



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

Research Division
Note #73
April 1999

Artist Employment in 1998

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show that almost 2 million people were employed as artists in 1998—a gain of 70,000 workers over the 1997 figure. In addition, the unemployment rate of artists fell to 4 percent. This note, #73, reports on the employment trends of workers in 11 artist occupations. The data are provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and represent annualized averages of monthly employment counts taken from the Current Population Survey. Table 1 of this note shows 1995 through 1998 employment statistics for all civilian workers, professional specialty occupations, and selected artist occupations. Chart 1 is a 1992-1998 time series graph of employment for the three aggregate categories of civilian workers, professional specialty occupations, and all artist occupations. Chart 2 shows a time series graph of unemployed workers in these three categories, and Chart 3 plots the unemployment rate for the three groups of workers over the 1992-1998 period.

The Artist Labor Force

The 3.7 percent growth in 1998 artist employment coincides with growth in general civilian employment (i.e., all civilian workers age 16 and over). In 1998, there were 131.5 million employed civilian workers, representing an increase of 1.9 million compared to 1997 estimates. Similarly, the civilian unemployment rate decreased from 4.9 percent in 1997 to 4.5 percent in 1998. Of the 1.9 million additional civilian employed workers, 638,000, or 33 percent, were in professional specialty occupations. This extensive occupation category is characterized by workers with relatively high levels of education and includes not only artist occupations, but also engineers, scientists, clergy, and librarians. In 1998, professional specialty occupations employment grew by 3.3 percent to reach 19.9 million workers.

Chart 1 shows 1992-1998 employment trends for all civilian workers, professional specialty occupations, and all artist occupations. All three categories show an upward trend. However, growth in artist employment tended to be stronger but less consistent than the other two employment categories. For example, there was little growth in artist employment between 1993 and 1994 (roughly 1.6 million workers in both years). By 1996, artist employment grew by 7 percent to reach 1.8 million and grew by 3.7 percent in 1998. By comparison, professional specialty employment grew between 3 and 3.7 percent, annually, over the 1992 through 1998 period.

Trends in unemployment rates are shown in Chart 3. Over this time period, civilian unemployment steadily declined. Professional specialty occupation unemployment didn't start its downward trend until 1996, and in 1997, unemployment among professional occupations dropped by 8 percent. However, unemployment among artists was more volatile than the other two groups. Among artists, unemployment increased over the 1992-1996 period. By 1997, though, unemployment declined by 18 percent and remained constant at an estimated 82,000 artists in both 1997 and 1998.

The strong drop in 1997 artist unemployment resulted in a percentage point decline in their unemployment rate (5.2 percent in 1996 to 4.2 percent in 1997). Chart 3 also reveals that unemployment rates tend to be higher for artists than for professional specialty occupations overall. For any given year in this time series, the unemployment rate associated with artists is about twice as high as the rate for the professional specialty occupations.

Individual Artist Occupations

Table 1 shows employment, unemployment, and unemployment rates for 11 individual artist occupations. The “designers” occupation is the largest of the individual artist categories. In 1998, 692,000 workers were employed as designers. In contrast, dancers constitute the smallest artist occupation—34,000 dancers were employed in 1998¹. Like the “all artists” group, employment among many of the individual artist occupations showed 1998 increases. The dancers and musicians/composers occupations experienced gains in employment and decreases in unemployment. Employment also rose for designers, photographers, teachers of art/drama/music, and other artists (not elsewhere classified). However, unemployment also increased for these occupations over their 1997 levels.

For some occupations, there were fewer workers in the labor force. For example, the estimated number of unemployed actors and directors was 14,000 in 1998 and 1997. However, the number of employed actors/directors dropped by 6,000 workers in 1998. Hence, an estimated 6,000 workers left the labor market as actors and directors. Civilian labor force also dropped for announcers, architects, authors, and painters, sculptors, and craft artists.

The data in Table 1 can also be used to look at changes in artist employment over the 1995-1998 time period. Most of the artist occupations showed increases in employment compared to 1995 figures. For example, there were 136,000 more employed designers in 1998 than in 1995; an additional 22,000 musicians/composers; 18,000 more photographers; and an increase of 16,000 actors and directors. Only the architects occupation showed declines in employment—5,000 fewer in 1998 than in 1995.

