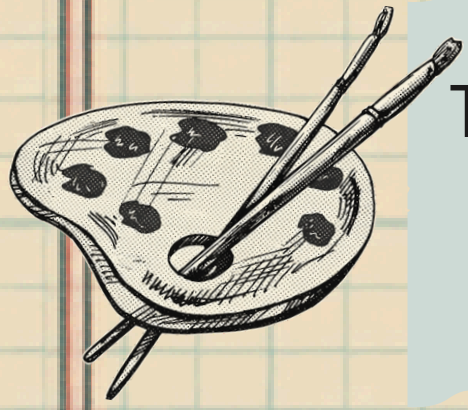


# Arts, Creative & Design Jobs



This sector rewards talent, hustle, and a strong portfolio, but the path looks different depending on how much school you want (or don't want) to do.

**This map is for:**

Self-Taught Creatives

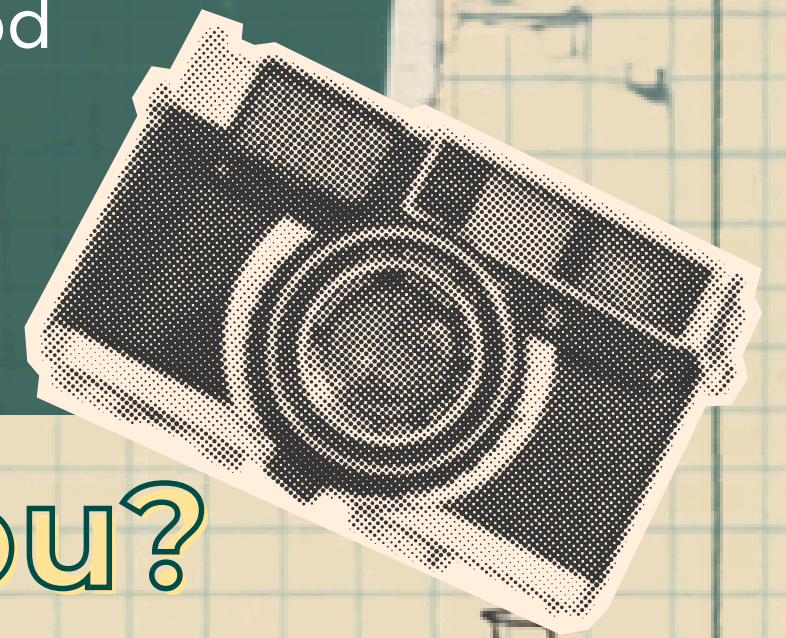
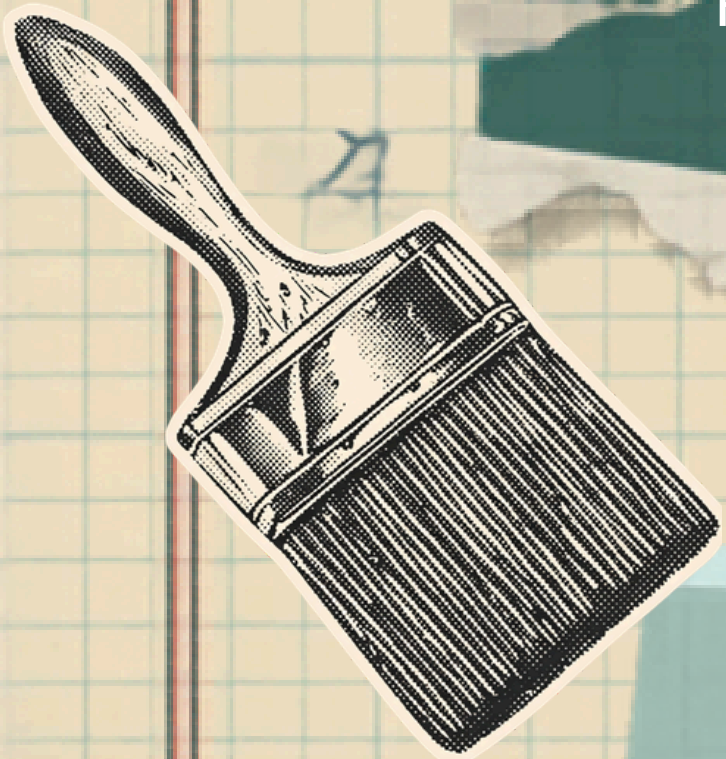
High School Students

