



Research Division
Note #76
June 2000

Artist Employment in 1999

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show that more than 2 million people were employed (in primary jobs) as artists in 1999—a gain of 76,000 workers over the 1998 figure. An additional 298,000 people held *secondary* jobs in artist occupations. This note, #76, reports on the employment trends of workers in 11 artist occupations. The data are provided by the BLS and represent annualized averages of monthly employment counts taken from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Table 1 of this note shows 1996 through 1999 employment statistics for all civilian workers, professional specialty occupations, and artist occupations. Chart 1 is a 1993-1999 time series graph of employment for the three aggregate categories of civilian workers, professional specialty occupations, and artist occupations. Chart 2 shows a time series graph of unemployed workers in these three categories, and Chart 3 plots the unemployment rate for the three groups of workers over the 1993-1999 period.

This note also features a section on earnings and projected employment growth for select artist occupations taken from the BLS' *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. These estimates were not based on the CPS. Rather, they were taken from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey program, a survey of business establishments.

The Artist Labor Force

The 3.9 percent growth in 1999 artist employment coincides with growth in general civilian employment (i.e., all civilian workers age 16 and over). In 1999, there were 133.5 million employed civilian workers, representing an increase of 2 million compared to 1998 estimates. Of the 2 million additional civilian employed workers, 1 million, or 50 percent, were in professional specialty occupations. This extensive occupation category is characterized by workers with relatively high levels of education and includes not only artist occupations, but also engineers, scientists, clergy, and librarians. In 1999, professional specialty occupations employment grew by 5 percent to reach nearly 21 million workers.

Chart 1 shows 1993-1999 employment trends for all civilian workers, professional specialty occupations, and all artist occupations. Though all three categories show upward trends, growth patterns are different. For example, between 1995 and 1998,

growth in artist employment was higher and less stable than the other two employment categories. In 1997, for instance, artist employment grew by 7 percent, compared to the 1.4 percent and 3.4 percent rates recorded for civilian employment and professional specialty employment, respectively. In 1999, however, this pattern reversed. The 5 percent increase in professional specialty employment surpassed growth in artist employment (3.9 percent) and civilian employment (1.5 percent).

Trends in unemployment and the unemployment rate are shown in Charts 2 and 3. Over the 1993-1999 time period, civilian unemployment continually declined. By 1999, civilian unemployment¹ dropped by 800,000 workers, or 12.9 percent, and the unemployment rate decreased from 4.5 percent in 1998 to 3.9 percent in 1999. So strong was the U.S. economy that the BLS reports that the 1999 unemployment rate was the lowest in 30 years².

Trends in professional specialty and artist unemployment were less stable. In 1999, professional specialty unemployment increased by 14,000 workers. Among artists, unemployment grew 5,000 workers. This increase in artist unemployment contributed to a small rise in the unemployment rate--4.1 percent in 1999 vs. 4.0 in 1998. Chart 3 also reveals that unemployment rates are higher for artists than for professional specialty occupations overall. For any given year in this time series, the unemployment rate associated with artists is about twice as high as the rate for the professional specialty occupations.

Individual Artist Occupations

Table 1 shows employment, unemployment, and unemployment rates for 11 individual artist occupations. The “designers” occupation is the largest of these categories. In 1999, 722,000 workers were employed as designers. In contrast, dancers constitute the smallest artist occupation—27,000 dancers were employed in 1999³. Among the 11 individual artist occupations shown in Table 1, six showed 1999 increases in employment. Architects experienced the strongest employment growth in 1999—up by 36,000 workers, or 23 percent, over 1998 employment levels. Employment among authors grew by 18,000, or 14 percent. The other artist occupations exhibiting 1999 employment growth were designers (up 4 percent); painters, sculptors, and craft artists (a gain of 5 percent); photographers (growth of 8 percent); and other artists, not elsewhere classified (up 3 percent).

For several other artist occupations, there were fewer workers in the labor force (i.e., working or looking for work in an artist occupation). For example, there were 12,000 fewer musicians and composers in the labor force in 1999. Unemployment for this group

¹ In this Note, unemployment and the unemployment rate refer to experienced workers.

