

Affiliate marketer

You earn a small commission when people buy through your links. Most earn little, and the few who earn a lot built an audience first.

TYPICAL INCOME

\$1,000

a year, varies widely

INCOME RANGE

\$0 to \$100k

most to the successful few

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

From home, through a website, a YouTube channel, TikTok or an email list

How you get there

- 1 Pick one topic you know** 1 month
Running shoes, budget tech, baby gear, fishing. Narrow enough that you can be the most useful voice.
- 2 Choose a channel** 1 month
A website found through search, short videos on TikTok or YouTube, or an email newsletter.
- 3 Publish useful content for months** 6 to 18 months
Real reviews, comparisons and how-tos. Most channels and sites earn almost nothing for the first 6 to 12 months.
- 4 Join programs and add links** Ongoing
Amazon Associates, TikTok Shop's affiliate program, and brand programs. Disclose every link.
- 5 Grow and spread the risk** 1 to 4 years
Earners who last use several programs and channels, and build an email list they own.

Pros and cons

- + Free or cheap to start, with no stock
- + Work from anywhere, on your own hours
- + Good content can earn for years
- Most people earn under \$10,000 a year
- Months of work before the first meaningful money
- Google, TikTok or a program can cut your income overnight

Good to know

Gift cards pay nothing

Amazon Associates pays 0% on gift cards, wireless plans and alcohol, and 1% on grocery. A link to someone's weekly grocery order earns you about a dollar.

"Collab" is not a disclosure

The FTC (Federal Trade Commission) says vague tags like "sp", "spon" or "collab", or a lone "thanks", do not count. Words like "ad" or "I get paid if you buy" do.

Optional boosts

Amazon Associates. TikTok Shop affiliate. Brand and software programs. ClickBank and digital products.

Where these numbers come from

Amazon Associates: standard commission income rates (US)

Federal Trade Commission: Disclosures 101 for social media influencers

Federal Trade Commission: The Endorsement Guides, what people are asking

Google: New ways we're tackling spammy, low-quality content on Search (March 2024)

Numbers checked October 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/affiliate-marketer>



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