

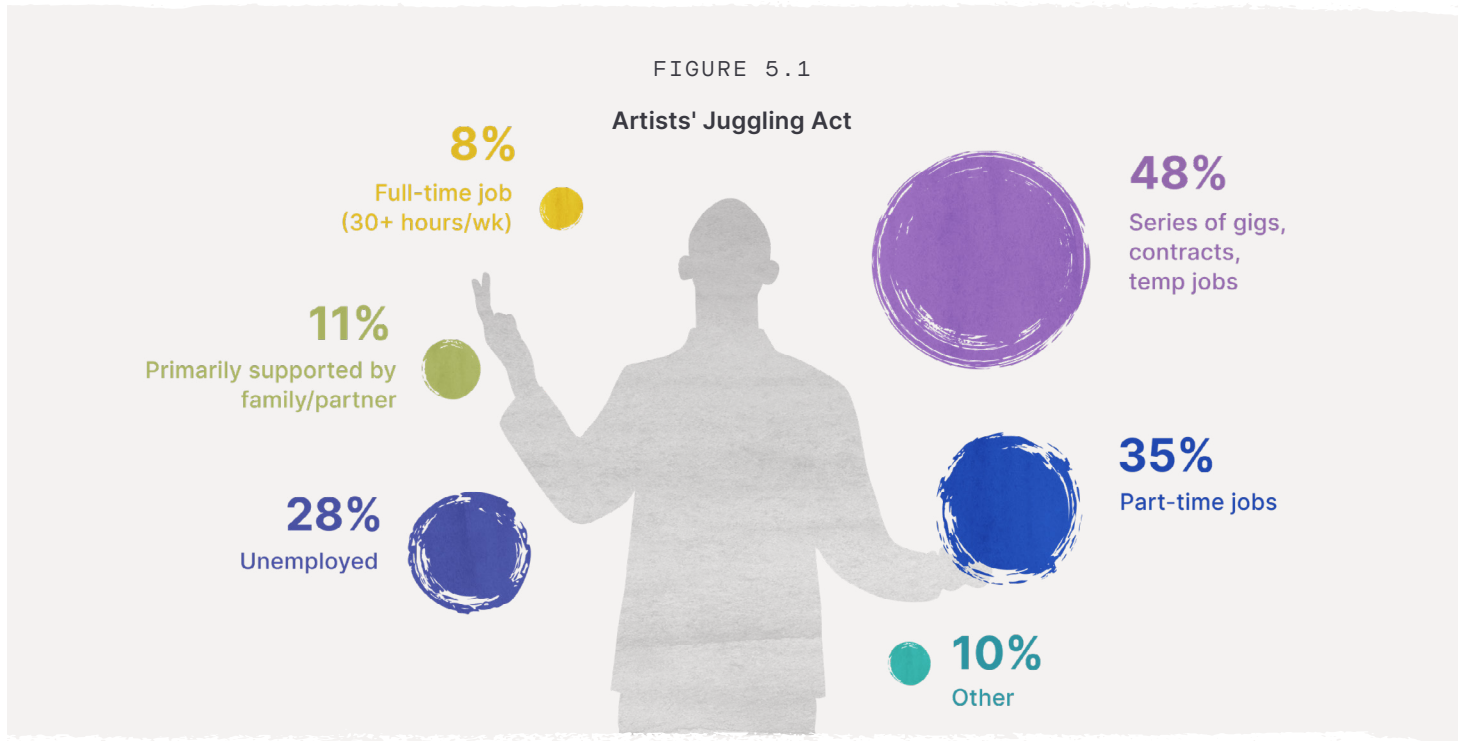
# Research Brief #5: Juggling Responsibilities

In 2022, Creatives Rebuild New York (CRNY) launched its Guaranteed Income (GI) for Artists Program. This program provided 2,400 artists across New York State with \$1,000 a month for 18 months. Built on the principle that all artists deserve financial security, the GI program ensured artists could use these no-strings-attached monthly payments in whatever way they chose, including directly supporting their artistic practice, stabilizing their financial situation, building a savings buffer to help with financial emergencies, paying down debts, or anything else.

