into public accessible spaces and uses her art to teach about environmental issues as they relate to water treatment and water as a natural resource. Another example is of artists who work at a conservatory for health education at Kaiser Permanente; the jobs of these full-time employees include writing, producing, acting, and other artistic pursuits. The distinction—or lack thereof—between professional and amateur artists was addressed in the context of Native American artists with ceremonial goals, student artists who design college majors to complement their artistic goals, and the importance of community spaces (and virtual spaces) that foster artistic expression.

Teaching Artists Research Project

Nick Rabkin of NORC at the University of Chicago spoke about the **Teaching Artists Research Project**. He began his presentation by defining teaching artists as individuals who bring people into the process of making art and engaging them in new artistic experiences. Rabkin stated that teaching artists are a source of innovation in both arts and education today and they are an essential element of any strategy to expand arts education in the United States. The Teaching Artists Research Project¹² aims to understand how teaching is a component of an artist's work, as well as decipher who teaching artists are, what they do, and the terms and conditions of their

¹¹ <http://www.lincnet.net/artists-and-recession-survey>

¹² <http://www.norc.org/projects/teaching+artists+research+project.htm>

employment. Other goals of the study are to understand teaching artists as an element within the larger infrastructure of arts and education and to understand how to support their work and develop them as a resource.

The study was conducted in 12 sites throughout the U.S. In addition to collecting demographic and employment data, the study inquired about the respondents' motivations for teaching, their attitudes toward the problems they confront, and the professional development issues they have faced. Of the roughly 2,500 respondents, the largest group (over one-third) were in the visual arts and the rest were distributed across a range of disciplines (music, dance, theater, media arts, creative writing/poetry, and "other"). Fifty percent of respondents had masters degrees or higher. Two-thirds of the degrees were in an art form, while 13 percent were in education.

It is common for the place that employs the artist to differ from the site where the work occurs. More than half of teaching artists worked for nonprofit arts organizations—community centers and theaters—although much of that work is done at public schools. Artists also work frequently in prisons, hospitals, parks, and senior centers.

The study raises two big policy questions, Rabkin said. First, should policies and programs display better balance between supporting the active creation of art and supporting the final product? Arts organizations tend to pay more attention to the output of the artistic process—the work that goes up on the stage or the gallery wall. Teaching artists, by contrast, focus on arts creation—bringing people into the making of and engagement with art. The second policy question concerns schools: is there a way to reconcile the historic tension between teaching artists and those educators to whom we usually refer as arts specialists—certified art teachers and music teachers, for example?

Strategic National Arts Alumni Project

Steven Tepper of Vanderbilt University spoke about the **Strategic National Arts Alumni Project** (SNAAP),¹³ an annual online survey, data management, and institutional improvement system designed to enhance the impact of arts education. SNAAP consists of surveying alumni of arts high schools, independent art and design colleges, conservatories, and the arts departments and schools of colleges.

The project aims to understand how arts education connects to workforce preparedness. These schools have no systematic information on how many of their graduates find employment in their field of training. Furthermore, most studies of artists omit people who trained as artists and then pursued other professions. By sampling students who trained as artists—both those who went on to have careers as artists and those who did not—researchers potentially can discover the factors that led to one pathway or the other.

In addition to informing arts programs about their graduates, SNAAP serves a broader policy purpose by reporting regularly on a slice of America's creative workforce. Tepper suggested that ultimately it might serve a similar purpose as the National Science Foundation's Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering.

¹³ <http://snaap.indiana.edu/>

The SNAAP project is still relatively new. In 2008, 23,000 individuals from 40 institutions were asked to participate in an online survey and a total of 1,739 graduates completed the survey. The survey collected information on employment status, multiple job-holdings, networking, career opportunities and barriers, satisfaction with training in the arts and in other areas, and levels of satisfaction with artistic opportunities. In addition, institutional reports have been generated for the 40 institutions.¹⁴

Of particular interest to researchers seeking qualitative data on artists is the survey's "life map." This data visualization tool organizes information reported by the respondent. The survey automatically populates certain elements on the life map—where the respondents went to school, important people in their lives, transitions and barriers, jobs and opportunities, etc. After completing the survey, the respondents can manipulate their maps, making some aspects more important than others, establishing connections, and adding new elements. This tool helps the respondents conceive of their lives in a visual format and make connections between different aspects of their life. However, the results can prove challenging to analyze.

¹⁴ Data from the 2010 SNAAP survey can be found here: <http://snaap.indiana.edu/snaapshot/index.cfm>

Panel Three: Widening the Lens to Capture Other Cultural Workers

The third and final panel consisted of three presentations:

- *Artists in the Greater Cultural Economy* by Ann Markusen, University of Minnesota
- *The Creative Class: Who's In, Who's Out?* by Tom Bradshaw, National Endowment for the Arts
- *American Community Survey: An Emerging Data Set* by Jennifer Day, U.S. Census Bureau

Artists in the Greater Cultural Economy

Ann Markusen of the University of Minnesota began the panel with a presentation on **Artists in the Greater Cultural Economy**.¹⁵ She asserted that how we define artists is important and that using “nested” definitions can be a highly useful approach. The definition of artist can range from a narrow core group of artist types—for example, visual artists, performing artists, writers, and authors—to a broader definition that includes core artists plus designers, media and communications workers, and other related job categories. The latter group is often referred to as the “cultural workforce” and is similar to Richard Florida’s definition of “creative class.”

Markusen explained that artists are embedded in “art worlds,” and she recommended Howard Becker’s book *Art Worlds*, which analyzes the networks of individuals and organizations that collectively produce art. Close to half of artists are self-employed, but the other half work for employers, both not-for-profit and for-profit. Some work in cultural industries, others do not, and many work simultaneously in commercial, not-for-profit, and community sectors. Many of the problems we think about as “artist problems” are often more about self-employed artists than about artists who work for organizations. The level of self-employment varies by discipline, ranging from 65 percent (writers and authors) to 28 percent (architects). Another issue that frequently arises is secondary employment. For many artists, making art is their second job. For instance, one-third of musicians list their musical occupation as secondary employment.

