

Arts Managers by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender: 2015-2019

Background

This research brief is based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS), Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), covering 2015 through 2019. It focuses on the racial/ethnic and gender composition of arts managers—defined as managerial occupations that fall into arts-related industries within the following sectors: arts and entertainment; information; professional services; and retail trade.¹

As a demographic profile of arts managers, the brief complements the NEA’s 2021 publication, “[Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Business-Owners in the Arts](#).” The current document is being released alongside two others: “Artists in the Workforce: Selected Demographic Characteristics Prior to COVID-19,” and “State Locations of Artists, by Race and Ethnicity: 2015-2019.” Together, the three briefs support a broader movement among arts and cultural funders and organizations to examine issues of access and equity within the larger sector. To this end, the trio stands on a key plank of the NEA’s five-year agenda: to monitor the state of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts.

Summary

- Whites occupied 73.5 percent of all management positions across the U.S. workforce. Yet they represented roughly 80 percent of managers working at museums, at publishers of books, magazines, and newspapers, at advertising or public relations firms, at design firms, and at bookstores.
- While women composed only 40.3 percent of workers in all management occupations, they were well-represented (nearly 50 percent or greater) as managers in the following arts industries: museums, specialized design (e.g., interior, industrial, fashion, or graphic) firms; book, magazine, and newspaper publishing; and performing arts companies.
- Blacks or African Americans held 12.5 percent of management jobs in sound recording (e.g., recording studios, record distributors, music publishers). This share was more than five percentage points greater than that of management positions held by Blacks in all U.S. industries.
- Nearly 12 percent of managers working in florist shops were Hispanic—roughly four percentage points greater than their share of management positions across all U.S. industries.

¹ Please see [Table 1b and Table 1c](#) that accompany this document.

- Asians accounted for 6 percent of managers working in all industries (arts and non-arts-related), but they held 17.2 percent of the management jobs in internet publishing and broadcasting.

Gender and Racial/Ethnic Make-Up of Arts Managers, by Selected Industry

Within the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' taxonomy for workers, there is no occupational code for "arts managers." Instead, analysts can glean data pertaining to the occupational code of "management" across different sectors. This brief, accordingly, looks at managers within arts-related industries that populate various sectors. Each of the following sections, organized by sector, starts with a list of the industries that were examined for national counts and demographic characteristics of arts managers.

Arts and Entertainment Sector

The arts and entertainment industries under consideration are: performing arts companies; performing arts presenters and agents and managers for artists; and museums.² According to the 2015-2019 ACS PUMS data, whites were represented in management positions within these industries at higher rates than within the U.S. workforce at large.

While whites make up 73.5 percent of all management positions in the U.S., and 62.2 percent of the labor force, they accounted for 74.5 percent of managers of performing arts companies. They composed an even greater share of museum managers: 79.3 percent in 2015-2019. *See Table 1.*

Hispanics, alternatively, were underrepresented in the management of performing arts companies and museums. For example, Hispanics, who represented 7.9 percent of all managers and 17.2 percent of the labor force, accounted for just 5.2 percent of managers working in museums.

Women, on the other hand, were considerably better represented in the management of performing arts companies and museums. While they made up 47.2 percent of the workforce, they accounted for 40.3 percent of all managers. Yet they composed 49.2 percent of managers within performing arts companies and 54.0 percent of all museum managers.

² "Performing arts presenters" is referred to in government industry data as "promoters of performing arts, sports, and similar events." Agents refer to "agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers, and other public figures." Counts for this industry include sports workers. Additionally, ACS entertainment industries include art galleries as part of museums. This differs from NAICS industry codes, which count art galleries as retail trade. Museums include galleries, historical sites, and institutions such as botanical gardens and zoos.

