



## COVID-19 Career and Funding FAQ For Musicians

### **What resources are available for immediate financial assistance?**

Self-employed and low-wage workers in the State of Michigan affected by COVID-19 can now qualify for unemployment benefits. Eligible applicants include self-employed, 1099-independent contractors, gig, and low-wage workers who can no longer work because of the pandemic, as well as those who were employed by workplaces that have closed due to COVID-19. To learn more and determine eligibility, visit the [Michigan Department of Labor](#) website.

In addition, there are a number of emergency fund resources for musicians. Check the lists on the [Network of Music Career Development](#) website and Creative Capital's [website](#) to see where you may be able to apply for funding in the short term. Two Michigan-based funds are the [Michigan Music Alliance](#) and the [Crosshatch Arts Emergency Fund](#).

### **My summer festival/band camp was cancelled and/or is on hold. How do I use my summer?**

Consider using this time to build your skills in music and beyond such as working on your own business and brand, applying for an internship, doing project work, or volunteering.

- **Build your business/brand.** Start a YouTube channel. Create a website with your recordings, bio, gallery of photos, and project updates. Design a logo. Create a studio policy or contract for use. Launch online lessons. Arrange charts. The options can be tailored to your career plan-schedule a career advising appointment to build a strategy for where to start and how this work can be reflected on your resume.
- **Apply to an internship.** Many arts organizations are still accepting unpaid interns, and MSU is hosting a [Virtual Career Fair April 23-24](#) for paid and unpaid summer work and internships for non-arts fields. Use your personal network (friends, family, MSU alumni on LinkedIn) to directly target organizations for unpaid internships, which are often more flexible than paid internships. Search [Handshake](#) and follow Running Start [social media](#) to watch for opportunities. Use those same connections for paid opportunities. In Handshake, use the keyword "remote" to search for virtual options. Remember that you are building skills to make you more flexible and versatile in the job market in the future.
- **Build your skills outside of performance through volunteer opportunities.** There are a number of remote volunteer opportunities listed by the [MSU Center for Community Engaged Learning](#).
- **Do project-based work.** This kind of work may or may not be paid, depending on the employer's situation. If you work on campus, reach out to your supervisor with brainstorms about possible projects you might work on this summer. Consider reaching out to a professor to inquire if there might be a project for their department or their personal research for which they may need help. For help crafting an email inquiry (and asking about paid or unpaid project work), make a [career advising appointment](#)

- Some industries are hiring or expanding at this time. Consider this [list of companies](#) and brainstorm related local or arts companies that may have opportunities (i.e. music tech companies and platforms)

## I have to find a job. What kind of jobs would a music major qualify for outside the performing, music teaching, or arts administration?

Surveys show that employers hire based on skills and experiences, not based on major, so music majors can be competitive for many types of jobs. The National Association of Colleges and Employers has identified [eight key competencies](#) that demonstrate career readiness to an employer, and many of these competencies are developed through music experiences. You can showcase these key competencies in bullet points on your resume to demonstrate your transferable skills. Learn more about showcasing those competencies in the [MSU Career Handbook](#).

## I am a music education major. How will COVID-19 impact my job search?

The situation with many districts is still evolving, and many things are unknown because most teaching positions are posted in June/July. K12 music teaching positions (private and public) will likely continue to be posted, but with remote interviewing instead of in-person interviewing. Personal connections will continue to play a pivotal role in the job search: make sure you are reaching out to mentors early regarding possible openings.

## I've never had a non-music job. What should I put on my resume?

Resumes should showcase all your experiences, not just paid jobs. There are a whole host of skills you acquire while attending music school, so use your resume to showcase those. Make a list of any paid or unpaid experiences you may have had, ensembles you have been a part of, and times you have volunteered or any involvement you have had in clubs/extracurriculars. If you have questions about how to start on a resume, want help with a partially completed resume, or want somebody to check a finished resume, check out the [resume models for music students](#) or [set up an appointment](#) with a Career services advisor.