Artists work in a variety of industries, those we normally associate with the arts—performing arts, publishing, and promoting—as well as those we do not—sports, computer system design, and other professional, scientific, and technical services. For instance, artists make up roughly 10 percent of the advertising industry workforce, and half of these workers are “core” artists—visual artists, performing artists, musicians, singers, writers, and authors. It is important to study the employment patterns of these non-cultural industries along with the cultural industries when analyzing the artist workforce, Markusen suggested.

Markusen then referred to her study entitled *Crossover: How Artists Build Careers across Commercial, Non-Profit, and Community Work*. An online survey was administered to California artists—benchmarked to U.S. Census numbers—to explore individual artists’ connections to the three sectors: commercial, non-profit, and community work. The study found that although 51 percent of respondents earned more money in the commercial sector than

¹⁵ <http://www.hhh.umn.edu/projects/prie/>

elsewhere, only 39 percent worked more hours in that sector. When asked for their preferences were money not an issue, most said they prefer to spend time working in the community.

The artists were also asked to describe the importance of each sector in helping them develop as artists. The commercial sector provided an understanding of artistic and professional conventions, broader visibility, and social networking that enhanced career opportunities and yielded higher rates of return. Not-for-profit experience gave aesthetic and emotional satisfaction and opportunities to explore new media and to collaborate with artists across media. Through the community sector, artists were able to affirm their cultural identity, pursue political and social justice goals, and to enrich community life.

Artists are embedded in places and spaces and one must look at various data sources to understand residence and migration patterns. Because of high levels of self-employment, artists tend to be quite mobile, though they concentrate in metropolitan areas. Los Angeles not only had the highest proportion of artists in its population—it also has gained two artists for every artist that left between 1995 and 2000.

Some fast-growing cities, like San Jose and Houston, experienced net losses of artist populations during the five-year period and also had low concentrations of artists. Phoenix had a high rate of artist in-migration, but its concentration of artists was still low. A smaller study of artist migration in Minnesota showed the importance of age for artist migration. Although young artists tend to migrate to the big cities, they tend to move to smaller areas in mid-life and in their retirement years.

The Creative Class: Who's In, Who's Out?

Next, Tom Bradshaw of the NEA gave a talk entitled **The Creative Class: Who's In, Who's Out?** He began with a reference to Richard Florida's book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, in which he discussed people involved in highly creative occupations and their importance to the economy. Florida's definition of "creative class" had been discussed earlier in the day, when Ann Markusen pointed out that Florida's definition (occupations driven by knowledge and ideas) made up approximately 52 percent of the labor force.

Bradshaw also summarized an article written by Tim Wojan and David McGranahan of the Economic Research Service (ERS) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture: *The Creative Class: A Key to Rural Growth*.¹⁶ To refine the definition of "creative class," Wojan and McGranahan excluded occupations that had numbers proportional to the populations served, like school teachers, judges, and medical doctors. Still, their definition of creative class includes many occupations, with artists making up a small portion of them.

Wojan and McGranahan ranked all U.S. counties by the proportion of residents employed in "creative class" occupations per capita, and the top 25 percent were considered "creative-class counties." Although the creative class is predominantly urban, about 11 percent of non-metro counties ranked as creative-class counties. Counties high in natural amenities were most likely

¹⁶ <http://www.ers.usda.gov/amberwaves/april07/features/creative.htm>

to be creative-class magnets. Pitkin County in Colorado, for example, which contains Aspen, had the largest creative-class proportion of all non-metro counties in 1990 and 2000.

Counties dominated by colleges and universities also had higher creative-class proportions. The creative class was strongly associated with growth in rural areas from 1990 to 2004. Other non-metro counties grew relatively slowly in the 1990s, but creative class non-metro counties gained jobs over the same period at a faster rate than their metro counterparts. Despite an urban affinity, the creative class can be drawn out of cities to high-amenity rural locations. Their activities, in turn, appear to generate new jobs and local growth.

American Community Survey: An Emerging Data Set

The final presentation of the day was **American Community Survey: An Emerging Data Set**, an overview of the new American Community Survey by Jennifer Day of the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁷ The ACS is one component of the reengineered decennial census. A continuous survey that provides estimates every year, the ACS is designed to address the nation's need for more current information on the characteristics of population and housing.

The 2000 decennial census included two forms, a long form, and a short form. Most housing units received the short form but about 17 percent, or one in six, received the long form. For the 2010 Census, however, all households received only the short form, which collected the most basic demographic and housing data. The 2010 Census did not collect any of the detailed demographic, social, economic and housing data that is now being gathered through the ACS.¹⁸

The NEA has already begun to use the ACS to study artists, and much of the other research cited during the forum used the decennial census long-form data. Data from the ACS offers several benefits when compared with other sources of occupation data, such as employer-based surveys and administrative records. The ACS offers people the opportunity to describe the activities of their jobs, while other sources ask employers for a list of job titles. The ACS captures people who are self-employed and unpaid family workers who are not usually covered in employer-based collections, and it captures people who are not working. Its massive sample size gives the ACS obvious advantages over the CPS and other household surveys.

For example, the survey enables extensive geographic detail and variable detail and provides information on the 505 occupations for which the Census Bureau collects data, including the artist occupations. The ACS also offers the ability to develop cross-tabulations of multiple categories, and it can measure these changes over time.

The ACS identifies artists through two occupational questions about the survey respondent's most recent job activity. Respondents must list their primary occupation as the one for which they worked the most hours. For respondents not currently working, their most recent occupation is listed. The first occupational question asks what kind of work the person was doing—the answer could be either the occupation name or the job title. The second question

¹⁷ <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

¹⁸ At the time of this meeting, the 2010 census data collections had not yet occurred.

asks what this person's most important activities were, and then the actual write-in answers are converted to standard codes.

