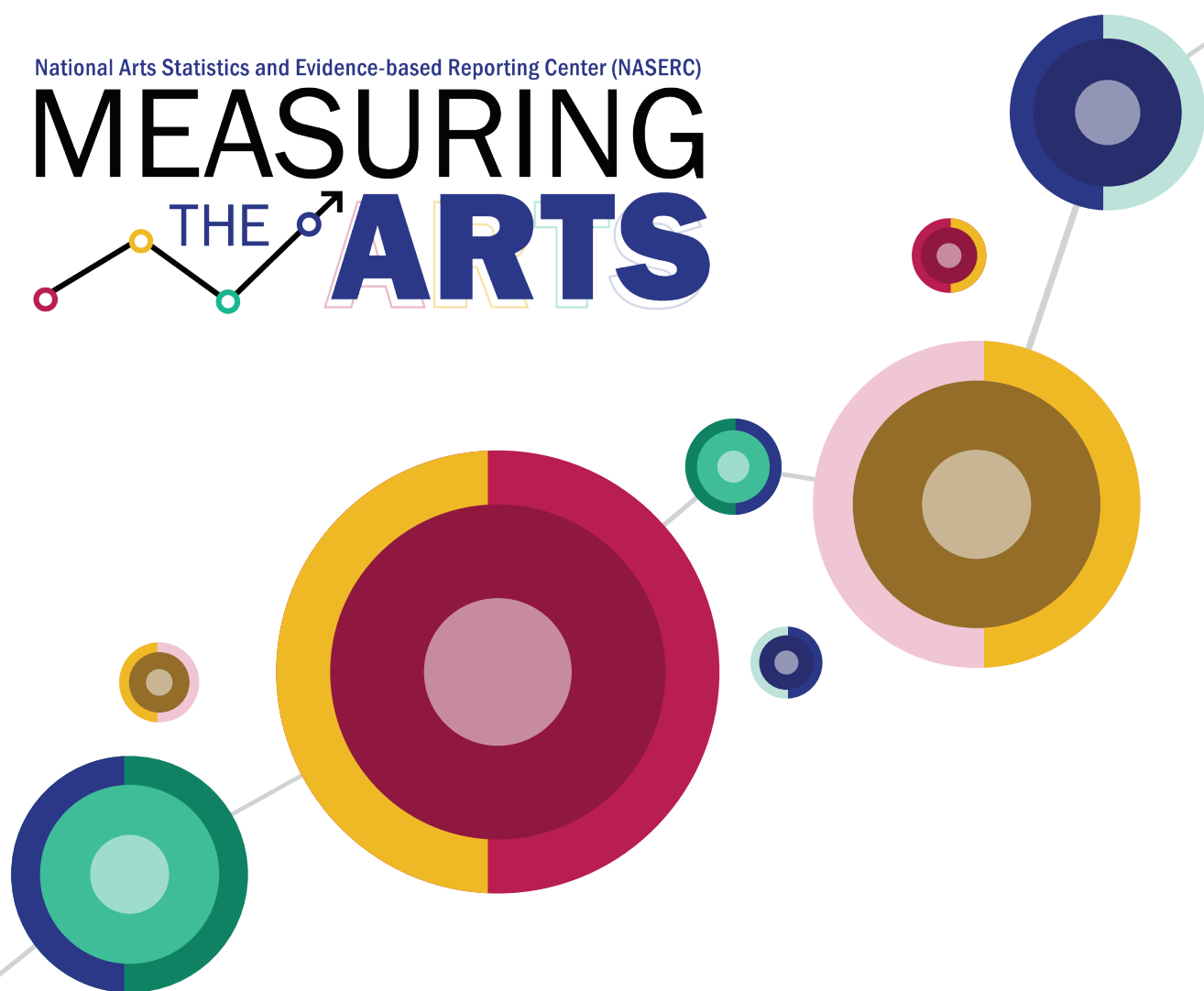


National Arts Statistics and Evidence-based Reporting Center (NASERC)

MEASURING THE ARTS



Domain A

Artists and Other Cultural Workers



Indicator A.3: Where Are Artists and Other Cultural Workers Located in the United States?

Introduction

Indicator A.3 uses data from the American Community Survey (ACS) to highlight the number and percentage of artists in the U.S. labor force by state and county. In compiling data for this and other indicators, artists have been defined by their self-reported primary occupation.¹ Indicator A.3 includes artists who are in the labor force—i.e., either currently employed in an artist occupation² or unemployed and looking for work in an artist occupation. It captures employed artists 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). For more information on geographic data used in this indicator, please see *Geographic Considerations*. Future analysis will also look at the number and percentage of other cultural workers in the labor force by state and county, as well as aspects such as work location and commuting patterns.

Geographic Considerations

It is important to note that the number of artists in the labor force in a state or county, and the overall size of the labor force in general, is related to the size of the total state or county population. For example, it is to be expected that California, the largest U.S. state by population, would have the largest labor force. Indicator A.3 accounts for this consideration by reporting both the number and percentage of artists in each state and county labor force. Additionally, in this indicator, the artist and labor force locations are determined by the location of residence, rather than the location of employment.

