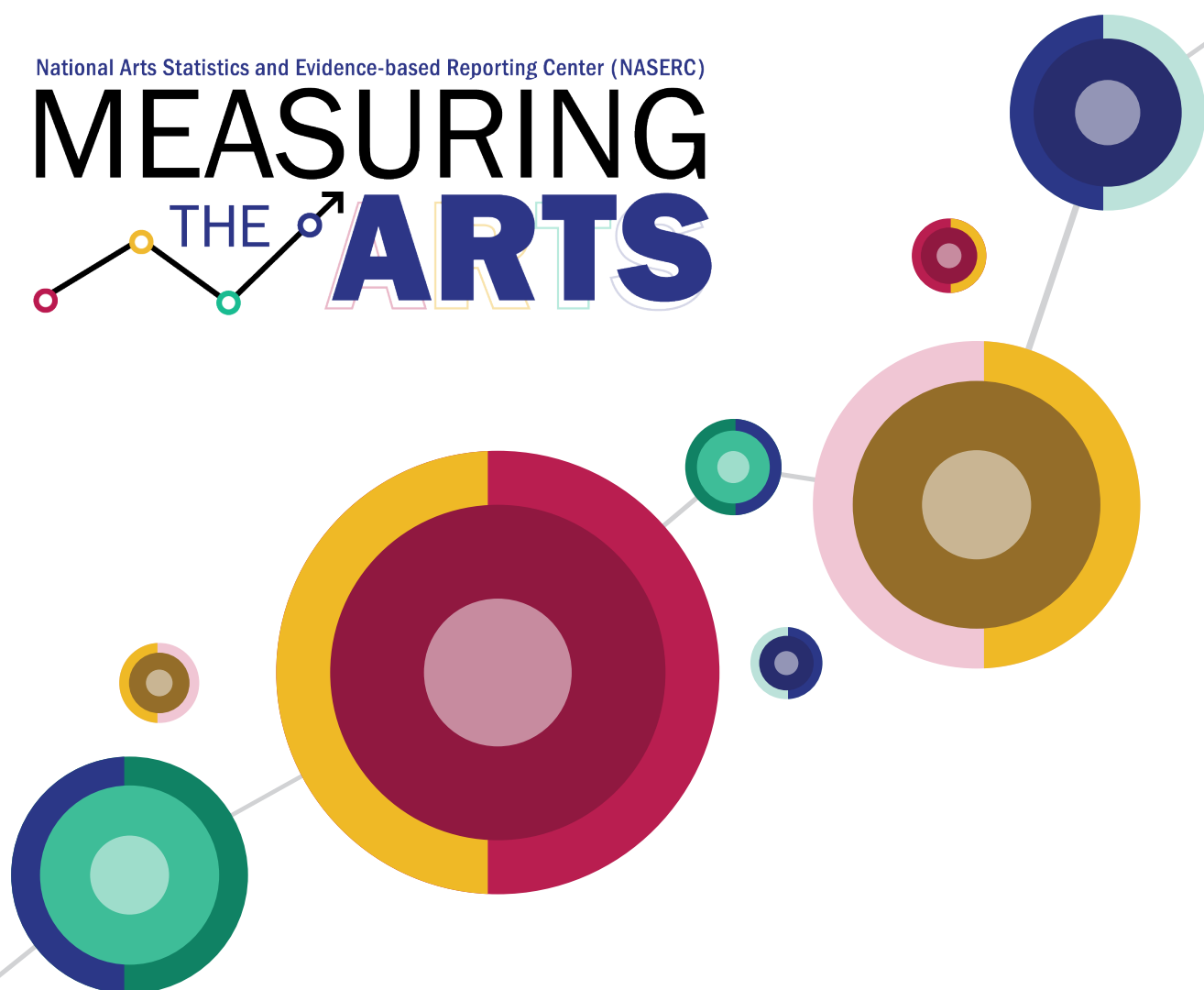


National Arts Statistics and Evidence-based Reporting Center (NASERC)

MEASURING THE ARTS

An abstract graphic featuring a line with four colored dots (red, yellow, green, blue) and an upward-pointing arrow, positioned to the left of the word 'THE'.