² See Jennifer L. Martel and Laura A. Kelter. “The Job Market Remains Strong in 1999.” *Monthly Labor Review*, February 2000. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

³ In occupations with labor forces of less than 75,000 there is higher error or variance in the estimate due to their small sample size. Year-to-year changes should be viewed with caution.

declined by 1,000, and the number of employed musicians and composers fell by 11,000. Similarly, there were 6,000 fewer art, drama, and music teachers in the labor force in 1999. Though unemployment remained unchanged (1,000 art teachers in both 1998 and 1999), employment fell by 6,000⁴. Among actors and directors, labor force increased by 2,000 workers. However, 1999 employment declined by 1,000 and unemployment increased by 3,000.

The data in Table 1 can also be used to look at changes in artist employment over the 1996-1999 time period. Among all artists, employment was up by 215,000 workers, or about 12 percent. However, the employment trends of individual artist occupations varied. In fact, patterns tended to mirror the 1998-1999 experience. For example, between 1996 and 1999, employment increased for architects; authors; designers; painters, sculptors, and craft artists; photographers; and other artists not elsewhere classified. Employment fell among actors and directors; musicians and composers; and teachers of art, drama, and music.

*Secondary Artist Employment*⁵

The previous sections of this note and Table 1 describe workers in primary jobs⁶. However, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 7.8 million workers, or 5.8 percent of the employed workforce, were multiple jobholders in 1999. Among professional specialty occupations, more than 1.5 million, or 7.3 percent, held secondary jobs. The table below shows the number and percentage of workers holding second jobs in artist occupations. At 36.5 percent, the rate of workers holding second jobs in artist occupations was highest for musicians and composers. The next highest rate of secondary jobs was in the announcers category (34.2 percent). On the lower end of the scale, only 3 percent of workers held second jobs as architects. Designer occupations also recorded fewer second jobs—5.1 percent of all workers in this occupation.

⁴ Some of the employment decline in art, drama, and music teachers may be due to fewer teachers reporting their specialties on the CPS questionnaire. As an alternative estimate of employment, the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a survey of business establishments, reported that there were 48,430 teachers of art, drama, and music in 1998. This estimate is down only 160 from the 1997 figure of 48,590.

⁵ For detailed information about multiple jobholding by artists, see *More than Once in a Blue Moon: Multiple Jobholding by American Artists*, soon to be published by the National Endowment for the Arts, Research Division.

⁶ Those holding more than one job are counted in the job in which they worked the most hours during the CPS survey week. This job is referred to as their primary job, while all other jobs held are defined as secondary jobs.

Secondary Employment

Selected Artist Occupation	Primary Job Employment in 1999 (in thousands)	Secondary Job Employment in 1999 (in thousands)	Total Holding Either Primary or Secondary Jobs (in thousands)	% in this Occupation as a Second Job
All Artists	2,026	298	2,324	12.8%
Actors/Directors	129	9	138	6.5%
Announcers	50	26	76	34.2%
Architects	194	6	200	3.0%
Authors	148	25	173	14.5%
Dancers	27	2	29	6.9%
Designers	722	39	761	5.1%
Musicians/Composers	172	99	271	36.5%
Painters/Sculptors/Craftmakers	252	36	288	12.5%
Photographers	166	29	195	14.9%
Teachers of Art/Drama/Music	39	5	44	11.4%
Other Artists, N.E.C.	127	22	149	14.8%

Occupational Outlook

In addition to reporting the current trends in artist occupations described above, the BLS also produces employment projections by occupation. Taken from the most recent edition of the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, the table below provides a brief summary of earnings and expected employment growth for select artist occupations. The current employment trends outlined in the above sections of this note were based on annual averages from the Current Population Survey. However, the *Outlook* earnings and projections figures are based on the BLS' Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a survey of 400,000 business establishments. Consequently, not all of the artist occupations analyzed in the current trends are available in the *Outlook* data. For example, earnings and employment projections are not offered for the authors or teachers of art/drama/music categories⁷. In addition, some artist occupations are defined differently in the *Outlook* than they are in the CPS. For example, the CPS combines all types of designers while the *Outlook* distinguishes between designers and interior designers.

