

Montana Film Office

Getting Hired in the Production Industry with No Experience



Montana Film Office offers the following suggestions to persons that have no production experience but wish to work in the production industry (AND stay in Montana).

- Establish contacts and network!
- Review the Montana Crew List to see if you know someone working in the film industry in your area.
 - Logon to www.montanafilm.com and click on the Crews & Support Services tab.
 - At the next screen, click in the CREW DIRECTORY column
 - This takes you to our Reel-Crew database. Click on SEARCH CREW LISTING.
 - At the next screen you can search by name, company, keyword, or region (Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula). For simplification, there are only 7 regions so choose which region is closest to your area. For example, Livingston would be in the Bozeman region, and Miles City would be in the Billings region.

If you recognize a name on the crew list, it might be a good idea to call and ask questions about their job and the industry in general. You may be able to volunteer your time to help them get ready for their next project (run errands, shop for props, etc.) You never know—they might become a great contact and could lead to your first production assistant position.

- Contact Montana’s film schools and volunteer your services.

Montana State University—School of Film & Photography
406.994.2484 <http://mta.montana.edu/>
mta@montana.edu

University of Montana—Media Arts
406.243.4540 <http://www.umt.edu/mediaarts/>
MediaArts@umontana.edu

Film students are always looking for willing and able crew members to work on their projects. Though there is no pay, it’s a good place to get a crash course in filmmaking. And if you *are* a student, work on as many projects as you can!!! The experiences will prove invaluable when you are on an actual set. Besides, you don’t know where some of those students will end up. The contacts you made with them while film students might lead to some great jobs in the future.

- Internships are always a good idea, but they aren’t as readily available in Montana as they are in major production areas. However, internships with professors, local TV stations, or local production companies can certainly lead to a career in the industry. Working for free, or school credit, will provide you with the kind of information that is not available in the classroom.
- If you are a student, challenge yourself to produce quality work, which you can enter in film festivals. This is great exposure and can lead to more (paying!) work.
- Persistence is essential. You want to get on a film, get to know the people in the production office. If you happen to be “at the right place, at the right time” you might get a job.

- Charm is also essential, but do not continually annoy the production office with your requests for a job. Be charming and persistent... that takes a lot of work!
- If a production does come to town, volunteer to work for free since you do not have any experience. When a position comes open (and they always do) they will be more likely to hire the hardworking ‘volunteer’ with whom they’ve already established a working relationship.
- **READ, READ, READ!!!** Get your hands on every bit of information about the industry that you can—so when you do get your first break, you’ll know the lingo and it will seem as though you’ve already worked in production before. Book resources/suggestions include:

Internet Movie DataBase

www.imdb.com

An online database of information about movies, actors, television shows, and production crews.

"Breaking and Entering: Land Your First Job in Film Production"

by April Fitzsimmons, 204 pages
Lone Eagle Publishing Co.

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

"Get A Reel Job"

by Philip Nemy, 309 pages
Angel's Touch Productions

<http://www.reeljob.net>

www.amazon.com

Internet Movie DataBase Glossary

www.imdb.com/Glossary

Definitions of terms and phrases frequently used in the world of movies, film, and acting.

"Careers in Film and Video Production"

by Michael Horwin, 206 pages
Focal Press

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

"Job Descriptions for Film, Video & CGI"

by William E. Hines, 342 pages
Ed-Venture Films/Books

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

- Learn basic skills—how to: answer phones, use a computer, type, make coffee, drive a stick shift, etc. This will ensure that once you have a job, you’ll keep the people that hired you happy.
- After you’ve worked on a production: Congratulations—you now have experience! Contact the Film Office to ask about getting on the Montana Crew List. The Montana Crew List will make your name available to the worldwide film industry via our website. The Montana crew list is also included in our printed directory, the Montana Production Guide. There is no charge to be on the crew list.
- The Montana Film Office hotline lists current projects that need crew. Unfortunately, it isn’t always as informative as we’d like since information can only be placed on our hotline after a production company gives permission. Often production companies are reluctant to release information about their project during its early phase. The hotline phone number is 406.444.3960. This same information is also available on the Film Office website in the “News 4 Crews” section.

How to contact us

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