ACTRA

2024-2027

Strategic Plan



ACTRA National

Strategic Plan

2024-2027

Table of Contents

WHO WE ARE **2**

KEY OBJECTIVES **3**

1. IMPROVE WAGES, WORKING CONDITIONS AND WORK OPPORTUNITES FOR PERFORMERS IN CANADA **4**

2. BUILD AN INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE UNION AND SCREEN INDUSTRY **6**

3. COLLECTIVELY ENGAGE MEMBERS TO BUILD POLITICAL POWER **8**

4. ENHANCE MEMBER SERVICES & BUILD FOR THE FUTURE **10**

WHO WE ARE

ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists) is over 30,000 performing artists strong, coming together to build the strongest cultural union in Canada.

We work closely with sibling unions from across Canada and around the world to strive for better protection, pay and working conditions for all. We stand together against the forces that seek to weaken our movement and look for ways to improve the social fabric and economic well-being and stability of all Canadians.

As leaders in our industry, we advocate for better policies and regulations to encourage and increase production in the recorded media sector. We continue to strive for greater equality and diversity in our union, our industry and on our screens.

Our strength comes from our members. We build our capacity and plan for the future by investing in the development of our next generation of leaders. We must continue to forge new and stronger alliances within the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), the International Federation of Actors (FIA) and with our sibling/unions/guilds and associations in the industry, both nationally and internationally. Their fight must be our fight, and our fight must be theirs. ACTRA must also be involved in issues of greater societal concern to all working Canadians such as the environment, tenants' rights and basic living wages, which is for the betterment of us all.

In 2024, we are emerging from a challenging time in our union: the ongoing National Commercial Agreement (NCA) lockout by the Institute of Canadian Agencies (ICA) since April 26, 2022, the financial implications of the Writer's Guild of America (WGA) and Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) strikes in the U.S., and political and economic unrest that has greatly impacted our industry and the world overall. ACTRA's short-term goals will focus on fighting for our jurisdiction, engaging and mobilizing the membership, and solidifying our overall goals through collective bargaining and proactive lobbying. Our long-term goals are to grow the union's strength and create long-term sustainable work opportunities for all members across Canada. Additionally, we will continue to optimize the ACTRA Membership System (AMS) and implement reliable, secure and cost-effective solutions throughout the union. We must be nimble and ready to adapt, react and fight for all challenges ahead.

We have identified clear goals and outlined our priorities to achieve them. While the core day- to-day work of serving our members and stewarding collective agreements continues over the next three years, our direction is operationalized through four key objectives.

KEY OBJECTIVES

1. **Improve wages, working conditions and work opportunities for performers in Canada**

   ACTRA performers are known for professionalism and dedication to their craft. As gig workers, making a living in the entertainment industry has always been challenging, particularly in recent years as we emerge from the pandemic and WGA and SAG-AFTRA strikes, in addition to the lockout by the ICA and economic inflationary pressures. This is why future-proofing and aligning our collective agreements with changing technologies, strategic proactive lobbying, and defending our jurisdiction, and improving working conditions and work opportunities for performers is more important than ever.

2. **Build an inclusive and equitable union and screen industry**

   In a world that rallied for and promised change in 2020, It is vital ACTRA lives up to and upholds our commitment to promote a more inclusive and equitable union and screen industry. Despite the significant progress that has been made over the past several years, there is still significant work to be done. We must work towards having members from all communities who have been historically underrepresented and marginalized elevated to a place where they are treated with the same dignity, respect, and renumeration as their historically privileged peers.

3. **Engage and mobilize members to build political power**

   ACTRA is strongest when our members are engaged and our union is fighting for issues most important to the membership. Attracting new members to ACTRA and growing our union density increases our ability to protect our jurisdiction and mobilize the membership to build power. Engaged and empowered ACTRA members are critical to developing collective political, social, and economic power that can be leveraged both in bargaining and in the halls of government. Engaging and mobilizing members and building union power is key to future-proofing our status as one of the oldest and strongest cultural unions in Canada.

4. **Enhance Member Services & Build for the Future**

   Transitioning our union into a more digital organization by modernizing our systems, improving members services, and further developing the ACTRA advantage is key to serving our members more proactively, fully and equally. Never before have we experienced such wholesale changes in the technological world in which we work and live. Advancing our members' interests relies heavily on our ability to adapt our services to these new realities.