Of the select artist occupations listed below, the highest median annual earnings were recorded for architects (\$47,710) and landscape architects (\$37,930). Photographers (\$20,940) and dancers and choreographers (\$21,430) had the lowest median annual earnings. However, the BLS reports that earnings for announcers, shown as \$8.62 per hour, were also comparatively low. Higher than average employment growth (i.e., employment growth for all occupations) is expected for the following artist occupations: actors, directors, and producers; designers and interior designers; visual artists, and camera operators. However, the BLS notes that, despite high projected employment

⁷ Though not listed as a specific occupation in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, the OES survey estimates that the *mean* annual wage of art, drama, and music teachers was \$45,000 in 1998.

growth (defined in the *Outlook* as 21 to 35 percent gains between 1998 and 2008), competition for some of these jobs will be strong. This is particularly true for actors, directors, and producers; visual artists⁸; and camera operators. Lower than average job growth is expected for photographers (projected employment growth of 0 to 9 percent), and employment is projected to decline by one or more percent for announcers.

Occupational Outlook for Select Artist Occupations

Occupation	Median Annual Earnings in 1998	Projected Employment Growth Between 1998 and 2008
<i>Actors, Directors, and Producers</i>	\$27,400	Increase Between 21 to 35 Percent
<i>Announcers</i>	\$8.62 (per hour)	Decrease 1 Percent or More
<i>Architects</i>	\$47,710	Increase Between 10 to 20 Percent
<i>Landscape Architects</i>	\$37,930	Increase Between 10 to 20 Percent
<i>Dancers and Choreographers</i>	\$21,430	Increase Between 10 to 20 Percent
<i>Designers</i>	\$29,200	Increase Between 21 to 35 Percent
<i>Interior Designers</i>	\$31,760	Increase Between 21 to 35 Percent
<i>Musicians, Singers, and Related Workers</i>	\$30,020	Increase Between 10 to 20 Percent
<i>Visual Artists</i>	\$31,690	Increase Between 21 to 35 Percent
<i>Photographers</i>	\$20,940	Increase Between 0 to 9 Percent
<i>Camera Operators</i>	\$21,530	Increase Between 21 to 35 Percent

Final Notes

The current trend employment data in this note are reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and are based on annual averages of data recorded by the monthly Current Population Survey. The employed are persons who, during the reference week of the survey, did any work at all as paid employees, worked in their own business, profession, or on their own farm, or who worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in an enterprise operated by a member of the family. Each employed person is counted only once, even if he or she holds more than one job. Multiple jobholders are counted in the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours during the reference week. The unemployed are defined as persons who had no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness, and had made specific efforts to find employment some time during the 4-week-period ending with the reference week. The labor force comprises all persons classified as employed or unemployed, and the unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force. The unemployment rates listed in this note were obtained directly from the BLS using unrounded data and relate to experienced workers. For a more complete explanation of the Current Population Survey, see the notes and definitions sections of the *Monthly Labor Review*, available online at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/mlrhome.htm>.

⁸ In the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, the visual artists category comprises a number of arts occupations including painters, sculptors, printmakers, painting restorers, illustrators, graphic designers, fashion artists, and animators.

The earnings and projected employment growth reported in this note were taken from the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, also produced by the BLS. Figures shown in the *Outlook* are based on the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a survey of 400,000 business establishments. For more information about the *Outlook* or the OES, see the BLS web site at <http://www.bls.gov/ocohome.htm>.

The Research Division of the National Endowment for the Arts has produced notes on artist employment annually since 1983. More information about Research Division notes and reports can be found on the Endowment's Web site at www.arts.gov.

Table 1. The Artist Labor Force: Trends in Employment and Unemployment, 1996-1999
(in thousands)

