

Executive Summary

“The Artist Alone: Work-Related, Human and Social Service Needs—Selected Findings”

by Joan Jeffri, Joseph Hosie, and Robert Greenblatt

This article reports on a 1987 study of 900 statewide fellowship applicants to the New York Foundation for the Arts to document artists' situations for health care coverage, pension and retirement plans, legal and financial services, and other work-related needs. Artist in fourteen different arts disciplines participated in three separate rounds of surveys, with response rates of 70, 59 and 58 percent. The pilot study for the Research Center's subsequent Information on Artists study, revealed that in 1986:

- 62% of artists had a gross household income of below \$15,000.
- over 75% of households claimed one or two dependents.
- of the painters who responded, 62% had health coverage, 26% had life insurance, and 23% had pensions.
- the average income for respondents who have health coverage, life insurance and pensions ranged from \$33,900 to \$37,400.

The average age was 38 with the median age slightly lower. Over 95% of the respondents had some college education; 59% had some graduate school education. In answering questions about professionalism, over 70% of the respondents pointed to spending a substantial amount of time creating art as a mark of professionalism and over half defined a professional artist as someone who is recognized by his/her peers as an artist as well as someone who has an inner drive to make art.

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