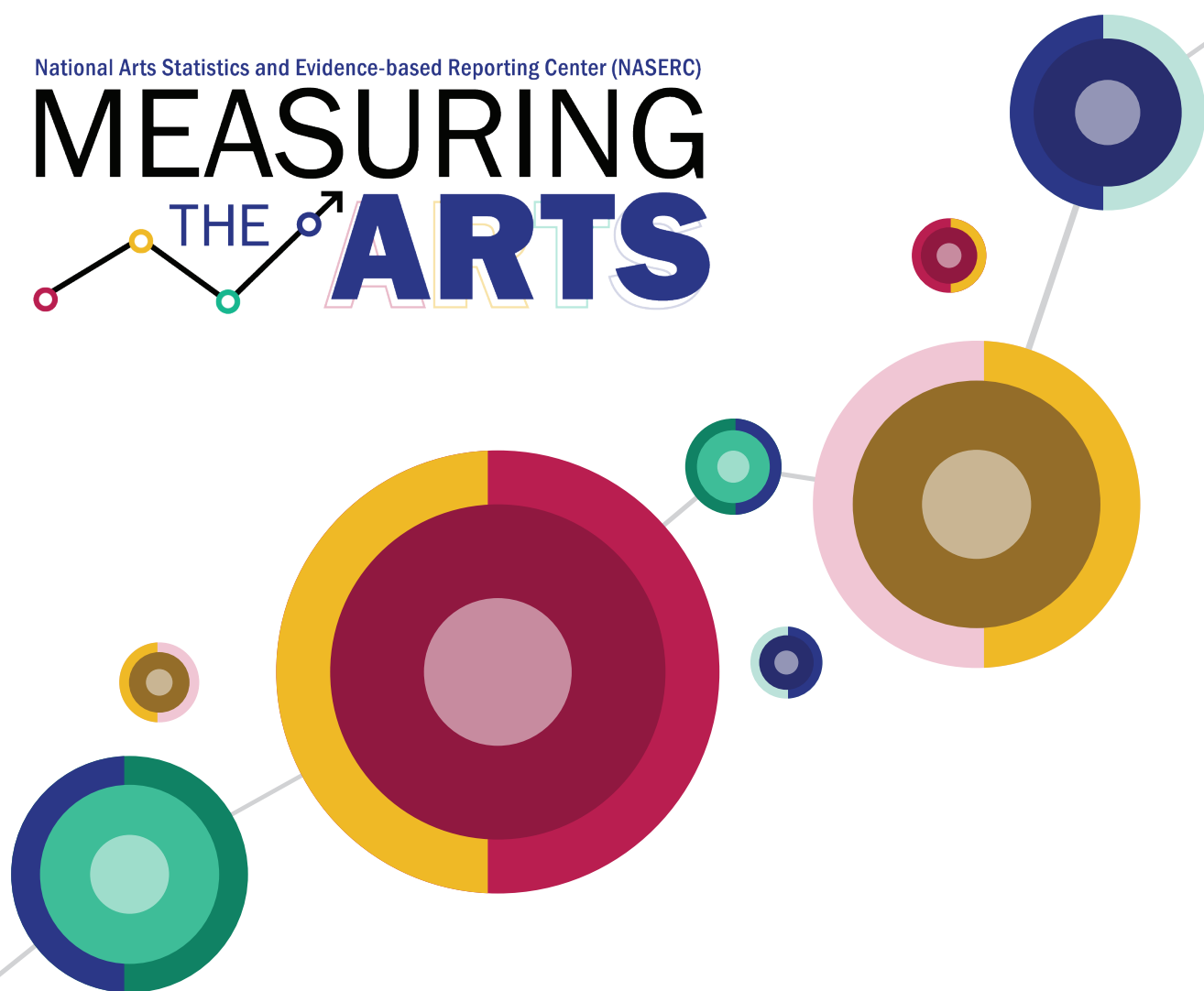


National Arts Statistics and Evidence-based Reporting Center (NASERC)