<i>Occupation</i>	1999	1998	1997	1996	Change From '98-'99	Change From '96-'99
	Total Civilian Workers	138,898	137,673	136,297	133,943	1,225
Employed	133,488	131,463	129,558	126,708	2,025	6,780
Unemployed	5,410	6,210	6,739	7,236	-800	-1,826
Unemployment Rate	3.9%	4.5%	4.9%	5.4%	-0.6%	-1.5%
Professional Specialty Occupations	21,277	20,263	19,648	19,190	1,014	2,087
Employed	20,883	19,883	19,245	18,752	1,000	2,131
Unemployed	394	380	403	438	14	-44
Unemployment Rate	1.9%	1.9%	2.1%	2.3%	0.0%	-0.4%
All Artists	2,113	2,032	1,962	1,911	81	202
Employed	2,026	1,950	1,880	1,811	76	215
Unemployed	87	82	82	100	5	-13
Unemployment Rate	4.1%	4.0%	4.2%	5.2%	0.1%	-1.1%
Actors and Directors	146	144	150	151	2	-5
Employed	129	130	136	136	-1	-7
Unemployed	17	14	14	15	3	2
Unemployment Rate	11.9%	9.8%	9.2%	9.8%	2.1%	2.1%
Announcers	54	62	64	66	-8	-12
Employed	50	60	61	62	-10	-12
Unemployed	4	2	3	4	2	0
Unemployment Rate	7.6%	3.7%	4.3%	5.9%	3.9%	1.7%
Architects	196	161	171	164	35	32
Employed	194	158	169	160	36	34
Unemployed	2	3	2	4	-1	-2
Unemployment Rate	0.9%	1.9%	1.4%	2.6%	-1.0%	-1.7%
Authors	152	134	141	117	18	35
Employed	148	130	137	114	18	34
Unemployed	4	4	4	3	0	1
Unemployment Rate	2.9%	3.3%	3.1%	2.8%	-0.4%	0.1%
Dancers	29	35	31	32	-6	-3
Employed	27	34	27	30	-7	-3
Unemployed	2	1	4	2	1	0
Unemployment Rate	5.2%	3.9%	13.6%	6.4%	1.3%	-1.2%
Designers	746	716	681	634	30	112
Employed	722	692	658	603	30	119
Unemployed	24	24	23	31	0	-7
Unemployment Rate	3.2%	3.4%	3.4%	4.9%	-0.2%	-1.7%

Table 1. (continued)

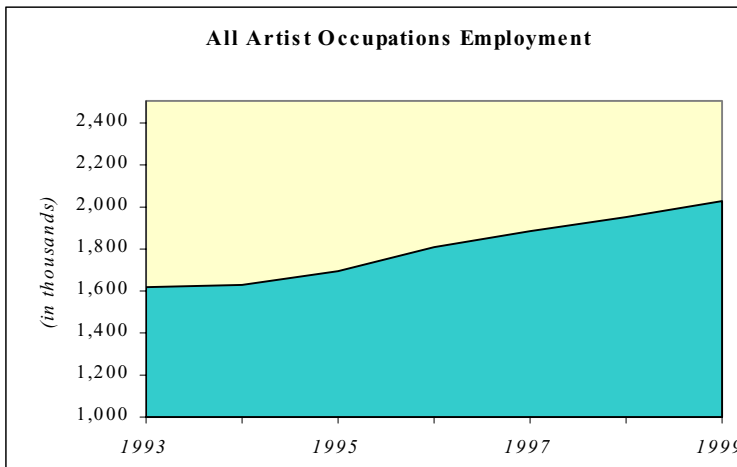
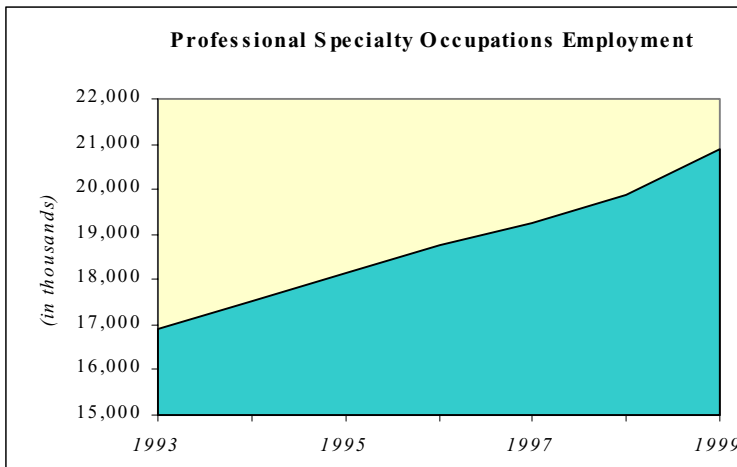
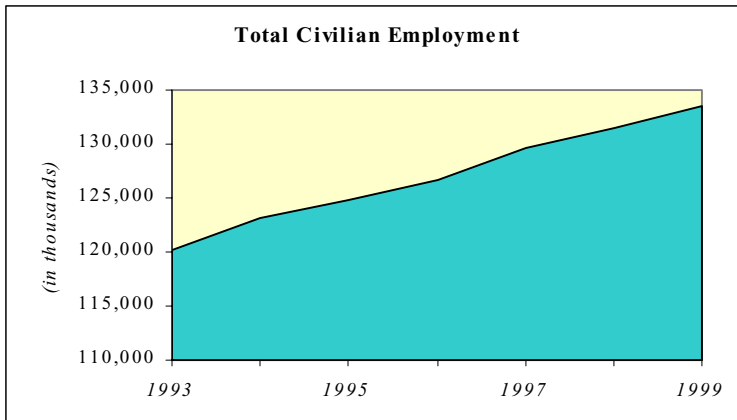
	<i>1999</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1996</i>	Change From <i>'98-'99</i>	Change From <i>'96-'99</i>
<i>Occupation</i>						
Musicians/Composers	181	193	167	189	-12	-8
Employed	172	183	155	175	-11	-3
Unemployed	9	10	12	14	-1	-5
Unemployment Rate	4.8%	5.2%	7.1%	7.4%	-0.4%	-2.6%
Painters, Sculptors, Craft Artists	261	248	259	245	13	16
Employed	252	241	251	235	11	17
Unemployed	9	7	8	10	2	-1
Unemployment Rate	3.4%	2.9%	3.0%	3.9%	0.5%	-0.5%
Photographers	174	162	137	147	12	27
Employed	166	154	132	141	12	25
Unemployed	8	8	5	6	0	2
Unemployment Rate	4.4%	4.9%	3.9%	4.2%	-0.5%	0.2%
Teachers of Art/Drama/Music	40	46	36	41	-6	-1
Employed	39	45	36	40	-6	-1
Unemployed	1	1	0	1	0	0
Unemployment Rate	2.8%	1.6%	0.5%	2.3%	1.2%	0.5%
Other Artists, N.E.C.**	134	131	125	125	3	9
Employed	127	123	118	115	4	12
Unemployed	7	8	7	10	-1	-3
Unemployment Rate	5.6%	6.4%	5.6%	7.7%	-0.8%	-2.1%

