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# ACTRA Apprentice Membership

**ACTRA is the union representing professional performers in English-language recorded media in Canada.** Our members work in films, television programs, radio and television commercials and digital media. Signatory producers engage ACTRA members because they want professionals. To join ACTRA you must be a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant. ACTRA members cannot work on non-union productions. Consider the commitments involved before you join ACTRA.

ACTRA negotiates and enforces agreements with producers, studios, TV, radio and cable networks that set out minimum fees and working conditions for performers.

- ACTRA ensures members have a safe work environment
- ACTRA ensures members are paid for both their work and the future use of their image
- ACTRA administers an industry-leading insurance and retirement plan for performers
- ACTRA provides training and professional development opportunities
- ACTRA ensures that performers behave professionally on set

**ACTRA's Apprentice Program** allows performers who are new to ACTRA to work on ACTRA sets and earn credits toward full membership.

## How to qualify

1. Land a qualifying role in a production under ACTRA's jurisdiction. Qualifying credits include:
  - a contracted Principal or Actor role shot under the IPA (Independent Production Agreement). The IPA covers work on film, television series, industrial videos, MOWs and digital media.
  - a contracted Principal or SOC commercial role shot under the Commercial Agreement.
  - a speaking role under one of our broadcast agreements (e.g. CBC, Citytv, CTV, etc.).
  - off-camera voice work in ACTRA's jurisdiction.You must be a full or Apprentice member to do radio commercials in ACTRA's jurisdiction.
2. Once you get the role, buy a work permit from ACTRA Toronto's membership department and advise that you want to register as an Apprentice member. You pay a yearly Apprentice fee of **\$75** and will be asked to attend an orientation session for new Apprentice members.
3. Once you join the Apprentice Program, you need two more qualifying credits for a total of three to become a full member of ACTRA. There is no time limit between joining the Apprentice Program and becoming a full member so long as you maintain your Apprentice membership and pay your annual fees.
4. In addition to the three qualifying credits, all applicants for full membership who are 16 or older must attend and complete the ACTRA Toronto Member Training Intensive course. The course costs \$200 and is available throughout the year. For more information contact Stephanie Stevenson at [sstevenson@actratoronto.com](mailto:ssstevenson@actratoronto.com) or visit [www.actratoronto.com](http://www.actratoronto.com).
5. When you purchase your third work permit you must apply for full membership by completing a full member application form, paying your initiation fee (**\$1600 minus permit fees paid to date for qualifying credits minus the Membership Training Intensive fee if it has already been paid**) and annual dues (**\$195 prorated to the current month**).
6. Attend a full members' meeting. You are now a full ACTRA member. You will receive your membership card in the mail.

## Get credit for education

ACTRA Apprentice members can earn one additional credit through education. If you graduated from an ACTRA-recognized accredited degree, diploma or certificate-granting institution with a concentration in acting performance, you may be eligible to receive one credit. Contact the ACTRA membership department to see if your institution is recognized by ACTRA.

## **Permits, fees and dues**

Apprentice members pay a **\$75** initiation fee plus fees for each of the work permits required. The cost of a work permit depends on the role and the agreement – see our **Work Permit Costs** brochure. Apprentice members do not pay working dues until they become Full ACTRA members. Permit fees are tax deductible, so keep your receipts.

Work permit costs under the IPA are the same for Apprentice members and non-members. If you join the Apprentice program with your first permit under the Commercial Agreement, you can buy work permits at the lower member rate.

The initiation fee for Apprentice members to become full members is **\$1600** MINUS all permit fees paid to date for qualifying credits and MINUS the \$200 Membership Training Intensive Course fee, if it has been paid prior to application plus one year's basic dues of **\$195**. Full ACTRA members pay **2.25%** of their gross earnings, to a maximum of **\$4,000**. Full ACTRA members no longer buy permits. Basic dues are paid each year in April.

## **Apprentice member rights**

Apprentice members can participate in ratification votes on ACTRA agreements they work under, and serve on ACTRA Toronto's various committees. Apprentice members do not have voting rights in elections and can't hold elected positions at ACTRA except the ACTRA Apprentice Caucus. ACTRA Apprentices can attend ACTRA Toronto's free member conferences and take advantage of discounts available to ACTRA members.

ACTRA Apprentice members are protected by ACTRA's collective agreements and benefit from the union's negotiating power with producers that results in better wages and working conditions, improved job opportunities and better protection.

ACTRA Apprentice members are not entitled to health and insurance benefits through the ACTRA Fraternal Benefit Society. Once an Apprentice member becomes a Full ACTRA member, the performer RSP contributions paid to AFBS over the previous two years will be credited to the member's record.

## **Joining the Apprentice program through significant background experience**

If you work primarily as a background performer, you can join ACTRA as an ACTRA Additional Background Performer (see ACTRA Additional Background Performers brochure). If you are an ACTRA Additional Background Performer with well-documented proof (i.e. vouchers or cheque stubs) of 200 on-set engagement days or 1,600 hours over the preceding four-year period on ACTRA sets, you may apply to the Apprentice Program.

## **Reality Check**

Some people think acting is a glamorous business where someone with little experience can make a lot of money with little effort. It's not that easy. Working as an actor is a challenging profession that requires discipline, continuous training and lots of hard work. Performers work hard each and every day. They compete against their fellow performers for roles and know there is no such thing as a guaranteed part. Most have years of experience and have trained at top theatre schools. Their work experience includes everything from plays and television series to commercials and feature films. Considering a career in the performing arts should not be a whim or passing fancy. Bringing a character to life on the screen can give you great joy and personal satisfaction – but it also entails personal sacrifices. You will succeed only if you are serious about being a performer and are dedicated to your profession.

**ACTRA members must keep an up-to-date photo on file with ACTRA Toronto, and keep us up-to-date on changes to your address, agent and other relevant personal information.**

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**ACTRA Toronto** has more than 15,000 members and is the largest organization within ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists). As an advocate for Canadian culture since 1943, ACTRA continues to secure the rights and respect for the work of professional performers.