¹ In occupations with labor forces of less than 75,000 there is higher error or variance in the estimates due to their small sample size. Year-to-year changes should be viewed with caution.

Secondary Artist Employment

The previous sections of this note and Table 1 describe workers in primary jobs ². However, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 7.9 million workers, or 6 percent of the employed workforce, were multiple jobholders in 1998. Among professional specialty occupations, more than 1.5 million, or 7.8 percent, held secondary jobs. Though the professional specialty occupations group ranks high in multiple jobholding rates, the table below shows that 14.5 percent of people working in artist occupations did so in secondary jobs—a rate nearly twice as high as the multiple jobholding rate for the professional specialty occupations group. Among the artist occupations, 38.6 percent of workers moonlighted as musicians/composers—the highest share of secondary workers in the arts. Other comparatively high levels of secondary artist jobs were among announcers (29.4 percent) and photographers and authors (both at 17.2 percent). On the lower end of the scale, only 1.3 percent of workers had second jobs as architects. Designer occupations also recorded comparatively few second jobs—7.6 percent of all workers in this occupation.

Selected Artist Occupation	Primary Job Employment in 1998 (in thousands)	Secondary Job Employment in 1998 (in thousands)	Total Holding Either Primary or Secondary Jobs (in thousands)	% in this Occupation as a Second Job
<i>All Artistes</i>	1,950	330	2,280	14.5%
<i>Actors and Directors</i>	130	15	145	10.3%
<i>Announcers</i>	60	25	85	29.4%
<i>Architects</i>	158	2	160	1.3%
<i>Authors</i>	130	27	157	17.2%
<i>Dancers</i>	34	3	37	8.1%
<i>Designers</i>	692	57	749	7.6%
<i>Musicians/Composers</i>	183	115	298	38.6%
<i>Painters, Sculptors, Craft Artists, and Printmakers</i>	241	21	262	8.0%
<i>Photographers</i>	154	32	186	17.2%
<i>Teachers of Art/Drama/Music</i>	45	10	55	18.2%
<i>Other Artists N.E.C.**</i>	123	23	146	15.8%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, annualized averages.
N.E.C. is not elsewhere classified.

Final Notes

The data in this note are reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and are based on annual averages of data recorded by the monthly Current Population Survey. The employed are persons who, during the reference week of the survey, did any work at all as paid employees, worked in their own business, profession, or on their own farm, or

² Those holding more than one job are counted in the job in which they worked the most hours during the CPS survey week. This job is referred to as their primary job, while all other jobs held are defined as secondary jobs.

who worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in an enterprise operated by a member of the family. Each employed person is counted only once, even if he or she holds more than one job. For purposes of occupation classification, multiple jobholders are counted in the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours during the reference week. The unemployed are defined as persons who had no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness, and had made specific efforts to find employment some time during the 4-week-period ending with the reference week. The labor force comprises all persons classified as employed or unemployed, and the unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force. The unemployment rates listed in Table 1 were obtained directly from the BLS using unrounded data. Rates computed using the rounded estimates of employment and unemployment from Table 1 would differ slightly than those reported by the BLS. For a more complete explanation of the Current Population Survey, see the Household Data narrative in *Employment and Earnings*, published monthly by the BLS.

Artist Employment Notes have been produced annually by the Research Division of the National Endowment for the Arts since 1983. More information about Research Division Notes and Reports can be found on the National Endowment for the Arts Web site at <http://www.arts.endow.gov/pub/>.

Table 1. The Artist Labor Force: Trends in Employment and Unemployment, 1995-1998
(in thousands)