Like the Census long form, the ACS provides many levels of geography, from national reporting levels to Census block groups. Each year, three estimates are released: one-year, three-year and five-year. As the number of years and months increases, the sample size is larger and, consequently, the estimates become stronger and can be displayed for smaller and smaller geographies and for smaller occupation groups. The content includes a broad range of topics such as demographic, economic, social, housing, and financial characteristics. The three- and five-year files provide a sufficient sample for performing detailed analyses of specific artist occupations and industries.

There are two standard data product types. First are pre-computed tables that appear in the Census Bureau's American FactFinder, which currently has only three tables, including 505 detailed occupations with specific artist categories. Then there is a public version of microdata—the so-called PUMS file—available for those who need to create tables unavailable through the Census Bureau's American FactFinder. For people who need the power of the entire dataset, special tabulations can be ordered.

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) file is a special tabulation designed for the specific needs of four federal agencies, but it is often used for other analyses of detailed occupation groups such as artists. The 1990 and 2000 decennial census EEO files have been used by the NEA to obtain the most reliable estimates of artist occupations. The new file will have essentially the same occupational and geographic content as the previous file, but it will use the ACS 2006-2010 five-year file and it will add a new variable—citizenship—in addition to age, race, Hispanic origin, and gender. It will be based on the 2010 geographies, the 2010 population base, and the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) categories.

The SOC is used by all federal agencies and was last updated for the 2000 Census. It will be updated again for 2010, and will contain the same 23 major groups.¹⁹ There will be no major changes for the artist occupations that are featured in the reports, but there will be significant changes and additions in the fields of information technology, healthcare, printing, and human resources.

One of the more exciting new-content items for 2009 is a question on field of degree. This question was added so that the National Science Foundation can use the ACS for its sample design for the National Survey of Recent College Graduates. The new question asks for the major field of the bachelor's degree, even if the respondent also holds an advanced degree. These answers are then coded to a standard list. This question will provide an opportunity to analyze the employment situation of people who hold bachelor's degrees in the arts, in all occupations and industries.

¹⁹ Occupation codes were updated in January 2011, based on the 2010 Decennial Census data.

Group Discussion

Following the formal presentations, participants engaged in lengthy discussion about the difficulty of counting members of the cultural workforce. Among issues highlighted were the difficulties of measuring and capturing hybrid work, secondary occupations, and fluctuations in artists' careers, and making choices about which non-artist careers to track. Some speakers pointed out that cross-classification of occupation and industry is possible from the household surveys and has been done in several studies.

Some participants also found the governmental definitions inadequate. For example, the process for determining occupation codes was brought into question. Some participants expressed an interest in researchers reviewing the raw, uncoded data files to gain a better understanding of how arts or cultural occupations might be determined beyond the rubric of official coding. Others observed that researchers should provide feedback on the ongoing work of evaluating and revising the SOC and the North American Industrial Codes (NAICS). Although it is important for the codes to minimize change—thus permitting comparisons over time—the committees apparently welcome input on ways to define occupations and industries to better reflect the evolving labor force.

The discussion ended with a description of a labor force in which art is an integral part of every worker's 21st century skill set, much like information technology.

Summary and Recommendations for Future Research

The rest of the afternoon was devoted to weighing recommendations for future research. The first of two questions was, “**From a policy or programming perspective, what are the most critical issues to study?**” Holly Sidford of the Helicon Collaborative led the discussion.

The most critical issues, as framed by Sidford, are:

Definitions and Methods:

- We need more work on definitions and on data capture, both for individual artists and for the cultural workforce. Better definitions can help to validate multiple vectors of employment so that we can understand and better support elective identities and changing identities, and so that we can see the whole industry.
- We need to focus on ways to present a more robust picture of a life and a career and a workforce, starting with individuals and following their trajectory and using mapping technology—such as the “life maps” presented earlier.
- We need to be more sophisticated about using mapping to illustrate the networks and nodes of artists’ careers and about using visual imagery in our research.

Workforce Development and Support:

- We need to validate artists’ and cultural workers’ endeavors as legitimate so that they can participate in and benefit from job and workforce development efforts.
- The Arts Endowment and the state arts agencies should look for opportunities to address self-employment issues like financial planning and indebtedness among artists and other cultural workers in the non-profit sector. Further, arts organizations should consider how their services might help broader constituencies, given the growing numbers of self-employed workers and workers whose careers blend artist and non-artist roles.

Research Goals:

- We need a comprehensive research agenda that goes beyond just looking at individual artists or attendance at cultural institutions. We need a cross-sector investigation of the arts and cultural workforce. The NEA is in a very good position to engender a cross-sector convening with leaders from health, environment, and other community development groups.
- The day’s sessions have informed us about a diverse array of interesting research projects, with varying timeframes and perspectives. There is an opportunity for the

Arts Endowment to bring the pieces together and help stakeholders see the full picture.

- Many of today's presentations discussed the integration of artists in other sectors (hybrid artists, teaching artists), and this focus should be continued and expanded.
- We should pay attention to the importance of place, tailoring research to the unique characteristics of artists in specific sites, and become more sophisticated in our understanding of place-specific cultural talents, using data in fresh ways to develop those talents.

The discussion continued with many suggestions from panelists and audience members:

Definitions and Methods:

- We need definitions to narrow down our purposes and our mission. Are we talking about artists in the workforce? Or are we talking about creativity in the workforce?
- We need to recognize that the lines are blurring between artists and non-artists—many people consider themselves artists without any workforce involvement—and the lines are also blurring in the area of arts participation; it does not occur solely in traditional cultural venues.²⁰
- We should think about the bridge between inductive and deductive thinking, about ways to refine our categories based on existing qualitative data. Maybe we could have access to the write-in responses on the ACS to develop different ways of defining occupations. We might try to identify which kinds of artistic work are being the least-well-captured by existing definitions. Knowing how people actually answered the ACS questions could help in deciphering this.
- The NEA could produce a primer on using data about artists, a document that describes the advantages and disadvantages of various data sources, and explains the details of how these data sources can be used to describe artists and cultural industries.