**In this research brief, we show the impact of a guaranteed income on how artists balance their lives based on surveys and interviews.<sup>1</sup>** We describe the ways in which artists' sources of income and other obligations impact the way they spend their time. We found that the GI program allowed artists to dedicate more time to their craft and artistic pursuits, and increase their ability to balance caregiving and rest. This support underscores the potential of guaranteed income to enhance the stability of artists, enabling them to build sustainable careers and contribute meaningfully to the cultural landscape of New York State.

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1. See *Guaranteed Income for Artists Impact Study: Introduction* for a detailed description of all research methods and data sources.



## Key Findings

### Artists eligible for the GI program juggled different kinds of work to make ends meet.

In a survey of 11,728 New York State artists who applied to the GI program,<sup>2</sup> CRNY learned about how these artists make ends meet and how they balance multiple jobs. The data showed a detailed picture of the often invisible – or taken for granted – juggling acts these artists must perform in order to maintain their livelihoods.

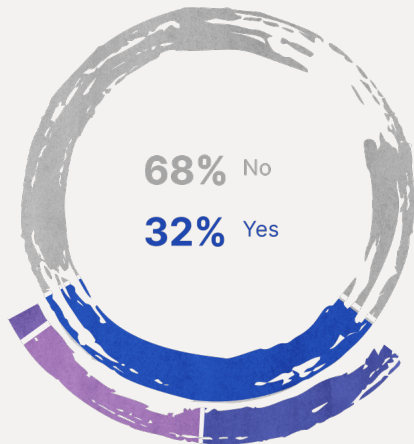
Most frequent were artists (48%) who reported working part-time and in “gig” – or intermittent – work. Only a small proportion of artists (8%) reported working full-time (30+ hours). Artists commonly reported being unemployed (28%) [See Figure 5.1].

Most artists also reported juggling multiple sources of income. As one artist told us, *“Every day is different now because I’m juggling three jobs, I have to, like, make... time. So it’s like if I’m working five days for one job, then I have the other two days to schedule my other two jobs. And I am basically working all the time.”* A minority of artists earned all of their income from their artistic practice (17%). Most found themselves combining earnings from gigs and freelancing, from part-time work, from family, and from other sources.

2. Hand, Jamie, and Calderon, Sarah. *Portrait of New York State Artists Survey, 2022*. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2024-05-21. <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR39025.v1>

FIGURE 5.2

**Percent of Artists in the Guaranteed Income Program, by Caregiving Status**



- 2% Care for kids & adults
- 14% Care for adults (partners, other)
- 16% Care for children

**Artists also juggled numerous household commitments.**

Artists reported considerable challenges juggling family and household roles as well. Over half (53%) of all GI participants cited domestic care responsibilities as a reason they could not sufficiently perform their artistic work. This should hardly be surprising when nearly a third of eligible applicants to the guaranteed income program (32%) were caregivers.

Almost half of artists in caregiver roles were providing care to adults (spouses, partners, or other adults), while the others were caregivers for children [See Figure 5.2].

**Receiving a guaranteed income allowed artists more time for their artistic work.**

The data indicate that artists in the GI program dedicated more hours to their arts practice, working (paid or unpaid) an average of 23 hours per week compared to 19 hours for artists not in the program. This increased focus on artistic work suggests that the financial support from the program allowed artists to prioritize their creative pursuits (see *Brief #4 Artists' Labor* for more on artists' work and earnings). Artists in the program also spent about the same hours on arts-related work (e.g., marketing, business development) and significantly fewer hours on non-arts work compared to artists not in the program. This shift reflects the impact of the funds in enabling artists to concentrate more on their core artistic activities and reduce their time spent in supplementary work outside their primary creative field [See Figure 5.3].

FIGURE 5.3

**Weekly hours worked, by type of work**

	Participants	Non-Participants
Artistic practice	23.2	19.3
Other art work	10.1	10.0
Non-art work	12.9	15.2

Although only 24% of non-participants reported having sufficient time for their practice, this jumped to 36% for GI participants. In short, *"What was really nice about the [GI] program was that it gave me time."* Clearly, the financial support enabled artists to better balance their time. The data highlight that both artists in and not in the GI program still faced significant barriers in dedicating time to their artistic practice, with "insufficient income from the arts/need to earn more income elsewhere" being the most prominent reason for both groups.