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?**

Key Findings

- The percentage of artists in the state labor force ranged from 0.9 percent in West Virginia, Mississippi, and South Dakota to 3.1 percent in the District of Columbia.
- Five states—New York, California, Oregon, Colorado, and New Jersey—and the District of Columbia had higher proportions of artists in the state labor force than the national rate. Twenty-two states had below-average rates.
- The percentage of non-artist cultural workers in the state labor force ranged from 0.4 percent in South Carolina, Mississippi, West Virginia, and Alabama to 1.6 percent in the District of Columbia.
- Eight states—New Mexico, Hawaii, New York, Maryland, Connecticut, Colorado, California, and Massachusetts—and the District of Columbia had higher proportions of non-artist cultural workers in the state labor force than the national rate. Ten states had below-average rates.

Introduction

Indicator A.3 uses data from the American Community Survey (ACS) to highlight the number and percentage of artists and other (non-artist) cultural workers in the U.S. labor force, broken down by state and select counties. In this and other indicators in the series, artists and other cultural workers are defined by their self-reported primary occupation.¹

Indicator A.3 includes artists who are in the labor force. This indicator includes artists and other cultural workers who are in the labor force—i.e., either currently employed in an artist or cultural occupation or unemployed and looking for work in an artist or cultural occupation.^{2,3} It captures employed artists and other 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). For more information on the geographic data used in this indicator, see *Geographic considerations*. Future analyses will also explore other geographic aspects, such as work location and commuting patterns.

Geographic considerations

The number of artists and other cultural workers in a state or county is related to the overall size of the labor force and population of that area. For example, California, the most populous U.S. state, has the largest labor force and, as a result, the largest number of artists and other cultural workers. Indicator A.3 accounts for this by reporting both the number and percentage of artists and other cultural workers in each state and select counties.

In this indicator, the locations of artists and other cultural workers are based on their place of residence, not their place of employment.

Number of artists by state

In 2023, there were 2.8 million artists in the United States, accounting for 1.6 percent of the total labor force (see **Table A3-1**).⁴ California, as the most populous state, had the highest number of artists in its labor force, with 473,000, followed by New York

¹ “Primary occupation” refers to the kind of work a person does for pay most of the time. The ACS—the data source for this indicator—asks only about the occupation corresponding to 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/2023_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf.

² The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has developed a list of 11 specific artist occupations: architects (including landscape architects); fine artists, art directors, and animators; designers; actors; producers and directors; dancers and choreographers; musicians (including music directors and composers); entertainers; announcers; writers and authors; and photographers. These occupations have been used in this indicator, though some categories have been combined for reporting purposes. For more information, see the 2019 NEA publication *Artists and Other Cultural Workers: A Statistical Portrait*.

³ Other cultural workers, also called non-artist cultural workers or simply cultural workers, are individuals whose primary occupation supports the arts but does not include artist-related occupations. Indicator A.3 uses 15 occupations that are included in the 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; 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. These occupations are mostly consistent with those listed in the NEA 2019 publication *Artists and Other Cultural Workers: A Statistical Portrait*. Estimates of non-artist cultural workers include all workers employed in these occupations, regardless of whether they are employed within an arts-related industry. However, the definition does not capture non-artists who work in arts and cultural industries.

⁴ See **Indicator A.1: Who Are the Artists?** for detail on the characteristics of artists in the U.S. labor force.

