

National Arts Statistics and Evidence-based Reporting Center (NASERC)

MEASURING THE ARTS

An abstract graphic featuring a central large circle with a yellow and pink ring. To its left is a smaller circle with a green and blue ring. To its right is another large circle with a brown and yellow ring. Several smaller circles in various colors (blue, green, yellow, pink) are scattered around, connected by thin grey lines. A line also extends from the top right towards the center.

Domain A

Artists and Other Cultural Workers



Indicator A.2: **Who Are the Other Cultural Workers?**

Key Findings

- In 2023, there were approximately 1.2 million other (non-artist) cultural workers in the U.S. labor force, an increase of 45,000 compared to 2010.
- The total number of non-artist cultural workers in 2023 reached the pre-pandemic level of 2019. Four out of 14 cultural occupations had more workers, while two had fewer workers than in 2019.
- Non-artist cultural workers in the labor force were generally more educated and less racially and ethnically varied than the total labor force.
- More non-artist cultural workers were under age 25 (16 percent) or aged 65 and over (9 percent) compared to the total labor force (14 percent and 7 percent, respectively).

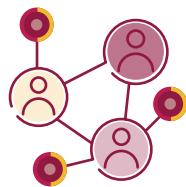
Introduction

Other cultural workers, also called non-artist cultural workers or simply cultural workers, are individuals whose occupations involve bringing artistry and design to their audiences. These cultural occupations contribute substantially to the country's

Other (non-artist) cultural worker and cultural occupations definitions

Non-artist cultural workers are individuals whose primary occupation supports the arts but is not included under artist-related occupations (see Indicator A.1). Indicator A.2 uses 15 occupations that are included in the American Community Survey (ACS) to capture non-artist cultural workers: archivists, curators, and museum technicians; broadcast, sound, and lighting technicians; editors; etchers and engravers; jewelers and precious stone and metal workers; librarians and library technicians; models, demonstrators, and product promoters; motion picture projectionists; photographic process workers and processing machine operators; print binders and finishing workers; printing press operators; television, video, and motion picture camera operators and editors; tour and travel guides; and ushers, lobby attendants, and ticket takers. Some cultural occupations have been combined in this indicator for reporting purposes.

These occupations are mostly consistent with those listed in the National Endowment for the Arts 2019 report titled [*Artists and Other Cultural Workers: A Statistical Portrait*](#).



total economic activity, but these workers are not part of the artist-related occupations defined in **Indicator A.1: Who Are the Artists?**

In Indicator A.2 and other indicators in the series, other cultural workers have been defined by their self-reported primary occupation.¹ For more information on these cultural occupations, see *Other (non-artist) cultural worker and cultural occupations definitions*. It is important to note that there are limitations to defining non-artist cultural workers based on their occupation. This definition only captures non-artist cultural workers in these selected cultural occupations. It does not capture all non-artists who work in arts and cultural industries. Future analysis will aim to explore this dimension of the arts labor force.

Those who personally perform or create art—regardless of whether it is part of their employment—are described in **Indicator B.3: Who is Personally Creating or Performing Art?** The arts teacher workforce, which is also not captured in this indicator but constitutes a major category of workers in the arts, is described in **Indicator D.2: Who Teaches the Arts in Schools?**

This indicator captures non-artist cultural workers who are in the labor force—i.e., either currently employed in a cultural occupation or unemployed and looking for work in a cultural occupation. It includes employed non-artist cultural workers in the labor force, regardless of work intensity (full-time or part-time status) and class of worker (private or wage-salary, government, or self-employed). More detailed

¹ “Primary occupation” refers to the kind of work a person does for pay most of the time. The ACS—the data source on which this indicator is based—asks only about the occupation corresponding with a respondent’s current or most recent job or, if they have two or more jobs, the job with the most usual hours worked. For more information see https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/subject_definitions/2022_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf.

information on the labor force status and employment characteristics of non-artist cultural workers, including trends in employment and unemployment rates, individuals holding primary and secondary jobs, and differences by work intensity is described in **Indicator A.5: What is the Labor Market Status of Artists and Other Cultural Workers?** The work classification of non-artist cultural workers and the industries they are most often employed in is described in **Indicator C.3: How Many Artists and Other Cultural Workers are Employed in Arts Organizations and Businesses?**

