

## The NAMM Show 2026 - Preparing Students for In-Demand Music Careers

By Serona Elton

Finding reliable and complete data about music-related careers can be challenging. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes its [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) which describes the nature of the work, working conditions, the training and education needed, earnings, and expected job prospects for a wide range of occupations.

Occupations are categorized using their [Standard Occupational Classification](#) (SOC) system. Because of how the data is compiled, it may be more accurate for some music-related occupations which follow a more traditional employer-employee relationship (e.g., elementary school music teacher), while it may be less accurate for those which involve self-employment (e.g., musician). Another challenge with the data is that many positions in the music *business* map to the generic SOC value (e.g., marketing manager), rather than one that is music business specific, so finding general information is possible while finding music business specific information is not. The table **Music-Related Occupation to Instructional Program Mapping** lists the SOC values for occupations specifically in music and maps them to related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes which colleges and universities tie their various majors/academic programs to. The table answers the question, "If I want to pursue a career as a [fill in the blank], what should I study in college?" Once someone knows the Instructional Programs they are interested in, they can use the [College Navigator](#) found on the National Center for Education Statistic website to see a list of colleges and universities that offer them.

## Music-Related Occupation to Instructional Program Mapping

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)	Related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)
<p><b>Music Business/Industry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agents and Business Managers of Artists, Performers, and Athletes (13-1011)</li> <li><i>Also see</i> other business-related occupations such as Marketing Managers (11-2021)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Music Management (50.1003)</li> <li>Arts, Entertainment, and Media Management, General (50.1001)</li> <li>Arts, Entertainment, and Media Management, Other (50.1099)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Music Education (including Music History)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Art, Drama, and Music Teachers, Postsecondary (25-1121)</li> <li>Education Teachers, Postsecondary (25-1081)</li> <li>Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education (25-2021)</li> <li>Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education (25-2022)</li> <li>Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education (25-2031)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Music Teacher Education (13.1312)</li> <li>Music Pedagogy (50.0912)</li> <li>Music History, Literature, and Theory (50.0902)</li> <li>Musicology and Ethnomusicology (50.0905)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Composers, Conductors, Music Directors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Music Directors and Composers (27-2041)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Music Theory and Composition (50.0904)</li> <li>Conducting (50.0906)</li> <li>Religious/Sacred Music (39.0501)</li> <li>Religious Music and Worship, Other (39.0599)</li> </ul>

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)	Related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)
<p><b>Musician</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musicians and Singers (27-2042)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music Performance, General (50.0903)</li> <li>• Keyboard Instruments (50.0907)</li> <li>• Voice and Opera (50.0908)</li> <li>• Jazz/Jazz Studies (50.0910)</li> <li>• Stringed Instruments (50.0911)</li> <li>• Brass Instruments (50.0914)</li> <li>• Woodwind Instruments (50.0915)</li> <li>• Percussion Instruments (50.0916)</li> <li>• Musical Theater (50.0509)</li> <li>• Music, General (50.0901)</li> <li>• Music, Other (50.0999)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Music Therapist</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music Therapists (29-1129.02)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music Therapy (51.2305)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Music Engineer/Producer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound Engineering Technicians (27-4014)</li> <li>• Audio and Video Technicians (27-4011)</li> <li>• <i>Also see</i> Producers and Directors (27-2012)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music Technology (50.0913)</li> <li>• Recording Arts Technology/Technician (10.0203)</li> <li>• Sound Arts (50.0917)</li> <li>• Electrical, Electronics, and Communications Engineering, Other (14.1099)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Instrument Repairers and Tuners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musical Instrument Repairers and Tuners (49-9063)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musical Instrument Fabrication and Repair (47.0404)</li> </ul>

Source: Mapping created by the book author. Codes taken from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics 2023 list of SOC Codes and the National Center for Education Statistics 2020 CIP Codes.

Another classification system that can provide insight into the types of companies that hire people working in music is the one used by the United States Census Bureau called the [North American Industry Classification System](#). It is used to classify establishments (companies, nonprofits, etc.). For each of the NAICS codes listed in the table, you can go online and look at the corresponding index entries which are the more granular descriptions of the work the establishment actually does.