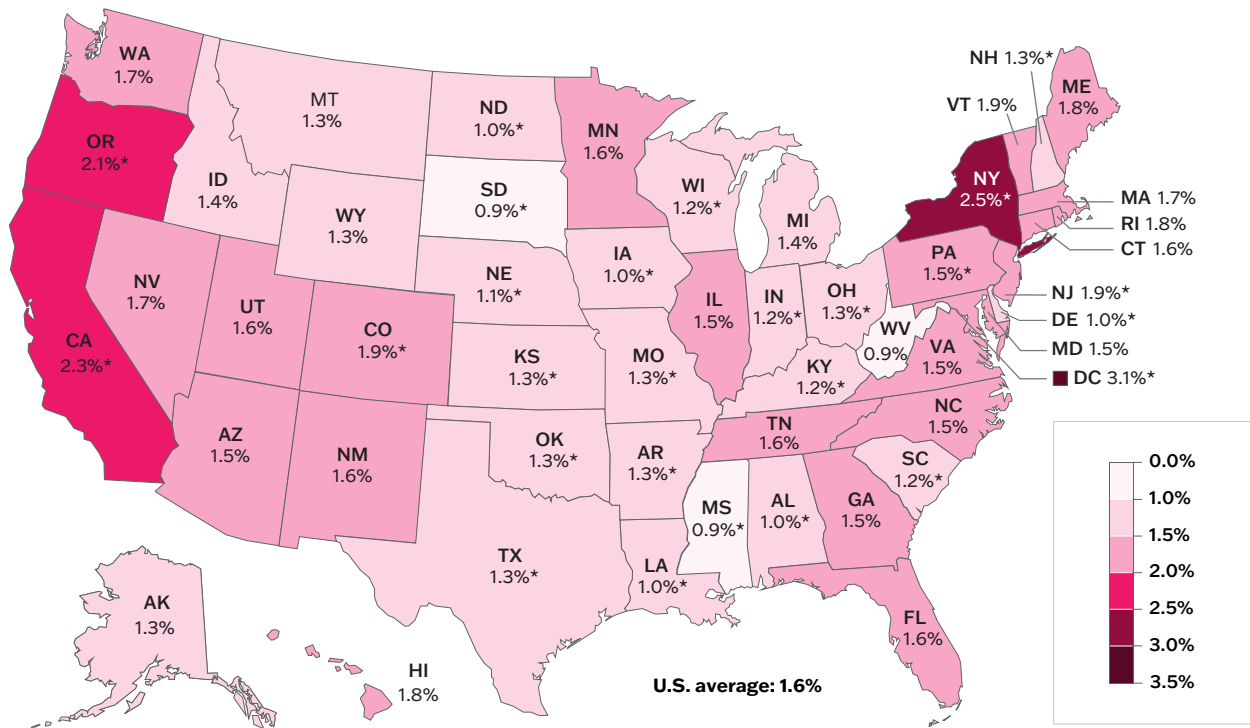
(257,000), Texas (208,000), Florida (176,000), and Illinois (100,000).⁵

Another way to examine the concentration of artists is by looking at their proportion within the state labor force. As noted, artists made up 1.6 percent of the total U.S. labor force in 2023. At the state level, the percentage of artists ranged from 0.9 percent in West Virginia, Mississippi, and South Dakota to 3.1 percent in the District of Columbia (**Figure A3-1**). Five states—New York, California, Oregon, Colorado, and New Jersey—and the District of Columbia had higher proportions of artists in their labor force than the national average. Twenty-two states had below-average rates, while in all other states, the percentage of artists was not measurably different from the national average.⁶

The national share of artists in the labor force increased from 1.3 percent in 2010 to 1.6 percent in 2023 (see **Table A3-1**). Twenty-nine states saw measurable increases in the percentage of artists in their labor force from 2010 to 2023: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming. No states or the District of Columbia experienced a decrease in this percentage during the same period.

Compared to 2022, most states saw no change in the percentage of artists in their labor force, except for five states. Arkansas, Indiana, and Oklahoma had a higher percentage in 2023 compared to 2022, while California and Maryland had a lower percentage.

Figure A3-1. Percentage of artists in the state labor force by state or jurisdiction: 2023



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from the U.S. average
 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), 2023.

⁵ 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.
⁶ While the values for Vermont, Hawaii, Maine, Rhode Island, Washington, Massachusetts, and Nevada appeared higher than the national average, the values were not measurably different from the U.S. average.