Other cultural workers by occupation



In 2023, there were approximately 1.2 million non-artist cultural workers in the U.S. labor force, an increase of 45,000 compared to 2010 (see **Table A2-1**). The percentage of non-artist cultural workers in the labor force was about 0.7 percent in both years.²

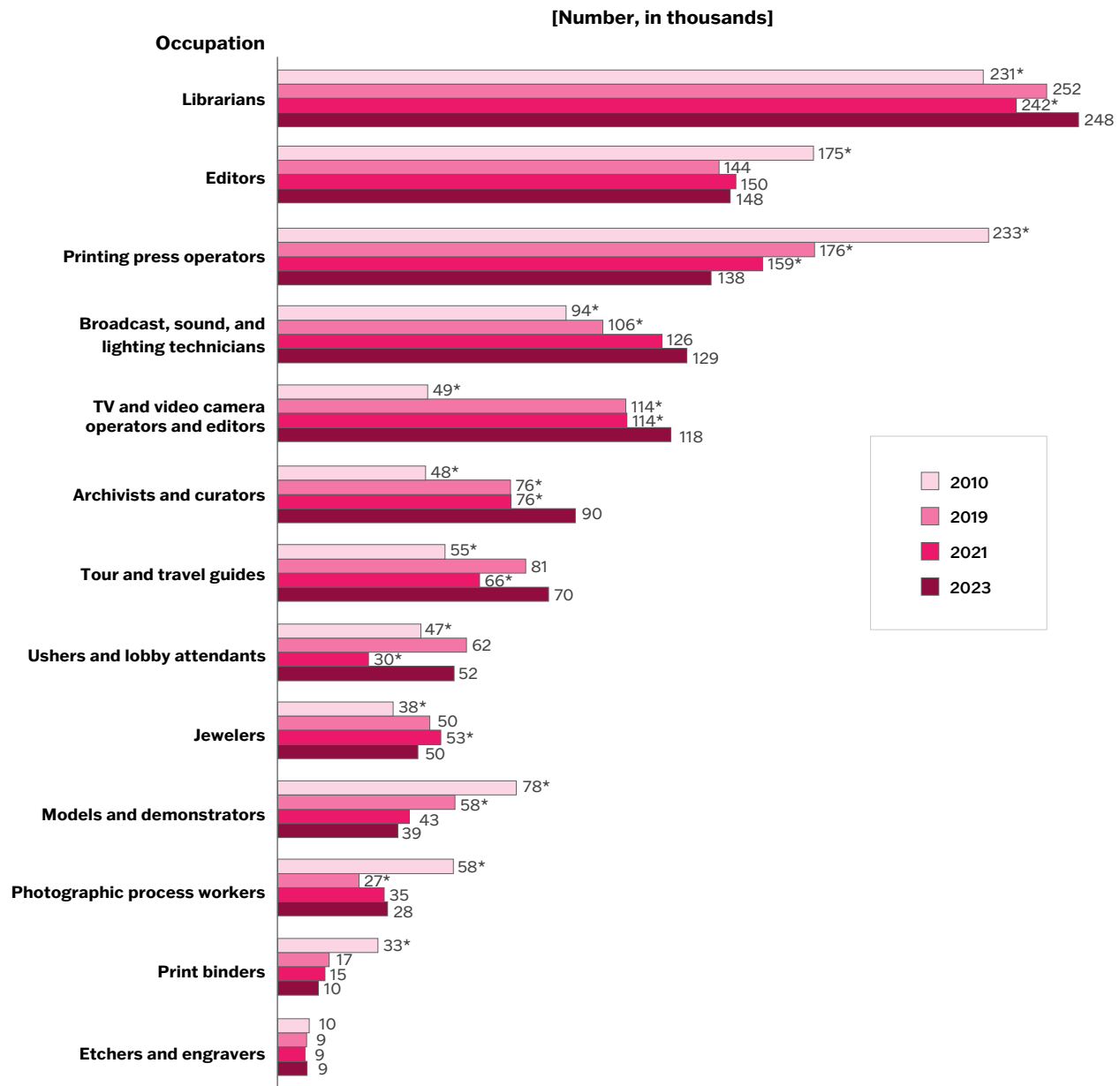
Among the 1.2 million non-artist cultural workers in the labor force in 2023, the occupations with the highest number of workers were librarians (262,000); editors (148,000); printing press operators (142,000); broadcast, sound, and lighting technicians (134,000); and TV and video camera operators and editors (129,000; **Figure A2-1**).³