Workforce Development and Support:

- Some policy-makers have a hard time understanding that an arts job is a job. It will become increasingly important to refine definitions so as to communicate with people who are decision-makers outside the arts sector.

²⁰ For additional information on this topic, see NEA research note on informal arts participation: <http://www.nea.gov/research/Notes/100.pdf>. Also, the format of the 2012 SPPA questionnaire has been revised to incorporate more questions on engagement in the arts through electronic media.

Research Goals:

As studies are being developed, it is important for researchers to touch base with the end-users of their reports, the organizations that will be changing and implementing services for different kinds of artists. They may have important advice on how research questions should be framed. To the extent possible, it helps to ask different questions for different types of artists.

- With so much of the current focus on the concept of the creative city, the NEA is well positioned to use its research to help with policy issues in cities, cultural organizations, industries, and spaces for community arts.
- It is important to distinguish between the arts and culture workforce, on the one hand, and between the arts/cultural and creative workforce on the other. The NEA should focus on the arts and culture workforce, and should work to understand which aspects of arts and culture work involve creativity and innovation.

Discussion about possible action items continued with a final question: **What are some promising new methods, resources, and technologies that can be used by researchers?** This portion was led by Paul DiMaggio of Princeton University.

Di Maggio's first point is that we need to recognize that different research goals require us to define artists differently and to use different methods. If the goal is to improve the lot of artists, then the focus will be on professionals and the vicissitudes of their careers. If the goal is to improve the health of the arts, then a wider focus must be taken—to include amateurs as well as professionals, because the well-being of the arts is a joint product of artist inputs and organizational inputs, among other contributors. If that policy interest extends to using the arts to improve the well-being of the U.S. population as a whole, then the focus must be still wider—encompassing professional and amateur artists, arts institutions, arts education, and the arts economy overall.

Second, we need to define “artist.” Throughout the day, speakers repeatedly explained that artists occupy multiple roles both at any given time and over the course of their careers. Sociologists and economists have been studying careers and occupations for decades and have found that careers are a lot rarer than often imagined. Something like 20 or 30 percent of people with M.D.s do not practice medicine all their lives. Thirty-five or 40 percent of lawyers do not practice law. Time diaries have been mentioned as a way of discovering what artists really do and would probably show that even people who have the same job title will do very different things in the course of the day.

Hybrid careers are another important issue that has been discussed today. There are different kinds of hybrid artists and the distinctions should be noted.

- One type is the artist who has multiple art roles in a particular artistic project. Someone can be a producer, director, and writer of a film—or they can be a composer/arranger, and do both of those roles for the same project. This

phenomenon often occurs at the start of artists' careers. The fewer resources people have, the more likely they are to combine roles in order to get work done. The perception and definition of differentiated artistic roles come from large systems rather than from small ones; small systems almost always have to combine occupational roles.

- Another type of hybrid artist involves people who move across multiple art “worlds” to do their work. Indie rock artists putting out their first or second album are probably going to both design the album as well as play the music because they might not be able to afford paying someone to do it for them.
- Yet another type of hybrid artist is one who steps outside the arts entirely to inhabit a different role, or someone who does his or her art in an unconventional place. An important research tool here is the use of ethnographic methods to try to study the meaning of the work and the identity that people bring with it.
- Throughout the day, speakers repeatedly talked about artists supporting themselves through a “day job” that does not account for the majority of their time. Another scenario is the artist whose day job is his or her primary occupation—in terms of number hours worked—but who fits art in whenever possible. Both of these cases pose methodological problems: if you fail to ask questions the right way or catch the artist during the week when he or she is not making art, then you will not obtain the information needed. This dilemma suggests that researchers should ask specific, artist-focused questions for a detailed understanding of the various activities and tasks that compose artistic roles.

Another pivotal issue is *where* to find artists. As discussed earlier, there are several methods:

- The best way is through the U.S. Census Bureau because of the number of possible respondents, according to some speakers.
- Another way is through organizations, unions, or associations. There are advantages to this approach, but one disadvantage is the omission of artists who are not union members—a serious problem in fields that are not unionized and which include many visual artists and writers.
- A third way is to find artists through schools. The SNAAP project holds promise because alumni do not change over time. Schools have an interest in getting people to commit to and feel identified with their schools, and people tend to cooperate with something they see as benefiting their alma mater. This resource has the potential to allow researchers to collect longitudinal panel data. Furthermore, the only way that researchers ever will learn about careers is by receiving multiple responses from the same people over, say, a 20- year period. Problematically, this approach will not capture artists who did not receive their training in school. Researchers should bear in mind that for certain types of artwork—particularly in folk and traditional art—relatively few people go to arts schools to learn their art.

- Respondent-driven sampling is probably one of the most important developments in statistical sampling theory over the past couple of decades. It is the method of choice for people doing international work and studying topics like HIV and drug use, which require the study of individuals who are hard to find and who do not usually come forward. Artists are far from reticent about their activities, but they are not always organized or easy to find. The limitation of RDS is that it may never be suited for a national study in a country as populous as the U.S.
- It is important not to confuse respondent-driven sampling (RDS) with snowball sampling. Respondent-driven sampling is very tightly controlled to ensure that you have a real sample, and that you are providing the right incentives and controlling the way people bring in new respondents. In many ways, it is the opposite of snowball sampling, because it is so controlled and demanding. If you can successfully implement RDS, it is a remarkable way of taking a sample of an unknown population.
- An alternative method is called hyper-network sampling. For example, a researcher could survey 3,000 people and ask each one of them if he or she knows an artist, and ask that respondent to record the artist's name and the contact information. If half of the respondents know an artist, then the researcher is left with a sample of 1,500 artists, which is a national sample weighted by the number of people that the particular artist happens to know. This data collection can form the basis for a focused survey that extracts more detailed information about artists in a relatively efficient manner.