In 2023, the percentage of artists in the labor force in all states either increased or was not measurably different from 2019, the last pre-pandemic year. Eleven states had a higher percentage in 2023 than in 2019: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Indiana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas.

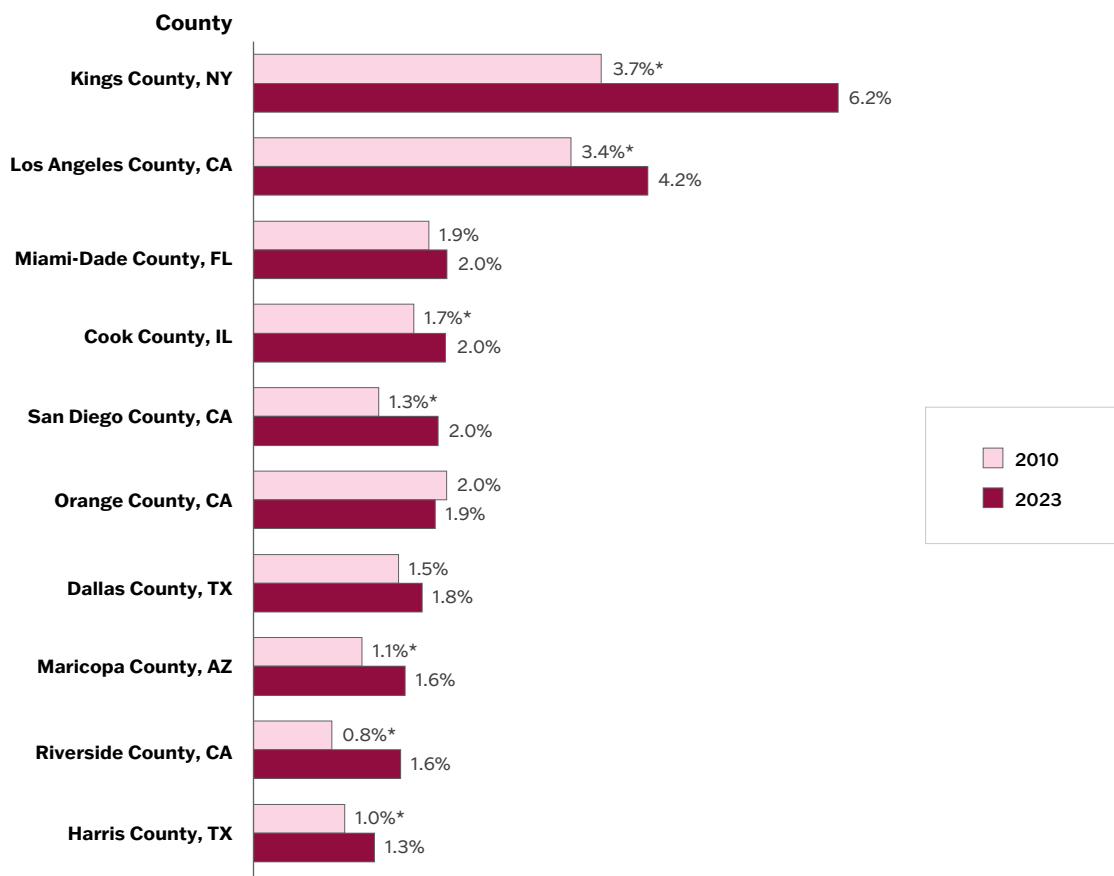
Number of artists in the top ten most populous counties

The most populous counties in the United States often include large cities or metropolitan areas like Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, or Miami. Sometimes, a single county has more artists in their 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 216,000 artists in 2023 (see [Table A3-2](#)). This number was higher than any state except New York and California itself. Nearly half (46 percent) of all artists in California lived in Los Angeles County in 2023, where artists made up 4.2 percent of the labor force ([Figure A3-2](#)). Orange County, California, part of the Los Angeles metropolitan area and the sixth largest county in the country, was home to 33,000 artists in 2023, accounting for 1.9 percent of the labor force.