Domain A

Artists and Other Cultural Workers



Indicator A.7: **What Are the Earnings for Artists and Other Cultural Workers?**

Introduction



Indicator A.7 looks at median annual earnings for employed artists and other cultural workers in the total United States labor force, by their full-time or part-time status.¹ It captures earnings for employed artists and other cultural workers regardless of class of worker (private or wage-salary, government, or self-employed). Indicator A.7 compares earnings for employed artists and other cultural workers to earnings for all employed workers, and it reports earnings of employed artists by occupation. In this and other indicators in the series, artists and other (non-artist) cultural workers have been defined by their self-reported primary occupation.² Indicator A.7 also reports the median annual household income of employed artists and other cultural workers in comparison to the household income of all employed workers.

Definitions of median earnings and household income

Earnings are defined in the American Community Survey (ACS) as the sum of wage-salary income and net income from self-employment before deductions for personal income taxes, Social Security, Medicare, etc. An individual with earnings is one who has either wage/salary income, self-employment income, or both. This indicator uses median earnings over the past 12 months from all jobs to compare earnings of artists and cultural workers, aged 18 and over, with the earnings of all workers aged 18 and over. Median earnings divide the income distribution into two equal groups, half with earnings above that amount and half with earnings below that amount. Unlike mean earnings, median earnings either do not change or change very little in response to extreme observations. Household income includes the income of the householder and all other individuals, aged 15 and over, in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not. For more information, see the [ACS Technical Documentation](#).



For more information on the definitions of earnings and household income, see *Definitions of median earnings and household income*. Future editions of Indicator A.7 will explore detailed information on earnings of other cultural workers by occupation as well as trends in earnings and household income for artists and other cultural workers. Moreover, **Indicator A.5: What Is the Labor Market Status of Artists and Other Cultural Workers?** will provide statistics on the labor force status and employment characteristics of artists, including trends in employment and unemployment rates, and rates of primary and secondary job-holding in the arts.

Median annual earnings of artists and other cultural workers employed full time



Individuals reporting primary employment as an artist or other cultural worker were less likely to be working full time,³ compared to all employed workers in general. In 2022, 63 percent of both employed artists and other cultural workers worked full time (see **Table A7-1**).⁴ By comparison, 73 percent of all employed workers in the United States worked full time. There was no measurable difference between the proportions of full-time employed artists and other cultural workers. However, artists who were employed full time had higher median annual earnings than other full-time employed cultural workers and full-time employed workers in general. Artists who were employed full time in 2022 typically earned \$67,420, or 20 percent more than other cultural workers (\$56,150), and 18 percent more than all full-time employed workers in general (\$57,320; **Figure A7-1**). These higher earnings for artists may reflect the fact that artists were generally more likely to have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the total labor force (see **Indicator A.1: Who Are the Artists?**).

¹ For more information on the definitions of artists and other cultural workers see **Indicator A.1: Who Are the Artists?** and **Indicator A.2: Who Are the Other Cultural Workers?**

² “Primary occupation” refers to the kind of work a person does for pay most of the time. The American Community Survey (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.

³ “Full time” is defined as working 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year.

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* technical report.