Occupation	<i>1998</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1995</i>	Change From <i>'97-'98</i>	Change From <i>'95-'98</i>
	Total All Civilian Workers	137,673	136,297	133,943	132,304	1,376
Employed	131,463	129,558	126,708	124,900	1,905	6,563
Unemployed	6,210	6,739	7,236	7,404	-529	-1,194
Unemployment Rate	4.5%	4.9%	5.4%	5.6%	-0.4%	-1.1%
Professional Specialty Occupations	20,263	19,648	19,190	18,592	615	1,671
Employed	19,883	19,245	18,752	18,132	638	1,751
Unemployed	380	403	438	460	-23	-80
Unemployment Rate	1.9%	2.1%	2.3%	2.5%	-0.2%	-0.6%
All Artists	2,032	1,962	1,911	1,788	70	244
Employed	1,950	1,880	1,811	1,693	70	257
Unemployed	82	82	100	95	0	-13
Unemployment Rate	4.0%	4.2%	5.2%	5.3%	-0.1%	-1.3%
Actors and Directors	144	150	151	130	-6	14
Employed	130	136	136	114	-6	16
Unemployed	14	14	15	16	0	-2
Unemployment Rate	9.8%	9.2%	9.8%	12.1%	0.6%	-2.3%
Announcers	62	64	66	53	-2	9
Employed	60	61	62	50	-1	10
Unemployed	2	3	4	3	-1	-1
Unemployment Rate	3.7%	4.3%	5.9%	5.7%	-0.6%	-2.0%
Architects	161	171	164	166	-10	-5
Employed	158	169	160	163	-11	-5
Unemployed	3	2	4	3	1	0
Unemployment Rate	1.9%	1.4%	2.6%	2.1%	0.5%	-0.2%
Authors	134	141	117	123	-7	11
Employed	130	137	114	118	-7	12
Unemployed	4	4	3	5	0	-1
Unemployment Rate	3.3%	3.1%	2.8%	3.9%	0.2%	-0.6%
Dancers	35	31	32	33	4	2
Employed	34	27	30	30	7	4
Unemployed	1	4	2	3	-3	-2
Unemployment Rate	3.9%	13.6%	6.4%	7.9%	-9.7%	-4.0%
Designers	716	681	634	586	35	130
Employed	692	658	603	556	34	136
Unemployed	24	23	31	30	1	-6
Unemployment Rate	3.4%	3.4%	4.9%	5.2%	0.0%	-1.8%

Table 1. (continued)

