

Kendall Cooper
Portland, ME 04103
LD 1075

My name is Kendall Cooper and I work full time as a Casting Director in the Film and Television industry. When I tell people I am a Casting Director and I live in Portland, Maine they are often surprised. I have to explain; "Well I recently worked on 'Hocus Pocus 2' which was filmed in Providence, RI and Greta Gerwig's 'Little Women' and the upcoming SONY/Marvel Feature 'Madame Webb'" which were both filmed in Boston. I usually have to travel out of state. Every now and then a small film will come to Maine. But they are few and far between."

I grew up in Cape Elizabeth and after graduating high school I left to pursue a career in the arts. I started in NYC and eventually found an opening as a casting assistant on a TV show filming in Richmond, Virginia. Most people don't know that Virginia has a film industry either, but they do. My first time on set I was amazed that 90% of the crew were local Virginia residents that worked full time in the film industry and lived in Virginia. My mind was blown, thinking I didn't have to stay in NYC or move to LA.

Virginia has an active film office and most importantly they have tax incentives available for productions spending money in the state and extra incentives for hiring residents as employees. When a film comes to town they hire local carpenters, painters, electricians, accountants, drivers, production assistants, hair and make-up artists, camera, sound and lighting assistants. The list of available jobs is extensive. The beautiful thing about these jobs is that they are exciting.

I was able to move back home to Maine during the pandemic, my team was deemed 'non-essential' personnel and we were able to work remotely. Now that I have moved back, I never want to leave. I'll be getting married this year and hoping to be able to start trying for a family soon. I want to raise my kids in Maine. I want to live and work in this beautiful state that holds my heart. I want to be able to stay here for my quality of life and also work in my chosen field.

I remember when I was growing up in Maine I thought I needed to leave if I wanted to pursue a career in theater or film, but the film industry has changed. Films are no longer shooting in only NYC or LA. The productions go where the tax incentives are, and when Maine approves tax incentives, the films will come. They will bring good paying, exciting jobs and economic growth for our beautiful state. They will hire local people and they will spend money at our hotels, restaurants and businesses. I have seen the incredible economic opportunities films have brought to other states and I hope Maine can use this opportunity to its advantage.

Sincerely,
Kendall Cooper

Kendall Cooper Casting
www.kendallcoopercasting.com