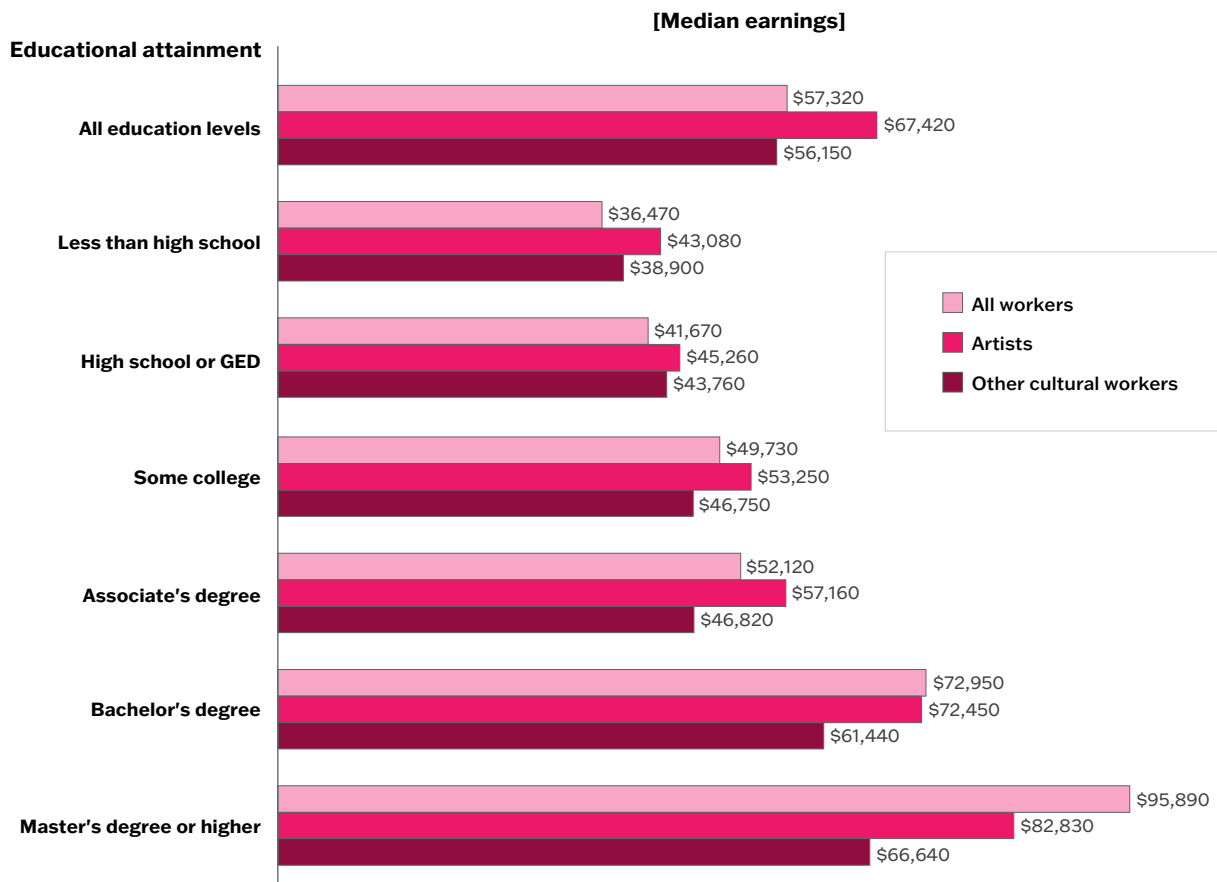
Median annual earnings of artists and other cultural workers, by education level

When comparing median annual earnings by educational attainment, there were no measurable differences in earnings among artists, other cultural workers, and all workers who were employed full time and had a high school education or less.

Differences emerged when the analysis focused on workers with some college⁵ education. Artists with some college education who were employed full time (\$53,250) typically earned more than other cultural workers with a similar education level who were

employed full time (\$46,750), and more than all workers with a similar education level who were employed full time (\$49,730). Full-time employed artists with an associate's degree typically earned more than other cultural workers employed full time with similar degrees (\$57,160 compared to \$46,820). In general, there were no measurable differences between full-time employed artists with an associate's or bachelor's degree and all full-time workers with similar degrees. However, full-time employed artists with a master's degree or higher typically earned less than did all full-time employed workers with similar degrees (\$82,830 and \$95,890, respectively). Full-time artists with any college education typically earned more than full-time other cultural workers with a similar education level.

