



Auditioning with **Muskegon Civic Theatre**

What are Auditions like at MCT?

Auditions at MCT are meant to be a fun and welcoming opportunity for community members to share their time and talent with our Artistic Leadership Team for each show. Auditioners sign up for an audition slot in advance and prepare materials as needed. Auditions typically happen Monday and Tuesday evenings between 7-10pm.

What to Prepare

It varies from show to show, but typically this is what we ask actors to prepare in advance of auditions:

- For a **MUSICAL**, we ask those auditioning to prepare 16-32 bars of a song to sing. There may also be a dance combination to learn in advance, or to learn the night of auditions.
- For a **PLAY**, we may ask those auditioning to prepare a monologue, or to simply be ready to read in group scenes or read monologues from the show on the night of auditions.
- Some shows requiring specific skill sets (such as stage combat or improvisation) may include a workshop or some other element to assess whether this skill is present
- We highly recommend **reading the play/musical ahead of time** or looking up the show online to become familiar with the story and characters. It's important to know whether you feel passionate about working towards bringing a show to life, and to learn more about the characters you might want to be considered for
- Our individual shows will always have an audition notice that goes out with more specific information about what to prepare.

Getting There

- If possible, **plan on arriving at least 30 minutes prior to your first audition slot**. We can never predict weather, parking, etc, and we want to ensure you have a buffer to arrive and get ready before you jump into your audition experience.
- **Speaking of Parking:** There is free parking available along Western Avenue and 3rd Avenue, but it is limited. Please give yourself plenty of time to secure a spot.
- **Location: Auditions are typically held in Ballroom A in the Hilt Building at 427 W Western Avenue.** Enter through the glass vestibule on Western Avenue, and once you step inside you will see the Beardsley Theater on your right and the Box Office to your left. Head straight ahead to the elevator, and take it to the 3rd floor. Once there, head to the table with the friendly folks seated who will get you checked in.

What to Expect

- After checking in, you may be asked to fill out an **audition form** if you didn't fill out one virtually
- We will have a volunteer take your **picture** for our reference – this is only shared with the audition team
- For some auditions, folks come into the audition room one at a time, and for others we may have a group come in together. Whether you're in the audition room together or just spending time waiting in the hall together, we encourage you to be friendly and courteous to your fellow auditioners
- In the audition room, the **Casting team** will be present as well as a piano accompanist if it's a Musical audition. Typically the Casting team consists of the Director, Assistant Director and/or Stage Manager, MCT's Artistic Director, and the Music Director and Choreographer for a Musical. As needed we pull additional folks into the casting committee such as members of the design team or a third party Director for sake of objectivity and perspective.

What to Wear and What to Bring

- Wear whatever is **comfortable** and makes you feel **confident**.
 - If there is a dance audition, make sure you can easily move in whatever you wear, and that you have a *clean, dry* pair of shoes ready. If you like to wear character or jazz shoes, please feel free to bring them, but a comfy sneaker works great too!
- Water bottle
- For vocal auditions, bring prepared **sheet music** for a vocal audition with the start and stop points clearly marked. Typically we ask you either have the pages in a binder to easily turn them, or have the pages taped together if there's only 2-3 pages
 - If you are using a backing track instead, send the link or file to info@muskegoncivictheatre.org ahead of time with your name and date/audition time. We have a bluetooth speaker in the room we can use to play your track.

How Casting Works

The Casting team takes the following into consideration when making casting decisions:

- (For Musicals) **Vocal skill/range** – are you able to sing the role? Is it the quality of sound the team is looking for?
- **Preparation** – When asked to have material ready to present, is it well prepared? This may mean having the lyrics of a song or a monologue confidently memorized, being familiar with the pacing/melody of a song, or knowing the dance steps to choreography provided in advance.
- **Energy/Stage Presence** – Does this actor give off the energy or attitude we are looking for in this character?
- **Good Scene Partners** – Does this actor collaborate well with the other auditioners when reading together? Do they seek connection and work together well? This is particularly important for characters with strong relationships.

- **Movement/Dance skill** – The importance of this varies from show to show and depending on character requirements
- **Attitude/Demeanor**
 - Casting teams are looking for actors who are communicative, prepared, collaborative and respectful
 - Casting team members may ask each other about past experiences working with returning actors or may reach out to contacts at other theatres to learn more about folks they haven't had the opportunity to work with yet
 - Our priority is a great show *as well as* a great experience for all folks involved
- **Conflicts** – Conflicts and availability play a major role in casting. Please be honest and thoughtful in noting conflicts on your audition form, as uncommunicated conflicts that arise through a rehearsal process absolutely will impact whether you'll be considered for future productions. The team will reach out to you directly if we need any further information about your conflicts.
- **Role Preference** – If you note on your audition form that you will only consider certain roles or will absolutely not consider certain roles, that dictates what you will be considered for. If we have questions about your preferences or wish to know more context, we will reach out to you directly.
- Some characters may need to present as a certain age, gender identity, or race depending on the show and whether it impacts the storytelling. We will include this in the character descriptions when applicable.
- **Casting is an Art Form** – a wild puzzle of storytelling, working within the pool of auditioners, and balancing the relationships present in the show. Not being cast is not a direct reflection of talent or whether the casting team "liked" you.

