

# Music Teacher

Teach piano, guitar, voice or band. You can start with no license at all, or take a degree and teach in a public school.

## TYPICAL PAY

**\$46,800**

a year, full time

## PAY RANGE

**\$30k to \$93k**

starting to experienced

## TIME TO QUALIFY

**up to 5 years**

after high school

## DEMAND

**Moderate**

job outlook

## LICENCE NEEDED

**No**

anyone can do it

## WHERE YOU WORK

**Private studios, music schools,  
community centers, students' ho...**

## How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 9 to 12  
Play seriously. Band, orchestra, choir, jazz group, lessons, competitions. Music theory if your school offers it.
- 2 Start teaching beginners** Any time  
Many teenagers teach a few younger students for pocket money. It is legal, it pays, and it is how you find out whether you like the work.
- 3 Bachelor's degree in music or music education** 4 years  
An audition is part of admission. Music education degrees include child development, conducting and classroom methods.
- 4 Student teaching and state license** 1 semester  
A semester in a real school classroom, plus your state's exams, which are usually Praxis subject and pedagogy tests.
- 5 Teach, then specialize** Ongoing  
School music position, a private studio, or both. Optional professional certification through a teachers' association.

## Pros and cons

- + You can start young with no license and no debt
- + You set your own rate, schedule and student list
- + Watching a student get good is genuinely satisfying
- The hours are evenings and weekends, permanently
- No health insurance, no pension and no paid sick days if you work for yourself
- Income drops every summer and every time a family moves away

## Optional boosts

Professional certification. Exam board preparation. A second instrument. Early childhood music methods.

### Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Self-Enrichment Teachers (25-3021.00)  
National Association for Music Education  
Music Teachers National Association  
Praxis tests, used by states for teacher licensure

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/music-teacher>

## Good to know

### The wage survey hides this job

Federal statisticians file private music teachers under Self-Enrichment Teachers, the same category as martial arts instructors and driving instructors. It is why no official number for music teacher pay exists...

### Teaching is how most musicians eat

A large share of working performers teach. Lessons pay reliably during the week while performing pays unevenly, and the two fit together because gigs are mostly at night and on weekends anyway.



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