Figure A7-1. Median annual earnings for all workers, artists, and other cultural workers employed full time, by educational attainment: 2022



NOTE: "Full time" is defined as working 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year. "Some college" includes individuals who attended college but did not receive a degree.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2022.

⁵ "Some college" includes individuals who attended college but did not receive a degree.

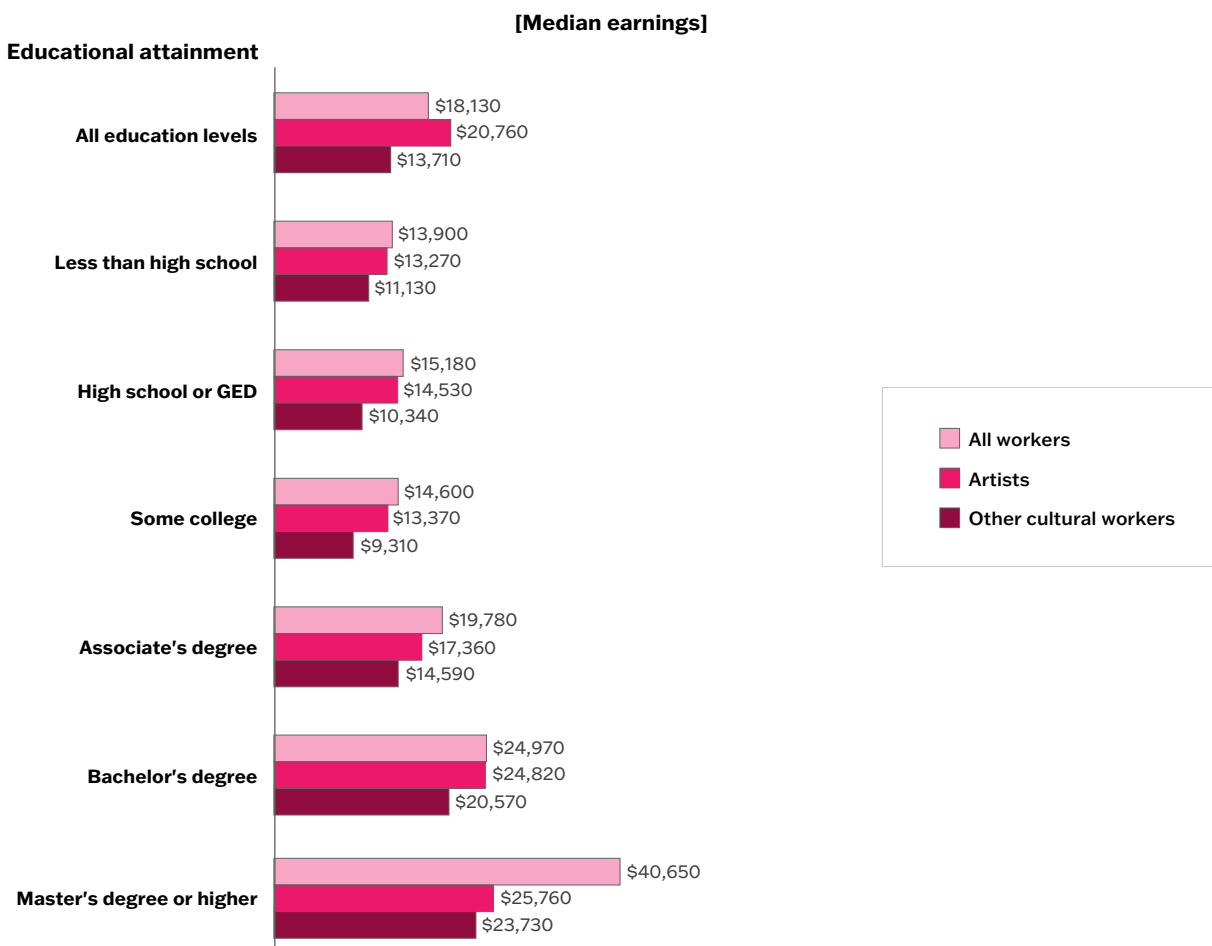
Median annual earnings of artists and other cultural workers employed part time