1. IMPROVE WAGES, WORKING CONDITIONS AND WORK OPPORTUNITES FOR PERFORMERS IN CANADA

Rapidly changing technologies drive change in the entertainment industry, offering consumers an abundance of content on a multitude of platforms in an increasingly competitive market.

The global commercial sector continues in its desire to hoard wealth at the expense of those who work within the industry. A change in how consumers engage with commercials and the decline in commercials under streaming modalities has made the situation more challenging. The attack in Canada, one of the last remaining unionized commercial sectors, remains ongoing since the April 26, 2022 lockout of ACTRA performers. However, we expect the industry to find ways to monetize new models for delivering commercial advertisements, making it paramount to keep up our fight to preserve our terms and conditions of our NCA and to grow ACTRA membership.

Streaming media giants are experiencing further market expansion as popularity of this format continues to grow. It is a priority to ensure that our collective agreements reflect the new business realities while protecting the tenets of Canadian content.

We can no longer bargain in isolation, we must work together with other unions in our industry to share strategies, and leverage each other's successes to create patterns in bargaining that help us all.

One of the most important services ACTRA provides to membership is bargaining. We must be well prepared, sufficiently resourced and have our members engaged to effectively deliver bargaining results. Upon ratification of each agreement, the process of continuous bargaining begins by ensuing the gains made through negotiations are properly enforced.

Finally, with new technologies come new industries (e.g. Artificial Intelligence (AI), Podcasts), which are becoming more important within the media and entertainment industry.

ACTRA will defend and improve wages, working conditions and work opportunities for Canadian performers by:

- Moving non-union commercial sector work to ACTRA contracts while protecting wages and working standards. While other creative sector unions have ceded jurisdiction in the commercial sector, ACTRA has continued to protect members and will build on efforts to organize and grow by:
  - Negotiating and implementing the National Commercial Agreement;
  - Working with staff at the Branch level to create and execute a strategy to counter non-union work;
  - Using data to build our understanding of trends and realities in the industry;

- Promoting digital tools, including the online estimator; and
- Coordinating to maximize members' bargaining power. While innovative digital platforms are creating new work, we know the industry is in transition and over the long-term, our unity as performers will be a vital ingredient when addressing whatever changes may unfold in the coming years.

ACTRA will futureproof the union by:

- Advocating for the regulation of emerging technologies, including AI to ensure explicit consent, control, and fair compensation;
- Seeking opportunities to ensure our models of remuneration protect and enhance the economic security of membership and grow our work;
- Engaging in public campaigns and lobbying efforts for the rights of gig workers; and
- Challenging laws and bargaining systems that relegate ACTRA members to an uncertain place in the legislative framework.

ACTRA will leverage our strength to fight for fair compensation and protections by:

- Educating and mobilizing members on emerging issues and threats to build power for collective bargaining and more effective contract administration;
- Defending and improving wages, working conditions and work opportunities;
- Using data to build an understanding of trends and realities in the industry;
- Utilizing pressure tactics such as taking collective action, lobbying at all political levels and taking legal actions;
- Facilitating strategic bargaining sessions with industry unions; and
- Mobilizing allies in the labour movement and community.

ACTRA will build our collective power by:

- Renegotiating its collective agreements (e.g.) film and TV, commercial, broadcast, videogame), with the goal of improving wages, protections and standards across the country;
- Exploring and developing opportunities to organize new members and expand jurisdiction.
- Leading the charge for continuous bargaining by working with the Branches to support the strategic enforcement of collective agreements; and
- Utilizing the most effective and appropriate method(s) of communicating with members throughout the bargaining process, thereby empowering the membership and applying strategic pressure on our bargaining opponents.

ACTRA will push for dignity and respect by:

- Creating safe work environments for performers involved in scenes depicting intimacy and nudity;
- Prioritizing hair and makeup equity in collective bargaining to service all ACTRA members; and
- Implementing industry-wide standards to address issues of on-set accessibility and inclusivity.

2. BUILD AN INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE UNION AND SCREEN INDUSTRY

The fight for equality within the screen industry remains a challenge not just here in Canada but around the world. In fact, it remains a systemic problem that extends beyond both industry and international borders.

ACTRA has led the way in the fight for a stronger, equitable and fairer screen industry and country, both within our union and through our work with our national and international industry partners.

We recognize systemic discrimination in our industry – and society as a whole – is real and will not be resolved without taking proactive steps to address issues within our own union and our industry.