Communication about Casting

- We will send notice about whether you'll need to attend callbacks (typically the day after our last day of auditions) either the night before or early in the morning of callbacks – as soon as we have the list and know what material will be involved in callbacks. Due to the quick turnaround, **we recommend holding that evening on your schedule** until you hear from us.
- We will reach out via e-mail with casting offers within three or so days immediately following callbacks. **All who audition will be notified about whether or not they are cast.**
- After the cast is finalized and all who auditioned are contacted, MCT will share the cast list publicly. **Please do not publicly share that you have been cast until MCT does so.**

After Casting

- Regardless of whether you are cast or not, **all those who audition will be contacted by MCT to ask for feedback about the audition and callback experience.** We endeavor to learn and grow with every show we produce, and want to ensure we hear from all those who take the courageous step to come out and audition!
- If you are not cast, it is completely understandable and reasonable to **feel your feelings** – disappointment, sadness, or frustration. Auditioning is a vulnerable experience! After you've had some

time to process, consider what you'd like to do *next* – you might want to take a class, look up other auditions in the area, or ask about other opportunities to get involved.

- Remember – **casting is not a direct reflection of your talents** or your standing in our theatre community. Many, many factors go into the art of casting, and the big picture of what the show needs takes precedence over the individual. If you are interested in asking for feedback on your audition, please reach out to us and we will gather feedback from the casting committee.

FAQs

Are actors at MCT volunteers?

All performers and most of our backstage positions are volunteer roles at MCT. We are incredibly grateful for the volunteer hours that contribute to every production we do, and make it a priority to respect your time and efforts. As a small token of our appreciation, all volunteers receive two complimentary tickets for any production in the MCT season they volunteer on.

Am I allowed to audition for MCT if I'm a minor?

Absolutely! We do ask that you read the audition notice in full with your parent/guardian to ensure everyone is on the same page about the requirements and content of the production, and we will need their contact information provided when you come out to audition.

All production team members must follow the [MCT Adult/Minor Engagement Guidelines](#) if there are minors involved in the cast or production team. If there are multiple minors in a cast, MCT will hire a Minor Coordinator to act as a backstage guardian and advocate.

I've never been in a show or auditioned before – can I still audition?

Yes! We are proud to have been the home of many performers' first shows. A great resource available to those who want to learn more about what each individual audition process looks like are our Audition Workshops. We hold these for every show, and they are a fantastic opportunity to meet the Artistic Leadership Team, hear about preparing for one show's specific auditions, and learn about auditioning best practices in general.

My family member is part of the Artistic Leadership Team – am I allowed to audition?

MCT doesn't have any formal policy against family working together – as a community theatre, it's important to us to support families having the joy of creating art together. However, we recognize it may present some complications when it comes to the casting process or the rehearsal room. Here's what MCT does to support a positive experience for everyone:

- Casting – MCT asks that Artistic Leadership disclose ahead of time any familial relationships they have with those who are auditioning for the show or applying to work on the show. The Artistic Director attends all auditions and callbacks to provide objectivity and feedback, and may add additional members to the casting committee for the same purpose. When discussing performances at auditions and callbacks, the rest of the committee is asked to provide feedback

on the performer prior to the leader with the relationship. Casting does not occur unilaterally – the whole team needs to be on board before moving forward with the final cast.

- Rehearsal room – Leadership is advised to be thoughtful of keeping the relationship in the rehearsal room as equitable as possible. Consent workshops at the start of each rehearsal process establish communication practices and concern elevation paths to ensure every actor is advocated for, and to provide a path of communication if a conflict of interest arises in the room.
- After the show – All participants on a show are asked to give feedback on the Artistic Leadership team, the Design team, and on the process overall. Respondents have the option to volunteer this information anonymously if needed.

Are any roles pre-cast?

No. While a Director may have certain actors in mind for a particular role or roles, the MCT does not allow a Director to pre-arrange for a role to be given to anyone prior to auditions. This allows new people to be seen with those returning to our stage and everyone has an equal chance at being cast. If there is a role that needs to be predetermined for any valid reason, the casting of that role would be announced prior to auditions.

Are there other ways to get involved?

There sure are! We are always in need of volunteers – whether it's to come to the scene shop to do a base coat on a piece of the set, to work backstage on a show, or to spread the word about the show in our community. The best way to hear about new opportunities is to [sign up for our newsletter](#) or to fill out our [volunteer form](#).

Upcoming Audition Workshops and Audition Dates

[It's a Wonderful Life Audition Workshop](#): Saturday, September 5th at 9AM

It's a Wonderful Life Auditions: Monday, September 14th and Tuesday, September 15th with Callbacks on Wednesday, September 16th

The Lifespan of a Fact Audition Workshop: Saturday, October 31st - Time TBA

The Lifespan of a Fact Auditions: Monday, November 9th and Tuesday, November 10th with Callbacks on Wednesday, November 11th

The Importance of Being Earnest Audition Workshop: Saturday, November 21st - Time TBA

The Importance of Being Earnest Auditions: Monday, December 7th and Tuesday, December 8th with Callbacks on Wednesday, December 9th

Matilda the Musical Audition Workshop: Saturday, January 30th - Time TBA

Matilda the Musical Auditions: Monday, February 15th, Tuesday, February 16th and Wednesday, February 17th with Callbacks on Thursday, February 18th