Additional suggestions came from panelists and audience members:

Definitions and Methods:

- The American Time Use Survey is produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and it addresses some questions that have been raised throughout the day. It is a relatively young survey (since 2003) and is tied to the CPS sample. Although the survey does not involve time diaries, it does collect detailed information on how respondents spent their time.²¹
- The advantages of longitudinal surveys were again recommended. One impediment to longitudinal surveys is the difficulty of obtaining funding that is guaranteed to continue through the life of the survey. It may be more practical to focus our efforts on obtaining more robust data from existing annual surveys. Combining the advantages of alumni surveys and longitudinal surveys could be a good option.

²¹ The NEA released a Research Note on the American Time Use Survey data in April 2011:
<http://www.nea.gov/research/Notes/102.pdf>

- The American Community Survey shows promise as a huge data set that will include in-depth information about states and localities. It can be used to study how a community's artistic workforce and cultural industries are different from those of other places. The NEA could support efforts to build datasets for different places by mining Census data and analyzing the results.
- We could make better use of administrative data, especially from sources that are available to the public. The NEA should enhance its efforts to identify federal administrative data related to cultural programming.
- We should anticipate changes in data collection because of the pervasiveness of the Web. Household surveys will always be important, but they are getting more and more expensive. Researchers in all disciplines are figuring out ways to learn about the world by "scraping data" from the web.

Workforce Development and Support:

- We should look at how artists get jobs. A study could simply ask artists where they worked, the name of their gallery, the last time they had a gig, how did they get it, who told them about it, and who made the connection. This effort would effectively measure the concept of "six degrees of separation." It would be useful also to map some of the iconic institutions that have seeded certain artistic fields and to identify places where large numbers of graduates from particular schools are employed because they know somebody who also graduated from those schools.
- NEA could study the impacts of cultural development policy on various components of the cultural workforce. Cultural development that focuses mainly on economic development might have negative effects on artists who work in a relatively non-institutional way.

Research Goals:

- The NEA could look at the National Science Foundation (NSF) model of surveying and studying scientists and engineers. The Scientists and Engineers Statistical Data System (SESTAT) is an integrated data collection effort that captures information about employment and the educational and demographic characteristics of scientists and engineers in the United States. It includes surveys of college graduates and doctoral recipients and is being modified to use the ACS as its sample frame, beginning with the new ACS question on field of degree. The system includes both cross-sectional and longitudinal portions. For artists, the disadvantage is that not all artists are educated in their fields. By contrast, virtually all scientists and engineers have degrees in their field of work. Nonetheless, if the NEA could get highly detailed career data on half the artists in the U.S. this would represent a large victory.
- The NSF produces annual science and engineering indicators, but the data from their surveys represent only half of what is reported in those indicators. They draw on

many other types of information to supplement the data. Data from artist alumni surveys could be supplemented with Census data, occupational data, and qualitative data. We could develop a pretty robust set of indicators that come from diverse kinds of methodologies and which might be released once every five years, or maybe every two or three years. The SNAAP project is an opportunity to craft the right kind of monograph that can draw from any of the data sources discussed, to make a statement about which research questions and data we care about and which kinds of indicators are most important.

- In assembling such indicators, we should consider the work of the Humanities Indicators Project and the work of Americans for the Arts. We should also look at educational data-collection efforts at the state level, as there is growing interest in tracking student outcomes.
- We should look at ways of studying where community art is occurring. People are working at the intersection of arts and a variety of sectors—community development, environment, and education. Visual Artists Network, which is part of the National Performance Network, consists of groups of local artists throughout the country. The grantees of the Creative Capital Foundation are another example. It is important to look beyond sources and organizations that may be the most obvious; instead, we should think about where the work occurs within a community and see what organic kinds of informal networks are beginning to form in addition to those that are more institutionally-based.
- The NEA should look at intersection of arts and technology. Time-use studies should focus on how all people—not just artists—are using their skills, and how certain skills blur the lines among professions. We need to look at the way the left brain and right brain complement each other as well as how creativity, innovation, imagination, and critical thinking are all important skills in a technology-driven world.

Appendix One: Meeting Agenda

NEA CULTURAL WORKFORCE FORUM

Friday, November 20, 2009

National Endowment for the Arts

8:30	Continental breakfast	
9:00	Welcome	<i>Sunil Iyengar</i> <i>Joan Shigekawa</i>
9:15	Introductions	
9:30	Panel One: What We Know About Artists and How We Know It	
	NEA Research on Artists in the Workforce	<i>Tom Bradshaw</i>
	Artist Labor Markets	<i>Greg Wassall</i>
	Discussion	
	Artist Careers	<i>Joan Jeffri</i>
	Artist Research: Union Perspectives	<i>David Cohen</i>
	Discussion	
10:45	Break	
11:00	Panel Two: Putting the Research to Work	
	Cultural Vitality: Investing in Creativity	<i>Maria Jackson</i>
	Artists and the Economic Recession	<i>Judilee Reed</i>
	Discussion	
	Teaching Artists Research Project	<i>Nick Rabkin</i>
	Strategic National Arts Alumni Project	<i>Steven Tepper</i>