** Not Elsewhere Classified

Source: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics
Current Population Survey, Annual Averages, 1996-1999

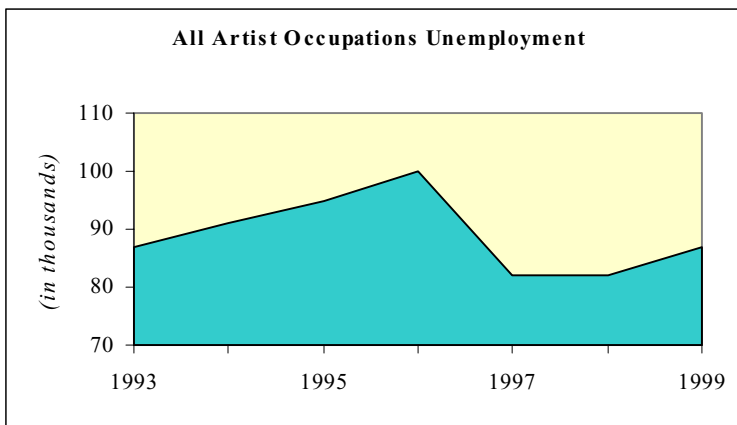
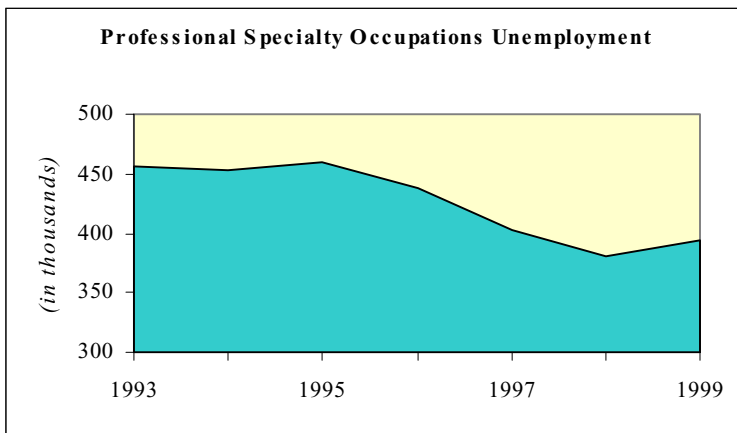
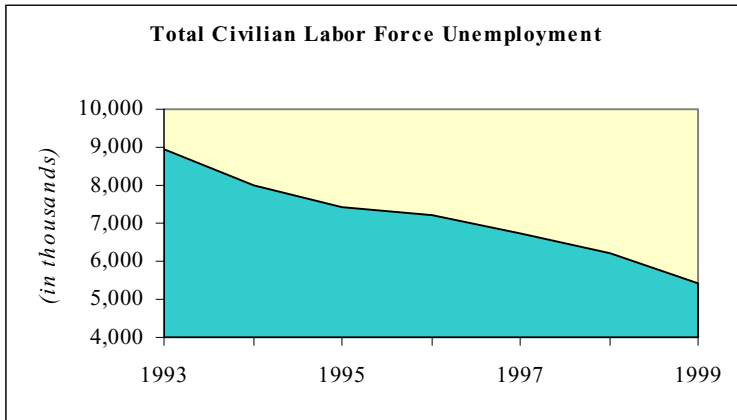
Note: All unemployment rates shown, except for the category "All Artists," were calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics using unrounded data.