The total number of non-artist cultural workers in 2023 returned to the pre-pandemic level of 2019. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of workers in two cultural occupations decreased: models and demonstrators (from 58,000 to 39,000) and printing press operators (from 176,000 to 142,000). These declines, continuing since 2010, may reflect the impacts of technological changes in media distribution. However, except for these two occupations, the number of non-artist cultural workers in 2023 was either not measurably different from or higher than in 2019. Growth between 2019 and 2023 was observed in four cultural occupations: broadcast, sound, and lighting technicians (from 106,000 to 134,000); TV and video camera operators and editors (from 114,000 to 129,000); archivists and curators (from 76,000 to 98,000); and photographic process workers (from 27,000 to 36,000).

² Differences between estimates (including trends over time) are stated only when they are statistically significant, based on a 95 percent level of confidence. For more information see *The Arts in the United States: Developing Key National Indicators of Arts Activity* technical report.

³ “Archivists and curators” include archivists, curators, and museum technicians. “Jewelers” include jewelers and precious stone and metal workers. “Librarians” include librarians and library technicians. “Models and demonstrators” include models, demonstrators, and product promoters. “Photographic process workers” include photographic process workers and processing machine operators. “Print binders” include print binders and finishing workers. “TV and video camera operators and editors” include television, video, and motion picture camera operators and editors. “Ushers and lobby attendants” include ushers, lobby attendants, and ticket takers. “Motion picture projectionists” are no longer separately reported in ACS, so they are not presented in the indicator.

Figure A2-1. Number of non-artist cultural workers in the total labor force, by occupation: 2010, 2019, 2021, and 2023



* Significantly difference ($p < .05$) from 2023

NOTE: Non-artist cultural workers in the labor force are individuals currently employed (regardless of work intensity [employed full time or part time] and class of worker [private or wage-salary, government, or self-employed]) in a cultural occupation or unemployed and looking for work in a cultural occupation. Data from 2019, 2021, and 2023 are included to compare non-artist cultural workers in the labor force before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from 2010 are included for long-term trend comparisons to 2019, 2021, and 2023 data. Data from 2020 are not analyzed because, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection, the Census Bureau considers the 2020 1-year ACS to be experimental. Experimental data may not meet all Census Bureau quality standards and reflect new data sources or methodologies. Due to the variance properties of the experimental estimation methodology, the variance estimates for some Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) estimates may be smaller than expected when compared to the equivalent variance estimates from previous years. See reference on page 16 of https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/experimental/2020/documentation/pums/ACS2020_PUMS_README.pdf. "Archivists and curators" include archivists, curators, and museum technicians. "Jewelers" include jewelers and precious stone and metal workers. "Librarians" include librarians and library technicians. "Models and demonstrators" include models, demonstrators, and product promoters. "Photographic process workers" include photographic process workers and processing machine operators. "Print binders" include print binding and finishing workers. "TV and video camera operators and editors" include television, video, and motion picture camera operators and editors. "Ushers and lobby attendants" include ushers, lobby attendants, and ticket takers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010, 2019, 2021, and 2023.