ACTRA seeks true representation – not just window dressing. We are committed to developing strategies in consultation with other unions and guilds and using data to address the barriers and gaps in industry representation.

For decades, ACTRA has fought to win and protect the rights of its equity deserving members through negotiating systemic change in our collective agreements and supporting member-driven equity committees and initiatives. ACTRA's ongoing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEIB) efforts seek to create systemic, long-lasting change, and ensure that Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, additional sexual orientations and gender identities (2SLGBTQIA+), women and people living with disabilities are authentically represented on screen, compensated fairly, treated with dignity and respect, and provided with fair and equitable work opportunities.

In 2024 and beyond, ACTRA will continue to pro-actively lead the way forward on DEIB initiatives, taking a firm stance on equity issues, pushing the boundaries to solve systemic problems, and continue fighting for a stronger, equitable and fairer screen industry.

ACTRA will make our union stronger by:

- Expanding the diversity of our membership through reviewing Membership Criteria to remove barriers and welcoming new members from historically underrepresented groups; and
- Understanding the composition of our membership, wage gaps and conducting regular surveys on important items such as demographics and member experiences.

ACTRA will confront and seek to eliminate systemic discrimination in all its forms by:

- Engaging with funding bodies such as the National Film Board (NFB), Telefilm Canada and the Canada Media Fund (CMF) to develop comprehensive plans to address systemic inequities and ensure traditionally marginalized groups see their stories told on screen.

- Applying DEIB and intersectionality lenses to all ACTRA initiatives to address diverse needs and remove systemic barriers:
  - Include DEIB and intersectional analysis in communications and digital efforts;
  - Continue to identify and remove barriers;
  - Continuing to support the work of our National Women's Committee and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee, and Progress Pride Committee, whose mandates are to examine issues of inequality that may be impacting ACTRA members across the country, and to help address these issues by sharing relevant information between Branches and fostering an internal discussion regarding community-specific issues; and
  - Advocating for systemic change in provincial and federal legislation, in areas which specifically impact equity deserving groups.

ACTRA will build effective coalitions with like-minded organizations on areas of shared interest including:

- Taking leadership roles in national and international bodies, such as FIA, the CLC and the Societies' Council for the Collective Management of Performers' Rights (SCAPR), to address issues of global concern, including copyright, residual collection and global trade;
- Maintaining alliances with partners such as, SAG-AFTRA, United Steelworkers (USW), Canadian Actor's Equity Association (CAEA) and Union des Artists (UDA); and
- Promoting work opportunities and networking opportunities through partnerships with community organizations with national reach, such as Reelworld, BIPOC TV & Film, Black Screen Office (BSO), the Canadian Creative Industries Coalition, Indigenous Screen Office (ISO) and Disability Screen Office (DSO).

3. COLLECTIVELY ENGAGE MEMBERS TO BUILD POLITICAL POWER

Encouraging members to take action to build our union's political power is vital for the many challenges ahead. As the industry landscape evolves, and new technologies are created, our livelihoods depend on the government to legislate protections, and to create a fair and sustainable playing field more than ever.

ACTRA must also continue to be part of the social fabric in our communities, fighting for others, as well as ourselves. We must lend our voice and leverage our position to amplify issues such as the environment, tenants' rights and a basic minimum living wage. These are the issues that affect us all, now and well into the future.

The Government of Canada has encountered fierce opposition in its attempts to modernize our broadcasting regulatory framework to include online entities. Streamers are regrettably transforming the Canadian content production sector into mere service work producers for non-Canadian companies. Copyright reform also looms, with ACTRA lobbying for audiovisual performers to be granted moral and exclusive rights, as well as improved remuneration when their performances are exploited in a streaming context.

Meanwhile, the challenges for performers in precarious and uncertain work remain the same. ACTRA needs public policy that supports performers and the work we do, creates work opportunities, and ensures ongoing and sustainable levels of production across the country

Members must be empowered to participate and engage in our collective fights. This is more crucial than ever given the recent labour disputes in our industry, rising inflation, the threat of economic harm from AI, changing business models and rising corporate greed.