Kings County, New York, which includes the New York City borough of Brooklyn and was the ninth most populous county in the country in 2023, had the highest percentage of artists in its labor force (6.2 percent) among the ten most populous counties. In nine of these ten counties, the percentage of artists was either higher

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 2023



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

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 2023.

than or similar to the national average. Harris County, Texas, was the only county with a lower percentage of artists (1.3 percent) compared to the national average (1.6 percent). Six counties had a higher percentage of artists than the U.S. average: Los Angeles County, California; Cook County, Illinois; San Diego County, California; Orange County, California; Miami-Dade County, Florida; and Kings County, New York.

Between 2010 and 2023, the percentage of artists in the labor force increased in seven of the ten most populous counties in the United States. These counties were Kings County, New York; Los Angeles County, California; Riverside County, California; San Diego County, California; Cook County, Illinois; Maricopa County, Arizona; and Harris County, Texas. None of the ten counties saw a decrease in the percentage of artists in the labor force between 2010 and 2023.

Compared to 2022, nine of the ten most populous counties had no significant change in the percentage of artists in the labor force, except for Kings County, New York, which saw a one percentage point increase in 2023. In 2023, the percentage of artists in all ten counties was either higher than or similar to 2019, the last pre-pandemic year. Three counties had a higher percentage than in 2019: Maricopa County, Arizona; Dallas County, Texas; and Kings County, New York.

Number of non-artist cultural workers by state



Other (non-artist) cultural workers are individuals whose primary occupation supports the arts but is not included under artist-related occupations. In 2023, there were 1.2 million non-artist cultural workers in the United States, accounting for 0.7 percent of the total labor force (see **Table A3-3**).⁷ Following the pattern of the distribution of artists, California had the highest number of non-artist cultural workers in its labor force, with 171,000, followed by New York (101,000), Texas (80,000), Florida (60,000), and Illinois (48,000).

The percentage of non-artist cultural workers in the state labor force ranged from 0.4 percent in South Carolina, Mississippi, West Virginia, and Alabama to 1.6 percent in the District of Columbia (**Figure A3-3**). Eight states—New Mexico, Hawaii, New York,

Maryland, Connecticut, Colorado, California, and Massachusetts—and the District of Columbia had higher proportions of non-artist cultural workers in their labor force than the national average. Ten states had below-average rates: Michigan, Missouri, Washington, Indiana, Florida, Texas, Alabama, West Virginia, Mississippi, and South Carolina. In all other states, the percentage of non-artist cultural workers was not measurably different from the national average. In all other states, the percentage of non-artist cultural workers was not measurably different from the national average.