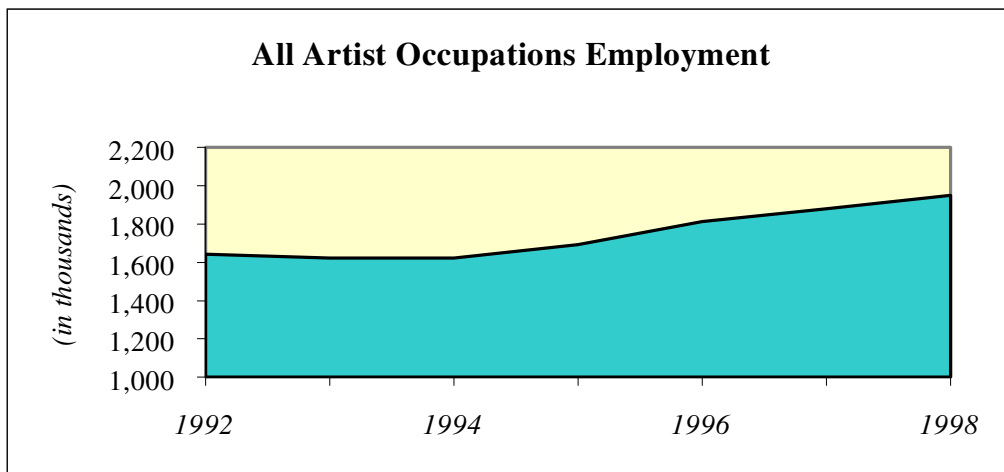
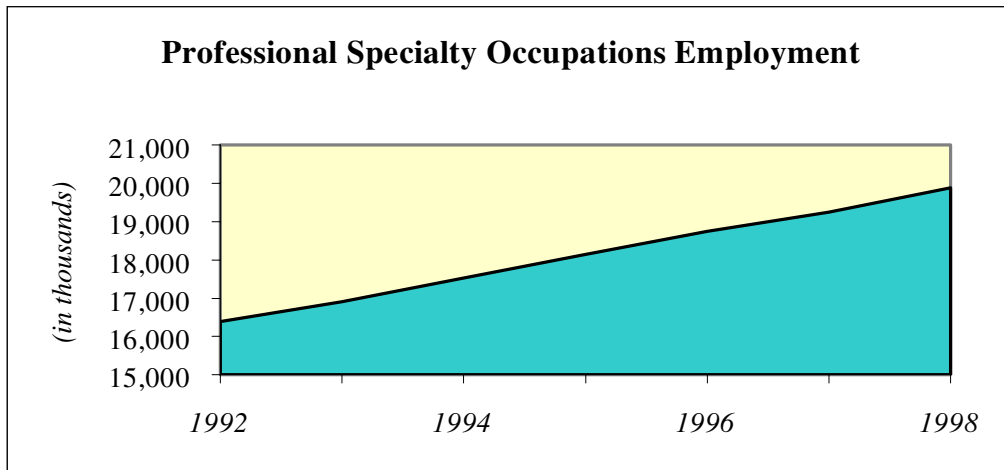
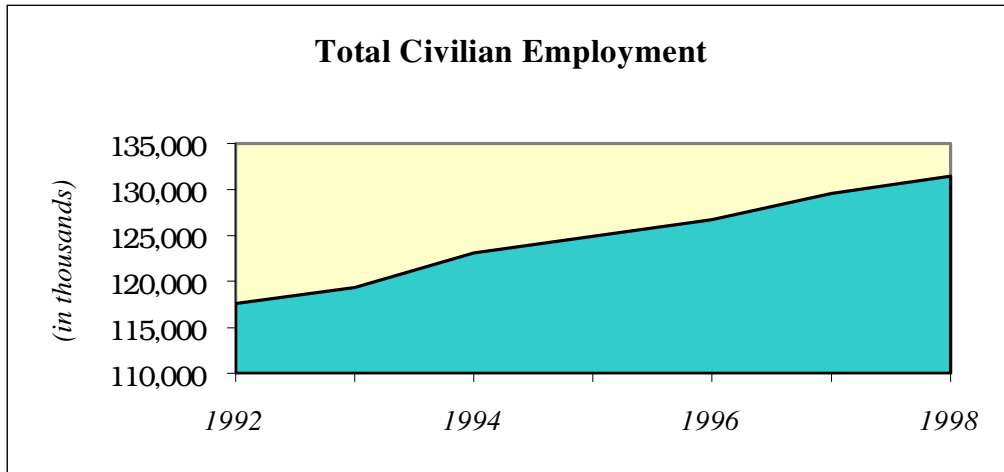
Occupation	1998	1997	1996	1995	Change From '97-'98	Change From '95-'98
	Musicians/Composers	193	167	189	172	26
Employed	183	155	175	161	28	22
Unemployed	10	12	14	11	-2	-1
Unemployment Rate	5.2%	7.1%	7.4%	6.3%	-1.9%	-1.1%
Painters, Sculptors, Craft Artists	248	259	245	241	-11	7
Employed	241	251	235	233	-10	8
Unemployed	7	8	10	8	-1	-1
Unemployment Rate	2.9%	3.0%	3.9%	3.2%	-0.1%	-0.3%
Photographers	162	137	147	144	25	18
Employed	154	132	141	136	22	18
Unemployed	8	5	6	8	3	0
Unemployment Rate	4.9%	3.9%	4.2%	5.5%	1.0%	-0.6%
Teachers of Art/Drama/Music	46	36	41	31	10	15
Employed	45	36	40	30	9	15
Unemployed	1	0	1	1	1	0
Unemployment Rate	1.6%	0.5%	2.3%	1.7%	1.1%	-0.1%
Other Artists, N.E.C.**	131	125	125	109	6	22
Employed	123	118	115	102	5	21
Unemployed	8	7	10	7	1	1
Unemployment Rate	6.4%	5.6%	7.7%	6.8%	0.8%	-0.4%

** Not Elsewhere Classified

Source: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics
Current Populations Survey, Annual Averages, 1995-1998