ACTRA will improve the welfare of artists and protect our culture by:

- Mobilizing membership and industry partners and building relationships with elected representatives to effectively lobby government for laws, regulations and support that enhance the lives of performers and grow our work in the screen industry;
- Supporting Branches across the country in lobbying and political action training as needed.
- Building strong alliances with other unions across Canada, such as UDA, Director's Guild of Canada (DGC), National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET 700-M), Writer's Guild of Canada (WGC), and International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), and FIA affiliates around the globe;
- Continuing to participate in legislative consultations with a primacy on seeking legislative protections for performers from harmful uses of AI, and the institution of moral rights for audio visual performers under the Copyright Act;

- Advocating for the promotion and discoverability of Canadian content and performers in Canada;
- Ensuring all legislative, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and trade agreements include strong supports/protections for investment in Canadian content production and the use of performers in Canada;
- Demanding government-funded bodies adopt and deliver on specific strategies to improve representation from historically underrepresented groups, and regional representation in the projects they finance;
- Lobbying for adequate funding to support the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Telefilm Canada, CMF, and NFB, and Certified Independent Production Funds (CIPFs) such as the BSO, ISO and Canadian Independent Screen Fund (CISF); and
- Regularly seeking opportunities to appear before parliamentary committees, regulatory bodies and tribunals to testify in support of public policies that benefit ACTRA performers , our industry and Canadian culture.

ACTRA will optimize member communications and increase engagement and mobilization through a robust communications plan that:

- Capitalizes on the momentum to increase followers and impressions with consistent and engaging content, by leveraging various social media platforms through best practices;
- Continues to monitor analytics and adapt the union's content strategy based on which content earns the most member and public engagement; and
- Ensures compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), including exploring designs to modernize ACTRA's logo to meet AODA standards and best practices.

ACTRA will educate members and the public to raise awareness on legislative issues that impact the ACTRA membership by:

- Increasing member and public awareness of the cultural and economic importance of the screen industry;
- Reflecting the diversity of Canada on all our screens; and
- Providing training and education for the National Council regarding the labour movement, industry news and developments, and considering succession planning, mentorship, and leadership development as the years progress.

4. ENHANCE MEMBER SERVICES & BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

As a 30,000 member strong union representing ACTRA members across a vast geographic area, the practice of bringing people together, engaging them in the business of the union, and providing the support and services they need can be a challenge. Yet the services ACTRA provides both to our members and to production represent a huge advantage. As we improve member services, we also develop "the ACTRA advantage," which brings production and work opportunities for members.

Digitization has created an expectation that everything can be available immediately simply with the touch of a button. And if it is not, people waste no time in seeking alternatives. It is important to note that moving to a digital existence on set and within our data requires not only significant resources from ACTRA but most often the agreement and funding of our engagers.

At this time of change some members want to move forward quickly into the digital age while others still prefer to use paper forms and want a physical copy of our collective agreements.

Ultimately, transitioning to new service-delivery models takes time and effort for all those involved. As we increasingly move our union online, we must be concerned with the custody and security of membership data and must take precautions against cybersecurity threats.

ACTRA will plan for the future through:

- Ongoing review of ACTRA National's operational structure to ensure the right staff are in the right positions and the organization is well-positioned to build for the future;
- Ongoing review of the services ACTRA National provides to ensure they are aligned with the needs of the membership and the Branches;
- Developing and implementing succession planning policies for Executive leadership;
- Ensuring appropriate facilities for the National office; and
- Automating and streamlining administrative processes and systems to optimize member services with cost-effective results.

ACTRA will continue to move our union online and improving member services by:

- Developing and launching the new membership system.
- Collecting data about ACTRA's membership to gain a better understanding of the needs of the membership and to equip ACTRA with data that will support ACTRA's collective bargaining and public policy initiatives;
- Improving data intake to ensure internal data is accurate and reliable and tracking, analyzing and reporting data through an intersectional lens to serve ACTRA members more proactively, fully and equally;
- Developing more options for members to connect with the union electronically, such as online referenda, electronic dues invoicing, tax receipts and E-forms;
- Exploring opportunities to increase efficiencies and work with engagers, payroll companies, agents and members to streamline and digitize processes;

- Ongoing review and upgrading of ACTRA's systems to improve member services and ensure ACTRA's member data is secure and protected; and
- Aligning and optimizing operations between ACTRA Branches, National, ACTRA Performers' Rights Society (PRS) and AFBS to offer the best integrated services.

ACTRA

ACTRA National
625 Church Street, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2G1
1-800-387-3516 or 416- 489-1311
actra@actra.ca
www.actra.ca