

Podcaster

Make a show people choose to listen to or watch every week. Most shows earn nothing; a few become a living.

TYPICAL INCOME

\$0

a year, varies widely

INCOME RANGE

\$0 to \$75k

most to the successful few

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

A home studio, a rented studio, on the road recording guests

How you get there

- 1 Pick a narrow topic you can talk about for years** A few weeks
A show for one kind of listener grows faster than a show about everything. Check what already exists.
- 2 Record 3 to 5 episodes before you launch** 1 to 2 months
You find your format and you have a buffer for bad weeks. Many shows die between episode 3 and 10.
- 3 Publish on a fixed schedule for a year** 1 year
Weekly or every two weeks. Audio and video, so you are on YouTube as well as podcast apps.
- 4 Grow through guests and other shows** Ongoing
Swapping guest spots with similar shows and clipping short videos is how most small shows find listeners.
- 5 Sell ads or memberships once you have an audience** Year 2 to 5
Usually after a few thousand downloads an episode for ads, or a few hundred loyal fans for memberships.

Pros and cons

- + Cheap to start, with gear you may already own
- + You build real skills: interviewing, editing, speaking
- + A show can open doors to clients, jobs and guests you would never meet
- 85% of independent shows make no money
- Growth is slow and audio is hard to discover
- Hours of unpaid work every week

Optional boosts

Video. Short clips. Selling sponsorships yourself. Audio editing.

Good to know

Most podcasts barely get started

A 2021 count of Apple Podcasts found 26% of shows had just 1 episode, and 44% had 3 or fewer. Getting past episode 10 already puts you ahead of most.

Millions of shows, few still going

Listen Notes counts about 3.8 million podcasts ever made. Only about 560,000 of them published an episode in 2026.

Where these numbers come from

Buzzsprout: platform stats, downloads per episode (September 2026)
Listen Notes: podcast stats (podcasts ever made, active and dead shows)
Alitu: The Independent Podcaster Report 2025 (558 creators)
Libsyn Ads: podcast advertising rates

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/podcaster>



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