Demographic characteristics of non-artist cultural workers



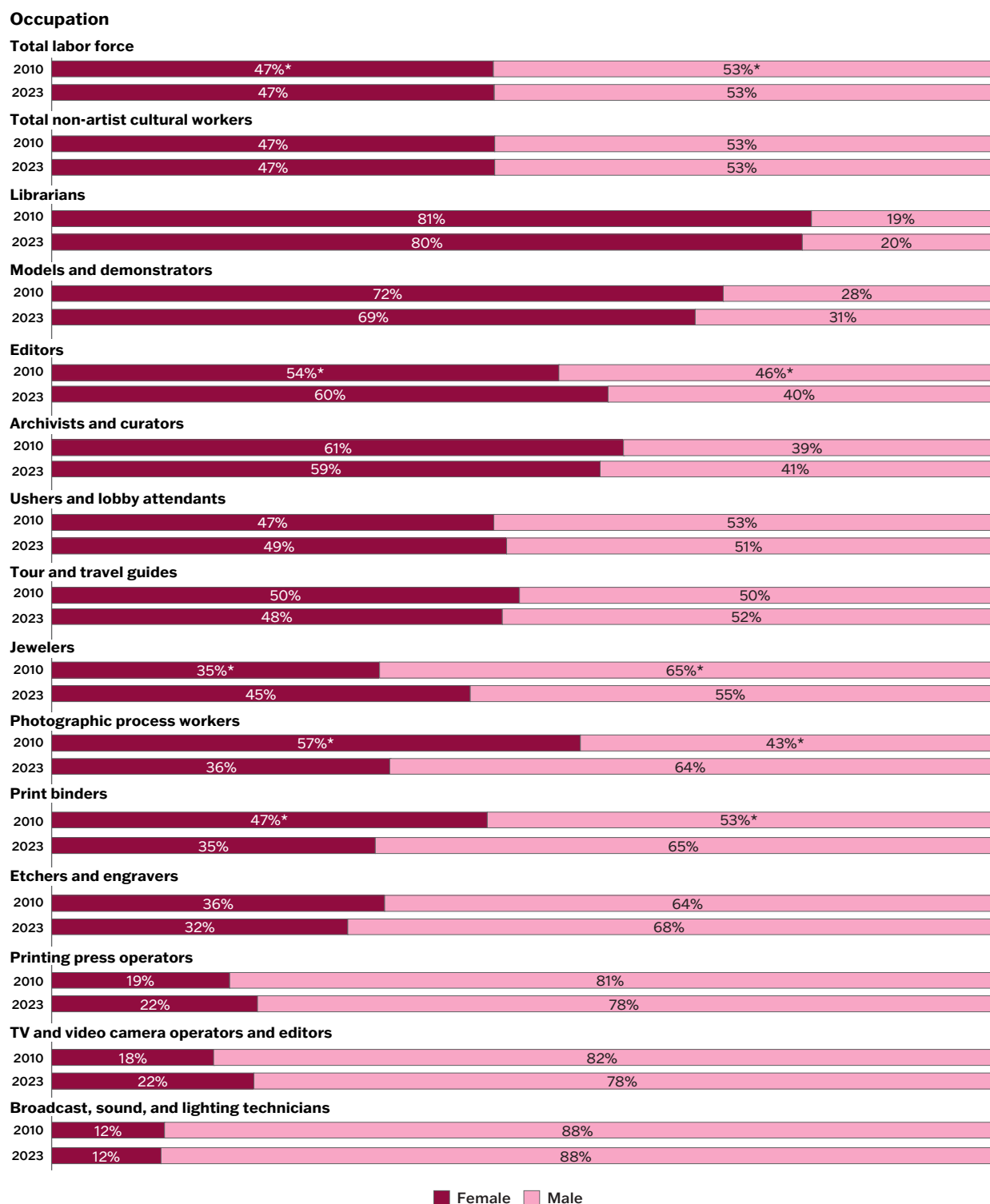
In 2023, non-artist cultural workers had different demographic characteristics compared to the total labor force, especially among specific cultural occupations.

The percentage of female workers among all non-artist cultural workers in the labor force (47 percent) was proportional to the rate of female workers in the total labor force (47 percent; **Figure A2-2**). However, the percentage of female workers in cultural occupations varied widely, ranging from around 12 percent for broadcast, sound, and lighting technicians and 22 percent for TV and video camera

operators and editors to a high of 80 percent for librarians. In addition to librarians, the percentage of female workers was above 50 percent for models and demonstrators (69 percent), editors (60 percent), and archivists and curators (59 percent).

Like the total labor force, the percentage of female non-artist cultural workers overall remained unchanged between 2010 and 2023 (47 percent). However, there were differences among specific cultural occupations. For example, the percentage of female jewelers increased from 35 percent to 45 percent and the percentage of female editors increased from 54 percent to 60 percent. In contrast, the percentage of female photographic process workers decreased from 57 percent to 36 percent, and the percentage of female print binders decreased from 47 percent to 35 percent.

Figure A2-2. Percentage distribution of the total labor force and non-artist cultural workers, by occupation and sex: 2010 and 2023



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2023.