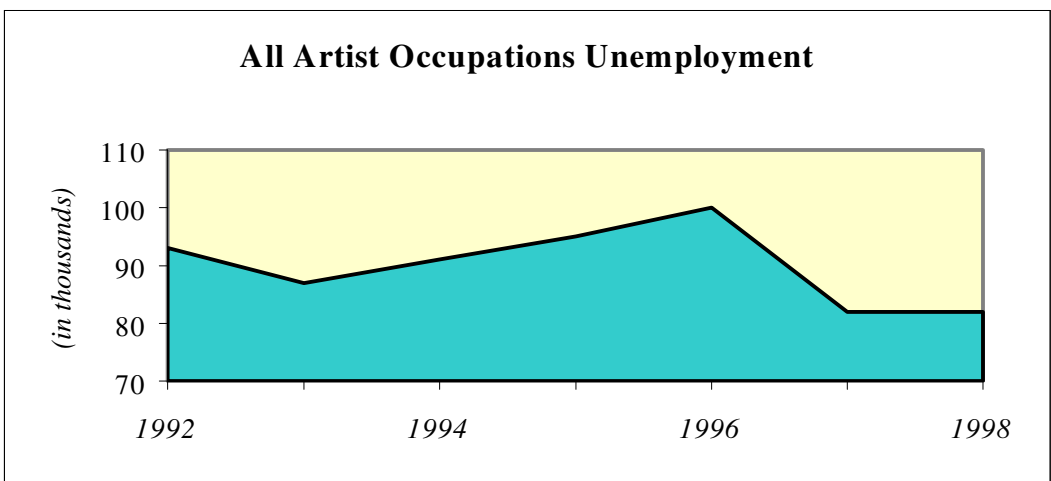
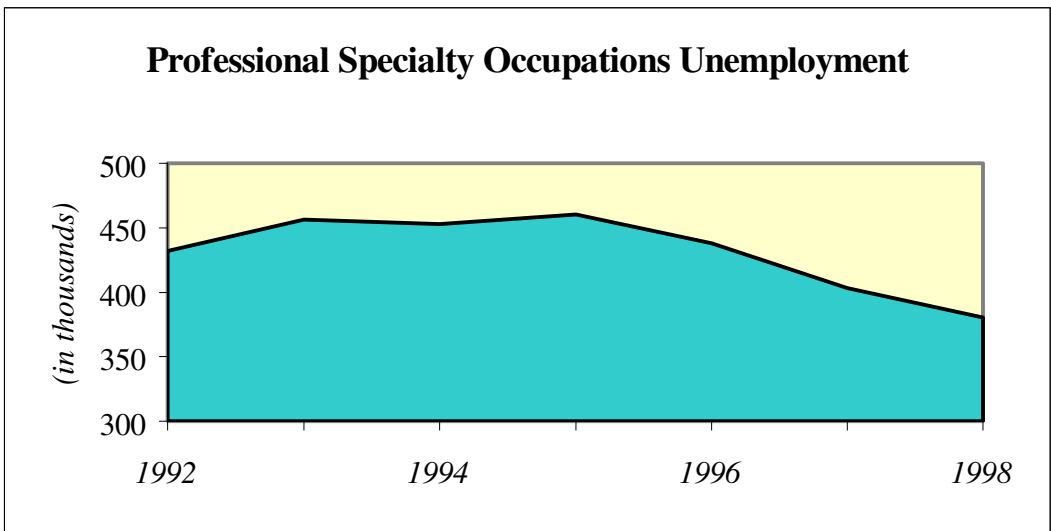
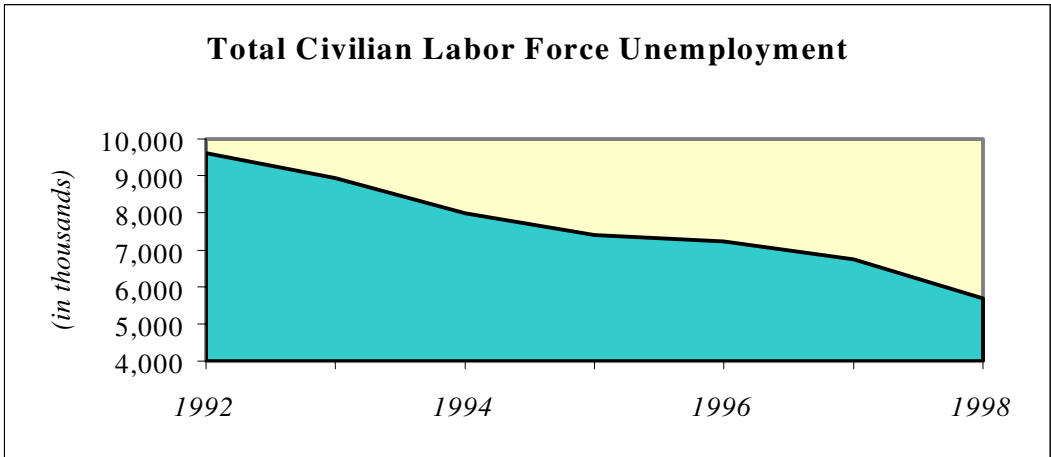
Note: All unemployment rates shown, except for the category "All Artists," were calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics using unrounded data.