The Bluebird by Joy Argento\*

*"This bluebird ... represents the freedom to fly with my creativity when I was in the Guaranteed Income program ... It is also the state bird of NY."*

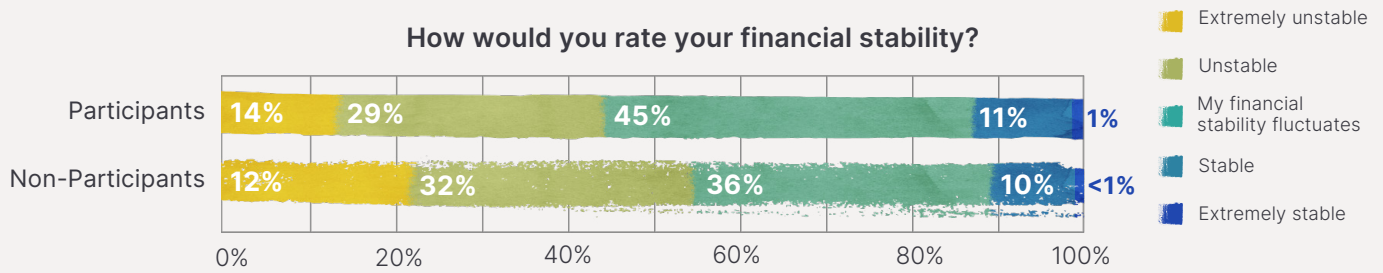
Among artists in the program, 56% cited lack of income as a primary obstacle to doing art work, and an even higher 63% of artists not in the program indicated it as a barrier. GI payments freed artists to practice their craft more. As one artist told us, *"I can really 100% commit and sit down and not worry and not feel guilty that I'm sitting down, painting for 8 hours when I could be doing something else... It was beautiful, not having that burden, not having that worry."*

Other constraints remained, such as caregiving responsibilities, health issues, and lack of facilities to make or showcase their work – just as they did for non-participants. As an artist told us, *"I have two little boys, and I have to come home and cook and pick them up and be there for them."* These findings highlight the complex and varied challenges artists face in dedicating time to their work. They suggest that comprehensive support, addressing both financial and logistical barriers, is essential to enable artists to fully engage in their creative practices.

## Guaranteed income helped artists find more time for their families.

The financial stability offered from guaranteed income empowered participants to focus their efforts on their families and loved ones [See Figure 5.4]. As one participating artist said, *"I try to be a support system for people in my family and try to help them when they are in need."* Fully three-fourths (75%) of the GI participants report that the funding enabled them to spend more time with loved ones. Almost 10% of GI artists listed "spending time with family and friends" or "helping family and friends in need" as one of the top-three ways that they used the GI payments. A third of the artists surveyed indicate that they regularly provide care to children, spouses, partners, or other adults. Nearly a quarter of the GI participants indicated that guaranteed income helped them access child care or elder care for their family members. In addition, many GI participants revealed other ways that they used the GI payments to support their families and loved ones. Five percent of GI participants listed "helping family members or friends who are in financial need" or paying for childcare, eldercare, or other care as a top-three way they used the GI payments. An artist summed up the GI program nicely: *"it really helped me to help my family"* (see **Brief #7 Community and Family Impacts** for more on how the GI program fostered community and family impacts).

FIGURE 5.4



Light 1 by Andrew Baranowski\*

### Guaranteed income provided artists with a chance to catch their breath.

With all this juggling of responsibilities, artists rarely get a chance to rest. Guaranteed income, as a writer put it, “gave me a breather... It was like a life saver.” Improved financial stability changed how artists lived, as one artist described: “For me, the stability meant I could take a break... and know that in a few weeks, more work was coming. I didn’t have to overwork myself all the time.” Eight percent of participants reported a top-three way that they used the GI payments was to invest in self care. This rates alongside buying essentials like clothes and medicine (9%). Crucially, the GI payments enabled artists to work more on their artistic practice while also cutting back on their non-arts hours worked. In describing how the GI program affected how they balance their time, a theater artist noted, “The past year it’s shifted... which is such a joy and a regenerative, life-giving source for me. So, that’s quite beautiful.”



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