Individuals reporting primary employment as an artist or other cultural worker were more likely to be working part time,⁶ compared to all employed workers in general. In 2022, 37 percent of both employed artists and other cultural workers worked part time compared to 27 percent of all employed workers (see **Table A7-1**). There were no measurable differences between the share of employed artists and the share of other employed cultural workers who worked part time, but there were differences in earnings for part-time workers between these two groups. In 2022, artists employed

part time typically earned 51 percent more (\$20,760) than part-time workers employed in other cultural occupations (\$13,710), and 15 percent more than part-time workers in general (\$18,130; **Figure A7-2**).

Regarding educational attainment, data show that other cultural workers employed part time who completed high school or any level of postsecondary education typically earned less than all similarly educated part-time employed workers. Specifically, other (non-artist) cultural workers with some college education who were employed part time typically earned 36 percent less than all employed workers with a similar education level (\$9,310 compared to \$14,600). Significant differences were also seen at the master's-degree-or-higher level, where both artists (\$25,760) and

Figure A7-2. Median annual earnings for all workers, artists, and other cultural workers employed part time, by educational attainment: 2022



NOTE: "Part time" is defined as working less than 35 hours per week and/or less than 50 weeks in the year. "Some college" includes individuals who attended college but did not receive a degree.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2022.

⁶ "Part time" is defined as working less than 35 hours per week and/or less than 50 weeks in the year.

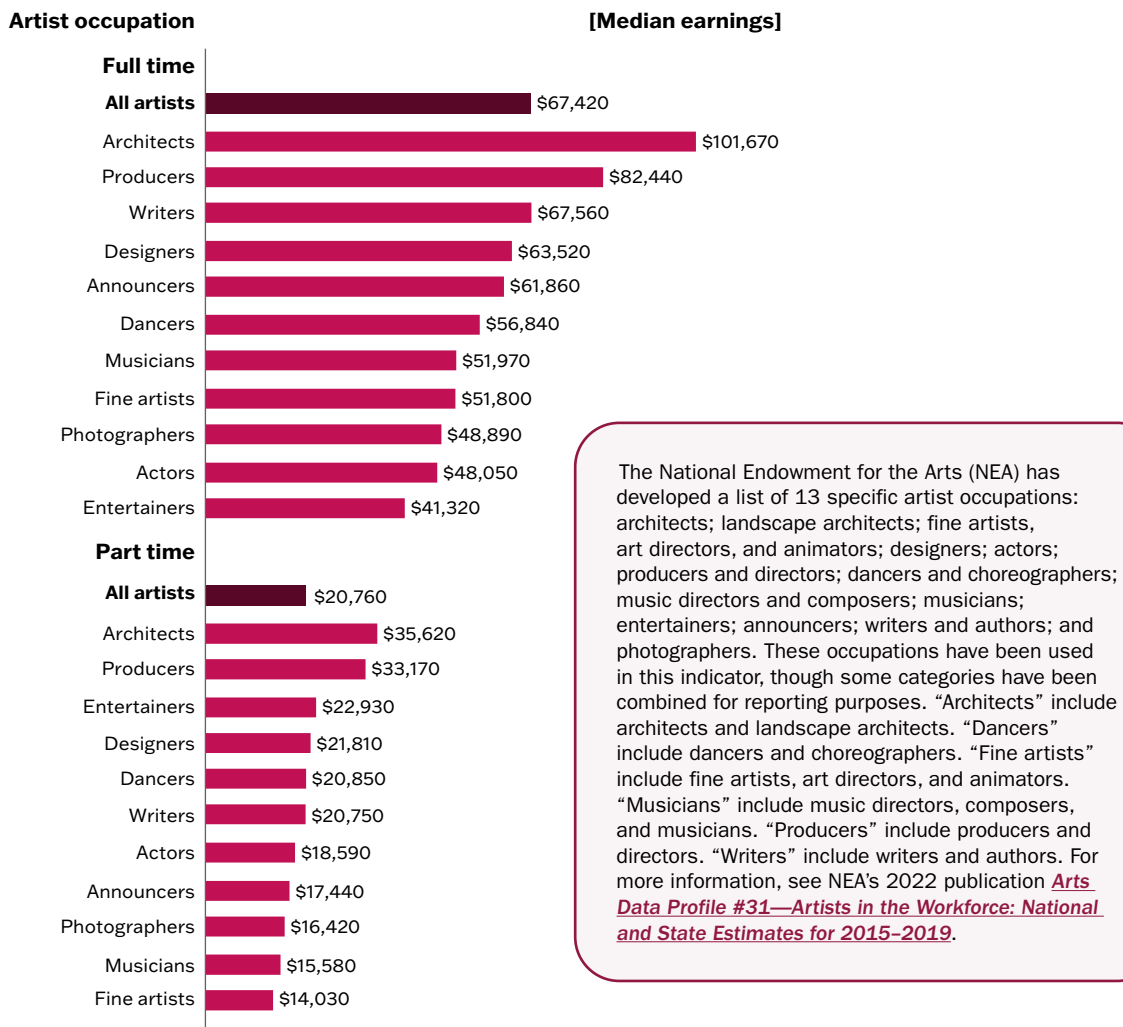
other cultural workers (\$23,730) employed part time typically earned less than all workers employed part time with similar degrees (\$40,650).