## North American Industry Classification System Codes related to Music

NAICS Code	Description
<b>Music Creators</b>	
711130 – Musical Groups and Artists	(1) Groups primarily engaged in producing live musical entertainment (except theatrical musical or opera productions), and (2) Independent (i.e., freelance) artists primarily engaged in providing live musical entertainment. Musical groups and artists may perform in front of a live audience or in a studio, and may or may not operate their own facilities for staging their shows.)
711510 - Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers	Freelance producers (except musical groups and artists) primarily engaged in musical activities independent of a company or group, including composers and conductors.
<b>The Recorded Music Business</b>	
512250 Record Production and Distribution	Establishments primarily engaged in record production and/or releasing, promoting, and distributing sound recordings to wholesalers, retailers, or directly to the public. These establishments contract with artists, arrange and finance the production of original master recordings, and/or produce master recordings themselves. Establishments in this industry hold the copyright to the master recording, or obtain reproduction and distribution rights to master recordings produced by others, and derive most of their revenues from the sales, leasing, licensing, or distribution of master recordings.
512240, Sound Recording Studios	Establishments primarily engaged in providing the facilities and technical expertise for sound recording in a studio. This industry includes establishments that provide audio production and postproduction services to produce master recordings. These establishments may provide audio services for film, television, and video productions.
516210 Media Streaming Distribution Services, Social Networks, and Other Media Networks and Content Providers	Establishments primarily providing media streaming distribution services, operating social network sites, operating media broadcasting and cable television networks, and supplying information, such as news reports, articles, pictures, and features, to the news media. These establishments distribute textual, audio, and/or video content of general or specific interest.
516110 Radio Broadcasting Stations	Establishments primarily engaged in broadcasting aural programs by radio to the public. These establishments operate radio broadcasting studios and facilities for the programming and transmission of programs to the public. Programming may originate in their own studio, from an affiliated network, or from external sources.

NAICS Code	Description
449210 Electronics and Appliance Retailers	Establishments primarily engaged in selling different types of goods including retailing prerecorded audio and video media, such as downloadable digital music and video files (without production or publishing), CDs, and DVDs.
<b>Music Publishing</b>	
512230 Music Publisher	Establishments primarily engaged in acquiring and registering copyrights for musical compositions in accordance with law and promoting and authorizing the use of these compositions in recordings, radio, television, motion pictures, live performances, print, or other media. Establishments in this industry represent the interests of the songwriter or other owners of musical compositions to produce revenues from the use of such works, generally through licensing agreements. These establishments may own the copyright or act as administrator of the music copyrights on behalf of copyright owners. Publishers of music books and sheet music are included in this industry.
<b>Live Music</b>	
711110 - Theater Companies and Dinner Theaters	Companies, groups, or theaters primarily engaged in producing theatrical musicals and opera productions.
711310 - Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events with Facilities	Establishments primarily engaged in (1) organizing, promoting, and/or managing live performing arts productions, sports events, and similar events, such as state fairs, county fairs, agricultural fairs, concerts, and festivals, held in facilities that they manage and operate and/or (2) managing and providing the staff to operate arenas, stadiums, theaters, or other related facilities for rent to other promoters
711320 - Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events without Facilities	Promoters primarily engaged in organizing, promoting, and/or managing live performing arts productions, sports events, and similar events, such as state fairs, county fairs, agricultural fairs, concerts, and festivals, in facilities that are managed and operated by others. Theatrical (except motion picture) booking agencies are included in this industry.
711410, Agents and Managers for Artists, Athletes, Entertainers, and Other Public Figures	Establishments of agents and managers primarily engaged in representing and/or managing creative and performing artists, sports figures, entertainers, and other public figures. The representation and management includes activities, such as representing clients in contract negotiations; managing or organizing clients' financial affairs; and generally promoting the careers of their clients.
<b>Music Products</b>	

NAICS Code	Description
339992 Musical Instrument Manufacturing	Establishments primarily engaged in manufacturing musical instruments (except toys).
459140 Musical Instrument and Supplies Retailers	Establishments primarily engaged in retailing new musical instruments, sheet music, and related supplies; or retailing these new products in combination with musical instrument repair, rental, or music instruction.
334310 Audio and Video Equipment Manufacturing	Establishments primarily engaged in manufacturing electronic audio and video equipment for home entertainment, motor vehicles, and public address and musical instrument amplification. Examples of products made by these establishments are digital video recorders, televisions, stereo equipment, speaker systems, household-type video cameras, jukeboxes, and amplifiers for musical instruments and public address systems.
811490 Other Personal and Household Goods Repair and Maintenance	Establishments primarily engaged in repairing and servicing musical instruments (or other goods) without retailing new instruments.