	Discussion	
12:10	Lunch	
1:20	Panel Three: Widening the Lens to Capture Other Cultural Workers	
	Artists in the Greater Cultural Economy	<i>Ann Markusen</i>
	Q&A	
	Creative Class: Who's In, Who's Out?	<i>Tom Bradshaw</i>
	American Community Survey: An Emerging Data Set	<i>Jennifer Day</i>
	Q&A	
2:20	Audience Feedback	
2:50	Break	
3:00	Discussion: Summary and Recommendations for Future Research	
	1) From a policy or programming perspective, what are the most critical issues to study?	
		Moderator: <i>Sunil Iyengar</i> Lead discussant: <i>Holly Sidford</i>
	2) What are some promising new methods, resources, and technologies that can be used by researchers?	
		Moderator: <i>Tom Bradshaw</i> Lead discussant: <i>Paul DiMaggio</i>
4:15	Wrap-up/next steps	<i>Sunil Iyengar</i>
4:30	Adjournment	

Appendix Two: Participants List

NEA CULTURAL WORKFORCE FORUM PARTICIPANTS

Friday, November 20, 2009

Roundtable participants:

David Cohen, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

Randy Cohen, Americans for the Arts

Jennifer Day, U.S. Census Bureau

Paul DiMaggio, Princeton University

Deirdre Gaquin, Consultant

Angela Han, National Association of State Arts Agencies

Maria Rosario Jackson, The Urban Institute

Joan Jeffri, Columbia University

Ruby Lerner, Creative Capital Foundation

Ann Markusen, University of Minnesota

Nick Rabkin, University of Chicago

Judilee Reed, Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC)

Carrie Sandahl, University of Illinois at Chicago

Holly Sidford, Helicon Collaborative

Steven J. Tepper, Vanderbilt University

Gregory Wassall, Northeastern University

Mary Jo Waits, National Governors Association

Audience:

Carlos Manjarrez, Institute of Museum and Library Services

Erica Pastore, Institute of Museum and Library Services

Phil Katz, AAM

Kristin Thomson, Future of Music Coalition

Heather Noonan, League of American Orchestras

Elyse Kantrowitz, League of American Orchestras

Victoria Smith, Dance USA

Carolyn Fuqua, NORC at University of Chicago

Alexis Notabartolo, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

Carole Rosenstein, The Urban Institute

Ken Grossinger, CrossCurrents Foundation

Roger Moncarz, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Michelle Boone, The Joyce Foundation

Esther Robinson, ArtHome
Kathi Levin, National Art Education Association and Foundation
Chris Dwyer, RMC Research
Mark Stern, University of Pennsylvania
Susan Seifert, University of Pennsylvania
Narric Rome, Americans for the Arts
Ian Moss, Fractured Atlas
Kelly Barsdate, National Association of State Arts Agencies
Barbara Davis, The Actors Fund
Tamara Nadel, Ragamala Dance (Minneapolis)
Jennifer Bradley, Brookings Institution
Yasmin Ramirez, Center for Puerto Rican Studies
Jean Greer, Arts & Science Council
Marda Kirn, EcoArts Connections
Paula Cleggett, Vanderbilt University
Shirley Sneve, Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc. (NAPT)

Appendix Three: Recommended Reading

NEA CULTURAL WORKFORCE FORUM

November 20, 2009

A Partial Guide to Research Resources

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Appendix Four: Sources of National Occupational Data

The **American Community Survey (ACS)** is a household survey developed by the U.S. Census Bureau as part of the decennial program. It is a large demographic survey collected throughout the year using mailed questionnaires, telephone interviews, and visits from Census Bureau field representatives to about 3 million household addresses annually. Starting in 2005, the ACS produced social, housing, and economic characteristic data for demographic groups in areas with populations of 65,000 or more. The ACS data will accumulate over three-year and five-year intervals to produce estimates for smaller geographies, including census tracts and block groups.

The **Current Population Survey (CPS)** is a monthly survey of households (approximately 60,000) conducted by the Bureau of Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It provides a comprehensive body of information on the employment and unemployment experience of the Nation's population, classified by age, sex, race, and a variety of other characteristics including jobholders' occupation and industry.

The decennial **Census of Population** (for 2000 and earlier decades) included a long form questionnaire completed by approximately 1 in 6 households. The long form contained occupation and industry questions comparable to those contained in the Current Population Survey basic monthly questionnaire.

The **Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)** program produces employment and wage estimates for over 800 occupations. These are estimates of the number of people employed in certain occupations, and estimates of the wages paid to them. Self-employed persons are not included in the estimates. These estimates are available for the nation as a whole, for individual States, and for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas; national occupational estimates for specific industries are also available.

Occupational Classification Systems

The 2000 **Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)** system is used by Federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, or disseminating data. All workers are classified into one of over 820 occupations according to their occupational definition. To facilitate classification, occupations are combined to form 23 major groups, 96 minor groups, and 449 broad occupations. Each broad occupation includes detailed occupation(s) requiring similar job duties, skills, education, or experience. Information on the SOC, including its occupational structure, is available on the Internet: <http://www.bls.gov/soc/>

The **Occupational Information Network (O*NET)**, which replaced the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, is used by public employment service offices to classify and place jobseekers. O*NET was developed by job analysts. The information on job duties, knowledge and skills, education and training, and other occupational characteristics comes

directly from workers and employers. Information on O*NET is available from O*NET Project, U.S. Department of Labor: <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/>. The structure of O*NET reflects the 2000 *Standard Occupational Classification* (SOC) system.

Appendix Five: Research about Artists in the Workforce: A Labor Perspective

For the
National Endowment for the Arts
Cultural Workforce Forum
Washington, D.C.
November 20, 2009



1. Introduction

Performing professionals and the professionals who support them work in a wide range of occupations — from musicians to set designers, actors to lighting technicians, stagehands to writers, and scores more. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and its research have recognized that these creative professionals are workers as well as artists. Doing so benefits the artists, the programs and institutions with which they work, the public they serve, and the policymakers seeking to sustain and strengthen our communities.