Chart 1. Total Civilian Labor Employment, Professional Specialty Occupations Employment, and All Artist Employment: 1993-1999



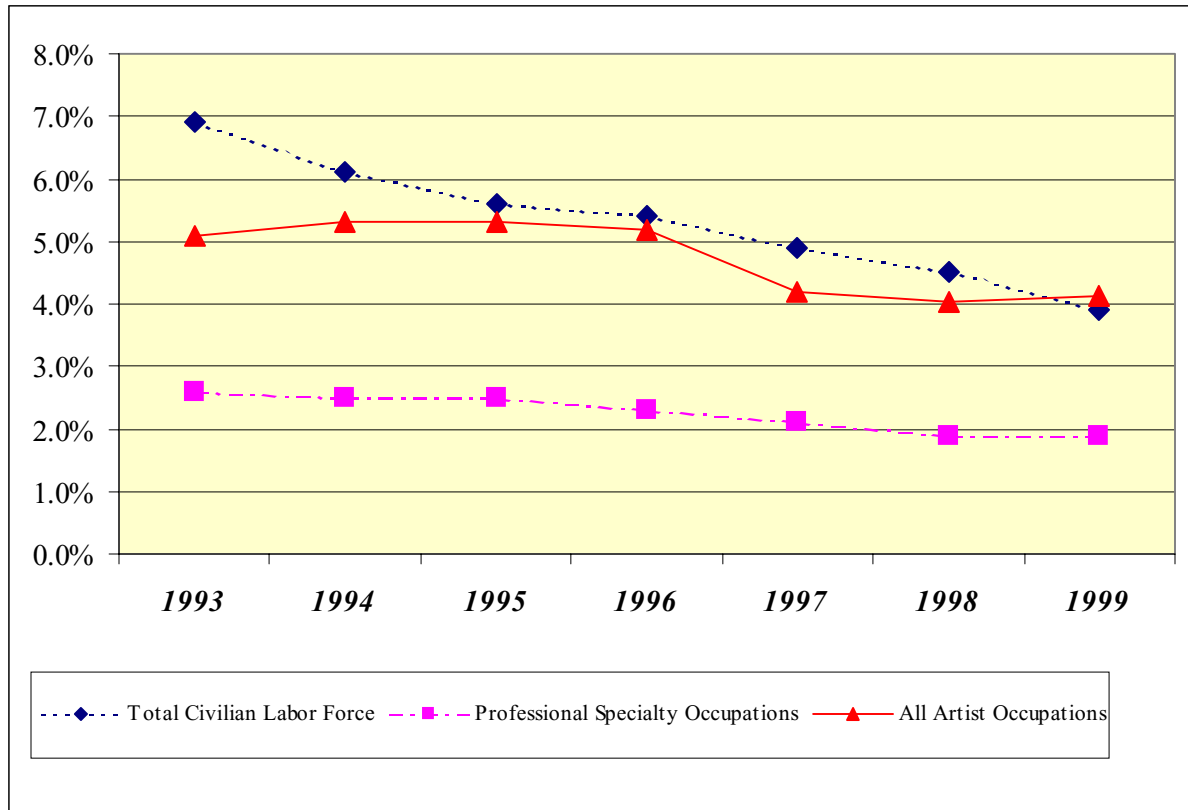
Research Division, National Endowment for the Arts, 2000.

Chart 2. Total Civilian Labor Unemployment, Professional Specialty Occupations Unemployment, and All Artist Occupations Unemployment: 1993-1999



Research Division, National Endowment for the Arts, 2000.

Chart 3. Rates of Unemployment for Total Civilian Labor Force, Professional Specialty Occupations, and All Artist Occupations from 1993-1999.



Research Division, National Endowment for the Arts, 2000.