

Career

Paths

THEATER

Get involved with productions any way you can to get your foot in the door. Be prepared to do various tasks assigned by stage managers or producers. Volunteer with fundraising efforts for the arts.

Be aware of scams. Check out the legitimacy of agencies and companies before paying any fees. Relocate to a metropolitan area where more opportunities exist. A career in the arts takes patience, dedication, and luck! Take advantage of unexpected opportunities!

Have a back-up plan. Understand that actors and directors may face frequent and long periods of unemployment. Develop skills that qualify you for other jobs while you wait for opportunities. Consider pairing theater with another career interest or major to open up more career possibilities. Many actors work in theater management or production. Theater helps students develop verbal and written communication, public speaking, and teamwork skills. These transferable skills are valued by many types of employers. In particular, positions in sales, marketing, management, and public relations may be open to students with theater degrees.

Performing

Example Career Paths: Stage | Television | Radio | Motion picture | Video

Potential Employers: Community theaters | Regional theaters | Commercial theaters | Summer stock theaters | Dinner theaters | Children's theaters | Repertory companies | University theater groups | Touring companies | Industrial shows | Show groups | Amusement and theme parks | Television/film studios | Radio stations | Nightclubs | Cabarets | Cruise lines | Acting conservatories | Public or community programs

Professional Associations: [Actors Equity Association](#) | [American Association of Community Theatre](#) | [American Federation of Television and Radio Artists](#) | [American Society of Cinematographers](#) | [Screen Actors Guild](#)

Directing

Example Career Paths: Direction | Technical direction | Casting | Set design | Stage management | Production | Dialect coaching | Dramaturgy | Support staff

Potential Employers: Theaters of varying types | Television and motion picture studios | Video production companies | Other performance venues

Professional Associations: [Directors Guild of America](#)

Behind the Scenes

Example Career Paths: Stage management | Stage direction | Set design/Construction | Costume design | Hair/Make-up | Special effects | Wardrobe | Prop management | Broadcast technology | Rigging | Electrical work | Carpentry/Scenic artistry

Potential Employers: Community theaters | Regional theaters | Commercial theaters | Summer stock theaters | Dinner theaters | Children's theaters | Repertory companies | University theater groups | Touring companies | Industrial shows | Show groups | Amusement and theme parks | Television/Film studios | Radio stations | Nightclubs | Cabarets | Cruise lines | Acting conservatories | Public or community programs

Professional Associations: [International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees](#) | [Stage Managers Association](#)

Writing

Example Career Paths: Scriptwriting | Playwriting | Screenwriting | Journalism | Publicity (press agents) | Research

Potential Employers: Theaters | Television/Film studios | Television stations | Radio stations | Video production companies | Magazines | Newspapers | Freelance

Professional Associations: [Dramatists Guild of America](#) | [Playwrights' Center](#) | [International Centre for Women Playwrights](#)

Business

Example Career Paths: Producing | Management | Agents | Marketing and advertising | Fundraising and development | Coordination of volunteers | Administration of arts programs | Box office sales | Promotions | Patron services

Potential Employers: Theaters | Arts councils | Television/Film studios | Broadway | Road company productions | Regional theaters | Stock productions | Dinner theaters | Cabarets | Talent agencies | Advertising agencies | Art museums

Professional Associations: [National Association of Schools of Theatre](#)

Education

Example Career Paths: Private instruction | Teaching | Research | Self-enrichment teaching

Potential Employers: Public and private schools, K-12 | Colleges and universities | Performing arts centers | Various types of theater | Freelance | Self-employed

Professional Associations: [Association for Theater in Higher Education](#) | [Educational Theatre Association](#)

Preparing for your Career

- Participate in acting workshops, courses, and seminars to get advice and experience and to make contacts with others in the field.
- Join unions, (e.g., Actors Equity Union, or actors' guilds to stay abreast of opportunities and developments in the field).
- Get as much acting experience as possible. Perform in school productions, community theater, summer stock, etc. to hone acting skills.
- Pursue training through acting conservatories or mentoring from a drama coach.
- Develop a wide range of skills, such as singing, dancing, or acrobatics to be more versatile.
- Gain related experience by working in a college radio or television station.
- Prepare a professional resume that lists your acting experience. Have your resume attached to or printed on the reverse side of an 8" x 10" photograph of yourself.
- Be prepared to make the rounds. Distribute your resume to numerous agencies and offices. Follow up with several personal visits.
- Secure an agent or manager to help find jobs.
- Be aware that more opportunities exist in large cities such as New York and Los Angeles.
- Learn about the entertainment industry as a whole.
- Take courses on entertainment law, business, management, etc.
- An extensive network of contacts is essential. Get to know people working in your field and related areas.
- Consider whether you want to pursue acting as a full-time job or as an avocational interest.

This resource was adapted from What Can I Do With My Major.

For more, visit <https://web.uri.edu/career/wcidwmm/>

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

WCIDWMM

What Can I Do With This Major? features 100 major profiles with information on common career paths, types of employers that hire in the field, and strategies to maximize opportunities. Scroll to the...

 Center for Career and Experiential Education /