

Video Editor

Turn hours of raw footage into something people want to watch. The job where the story is actually decided.

TYPICAL PAY

\$75,420

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$40k to \$149k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Post-production houses, TV networks, streaming shows, ad ag...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Start cutting now. Phone footage, a friend's band, a school game. Nobody will ask what year you started.
- 2 Learn one program properly** 6 to 12 months of real practice
Adobe Premiere Pro, Avid Media Composer or DaVinci Resolve. Scripted television runs on Avid, almost everything else on the other two.
- 3 Degree, or not** 0 to 4 years
About 65% of people in the job hold a bachelor's degree and 16% have only a high school diploma. A program buys you equipment, deadlines and a network, not a credential anyone checks.
- 4 Get in the building** 1 to 2 years
Post-production assistant, media manager, loader. Low pay, long hours, and the only reliable way anyone learns you exist.
- 5 Assistant editor, then editor** 2 to 5 years
You start cutting scenes when the editor trusts you, then take your own projects.

Pros and cons

- + No license, no exam and no required degree
- + You can start learning today with free software
- + Remote and freelance work is normal, not a favor
- The first few years pay badly and the hours are long
- Work clusters in two expensive cities
- Freelance income is unpredictable and there is no paid sick leave

Optional boosts

Color grading. Motion graphics. Sound. Avid Media Composer.

Good to know

Two shots make a third thing

Cut the same neutral face against a bowl of soup and an audience reads hunger. Cut it against a coffin and they read grief. The face never changed. Editors have been using that trick since the 1920s an...

The federal job profile lists TikTok

The government occupation profile for film and video editors names Adobe After Effects and Adobe Creative Cloud as tools of the trade, and then lists TikTok and YouTube right beside them. Short-form soc...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Film and Video Editors (27-4032.00)
O*NET OnLine: Film and Video Editors, tasks, software and education
Motion Picture Editors Guild, the post-production union
University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts

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/video-editor>



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