



ACTORS' EQUITY AT A GLANCE

Before Actors' Equity, actors and stage managers had little control over their careers. Rehearsing without pay, being stranded throughout the country when shows closed on the road, paying for their own costumes and far worse abuses – this was “life upon the wicked stage” before May 26, 1913. On that day, 112 actors gathered at the Pabst Grand Circle Hotel in New York City to form a union. William Courtleigh suggested the name that seemed to encompass what they were fighting for: **Actors' Equity**.

Since then, the union has grown to over 51,000 members strong. From standing against segregation both in the audience and on stage, fighting the blacklists of the 1950s and banding together to stem the tide of AIDS and achieve marriage equality, to advocating for inclusive casting, affordable housing and healthcare, arts funding and collective bargaining rights, Equity members have leveraged their collective power for more than a century. So whenever you go to an audition, start rehearsals, call a cue or take a bow, Equity stands behind you.

**“WE HEREBY CONSTITUTE
OURSELVES A VOLUNTARY
ASSOCIATION TO
ADVANCE, PROMOTE,
FOSTER AND BENEFIT ALL
THOSE CONNECTED WITH
THE ART OF THE THEATRE ”**

**— FROM THE PREAMBLE TO EQUITY'S
CONSTITUTION, 1913**



WHAT IS ACTORS' EQUITY?

Actors' Equity Association (“Equity”), founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 51,000 actors and stage managers. Equity fosters the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages, improving working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Actors' Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and affiliated with Federation Internationale Artistes (FIA), an international organization of performing arts unions.

As a representative democracy, Equity is governed by members, for members. Its chief policy-making and governing body, the National Council, is elected by the membership and composed of working actors and stage managers. Equity Officers and Councillors serve without compensation.

Equity's strength is founded in the unity of purpose and mutual support of its members who share common concern for the needs of our challenging profession. In everything from equitable salary standards to safety conditions, pension to health insurance to our decades-long battle against discrimination, Equity has fought time and again for the dignity of the performer. Equity is your collective voice as professionals.

WHAT DO I GET?

Contract Benefits

- **Equitable Salary Standards:** the fundamental right of fair treatment in terms of minimum salary and compensation for additional duties, overtime and extra performances.
- **Pension and Health Plans:** Since 1960, Equity has required producers to contribute to pension and health trust funds.
- **Work Rules:** Equity monitors and addresses safety issues like raked stages, smoke and haze exposure and sanitary rules, and places limits on rehearsal hours, media promotion and publicity.
- **Guaranteed Paycheck:** Equity requires most producers to post a bond to ensure payment; even if a show closes or a producer defaults, you still get paid and won't get stranded.
- **Audition Access:** Equity has negotiated required auditions for principal and chorus performers. More than 1,300 audition notices are posted on Equity's website annually.

WHAT DO I GIVE?

Member Responsibilities

- Never rehearse or perform without a signed Equity contract.
- Pay your dues on time, each May and November.
- Keep your contact information up to date.
- Give your best possible performance.
- Read your contract and file a copy with Equity no later than first rehearsal.
- Make no unauthorized changes in performance, costume, make-up or hairstyle.
- Be on time for rehearsals and the scheduled half-hour.
- Notify the stage manager before half-hour if you are ill or unable to reach the theatre in time.
- Stay informed about your union: read your email, *Equity News* and posts in the Member Portal.
- Equity is member-driven. GET INVOLVED!

#EQUITYWORKS FOR YOU

Dispute Resolution Equity protects you through grievance procedures and binding arbitration. Let Equity help!

Political Advocacy Equity's public affairs agenda includes fighting for arts funding, pushing for universal affordable health insurance, advancing smarter gun laws and supporting candidates who support labor.

#ChangeTheStage Equity has always been at the forefront of struggles against discrimination, leading the way for decades in the fight for inclusive casting.