NOTE: Non-artist cultural workers in the labor force are individuals currently employed (regardless of work intensity [employed full time or part time] and class of worker [private or wage-salary, government, or self-employed]) in a cultural occupation or unemployed and looking for work in a cultural occupation. "Archivists and curators" include archivists, curators, and museum technicians. "Jewelers" include jewelers and precious stone and metal workers. "Librarians" include librarians and library technicians. "Models and demonstrators" include models, demonstrators, and product promoters. "Photographic process workers" include photographic process workers and processing machine operators. "Print binders" include print binding and finishing workers. "TV and video camera operators and editors" include television, video, and motion picture camera operators and editors. "Ushers and lobby attendants" include ushers, lobby attendants, and ticket takers.

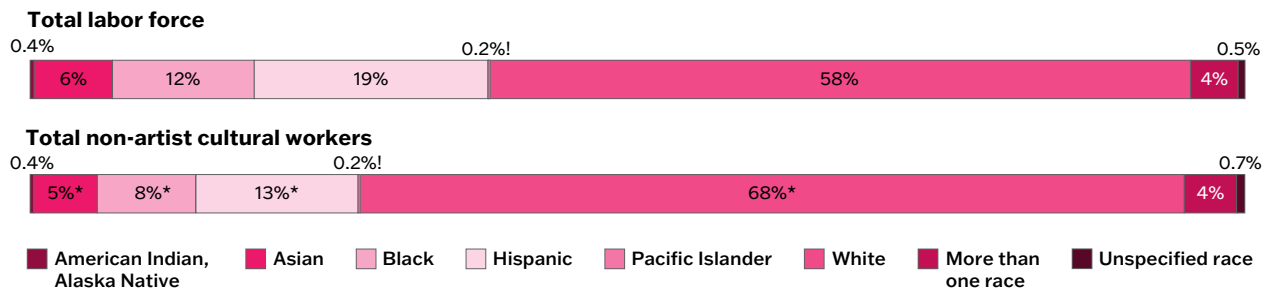
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010 and 2023.

In 2023, the percentages of non-artist cultural workers in the labor force who were Black (8 percent), Hispanic (13 percent), or Asian (5 percent) were lower than those in the total labor force, which were 12 percent, 19 percent, and 6 percent, respectively (Figure A2-3). In contrast, the percentage of White non-artist cultural workers (68 percent) was higher than that of the total labor force (58 percent). The percentages of Pacific Islander (0.2 percent) and American Indian/Alaska Native (0.4 percent) non-artist cultural workers were similar to their shares in the total labor force.

Among cultural occupations, the percentages of Black workers were particularly low among etchers and engravers (5 percent) and print binders

(5 percent; see Table A2-3). Hispanic workers were underrepresented in seven cultural occupations. For example, the Hispanic shares of photographic process workers (6 percent) and editors (8 percent) were less than half of the overall percentage of Hispanic workers in the labor force (19 percent). There were no cultural occupations in which the percentage of Black or Hispanic workers exceeded their share of the total labor force. Asian workers made up a larger percentage of photographic process workers and jewelers (both 11 percent) compared to their proportion of the total labor force (6 percent). For all remaining cultural occupations, the percentage of workers who were Asian was lower or not measurably different than their percentage of the labor force.

Figure A2-3. Percentage distribution of the total labor force and non-artist cultural workers, by race/ethnicity: 2023



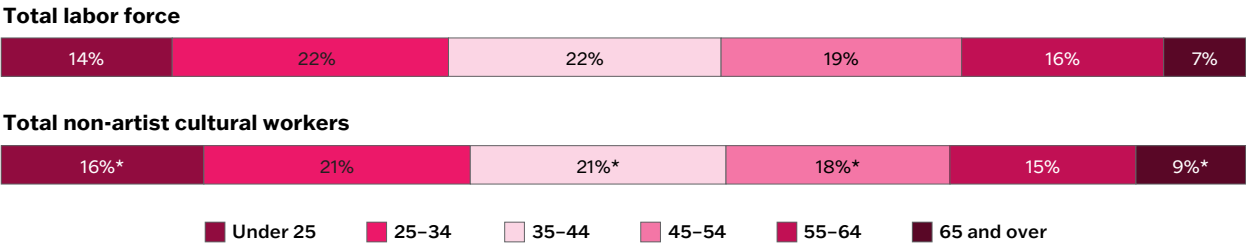
* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from total labor force.
! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.
NOTE: Non-artist cultural workers in the labor force are individuals currently employed (regardless of work intensity [employed full time or part time] and class of worker [private or wage-salary, government, or self-employed]) in a cultural occupation or unemployed and looking for work in a cultural occupation. Race groups are mutually exclusive; persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2023.

