

New Otis College Study: California Creative Economy Employment Decreased Slightly Yet Salaries Still High

The latest Otis College Report on the Creative Economy highlights the most important changes in California's creative economy.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, March 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Otis College](#) of Art and Design released a new study that spotlights shifts within California's creative economy labor force through the third quarter of 2024. The study is available through an interactive [online dashboard](#), a free

resource that compiles data and customized reports. This year's updated dashboard also provides more details on the racial composition within the state's creative workforce as well as improved tracking of independent contractors, which comprise a sizable portion.



Otis College of Art and Design

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Charles Hirschhorn, President of Otis College

Findings of this new report, which reviews the most important changes in California's creative economy through the third quarter of 2024, include:

Employment in California's Creative Economy has decreased by 0.9%. Over the past year the state shed approximately 6,700 jobs, contracting by 0.9%, however California remains the national and global leader of the creative economy. In 2025, the number of creative economy jobs in the state is 7.1% below its pre-pandemic peak. Nationally, creative economy jobs have fallen by

35,000, or roughly 0.8% over the past year.

Entertainment employment and production are still below their 2022 peaks and may be entering a new normal. Only 26% of the jobs lost during the strikes has been recovered, underscoring the

impact of an industry in transition. Production levels continue to lag. The number of shooting days in Los Angeles County was down 42% in 2024 compared to 2022, suggesting that fewer projects are being greenlit and completed in Los Angeles. Growth seen in theater companies, dance companies, and musical groups and artists highlight an enduring demand for non-screened entertainment.

Fine arts continue to shine as California remains a fine arts education powerhouse. In 2023, California conferred 22% of the nation's fine arts degrees. The state is home to seven of the 15 largest fine arts programs in the U.S. Fine arts graduates make up 10% of the state's creative workforce.

Creative economy workers are becoming better educated and better paid. California's creative economy workers have higher levels of educational attainment than their counterparts throughout the U.S. and are paid higher wages. California's creative economy employs more than 760,000 workers earning an average salary of \$191,000, which is nearly twice as much as the state's other economic sectors. Higher-paying creative jobs requiring more specialized skills are growing in the state.

Across the state's regions, Los Angeles led creative economy job gains, while San Francisco led job losses. Over the past year the creative economy saw impressive employment growth in Los Angeles and Sacramento, while relatively large job losses occurred in Santa Barbara, Fresno, and San Francisco.

Toys and Design Highlighted as Stand Out Industries

Otis College presented an in-depth Creative Economy Report focused on Los Angeles's unique role as a global design hub by referencing its sizable and influential toy design industry as a case study.

The report, titled "No Assembly Required: Los Angeles is a Global Hub for Toys and Specialized Design," featured key findings including:

More than one million workers in the U.S. economy are designers. Since 2012, design jobs in the U.S. have grown at twice the rate as jobs across the rest of the economy.

Los Angeles is home to the second highest number of design jobs, behind New York. However, design jobs account for a larger share of total jobs in Los Angeles than they do in New York City, and the share of designers in Los Angeles is 40% higher than the rest of the U.S.

Los Angeles is the leading hub of the toy industry in the U.S., if not the world. The region is home to more national and international corporate headquarters; it has more toy designers, more small- and medium-sized companies; and stronger regional logistics capabilities than any other place, making it the most innovative toy design center in the nation.

Three factors attract industry-leading anchor firms to Los Angeles. They include: access to the world's largest content creation complex, a cultural milieu that inspires new products and attracts talent, and a globally-connected port complex that links toymakers to a global audience.

Los Angeles has benefited as the lines between toy production and content creation have blurred. TV characters are made into valuable toy properties, and increasingly toys are the stars of movies.

The Otis Creative Economy Dashboard, which highlights data and trends across creative sectors, provides users with immediate access to current information and the ability to tailor data outputs to support their needs. This powerful, free tool compiles data found in the previous reports as well as new data points, providing more history and geographic coverage of the creative economy.

With this dashboard, Otis College is able to produce topical and timely updates about different aspects of the creative economy throughout the year. The dashboard and focused reports replace the report's previous, annual format.

The report and dashboard updates were unveiled this morning at an event at Snap Inc. that featured a presentation of findings by Westwood Economics & Planning Associates and a panel discussion on strengthening the Los Angeles region's position as a global hub of the creative economy. Panelists included Barbara Bestor, Founder & Principal, Bestor Architecture; Chris Down, EVP, Chief Design Officer, Mattel, Inc.; Dana Flowers, Senior Creative Lead Movies and Series, Amazon MGM Studios; and Jackson George, EVP-Head of Brand Creative, Disney+/Co-head of Creative Marketing, Walt Disney Studios. A recording of the event is available online.

"The Otis College Report on the Creative Economy continues to evolve, offering essential data and analysis on this vital sector of California's economy," said Charles Hirschhorn, President of Otis College. "It's crucial that we understand the creative industries that employ our graduates, enabling us to empower them to succeed and make a positive impact on the world."

Generous funding for the Otis College Report on the Creative Economy has been provided by California Community Foundation; Councilwoman Traci Park; The Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles; Gallagher; Marsh; Moss Adams; The Music Man Foundation; The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation; The Snap Foundation; and Sony Pictures Entertainment.

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