Table 1 . Arts and entertainment sector: Percent of arts managers by gender, race/ethnicity, and selected industry: 2015-2019

	U.S. labor force	All U.S. managers	Performing arts company managers	Managers of performing arts presenters ¹	Museum managers
Male	52.8%	59.7%	50.8%	57.0%	46.0%
Female	47.2%	40.3%	49.2%	43.0%	54.0%
Hispanic	17.2%	7.9%	8.8%	7.3%	5.2%
Non-Hispanic white	62.2%	73.5%	74.5%	76.7%	79.3%
Non-Hispanic Black or African American	11.9%	7.4%	8.2%	7.8%	8.6%
Non-Hispanic Asian	5.8%	6.0%	3.3%	3.6%	3.0%
Non-Hispanic other	2.9%	5.2%	5.2%	4.6%	4.0%

¹ Includes managers in the industry classified as “agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers, and other public figures.”

Note: "U.S. managers" is used here to denote managerial occupations across all industries in the U.S.

Data source: American Community Survey (ACS), PUMS, U.S. Census Bureau

Information Sector

Arts-related information industries include: motion picture and video industries; sound recording industries; broadcasting; newspaper publishers; periodical, book, and directory publishers; and web publishing and web broadcasting.³

For all industries (not just those in the arts), Blacks or African Americans were underrepresented in management. *See Table 2.* This was not the case for management of sound recording businesses, which includes sound recording studios, record distributors, and music publishers. Blacks composed 12.5 percent of managers working in sound recording. This share was 5.1 percentage points greater than the share of Black managers in all industries.

A parallel finding is that African Americans also were well-represented in the labor force as musicians; they composed just 6.2 percent of all workers in artist occupations, yet made up 13.0 percent of musicians in the labor force.⁴

Previously, an NEA analysis of data from the 2017 Annual Business Survey (ABS) showed that African Americans were twice as likely to *own* sound recording businesses than other types of enterprises.⁵

³ Includes web portals.

⁴ For a list of the occupations grouped as artists in this analysis, please see [Key to Artist Occupations](#).

⁵ See [Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Business Owners in the Arts: A National Endowment for the Arts Research Brief](#).

Table 2. Information sector: Percent of arts managers by gender, race/ethnicity, and selected industry: 2015-2019

	U.S. labor force	All U.S. managers	Motion picture and video managers	Sound recording managers	Broadcasting managers
Male	52.8%	59.7%	63.5%	67.4%	63.2%
Female	47.2%	40.3%	36.5%	32.6%	36.9%
Hispanic	17.2%	7.9%	10.4%	9.7%	9.0%
Non-Hispanic white	62.2%	73.5%	72.1%	67.4%	71.2%
Non-Hispanic Black or African American	11.9%	7.4%	5.5%	12.5%	9.6%
Non-Hispanic Asian	5.8%	6.0%	5.5%	4.1%	5.4%
Non-Hispanic other	2.9%	5.2%	6.5%	6.4%	4.8%
	U.S. labor force	All U.S. managers	Newspaper publishers	Periodical, book, and directory publishers	Internet publishing and broadcasting and web portals
Male	52.8%	59.7%	56.5%	47.7%	60.6%
Female	47.2%	40.3%	43.5%	52.3%	39.4%
Hispanic	17.2%	7.9%	3.7%	4.6%	5.5%
Non-Hispanic white	62.2%	73.5%	80.9%	82.3%	67.4%
Non-Hispanic Black or African American	11.9%	7.4%	5.2%	5.1%	3.6%
Non-Hispanic Asian	5.8%	6.0%	5.5%	4.8%	17.2%
Non-Hispanic other	2.9%	5.2%	4.7%	3.4%	6.3%
"U.S. managers" is used here to denote managerial occupations across all industries in the U.S.					
Data source: American Community Survey (ACS), PUMS, U.S. Census Bureau					

The 2017 ABS also showed that Asians were more likely to own web publishing/broadcasting firms than other arts-related information companies such as sound recording and motion picture/video businesses.

A similar finding is reflected in the ACS data: in 2015-2019, 17.2 percent of managers of web publishing and web broadcasting companies were Asian.

Within the information sector, women were well-represented in the management of periodical and book publishing firms. While women accounted for 40.3 percent of managers in all U.S. businesses, they made up 52.3 percent of managers in magazine and book publishing concerns.