This Cultural Workforce Forum is a further example of the seriousness and thoughtfulness with which NEA approaches its mission. The Arts, Entertainment and Media Industries (AEMI) unions affiliated with the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) – Actors’ Equity Association, American Federation of Musicians, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, American Guild of Musical Artists, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Office and Professional Employees International Union, Screen Actors Guild, and Writers Guild of America, East – commend NEA for so enriching our public culture and discourse.

The AEMI unions take a special interest in research that enables policymakers at the federal, state and municipal levels to serve arts professionals more effectively. Examples of federal issues include showing the economic impact of the arts and targeting economic stimulus funds, performance rights for singers and musicians whose recordings play on AM/FM radio, the qualified performing artists tax exemption, the applicability of IRC

Section 409A to performers' deferred compensation, and even research about arts education²². State issues may include protections for child performers, incentives for film production, arts programs at state universities, and arts education in public schools. Municipal focal points might include financing arts centers, using the arts to anchor economic development, or providing performance or studio venues for performing or visual artists.

Despite the policy importance of accurate descriptive data about performing professionals and the professionals who support them, there are noticeable problems – which begin outside the purview of the NEA – in collecting and interpreting artistic workforce information. For example, the 2005 NEA report *Artists in the Workforce: 1990-2005* utilizes data collected by the American Community Survey (ACS) that places the total number of actors in the U.S. at 39,717²³.

The number of dues-paying members of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) is nearly 120,000; actor members of Actors' Equity Association (AEA), some 36,000; and members covered by American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) entertainment contracts, roughly 50,000. These numbers do not include performers who have no union affiliation. Even recognizing that an individual may carry membership cards in more than one performers' union or have stopped actively seeking work as a performer, more nuanced research into the nature and amount of work by performing professionals and the professionals who support them is essential. A measure of occupational identity that relies on a primary source of income, as the ACS does, may not accurately reflect an individual's primary occupation.

Discrepancies may arise from problems phrasing questions in survey work, imprecise or unduly limited measures of how to classify someone, or a lack of context with which to interpret data. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment Statistics, for example, assume a worker has a standardized, "year-round, full-time" schedule of 2,080 hours per year. When the AEMI unions and DPE pointed out the project-based nature of work in the arts, BLS stopped posting annual wages for, among others, actors, dancers, musicians, and singers.

²² The National Assessment of Educational Progress, for example, issued a report about achievement at Grade 8, *Arts 2008: Music & Visual Arts*, that noted the impact of "budget constraints." Despite standards calling for an assessment of students in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, the 2008 assessment extended only to parts of the processes in music and visual arts. (Page 4.)

²³ Gaquin, D. *Artists in the Workforce: 1990-2005* (National Endowment for the Arts Report 48). Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2008. Pg. 5.

Could researchers find or create other data sources that would better reconcile the realities of this sector with providing comparisons to other sectors? Even BLS earnings data classify the workforce based on the usual earnings received from the worker's *sole* or *primary* job. Where does someone who may teach while working in the performing arts fall, especially if more income comes from teaching?

These data problems have serious ramifications for performing professionals and the professionals who support them. Inaccurate data may not only understate their personal contributions to the economy, but also the broader impact their industry has on the economies of communities across the U.S. When the impact of these workers is undervalued, government policy may be crafted that does not adequately support an industry that cannot be outsourced, generates jobs and revenue, and enriches our cultural life.

We believe that this NEA Forum should enlarge a conversation in which many of the Forum participants have already been engaged. We believe also that the Forum should not and cannot mark an endpoint. To enlarge the conversation, one can imagine, for example, a collaboration to design a multi-pronged research strategy. Elements might include:

- an assessment of existing research and methodologies, with today as a starting point;
- collaboration among government agencies, foundations, arts organizations, unions, and frontline professionals to design research questions and invite individuals to respond;
- a careful and targeted focus on discrete occupations rather than rubrics lumping together multiple occupations;
- longitudinal studies of performing artists and the professionals who support them, refined by discrete occupations, that track career arcs and the impact of changing media technologies;
- time diaries to generate data about the interaction of multiple occupations and sources of income; and
- using the longitudinal and time diary data to improve questions for and interpretation of more general survey data.

2. Questions about the Artist Workforce

DPE recognizes with gratitude the hard work, creativity, and expertise that researchers, including others at this NEA Forum, have already brought to analyzing the artist workforce. We set out the questions that follow as a checklist for assessing what we know and beginning to fill in the gaps.

- Entry, Retention, and Retirement
 - Entry, retention, and exit are a black box. How do people enter the performing arts and in what numbers? From what backgrounds do they come?

- How many people enter the artistic workforce through employment for nonprofit institutions: regional theaters, orchestras, operas, ballets, or other arts organizations? Through public institutions: state colleges or universities, public schools, museums, or others? Through commercial enterprises or venues: for-profit theaters, films, or television? How many people divide their time among the three? What are the trends over time?
- How much do people work as performers, supporting professionals, or in other capacities? When do they take breaks, and for what reasons? What other employment do they have? What periods of unemployment do they have?
- Do people exit the artistic workforce definitively? If so, how and in what numbers?
- What are the sources of income among retired artists?
 - How many have pensions they draw from?
 - How many collect social security?
 - How many receive residual payments for previously recorded work?
 - How many have tax deferred savings accounts?
 - What is the investment profile for the average retired artist?
 - How if at all is retirement income related to spousal benefits?
- Salary and Income Issues
 - Sporadic employment makes accurate reporting difficult. How can we overcome the difficulties and better portray project-based work in arts occupations?
 - What are the industry earnings of the artistic workforce? How do we account for residuals and royalties? How do we account for project payments (for example, for screenwriters), participation agreements, bonuses, and loan-out corporations (for example, for high-profile performers)? Instead of looking at annual income, should we be looking at five-year rolling averages for a more effective measure of career trajectories?
 - Accounting for artists who also work outside the arts is a concern. Current collection methods are not reliable. What are the non-industry earnings of the artistic workforce? Does this workforce have other sources of income and if so, what are they? How do earnings vary by age, gender, ethnicity, race, and union membership or non-membership?
 - How do people identify themselves in terms of occupation and sources of income? How many consider themselves primarily artists? How many think of their arts careers as secondary? How do these self-concepts correlate with sources of income? Do people receive their incomes primarily from the arts or from other, portfolio careers?
 - What are the numbers of people engaging in work covered or not covered by collective bargaining agreements? What are the differences in the pay, benefits, and working conditions between union and non-union work? How many people are working for other people on projects, as employees, or on their own?
 - Classification is complex. Is a carpenter on set considered a carpenter or as backstage crew? Statistics on workers who support artists, like stagehands, are especially difficult to rely on. Who is a part of the performing arts and

entertainment? Should we include supporting businesses, from prop shops to costume shops?