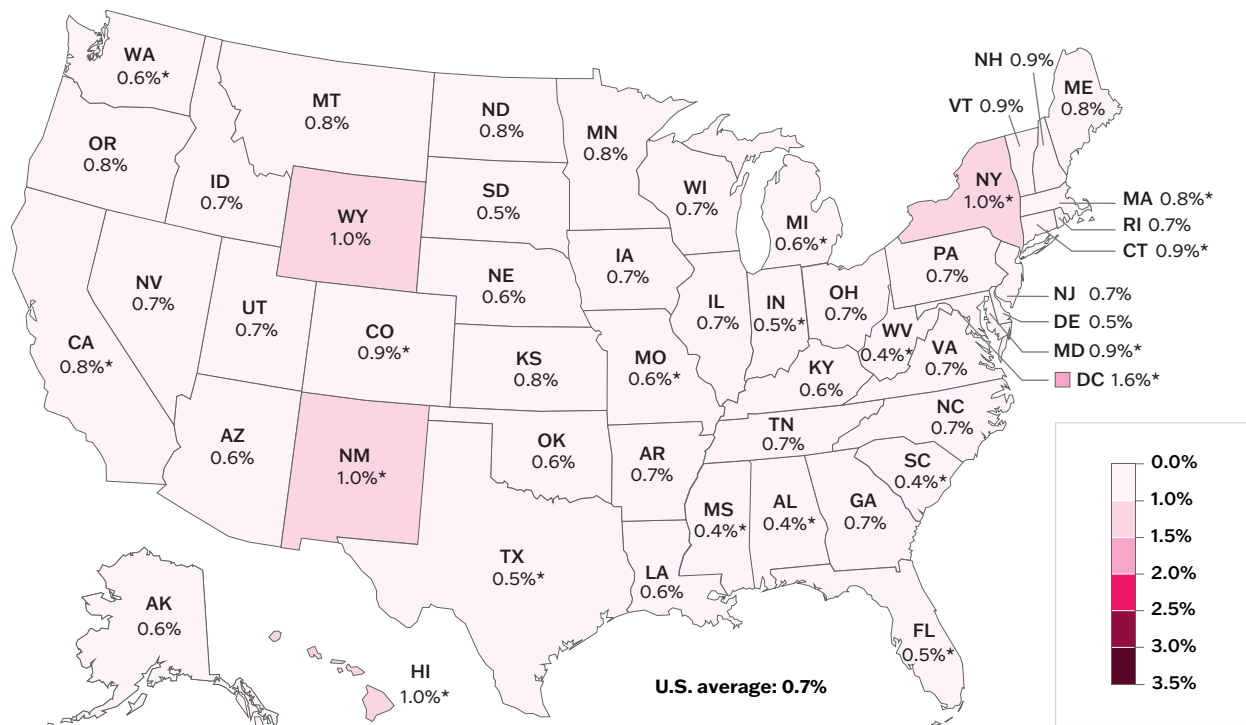
The percentage of non-artist cultural workers in the labor force was about 0.7 percent in both 2010 and 2023 (see **Table A3-3**). Most states saw no measurable change in the share of non-artist cultural workers in their labor force during this period. Only two states, Louisiana and North Dakota, had measurable increases in the percentage of non-artist cultural workers in their labor force between 2010 and 2023. Seven states experienced measurable decreases: Illinois, Indiana, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

In 2023, the percentage of non-artist cultural workers in most states was not measurably different from 2019, the last pre-pandemic year. However, North Carolina saw an increase from 0.5 percent to 0.7 percent, while Rhode Island saw a decrease from 1.2 percent to 0.7 percent.

Compared to 2022, most states saw no change in the percentage of non-artist cultural workers, except for three states. Maryland and Tennessee had higher percentages in 2023 than in 2022 (0.9 vs. 0.7 percent and 0.7 vs. 0.6 percent, respectively), while South Carolina had a lower percentage in 2023 than in 2022 (0.4 vs. 0.5 percent).

⁷ See **Indicator A.2: Who Are the Other Cultural Workers?** for detail on the characteristics of non-artist cultural workers in the U.S. labor force.

Figure A3-3. Percentage of non-artist cultural workers in the state labor force by state or jurisdiction: 2023



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from the U.S. average

NOTE: Non-artist cultural workers in the labor force are individuals currently employed in a cultural 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 a cultural occupation.