For that matter, women represented the majority of writers in the labor force—59.8 percent in 2015-2019.⁶ Book and periodical publishers are second only to the advertising industry in employment of writers.

⁶ Please see [Table 1a. Selected characteristics of artists and the total labor force: 2015-2019](#).

Professional Services Sector

The professional services industries under consideration are specialized design services—for example, interior design, industrial/commercial design, graphic design, and fashion design—and advertising and public relations.

As it happens, Asians are not underrepresented as managers in these industries. The share of Asians who work as managers of design and advertising services firms was similar to the share of people from Asian racial backgrounds who worked in management overall, and who occupied the U.S. labor force in general. Asians compose 6-7 percent of all managers, managers of specialized design firms, and managers of advertising and public relations outfits.

Whites, however, were strongly concentrated in the management of these industries. They represented 62.2 percent of the labor force (and 73.5 percent of all management positions), but accounted for more than 77 percent of managers working in design and advertising firms.

As noted above, women accounted for a majority of writers and authors in the labor force. The industry employing the greatest number of writers was advertising and public relations.⁷

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that women were well-represented in management positions in these firms—in 2015-2019, women accounted for 48.6 percent of the managers working in the advertising and public relations industry.

Further, women represented 49.3 percent of managers of specialized design firms.

Table 3. Professional services: Percent of arts managers by gender, race/ethnicity, and selected industry: 2015-2019

	U.S. labor force	All U.S. managers	Specialized design services managers	Advertising and public relations managers
Male	52.8%	59.7%	50.7%	51.4%
Female	47.2%	40.3%	49.3%	48.6%
Hispanic	17.2%	7.9%	6.8%	6.9%
Non-Hispanic white	62.2%	73.5%	77.1%	78.3%
Non-Hispanic Black or African American	11.9%	7.4%	4.3%	4.6%
Non-Hispanic Asian	5.8%	6.0%	7.3%	6.2%
Non-Hispanic other	2.9%	5.2%	4.6%	4.1%
"U.S. managers" is used here to denote managerial occupations across all industries in the U.S.				
Data source: American Community Survey (ACS), PUMS, U.S. Census Bureau				

⁷ See [Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2019, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

Retail Trade Sector

This brief examines the following arts-related retail trade industries: musical instrument and supply stores; book stores and news dealers; and florists.⁸

Although Hispanics were underrepresented in management positions (relative to their share of the labor force), they compose a greater share of florist shop management than of management in general.

In 2015-2019, 11.8 percent of managers working in florist shops were Hispanic. The share was nearly four percentage points greater than the share of all managers of that ethnicity.

Managers of musical instrument stores and bookstores/news dealers were overwhelmingly white. Over the five-year period considered, whites composed 83.8 percent of managers of musical instrument and supply stores.

Most managers in these stores were men—76.0 percent. Florist shops, however, were equally as likely to be managed by women as by men.

Table 4. Retail trade: Percent of arts managers by gender, race/ethnicity, and selected industry: 2015-2019

	U.S. labor force	All U.S. managers	Musical instrument and supplies store managers	Book store and news dealer managers	Florist managers
Male	52.8%	59.7%	76.0%	56.2%	50.1%
Female	47.2%	40.3%	24.0%	43.8%	49.9%
Hispanic	17.2%	7.9%	8.0%	2.0%	11.8%
Non-Hispanic white	62.2%	73.5%	83.8%	77.8%	65.1%
Non-Hispanic Black or African American	11.9%	7.4%	0.0%	4.9%	8.7%
Non-Hispanic Asian	5.8%	6.0%	1.6%	6.4%	3.8%
Non-Hispanic other	2.9%	5.2%	6.7%	8.9%	10.6%
"U.S. managers" is used here to denote managerial occupations across all industries in the U.S.					
Data source: American Community Survey (ACS), PUMS, U.S. Census Bureau					

⁸ Florists are the leading employer of floral designers, an occupation included in the overall “designers” category within the NEA’s list of artist occupations. [In 2019, as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 67.3 percent of employed floral designers worked in florist shops.](#)

Conclusions

The findings from this analysis of American Community Survey data (2015-2019) show that in the years immediately preceding the COVID-19 pandemic, whites were represented at higher rates—among several arts manager positions—than in the managerial workforce at large. Although the share of whites in managerial occupations (73.5 percent) was already greater than the share of whites in the U.S. workforce (62.2 percent), it approached 80 percent for managers of museums, design firms, publishers, advertising or public relations firms, and bookstores. Whites also headed performing arts companies and performing artist agencies at rates approaching 75 percent or greater.