- Information on artists in the non-profit and commercial sectors is currently reliably collected only by non-profit groups. It is nearly impossible to get a sense of what sector artists are working in and when. This has major implications for government funding allocations and state policies (state film production tax incentives, etc).
 - How do taxes relate to the incomes of professional performers and the professionals who support them? Is underpaying or overpaying common? To how many states do artists – for example, musicians who tour – generally have to pay taxes? In what states, if any, does a performing artist become eligible for unemployment benefits?
- **Artists and Health Insurance Coverage**
 - Workers in the arts may receive insurance through spouses, work outside the arts, a federal or other governmental program, or a fund linked to a union. They may also purchase insurance in the individual market, which poses problems of exclusions based on medical history, affordability, and appropriate coverage. What factors are most important to providing continuous and comprehensive coverage?
 - Given the episodic nature of much arts work, what is the health insurance status for artists over time? How long are gaps in coverage? How frequently do they occur?
 - Where do artists generally get insurance? Through a private insurer? A union? A spouse or partner? Medicaid? Other public programs?
 - Do all artists have similar health care coverage by cohort? Is coverage less likely for young artists as compared to older or mid-career artists? Should policy proposals include allowing earlier participation in Medicare by lowering eligibility or permitting a buy-in?
 - **Artists and the Economy**
 - What is the economic impact of the arts at the national level? State by state? For a given city?
 - What is the multiplier effect in terms of other jobs? In tax revenues? In creating and supporting other businesses?

3. Possible Research Projects

A. *Research Question:* How do performing artists make a living?

Hypotheses:

- 1) Professional performing artists work in both arts and non-arts occupations, but are undercounted in most surveys. These undercounts result from imprecise question sets that may not accurately account for work in multiple capacities.
- 2) The income performing artists earn from arts work comes from a mixture of commercial and other projects. The difference in earnings between those performing artists who work under a union negotiated contract and those who do not will be substantial. The pay gaps for female and minority performing artists working without union protection will mirror the pay gaps those groups see without a union contract elsewhere in the economy.
- 3) Residuals may or may not be a primary source of income for performing artists. The residuals structure is, however, essential for maintaining a highly skilled workforce, especially with the sporadic, project-based nature of employment.

Specific Aim: Conduct a survey of the professional performing arts community, focusing on the sources and frequency of income for performing artists, the nature of any non-arts work, and the differences (broken up by geographic region and occupation) between performing artists working with and without union representation across the United States.

B. Research Question: How many performing artists have health coverage?

Hypotheses:

- Many performing artists do not have sufficient, continuous health care coverage. Performing artists working regularly under collective bargaining agreements will have more, continuous coverage than those performing artists working without union protection.
- Gaps in coverage vary over time and coverage will come from different sources at different points in a performing artist's career. Coverage will often come from non-arts sources (non-arts jobs, partners or spouses outside the performing arts, government programs, and so on).
- Coverage is less likely among young performing artists and those age 55 to 64, as opposed to mid-career performing artists.

Specific Aim: Conduct a study of performing artists' access to health care coverage, utilizing a mixture of quantitative tools and qualitative interviews with a representative sample set of performing artists.

C. Research Questions: How do people enter the performing arts profession, and what careers follow?

Hypotheses:

- 1) More performing artists are entering the profession after completing a course of university-level performing arts study than in previous decades.
- 2) Young performing artists are more likely than mid-career or older performing artists to hold a non-arts job, not have health coverage, and work without a union contract.

Specific Aim: Conduct a study of young performing artists' experience with entry into the performing arts profession, as compared to the experiences of mid-career and older performing artists at their entry into the performing arts. A longitudinal study should also compare the status of each cohort with respect to work in the arts, non-arts jobs, other elements of their career paths, income, health coverage and union membership.

D. Research Question: Do older performing artists plan for retirement?

Hypotheses:

- 1) “Retirement” (cessation of work life) among older professional performing artists is less common than among average older U.S. citizens. The lack of retirement is most often the result of a choice to not “retire,” rather than a financial need to continue working.
- 2) Older performing artists have less income than the average older U.S. citizen.
- 3) Older performing artists are less likely than the average older Americans to have pensions to draw from, tax deferred savings accounts or an investment profile. Older performing artists are equally as likely to draw social security benefits as the average older American and more likely to be a union member.

Specific Aims: Using publicly available data on the older U.S. population and data collected from older performing artists, conduct a study comparing older performing artists to the average profile of an older U.S. citizen.

4. Potential Data from Unions and Collectively Bargained Trust Funds

As we noted in the Introduction, DPE and its affiliated unions believe this NEA Forum should open a conversation. As membership organizations that assist people’s careers and well-being, unions seek to protect their members’ interests and privacy. There are, however, records from unions and collectively bargained trust funds that might, with appropriate collaboration, permissions, and safeguards, assist constructive research:

- Casting reports
- Actuarial reports
- Pension contributions
- Health and welfare fund contributions
- Union membership
- Hours of work
- Residuals and royalties

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