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

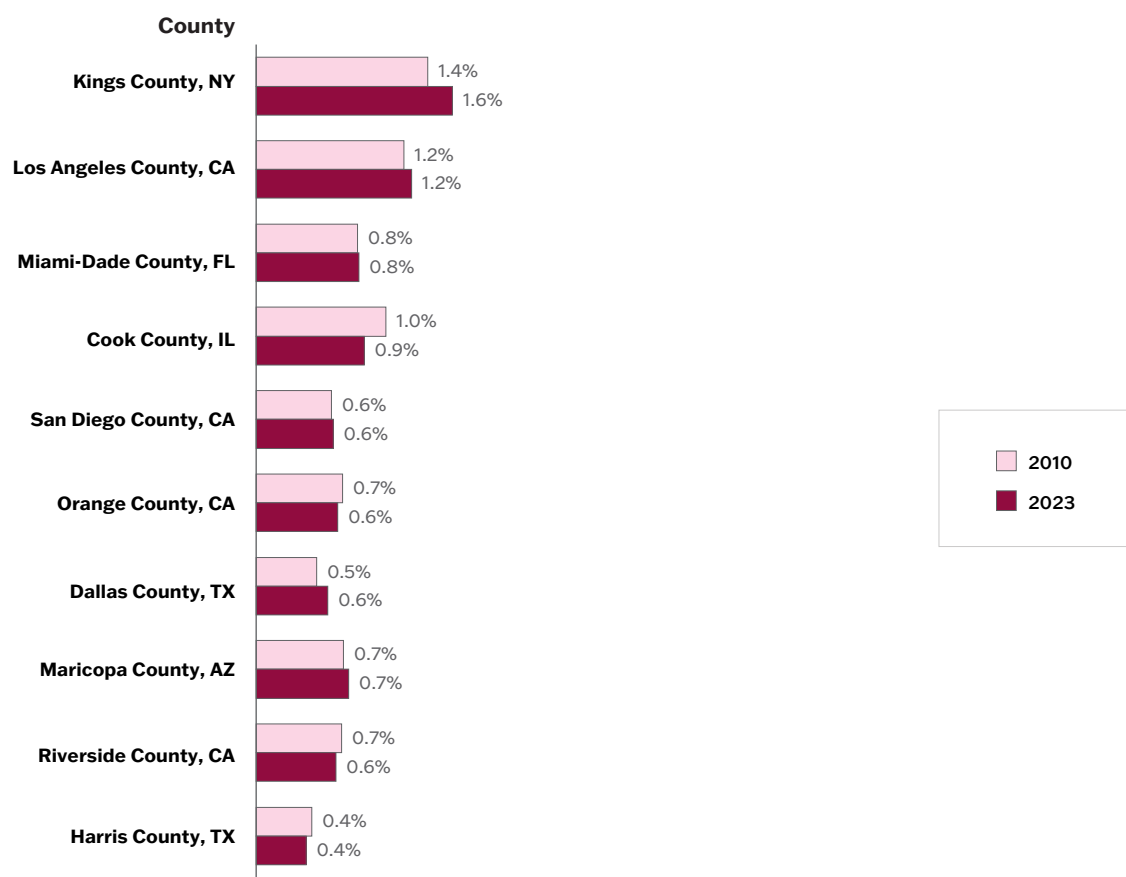
Number of non-artist cultural workers in the top ten most populous counties

Los Angeles County, California, had 64,000 non-artist cultural workers in 2023, more than any state except New York, Texas, and California itself (see [Table A3-4](#)). Non-artist cultural workers made up 1.2 percent of the labor force in Los Angeles County ([Figure A3-4](#)). Kings County, New York, had the highest percentage of non-artist cultural workers in the labor force (1.6 percent) among the ten most populous counties, totaling 21,000 workers. Los Angeles County and Kings County were the only two of these counties with a higher percentage of non-artist cultural workers than the national average of 0.7 percent.

Despite Texas having the third highest number of non-artist cultural workers, it was among the states with the lowest percentages of non-artist cultural workers in its total labor force (0.5 percent). Harris County, Texas, had a low percentage of non-artist cultural workers in its labor force (0.4 percent) and was the only county among the ten most populous with a lower percentage than the national average.

Between 2010 and 2023, the percentage of non-artist cultural workers in the labor force did not change among the ten most populous counties in the United States. There was also no measurable change between 2019 and 2023. Between 2022 and 2023, only Maricopa County, Arizona, saw a slight increase in the percentage of non-artist cultural workers in its labor force (from 0.5 percent to 0.6 percent); there was no measurable change in any of the remaining counties.

Figure A3-4. Non-artist cultural workers as a percentage of the total county labor force in the ten most populous counties in the United States, by county: 2010 and 2023



NOTE: Non-artist cultural workers in the labor force are individuals currently employed in a cultural 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 a cultural occupation.

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

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