Career Changers

Portfolio Builders

**Every brand you love, every show you binge, every feed you scroll. Someone designed that.**

Film it. Design it. Market it. That could be you. This map shows how to get started in the Redwood Region – with or without a degree.



## Why Here, Why You?

### Create for a Living

From photography to graphic design to marketing, there are multiple paths into a creative career – with or without a degree.

### 150+ Studios Open Every June

During North Coast Open Studios, local artists open their doors to the public. Creative careers happen here!

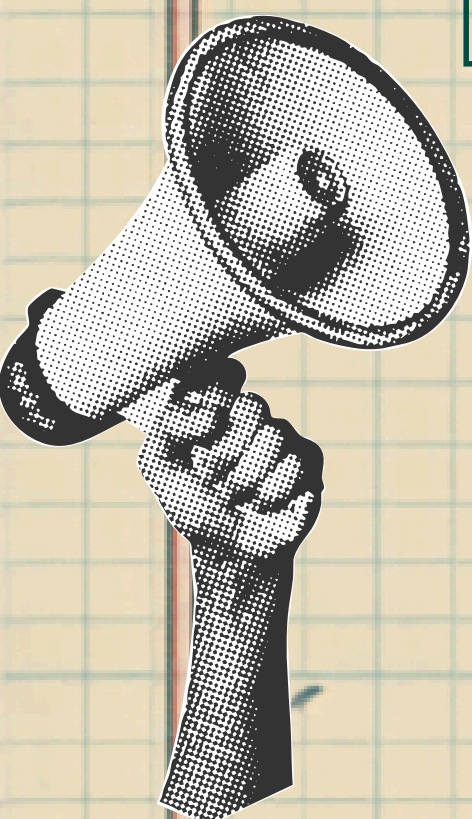
## Two Ways In - Pick Your Path

### Start Now Track

No degree needed

### Credential Track

Build skills through school



\*Labor Market Information from [CA Employment Development Department](#) in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics

# Start Now: A Non-Degree Path Into Creative Careers

You do not need a degree to start a creative career. In this field, your skills, portfolio, and real-world experience can matter just as much as a credential.

## NOW

### Explore your interests

Try photography, design, content creation, branding, or marketing.

## MONTHS 1-6

### Learn and make sample work

Use free tools to practice and create work you can show.

## YEAR 1-3

### Take projects & build experience

Take on small projects, paid gigs, or entry-level work to grow your skills and portfolio.

## LONG TERM

### Grow your creative path

Specialize, freelance, build your brand, or move into more advanced creative work.

## Creative Roles You Can Start Without a Degree

### Merchandise Displayer & Window Trimmer

100 job openings/yr

High School Diploma

Median Salary: \$39,076/yr

Create visual displays for stores, events, and venues. Uses design skills and creativity daily. A real foot in the door for visual arts careers.

### Photographer

40 job openings/yr

High School Diploma

Median Salary: \$49,893/yr

Shoot events, portraits, products, or landscapes. One of the best entry-level creative jobs. Your portfolio does the talking!

*Practicing and building your portfolio is your "training".*

### Advertising Sales Agent

50 job openings/yr

High School Diploma

Median Salary: \$52,947/yr

Sell ad space for media, digital platforms, or print. Combines creative knowledge with sales skills. Great earning potential without a degree.