Median annual earnings of employed artists, by occupation

Median annual earnings of employed artists in 2022 varied by occupation. Earnings for full-time employed artists ranged from \$41,320 for entertainers to \$101,670 for architects (**Figure A7-3**). For part-time employed artists, earnings ranged from \$14,030

for fine artists to \$35,620 for architects. Among artists employed full time, architects (\$101,670) and producers (\$82,440) typically earned more than artists in general (\$67,420). Conversely, designers (\$63,520), musicians (\$51,970), fine artists (\$51,800), photographers (\$48,890), and entertainers (\$41,320) typically earned less than all artists. Among artists employed part time, architects (\$35,620) and producers (\$33,170) again had higher median earnings than that for all artists (\$20,760), while earnings of musicians (\$15,580) and fine artists (\$14,030) were below the earnings of all artists. For all other artist occupations, earnings were not measurably different from those of all artists employed full time or part time.

Figure A7-3. Median earnings of employed artists, by occupation and employment status: 2022



NOTE: "Full time" is defined as working 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year. "Part time" is defined as working less than 35 hours per week and/or less than 50 weeks in the year. "Architects" include architects and landscape architects. "Dancers" include dancers and choreographers. "Fine artists" include fine artists, art directors, and animators. "Musicians" include music directors, composers, and musicians. "Producers" include producers and directors. "Writers" include writers and authors.

