

Ceramic Artist

Make pots, sculpture and tableware out of clay and sell them. Almost nobody does it on one income stream alone.

TYPICAL PAY

\$46,080

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$26k to \$72k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Home studios, shared studios, craft fairs, galleries, teaching studios

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Take every art class, and ceramics specifically if your school has a kiln. Start photographing your work now.
- 2 Learn the material** 6 months to 2 years
Community studio classes or a community college ceramics course. Cheap, hands on, and enough to find out if you actually like clay.
- 3 A degree, if you want one** 4 years
A Bachelor of Fine Arts gives you four years of studio time, critique and access to kilns you could never afford. It is optional, not required.
- 4 Build a body of work** 2 to 4 years
A recognizable line of pieces, made repeatedly and well. This is what galleries, shops and customers respond to, not one good piece.
- 5 Set up to sell** Ongoing
Your own kiln or studio membership, a business license from your state, an online shop and a market schedule.

Pros and cons

- + No gatekeeper, no license, no admission committee
- + You can start for a few hundred dollars at a community studio
- + People use what you make every morning
- Income is unpredictable and seasonal, heaviest before the holidays
- You are running a business, not just making things
- No health insurance or paid time off unless you buy it yourself

Good to know

A small town in New York is the center of it

Alfred University in rural New York runs the ceramic art program that US News and World Report ranked first in the country for 2025. Potters move across the world for it.

Your pot will get smaller

Clay shrinks roughly 10 to 15 percent between wet and fired. Every potter learns to throw a mug bigger than the mug they actually want, and glaze fit depends on the clay and the glaze shrinking at the same...

Optional boosts

Throwing production ware. Glaze chemistry. Mold making and slip casting. Kiln repair.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Craft Artists (27-1012.00)
National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts
Alfred University
United States Small Business Administration

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/ceramic-artist>



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