Organizing Equity is committed to creating more work opportunities for our members by bringing more theatres on to contract and scaling up those already hiring Equity members.

Agency Regulation Equity sets terms for agents that protect our members and standardizes conditions such as a commission schedule, termination agreements and more.

From unemployment and workers compensation claims to Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, Equity has always been at the forefront in helping with the challenges of actors and stage managers.

HELP US HELP YOU!

In order to hold employers to the promises they make in our agreements, we need to know from you when they fall short. If you encounter an issue – even if you're not sure if you'd like us to take action – please speak with your Deputy or Business Representative for a private and confidential conversation.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED

Throughout the history of Equity, single strong voices have often made the difference. Equity is a member-driven organization; from committees to Regional Boards, from Council to the President, members run the show! Once you earn your Equity membership, there are many ways you can become involved.

- **Join the Conversation** Find Actors' Equity on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube and share your thoughts. We also sponsor a private, members-only Facebook group called Equity's Stage Door for more in-depth discussions.
- **Attend an Equity Meeting** Membership meetings take place three times a year in office cities and once a year in Liaison Areas.
- **Vote** It is the right and duty of all Equity members (age 12+) to vote in our biennial elections.
- **Join a Committee** There are national and regional committees dealing with issues from chorus affairs to stage managers, young performers, contracts, equal employment opportunity, new media, agency regulations and more. If you live in one of the 28 Liaison Areas, join your Liaison Committee to have a say in union affairs close to home.
- **Run for Office** Equity is governed by its members. Elections are held biennially. Elected Officers, Councillors and Board Members put in many hours of volunteer service to ensure your union works for you.

MEMBERSHIP DUES AND FEES

Equity is completely funded by members' initiation fees and dues. After earning your membership, Equity's initiation fee must be paid in full within a two-year period. Equity dues are paid in two ways: basic dues are paid each May and November; working dues, a percentage of your gross salary income (which does not include contractually-mandated per diem), is automatically deducted from your paycheck by your employer on your behalf.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

As an actor, your name is everything! Because names are so important to an actor, Equity cannot issue you a professional name that is identical (or similar sounding) to that of an already current member. If a conflict exists, you will be advised when you join.

CONTRACTS

Equity negotiates agreements with employers on behalf of its members. Prior to Equity, most actors worked without contract or security of any kind. Today, we administer more than 40 national and regional contracts which cover jobs in three categories: Principal, Chorus and Stage Manager. The Principal contract is used for all principal actors and most stage managers. The Chorus contract is used for those actors who are primarily performing chorus work, i.e. those who appear in a musical as part of a group or ensemble or in a play as part of a singing or dancing group or ensemble.

WHERE TO FIND US

Equity's governing and administrative structure is divided into three regions: Eastern, Central and Western. Equity maintains offices and staff in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and Orlando. Twenty-eight Liaison Areas are home to volunteer Liaison Committees which provide an outlet for local involvement and a communications link to the regional and national offices.

OFFICES

National/Eastern Region
165 West 46th St.
New York, NY 10036
212-869-8530

Central Region
557 West Randolph St.
Chicago, IL 60661
312-641-0393

Western Region
5636 Tujunga Ave.
North Hollywood, CA 91601
323-978-8080

Orlando Satellite
10319 Orangewood Blvd.
Orlando, FL 32821
407-345-8600

LIAISON AREAS

Greater Albany	Milwaukee/
Atlanta	Madison
Austin/San	Minneapolis/
Antonio	St. Paul
Boston	Nashville
Buffalo/	New Orleans
Rochester	Philadelphia
Cincinnati/	Phoenix/
Louisville	Tucson
Cleveland	Pittsburgh
Dallas/	Portland
Fort Worth	St. Louis
Denver	San Diego
Detroit	San Francisco
Central Florida	Bay Area
South Florida	Seattle
Houston/	Greater
Galveston	Washington,
Kansas City	D.C./Baltimore
Las Vegas	