The age distribution of non-artist cultural workers in the labor force shows some differences compared to the total labor force. In 2023, 16 percent of non-artist cultural workers were under age 25 and 9 percent were aged 65 and over, compared to 14 percent and 7 percent of the total labor force, respectively (**Figure A2-4**). However, the percentages of non-artist cultural workers aged 35–44 (21 percent), aged 45–54 (18 percent), and aged 55–64 (15 percent) were lower than those in the total labor force (22 percent, 19 percent, and 16 percent, respectively). The percentage of non-artist cultural workers aged 25–34 was similar to that of the total labor force.

While the overall age distribution differences were small, there were notable variations within specific

cultural occupations (see **Table A2-3**). For example, the percentage of workers aged 65 and over was higher in occupations such as models and demonstrators (25 percent), jewelers (20 percent), print binders (16 percent), ushers and lobby attendants (15 percent), editors (10 percent), archivists and curators (9 percent), and librarians (9 percent). These percentages were all above the 7 percent of the total labor force in this age group. Similarly, the share of workers under age 25 varied by cultural occupation. For example, the percentages of ushers and lobby attendants and tour and travel guides (both 48 percent) under age 25 were much higher than the 14 percent of the total labor force in this age group.

Figure A2-4. Percentage distribution of the total labor force and non-artist cultural workers, by age group: 2023



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from total labor force.
 NOTE: Non-artist cultural workers in the labor force are individuals currently employed (regardless of work intensity [employed full time or part time] and class of worker [private or wage-salary, government, or self-employed]) in a cultural occupation or unemployed and looking for work in a cultural occupation. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2023.

In 2023, non-artist cultural workers in the labor force generally had higher levels of education compared to the total labor force. Relatively fewer of these workers had not completed high school (5 percent) compared to the total labor force (9 percent; **Figure A2-5**). Similarly, relatively fewer non-artist cultural workers had only completed high school (16 percent) compared to the total labor force (24 percent). In contrast, a higher share of non-artist cultural workers had completed a bachelor's degree (32 percent) than the total labor force (23 percent). Additionally, a greater share of non-artist cultural workers (21 percent) had completed a master's degree or higher compared to the total labor force (15 percent).

While the percentage of non-artist cultural workers who had not completed high school was lower than the total labor force, it was higher for ushers and lobby attendants (18 percent) and printing press operators (13 percent; see **Table A2-3**). Similarly, although the percentage of non-artist cultural workers with only a high school education (16 percent) was lower than that of the total labor force (24 percent), four cultural occupations had higher rates: print binders (51 percent), etchers and engravers (48 percent), printing press operators (43 percent), and ushers and lobby attendants (31 percent).

For five of the 13 non-artist cultural occupations, the percentage of workers with a bachelor's degree as their highest level of attainment was greater than that of the total labor force (23 percent). For example, 57 percent of editors and 55 percent of TV and video camera operators and editors had a bachelor's degree. In contrast, the percentages with a bachelor's degree working as printing press operators (12 percent), usher and lobby attendants (12 percent), and print binders (10 percent) were lower than that of the total labor force.

The percentage of non-artist cultural workers who had a master's degree or higher varied widely across specific occupations. The percentages of librarians (50 percent), archivists and curators (38 percent), and editors (27 percent) with a master's degree or higher were greater than that of the total labor force (15 percent). In contrast, the percentages for printing press operators (2 percent); ushers and lobby attendants (5 percent); tour and travel guides (6 percent); broadcast, sound, and lighting technicians (8 percent); models and demonstrators (8 percent); TV and motion picture camera operators (8 percent); and jewelers (10 percent) were lower. For other specific cultural occupations, comparisons with the labor force did not yield significant differences.

Figure A2-5. Percentage distribution of the total labor force and non-artist cultural workers, by educational attainment: 2023

Total labor force



Total non-artist cultural workers



Less than high school
 High school or GED
 Some college
 Associate's degree
 Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree or higher

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from total labor force.

NOTE: Non-artist cultural workers in the labor force are individuals currently employed (regardless of work intensity [employed full time or part time] and class of worker [private or wage-salary, government, or self-employed]) in a cultural occupation or unemployed and looking for work in a cultural occupation. "Some college" includes individuals who attended college but did not receive a degree. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2023.

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