



Results, Recommendations & Resources

In May 2019, ACTRA Toronto and the Casting Directors Society of Canada conducted a survey of audition facilities in Toronto. The objective of the survey was to review compliance with collective agreements and identify barriers to accessibility. In addition to the on-line survey responses, ACTRA Toronto President Theresa Tova, ACTRA National President David Sparrow and ACTRA Toronto member George Alevizos visited 14 locations.

ACTRA Toronto and the Casting Directors Society of Canada are grateful to the Casting Directors, facility staff, Theresa, David and George for their time and participation in this audit.

The good news is that many facilities have taken steps to address and remove barriers to people living with disabilities as well as ensuring respectful and harassment free audition spaces. Where there is room for improvement, the on-site visits have been helpful in sharing recommendations.

This report includes the survey responses, some recommendations as well as resources and relevant collective agreement provisions for reference.



Survey Questions

The survey included questions in the following 5 areas:

1. Discrimination, Harassment and Violence Prevention
2. Availability of on-site or accessible parking and public transit
3. Entrance to the audition facility and identification of possible barriers
4. Availability and access to change rooms and washroom facilities
5. Availability of supports to performers living with hearing or visual impairments

Survey Responses

The survey was sent to 35 casting directors or audition facilities. A total of 23 participated in the survey through the on-site visits or by completing the on-line questionnaire.

Discrimination, Harassment and Violence Prevention

Only 6 out of the 23 respondents included answers to the questions regarding discrimination, harassment and violence prevention. Of those who did respond, 5 have a policy to prevent harassment and violence; 4 have procedures in place for reporting any incidents of harassment; and 2 post the policy or the Canadian Creative Industries Code of Conduct.

Availability of on-site or accessible parking and public transit

Out of the 20 responses on questions regarding parking and transit, all 20 are close to public transit options that are wheelchair accessible and 6 have accessible parking. In terms of accessible and safe drop-off, pick-up and waiting areas, while 19 have indoor and temperature-controlled areas for performers to wait for transportation, only 9 have space designated near the building entrance for vehicles e.g. Wheel-Trans to safely drop-off or pick-up people.

Entrance to the audition facility and identification of possible barriers

While the majority of respondents reported main entrances to buildings that are ground level and barrier free (11 out of 19 responses), 6 of the locations have steps and 2 report having ramps. All but 2 facilities report having clear signage to their offices. Only 2 report signage in alternate formats. All but one indicated that their entrance and hallways are well lit. Only 8 report having an Automatic Door Opener (ADO); 3 responded that the ADO would not be within the reach of a person in a wheelchair.

17 out of 18 respondents note their entrance way is wide enough for a scooter or wheelchair. 14 out of 19 indicate that an elevator is required to get from the building entrance to the casting facility. In 3 cases, the elevator would not be large enough to accommodate a scooter or wheelchair. Where a freight elevator exists, again 3 respondents note that it is not large enough for a scooter or wheelchair. And, 2 out of 18 respondents report that their waiting area once in the casting facility is not wheelchair accessible.

Availability and access to change rooms and washroom facilities

In all cases, respondents note seating is available for performers once inside the audition facility. 15 out of 18 responded that there is water available in the waiting area. Of 18 respondents, 16 note that performers have access to washrooms. Only 3 report access to single use wheelchair accessible washrooms with an automatic door opener. 7 respondents note that their washrooms contain an accessible mirror and hand basin.

In terms of change facilities, 16 of 23 responded. Only 2 facilities have change rooms that are separate from their washrooms. None of the respondents have “all gender” change facilities. Only 3 report change facilities that are well lit and have mirrors; 2 have places to hang clothes; and 2 are private and have doors that can be locked from the inside.

The doorway from the waiting area into the audition room, in all but 2 cases, is wide enough to accommodate a scooter or wheelchair. 16 out of 18 respondents note that their audition rooms are sound-proof.

Availability of supports to performers living with hearing or visual impairments

Out of the 23 surveys, 5 included responses to the questions regarding the provision of sign language and supports in alternate formats. 4 out of the 5 will provide and cover the costs of sign language interpreters or scribes in alternate formats.

Recommendations & Resources

The good news, as noted above, is that a number of casting directors reported they had recently relocated or made changes to their facilities to remove barriers to performers who have mobility issues or those living with disabilities. The on-site visits and conversations with Theresa, David and George were helpful in pointing out potential barriers and discussing solutions.

As the results indicate, there are unfortunately, a couple of audition facilities that are inaccessible to performers with mobility issues or requiring wheelchairs or scooters. And, there are a couple of facilities that do not provide washroom or change facilities. ACTRA Toronto and the Casting Directors Society of Canada will be following up with these particular facilities to discuss much needed improvements.

In addition to meeting with the couple of facilities that were identified as totally inaccessible and those without on-site washroom facilities, we offer the following recommendations:

- 1.** Post the Code of Conduct: ACTRA Toronto and the Casting Directors Society of Canada are both signatory to the [Canadian Creative Industries Code of Conduct](#). Posting the Code is a sign of commitment to a respectful work environment. A copy of the Code can be easily printed and posted in a place that is visible to performers.

2. Develop a policy and procedures for reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment and violence. Sample policies are available and can be easily customized.
3. HAVEN Helpline: ACTRA and the DGC have launched [HAVEN: the Harassment and Violence Emergency Network](#). Wallet-size cards are available for distribution through casting facilities and production sets.
4. If a casting facility is not wheelchair accessible or accessible for people with mobility issues, identify alternative locations that are accessible for in-person auditions. If a self-tape is required, assist in booking an accessible self-tape facility.
5. Test Automatic Door Openers regularly and notify building owners or maintenance if the ADOs are not in working order.
6. Note with building owners and maintenance providers when entrance ways and hallways need to be cleared, lighting fixed, etc.
7. Where there are stairs or raised thresholds that are a barrier to people living with disabilities, look at portable and easily installed ramps.
8. Let performers and agents know what washroom and change facilities are available and accessible.
9. Make sure there is an accessible mirror and hand basin in the washrooms.
10. Let performers and agents know that interpreters and alternate formats are available on request.

ACTRA's collective agreements include provisions that require Producers and Engagers to ensure proper facilities are used when auditioning Performers. This includes adequate lighting, sound-proofing and access to clean washrooms.

[INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION AGREEMENT \(IPA\)](#) - online at [ACTRA.CA](#)

[NATIONAL COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT \(NCA\)](#) - online at [ACTRA.CA](#)

Agents and Performers are advised to notify ACTRA if proper audition facilities are not available. ACTRA Toronto will then follow-up with the Producer or Engager, filing grievances if necessary.

In addition, ACTRA Toronto is a signatory to the [Dear Everybody Agreement](#) that calls on the industry to ensure that 13.7% of performers in videos, photoshoots, recordings and posts are people living with disabilities. If audition facilities are not accessible, we have advised Agents and Performers to contact ACTRA. We will follow-up with Producers and Engagers about making arrangements to accommodate Performers living with disabilities, filing grievances, if necessary.