Chart 1. Total Civilian Labor Employment, Professional Specialty Occupations Employment, and All Artist Occupations Employment: 1992 -1998



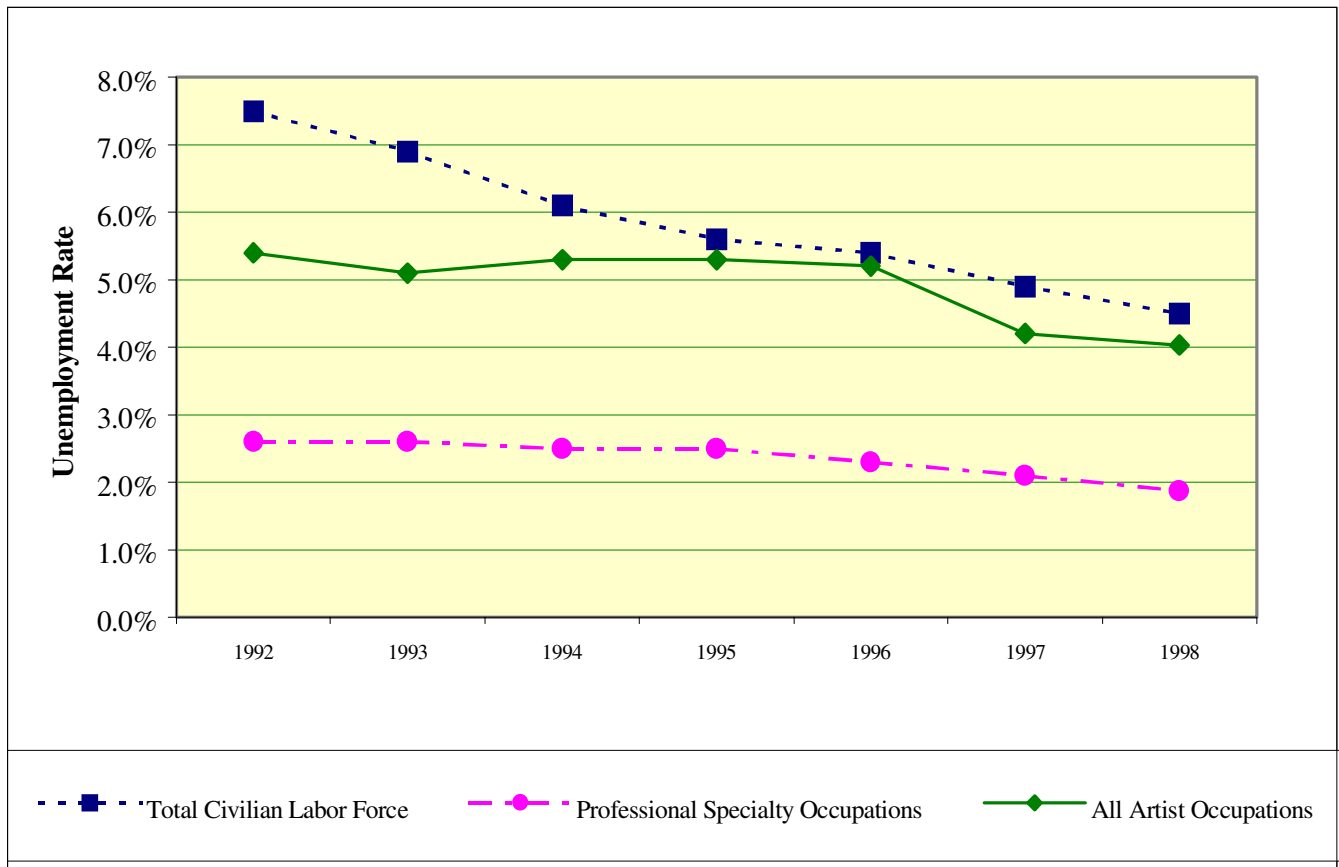
Research Division, National Endowment for the Arts, 1999.

Chart 2. Total Civilian Labor Unemployment , Professional Specialty Occupations Unemployment, and All Artist Occupations Unemployment: 1992-1998



Research Division, National Endowment for the Arts, 1999.

Chart 3. Rates of Unemployment for Total Civilian Labor Force, Professional Specialty Occupations, and All Artist Occupations from 1992-1998.



Research Division, National Endowment for the Arts, 1999.