Number of Artists by State

There were 2.6 million artists in 2021, accounting for 1.6 percent of the total U.S. labor force (see **Table A3-1**).³ California had the highest number of artists in the state labor force in 2021 (474,000), followed by New York (262,000), Texas (179,000), and Florida (160,000).⁴ Another way to look at the concentration of artists in the labor force at the state level is to examine them as a proportion of the state labor force. As noted above, artists accounted for 1.6 percent of the total U.S. labor force in 2021. Considered this way, the percentage of artists in the state labor force ranged from 0.6 percent in West Virginia and Mississippi to 2.7 percent in Vermont (**Figure A3-1**). Five states (Vermont, New York, California, Oregon, and Colorado) and the District of Columbia had higher proportions of artists in the state labor force than the national average. Twenty-three states had below-average rates. In all other states, however, the percentage of artists in the labor force was not measurably different from the national average.⁵

The national share of artists in the labor force increased from 1.3 percent in 2010 to 1.6 percent in 2021 (see **Table A3-1**). Twelve states had measurable increases in the percentage of artists in their state labor force in 2021 versus 2010: California, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, and Utah. No states nor the District of Columbia had percentages that decreased between 2010 and 2021.

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.

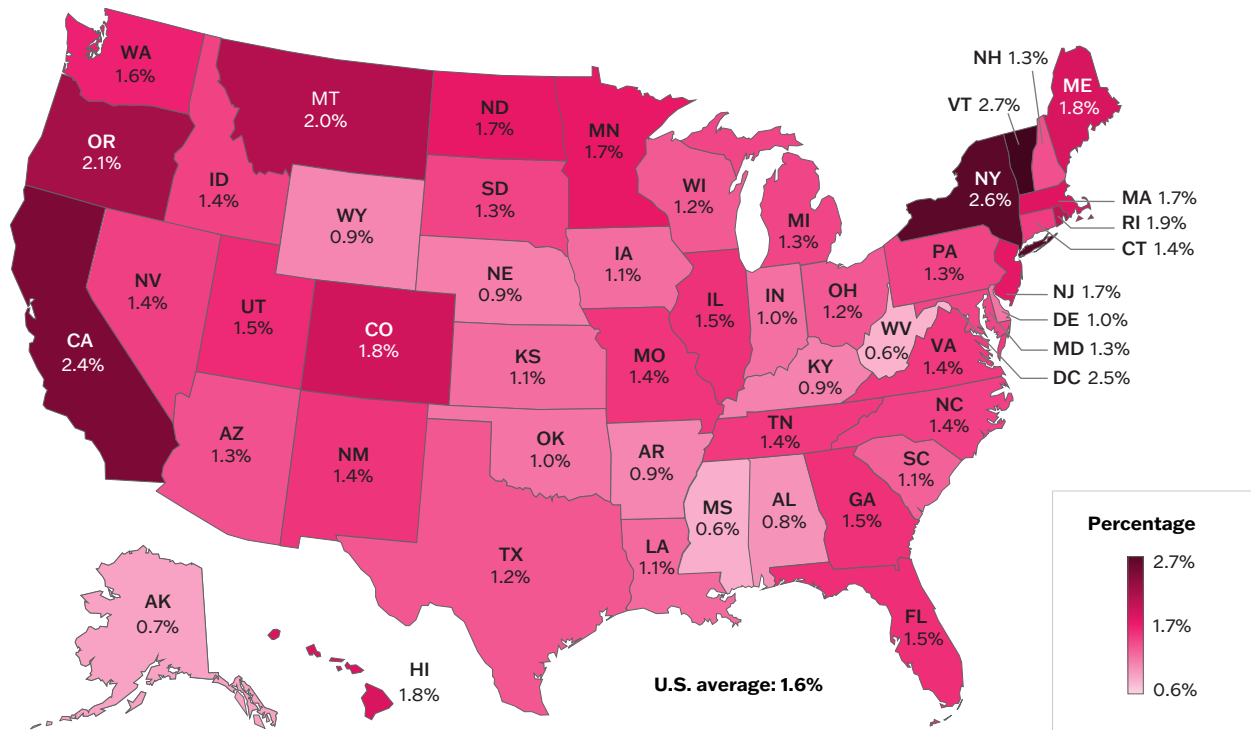
2 The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has developed a list of 13 specific artist occupations: architects; landscape architects; fine artists, art directors, and animators; designers; actors; producers and directors; dancers and choreographers; music directors and composers; musicians; entertainers; announcers; writers and authors; and photographers. These occupations have been used in this indicator. For more information see the NEA’s 2022 publication **Arts Data Profile #31—Artists in the Workforce: National and State Estimates for 2015–2019**.

3 See **Indicator A.1: Who Are the Artists?** for detail on the characteristics of artists in the U.S. labor force.

4 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* report.

5 While the values for Montana and Rhode Island appeared higher than Colorado, the values were not measurably different from the U.S. average due to relatively small sample sizes.