## Free & Low-Cost Online Trainings

- **Canva Design School:** Free courses in graphic design, branding, social media, and marketing. Includes certificates you can add to your resume.
- **Adobe Learn:** Intro courses in Photoshop, Illustrator, and Express, plus a deeper graphic design certificate option through [Coursera](#).
- **Google Digital Marketing & E-Commerce Certificate:** Covers Search Engine Optimization (SEO), social media, Google Ads, Canva, and Shopify. Good for individuals interested in marketing and digital content.
- **CalArts Graphic Design Specialization:** A beginner-friendly Coursera series covering typography, image-making, composition, and color.
- **DaVinci Resolve:** Free professional video editing software used in film and media production. Great for building editing and production skills.
- **Alison:** Free self-paced courses in graphic design and digital marketing, with certificates available after completion.

## Want to be your own boss?

You could freelance, teach, take commissions, land city contracts, or build your own brand. Many creatives do all of the above.

Check out our Entrepreneurship guide to see how.

## What helps you move up

- A strong portfolio
- Real project experience
- Client or employer reference
- Social media or online presence
- A clear creative niche or style

# Creative Careers Through College

A degree path can help you build skills, experience, and connections for creative careers. It can also offer mentorship, internships, and a more guided learning experience.

## NOW

### Research & choose your program

Explore local college programs. Visit campuses, talk to advisors, and find the program that fits your creative direction.

## YEAR 1-2

### Build foundations & start your portfolio

Take courses and access professional tools, studios, and equipment. Build a portfolio through class projects and campus opportunities.

## YEAR 2-4

### Gain real experience & specialize

Declare your emphasis, land internships, and build your network through faculty and local arts organizations.

## LONG TERM

### Launch and grow your career

Enter the workforce with a degree, strong portfolio, and professional references.

## Where This Path Can Lead

### Producer & Director

60 job openings/yr

Bachelor's Degree

Median Salary: \$75,287/yr

Lead film, video, audio, or live productions. This is the fastest-growing job in the sector driven by surging demand for video and digital content.

### Graphic Designer

70 job openings/yr

Bachelor's Degree

Median Salary: \$58,104/yr

Design logos, layouts, social media, websites, and marketing materials. Growing field with solid wages.

### Marketing Manager

90 job openings/yr

Bachelor's Degree

Median Salary: \$128,756/yr

Lead marketing campaigns for businesses, arts orgs, and brands. Growing at 10% with the highest pay in the creative sector — this is the top of the earnings ladder.

## Local Programs

### CR COLLEGE OF THE REDWOODS

- **Associate's Degree in Studio Arts for Transfer** - Guaranteed CSU admission. 2 years then transfer to Humboldt.
- **Graphic Design & Visual Communication Certificate** - Design, photography, digital storytelling.



MENDOCINO COLLEGE

- **Digital Arts & Media Certificate** - Graphic design, layout, multimedia production.
- **Studio Arts, Associate's Degree** - Foundation in visual arts with CSU transfer pathway.
- **Theatre Arts, Associate's Degree** - 2-year foundation in performance and production

### Cal Poly Humboldt.

- **Film, Bachelor's Degree.** - Directing, cinematography, screenwriting, editing.
- **Media Arts, Bachelor's Degree** - Animation, Design, Film, Photography
- **Art, Bachelor's Degree. (Digital Arts + Graphic Design)** - Visual communication with a tech focus
- **Business Admin, Bachelor's Degree (Marketing)** - Strategy, branding, analytics
- **Journalism, Bachelor's Degree** - Reporting, media, digital storytelling
- **Theatre Arts, Bachelor's Degree** - Performance, production, arts management

## Hands On Experience

- [MARZ Project Media Lab](#) - Free video, audio, and digital arts equipment + pro mentorship. Ages 12-24.
- [Morris Graves Museum of Art](#) - Gallery, event, and arts education volunteer roles.
- [Cal Poly Humboldt Student Access Gallery](#) - Student-run gallery. Real curation and installation experience.
- [KHSU Public Radio](#) - Student internships in audio production and media operations.
- [Arts Council of Mendocino County](#) - Mendocino County's arts hub. Browse volunteer roles, jobs, and creative opportunities across the county.