

# ACTRA TORONTO



WE RISE IN  
SOLIDARITY

ACTRA Toronto  
Operating Plan  
2024 - 2025



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# We Rise in Solidarity - ACTRA Toronto Operating Plan 2024-25

## Organized. Engaged. Educated. Empowered.

Building on the momentum of our previous year's work, ACTRA Toronto's 2024 Operating Plan lays out a strategic roadmap designed to fortify our commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), enhance our bargaining power, deepen member engagement, expand our organizing efforts, streamline communications, and decisively end the lockout. The Operating Plan must also be viewed through an Artificial Intelligence (AI) lens as well. All aspects of education and protection for performers must consider AI and the future benefits and consequences it may have on the industry. This document outlines our focused initiatives under six critical themes, reflecting our dedication to advancing the interests of our members and strengthening our collective voice in the industry.

### 1. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Accessibility

ACTRA Toronto will continue to utilize training and education, strategic communications, data and analytics, events and opportunities, advancements in policy, and partnerships with key industry allies to further our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Accessibility (DEIBA) agenda. ACTRA Toronto in 2024 will:

- Implement initiatives to increase representation for underrepresented groups.
- Begin the creation of Accessibility/Anti ableism training for Members.
- Conduct accessibility audits for all union events and resources.
- Advocate for accommodations on sets.
- Seek protection in the casting process for artists from historically marginalized communities.
- Advocate for inclusive casting and stunt coordination practices.
- Work on the creation of fair and inclusive casting best practices guidelines.
- Look to the formation of a Casting Standards Committee.
- Provide resources to members for addressing discriminatory practices in the workplace.
- Integrate DEIBA principles into all communications.
- Highlight achievements of members from historically marginalized communities.
- Continue Diversity Showcases of members from diverse communities and build on the success of our Black Performer and Asian Performer Showcases.
- Organize events to promote Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) talent.
- Work with the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Committee & sub-committees to create Voice/Stunt Initiatives for equity-seeking members.
- Seek to develop workshops for members on DEIBA principles.
- Ensure negotiated AI language recognizes the systemic ethnocultural biases inherent in the use of AI and the

ongoing damage done to historically marginalized communities. outreach, training, and mentoring of performers and crew.

## 2. Bargaining

Unions are only as strong as the collective agreements they negotiate. In view of the profound effects of the WGA and SAG AFTRA strikes on the industry across the globe, we know that we must find success in our own 2024 IPA negotiations.

In 2024, ACTRA Toronto will:

- Ensure successful Renegotiations of IPA.
- Work towards a renewal of the National Commercial Agreement (NCA) while finding new paths forward to regain our jurisdiction.
- Seek to establish a negotiation strategy committee.
- Conduct regular updates on negotiation progress.
- Continue to fight for the protection for Performers' rights, health, and safety:
- Continue to enforce robust health and safety protocols.
- Research more inclusive and open bargaining processes:
- Work towards Increased transparency in negotiation processes.
- Bargain robust AI protections into all ACTRA agreements.
- Establish best practices to protect against AI misuse.
- Establish a full committee to monitor and address evolving AI concerns.
- Develop guidelines and protocols to ensure the ethical treatment of child performers in AI driven projects.
- Ensure negotiated IPA working groups meet regularly to examine casting standards and practices.
- Seek to negotiate more strict control over streamers:
  - Advocate for fair residual compensation models with streaming services.
- Learn from the SAG-AFTRA negotiations and apply best practices to all ACTRA negotiations.

### 3. Member Engagement, Education, and Empowerment

We must continue to remain connected to ACTRA Toronto members and find new ways to communicate with them, so they not only hear from their union, but feel heard and seen. The 'Triple E' (engagement, education and empowerment) method will ensure members see themselves in the union and it is not a monolith that stands apart from them. The members are the union.

In 2024, ACTRA Toronto will:

- Ensure ongoing member Engagement, Education and Empowerment at all levels of union work.
- Implement workshops through Committees on industry changes, member rights and union benefits.
- Analyze the structure of Member Education courses and interactions.
- Seek to design a new tiered ongoing education program.
- Conduct regular workshops to empower members in understanding and negotiating their contracts.
- Hold staff and Council workshops with labour educators.
- Increase the frequency of town hall meetings to engage with members.
- Organize workshops to enhance knowledge of staff and council.
- Establish regular, virtual or in-person, Council "office hours" where members can meet with elected Councillors virtually or in person.
- Foster solidarity among members through targeted communication and events.
- Engage members in regular lobbying efforts to advance the interests of ACTRA Toronto members.
- Plan to hold a new Census of ACTRA Toronto members to update necessary datasets and better understand who ACTRA members are.