The only arts-related industries in which non-white groups occupied management spots at a rate surpassing their share of all U.S. management positions were: sound recording (African Americans or Blacks); florist shops (Hispanics)—the leading employer of floral designers; and web publishing and web broadcasting (Asian).

In contrast to these disparities by race and ethnicity, gender is more evenly split for arts managers. Although women accounted for only 40.3 percent of all managers in the U.S. workforce, they represented nearly 50 percent of managers in each of the following arts industries: museums; performing arts companies; publishers, and design firms.

Women were, however, significantly underrepresented as managers in such industries as performing arts presenting and artist agencies, sound recording, web publishing and web broadcasting, and bookstores. In the case of musical instrument and supply stores, women were a mere 24 percent of all managers.

In selecting the industries for the present analysis, NEA researchers examined industries captured by the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA)—produced through a partnership between the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Endowment for the Arts—and that are reflected in the American Community Survey data.⁹

However, this analysis excludes the ACPSA industry known as “architectural services,” because the ACS does not distinguish workers in this industry from those working in engineering services. Regarding another difference between the datasets, the ACPSA includes jewelry and silverware manufacturing. The ACS, meanwhile, does not separate jewelry and silverware manufacturing from other types of “miscellaneous” manufacturing industries, and so those workers are not analyzed here.

⁹ For a list of industries included in the ACPSA, see [Concordance of NAICS and ACPSA Industries](#).

Beyond this report, other national snapshots of the demographic profile of managers have been published for museums—by the Association of Art Museum Directors and the American Alliance of Museums, and—for opera—in a recent report released by OPERA America.¹⁰

Additionally, Antonio Cuyler at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (author of *Access, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Cultural Organizations: Insights from the Careers of Executive Opera Managers of Color in the U. S.*), conducted an online demographic survey of nonprofit arts organizations, finding in 2014 that whites accounted for 78 percent of arts managers.¹¹

That figure is roughly comparable to the share detected by the 2015-2019 American Community Survey data for managers of museums and performing arts companies. Combined with the gender gaps shown for manager occupations in selected arts industries, the differences in racial/ethnic group representation across arts industry leadership positions should give U.S. policymakers and arts organizations a clear baseline for assessing progress toward advancing sector-wide equity in coming years.

¹⁰ See the [American Alliance of Museums](#) and [OPERA America](#).

¹¹ Antonio C. Cuyler. “An Exploratory Study of Demographic Diversity in the Arts Management Workforce.” *GIAREADER*. Vol 26, No 3 (Fall 2015). Accessed June 22, 2022. <https://www.giarts.org/reader-26-3>

Technical Notes

Defining Management

Management occupations captured by the ACS span jobs as varied as chief executives and legislators, sales managers, financial managers, and human resources managers.

Most managers working in the selected arts industries examined in this research brief are coded as “other,” a management occupation category accounting for 59.2 percent of the managers working for performing arts companies and 56.9 percent working for sound recording industries, for example.

Exceptions are managers of arts-related retail trade. In bookstores and florist shops, 20 percent or more of the managers in these industries are coded by the ACS as general managers and chief executives.¹²

Defining Race and Ethnicity

The race and ethnicity categories considered in this analysis are: white, alone, not Hispanic; Black or African American, alone, not Hispanic; Asian, alone, not Hispanic; “other,” which combines American Indian or Alaskan native, alone, not Hispanic, native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, alone, not Hispanic, some other race alone, and people of two or more races. Hispanics can be of any race.

¹² For more information about the management occupations coded in the ACS, see the [2015-2019 ACS PUMS Data Dictionary](#).