## How do I find opportunities outside the performing arts?

You can start to find opportunities through networking via [LinkedIn](#) and [MSU Connect](#). The [Running Start search page](#) can also provide a starting place for searching for opportunities. The page lists resources for general searches in addition to performing arts specific searches. [Handshake](#) is an extremely valuable tool for job searching, as it features employers specifically recruiting Spartan talent and provides a number of parameters to narrow your search and many options for sorting jobs. Finally, don't forget to use personal connections (friends, family, former supervisors, mentors) for finding jobs, internships, and volunteer-based activities.

## What is a career fair? Why would you go?

At a career fair, you can learn about companies, find available jobs, and network with employers who are hiring. Employers attend a job fair with the goal of showcasing their company as well as finding potential new hires. Attending a job fair can be an excellent way to find opportunities you may not know about, and provides a platform for which you can talk to employers directly about your skills and their openings. Particularly as the job market is changing, a virtual career fair is a perfect opportunity to make connections with employers and show them why you would be an asset to their team. For more tips on career fairs, see the [Career Services webpage](#).

## **What is a virtual career fair? Tips for preparing?**

Given social distancing and refraining from gathering in public, many career fairs have moved to a virtual format. MSU is hosting [a virtual career fair](#) on April 23 and 24. Make sure to register early and upload your resume-companies may be able to view your profile ahead of time. Ensure you have an active LinkedIn profile and research the companies attending. For more advice, the Career Services Network has put together [this tip sheet](#) for virtual career fairs.

## **What should I expect from a virtual interview?**

Like a live interview, make sure you prepare in advance-researching the company, drafting questions to ask during the interview, and practicing your responses to possible questions. Professional attire is still required (dress the part on the top and bottom). Test your technology prior to the interview (including downloading any software you need) and make sure you are in a quiet and non-distracting location. For more tips, the Broad College of Business has put together [this tip sheet](#). You can also practice and record your interview with [Interview Stream](#).

## **What if I applied to a job, internship, or audition and haven't heard back?**

Many arts/entertainment employers have had dramatic disruptions in their revenue streams, so you may see searches and auditions cancelled, put on hold, or delayed. If you receive an email like this, reiterate your interest, indicate that you are open to project-based work (if relevant to the industry) and make sure to connect with the hiring manager or recruiter on LinkedIn if possible. Consider applying for jobs in other fields or for companies that focus more on teaching, not live performance.

## **What if I was planning to teach or freelance after graduation?**

**Teaching:** Musicians and students are adapting quickly to virtual teaching as an option for private lessons. Create a website and think about what studio recruitment looks like in a remote learning environment. Reach out to high school and middle school directors to find out what they are telling their students regarding lessons, and/or offer to help with masterclasses, playing tests, or other virtual lesson creation to establish yourself in a community.

**Freelancing:** Freelance work may not resume until July (or even later). Do apply to any summer/street festivals, as many applications are still open until early May. However, it is wise to have a financial cushion and not expect regular performance work to resume in the fall.

## **Other Resources/Managing Stress**

With everybody's education and professional situations undergoing large changes, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and stressed. It is more important than ever to stay connected to each other virtually. [Zoom](#) is an excellent resource to continue face-to-face interaction, and it is free to MSU students, faculty, and staff. There are also a number of programs that are designed to connect musicians online. [JamKazam](#) is a program designed for live rehearsals from different locations. [Soundtrap](#)'s online studio gives you the ability to record, edit, and collaborate with other musicians. If you are looking to connect with musicians across the country, the Facebook group, "[Music, But Everybody is Quarantined](#)" has become extremely popular. This group has provided a platform for musicians to share individual music or to seek musicians with whom to collaborate. MSU is still providing mental health resources to students remotely through [CAPS](#). See their website for more information about their virtual and phone resources.