### 4. Organizing

Internal and external organizing is a key pillar on which ACTRA Toronto will build future success. Not only must we ensure our own house is in order, but we also cannot wait for work opportunities to come to us. Instead, we must actively seek these new opportunities. We must also broaden our member base and welcome new members in easier and new ways.

In 2024, ACTRA Toronto will:

- Hire an organizer.
- Develop strategic campaigns to increase ACTRA's influence in the industry.
- Ramp up our outreach to "pre-members" beyond the current school-based model.
- Develop targeted campaigns to help new members join ACTRA.

- Provide informational sessions and resources for those considering joining ACTRA.
- Develop tailored outreach programs aimed at engaging a younger generation of performers and fostering their involvement in the union.
- Work with ACTRA National to streamline the membership application process.
- Facilitate regular meetings between ACTRA members and members of other unions to collaborate on common goals and share experiences to strengthen the broader industry.

## 5. Communications

To keep pace with our rapidly changing industry, we must ensure ACTRA members remain current, knowledgeable, and connected. We must endeavour to ensure clarity and openness in our communications and find new, more effective ways to converse with each other.

In 2024, ACTRA Toronto will:

- Look towards a fulsome, user-friendly revamp of our website.
- Look for ways to ensure our website content is available in multiple languages through the implementation of automatic translation tools.
- Focus on communications language to ensure it is exciting, accessible, clear, and Inclusive.
- Regularly review communication strategies to ensure we are following all Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements.
- Use more plain speech in our communications.
- Provide more fulsome updates whenever possible.
- Implement a strategy prioritizing clarity and simplicity through a “member first” lens.
- Utilize various communication channels to engage members in meaningful conversations.
- Develop surveys tailored to the diverse needs and preferences of ACTRA members.
- Use survey data to inform decision making and improve union services.
- Redevelop existing concise informational materials covering key aspects of ACTRA.
- Provide easily accessible resources to help members navigate union processes.

## 6. Ending the Lockout

We will work to negotiate an end to the unlawful lock-out of commercial performers. This year will also be a year of ongoing future-proofing our jurisdiction. Keeping ACTRA Toronto members informed about negotiation progress and related developments is crucial to this Council. Regular updates and forums to discuss the situation will help maintain unity and collective resolve among the members.

In 2024, ACTRA Toronto will:

- Seek to negotiate to end the lockout with fair terms:
  - Establish a task force to develop additional strategies to negotiate the end of the lockout.
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan to keep members informed and engaged during the lockout period.
- Continue to work with support agencies and funders to provide ongoing support mechanisms for members financially or professionally affected by the lockout.

## A Message from Council

These are challenging times for performers. For two years, we have been fighting an unlawful lockout by rogue agencies who have broken their word, abandoned the bargaining process, attacked our commercial jurisdiction and tried to break our union. The agencies want a “pay what you can” deal from the performers whose pay represents less than 2% of an average commercial budget, at a time when our “pay what you must” deals like rent and groceries keep going up. Nowhere has the impact of this lockout been felt more deeply than in Ontario.

Performers are precarious workers in a precarious industry rocked by the non-stop disruption caused by ever more rapidly evolving technology. Streaming video and the pandemic created an explosion of scripted content and work opportunities but also a widespread sense that performers and other creatives were being cut out of the downstream revenue. While audiences were locked-down, performers continued to battle their way to set and endure demanding protocols so that the show might go on and the industry might survive. The work got riskier and harder but our pay didn’t get better. Our work has never been more in demand but it feel like it is harder than ever to make a living in this business. No wonder so many performers feel like the gold rush passed them by, now that streamers are greenlighting fewer productions as their focus shifts from subscriber growth to profit margins.

Declining production is worrisome, but performers and other creators are not just worried that less content will be made. We are worried that less of the content that does get made will be made by humans. In the space of a few years, competition between humans and AI has gone from being the theme of sci-fi movies to being the core issue in two major strikes by creative labour that brought production to a standstill last year. No wonder. In an age of Deep Fakes, cyber-scanning, and ChatGPT, performers and other creatives are rising up to demand control of and protections for their images and voices.

These are big challenges that we face. Too big for us to face alone. Like other creative workers around the world, we are waking up to the truth that our power and our hope in times like these is in each other. Alone, we struggle. In solidarity, we make change.

In Solidarity, We Rise Up.