Figure A3-1. Percentage of artists in the state labor force by state or jurisdiction: 2021



NOTE: Artists in the labor force are individuals currently employed in an artist occupation (regardless of work intensity [employed full time or part time] and class of worker [private or wage-salary, government, or self-employed]) or unemployed and looking for work in an artist occupation.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2021.

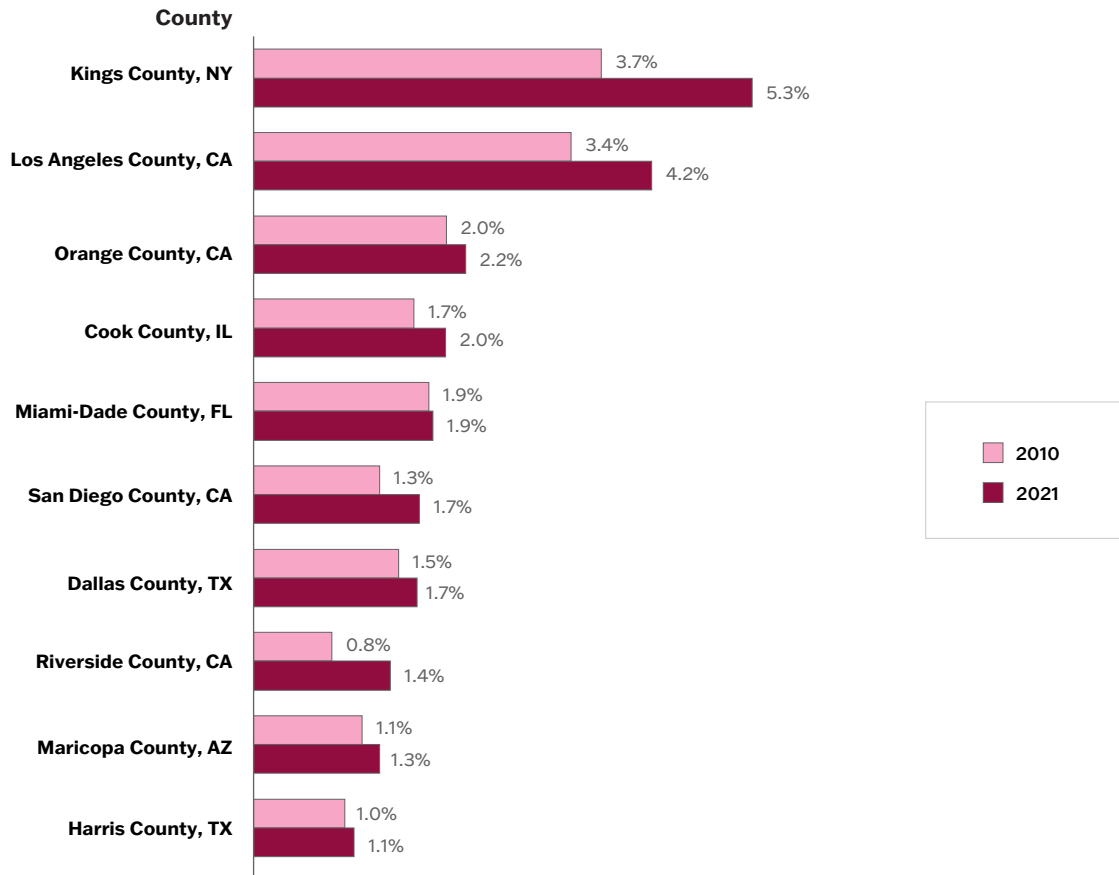
Number of Artists in the Top Ten Most Populous Counties

The most populous counties in the United States tend to capture in whole or in part large cities or metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, and Miami. In some cases, a single county may be home to more artists in the labor force than an entire state. For example, Los Angeles County, California, which includes the city of Los Angeles and is the most populous county in the United States, was home to 217,000 artists in 2021, more than all states except New York and California itself (see **Table A3-2**). The number of artists in the labor force in Los Angeles County accounted for nearly half (46 percent) of all artists in California; artists represented 4.2 percent of the labor force of Los Angeles County (**Figure A3-2**). Orange County,

California, which is within the city of Los Angeles metropolitan area and the fourth largest county in the country, was home to a further 38,000 artists in the labor force in 2021, though artists comprised 2.2 percent of the labor force. However, Kings County, New York, which was the second most populous county in the country in 2021 and includes the New York City borough of Brooklyn, was home to the largest percentage of the total labor force that was artists (5.3 percent) among the ten most populous counties.

Between 2010 and 2021, artists as a percentage of the labor force increased in four of the ten most populous counties in the United States. The counties that experienced increases were Kings County, New York; Los Angeles County, California; Riverside County, California; and San Diego County, California. None of the ten most populous counties saw a decrease in the percentage of artists in the labor force between 2010 and 2021.

Figure A3-2. Artists as a percentage of the total county labor force in the ten most populous counties in the United States, by county: 2010 and 2021



NOTE: Artists in the labor force are individuals currently employed in an artist occupation (regardless of work intensity [employed full time or part time] and class of worker [private or wage-salary, government, or self-employed]) or unemployed and looking for work in an artist occupation.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010 and 2021.

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