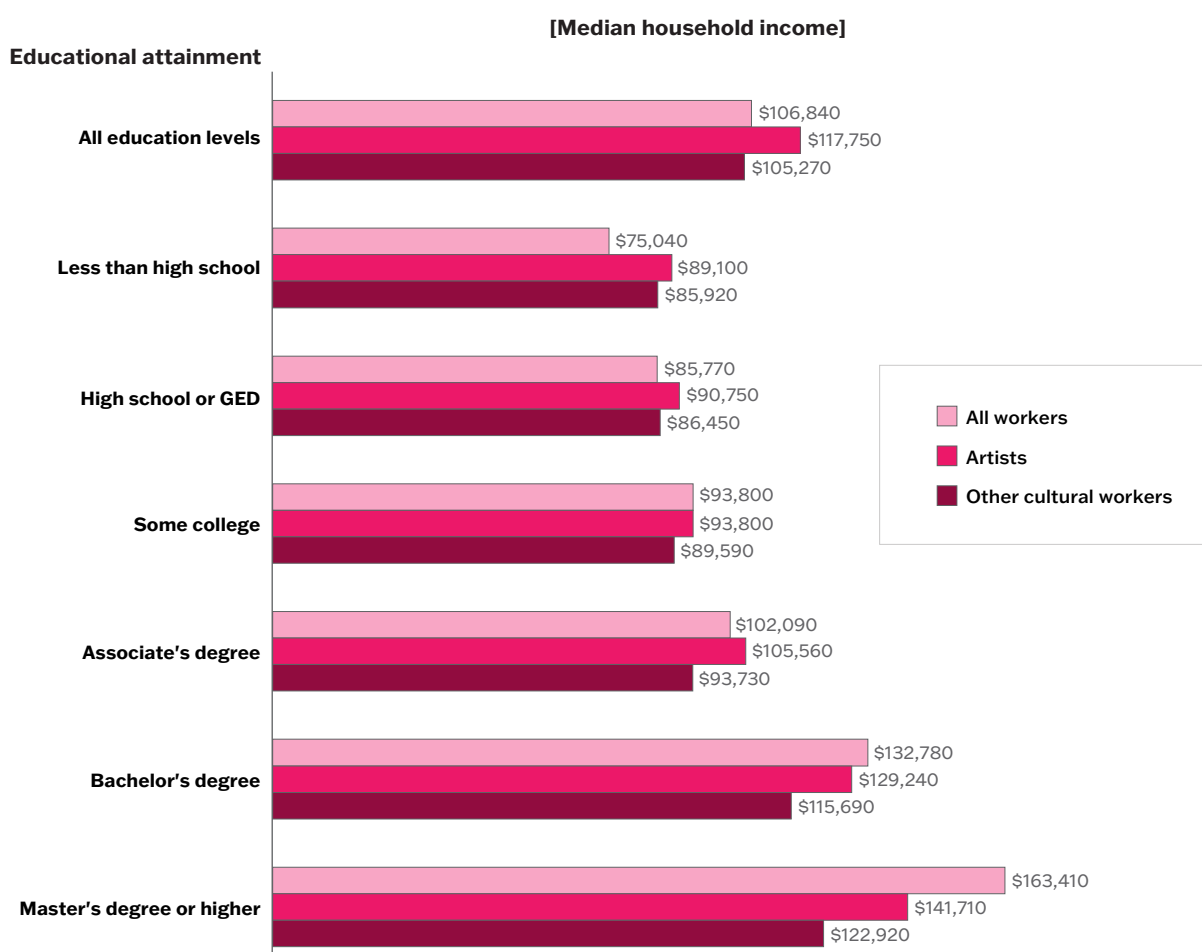
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2022.

Median annual household income of artists and other cultural workers

The median annual household incomes of artists and other cultural workers were also examined. Household income includes the income of the householder and all other individuals aged 15 and over regardless of their relationship with the householder. In 2022, the median household income for artists was

\$117,750, or 12 percent greater than that of other cultural workers (\$105,270) and 10 percent greater than for all workers (\$106,840). Considering workers by educational attainment, however, the median household income of all workers with a master's degree or higher (\$163,410) was 15 percent greater than for artists with similar degrees (\$141,710), and 33 percent greater than for other cultural workers with similar degrees (\$122,920; **Figure A7-4**).

Figure A7-4. Median annual household income for all employed workers, artists, and other cultural workers, by educational attainment: 2022



NOTE: "Some college" includes individuals who attended college but did not receive a degree.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2022.

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