

# ACTRA TORONTO

 **LOOKING  
FORWARD** | ACTRA Toronto  
Operating Plan  
2022 - 2023



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## Looking Forward - ACTRA Toronto Operating Plan 2022-23

*“Love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair.*

*So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we’ll change the world.”*

Jack Layton

And so begins a new year living with a new normal, and there is nothing normal about it. The industry continues to adjust to and manage the impact of COVID-19, we continue to see positive moments around which we can rally: a newly ratified IPA which brings improvements to health and safety and monetary gains; ongoing engagement of members through virtual town halls and digital workshops; and increased growth in the industry overall. We also see good strides forward as the industry comes together in making commitments to address anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination.

2022 will be a year of looking forward, while we continue to learn from our past. We will look forward to completing negotiations of the National Commercial Agreement, while we celebrate the hard fought gains made in the Independent Production Agreement. We will continue to take advantage of the lessons learned in the pandemic and the industry wide commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as we ensure safer sets for all Performers. We will look forward to ensuring continued growth of the industry through the efforts of the ACTRA Toronto Council and Committees in developing our outreach into underrepresented communities. We will take the care and time to work on modernizing the Broadcasting Act, while helping shape the legislation and regulatory framework to support and promote the development of Canadian content and Canadian creators. And, we will look forward with a newly elected ACTRA Toronto Council, who bring new passions, new voices and new ideas to the table.

2021 saw record film and television production volumes in Ontario, an increase in membership for ACTRA Toronto and a modest budget surplus at the end of February 2021.

We can be extremely proud and appreciative of the work we did to support each other through some very tough times. Unfortunately, we are not out of the proverbial woods yet and must continue our vigilance to manage the spread of COVID-19 by listening to health care professionals and heeding the advice to get vaccinated if medically able, to wear a mask, and maintain physical distancing.

With our continued awareness and commitment to keep each other safe, we will get through this and will continue to look forward, together. Determination, creativity and dedication to storytelling under such extraordinary conditions are just some of the reasons that Ontario is a premier filming destination. No matter what 2022 brings, we have no doubt that ACTRA Toronto will continue to rise to meet the challenges ahead with leadership, compassion, courage, solidarity and forward thinking. We look forward to gathering together again and replacing the words “on-line” in this document with “in-person”.

## Looking Forward – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

ACTRA Toronto has been a leader in the industry in promoting initiatives and programs to identify and encourage greater diversity in front of and behind our cameras and microphones. Building on the work that began in earnest in July 2020 when the ACTRA Toronto Council approved the hiring of an Industry Relations: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion staff person, ACTRA Toronto will continue to utilize training & education, strategic communications, data and analytics, events & opportunities, advancements in policy, and partnerships with key industry allies to further our Anti- Black Racism, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging agenda.

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### ACTRA Toronto in 2022 will:

- Continue the promotion of ACTRA Toronto's diverse members through diversity.ACTRAonline, the ACTRA Toronto Spotlight feature on social media, and showcases that spotlight specific groups of underrepresented performers in the industry.
- Continue our ongoing support of Voice Committee mentorship of members who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour, performers living with a disability, performers with accents, seasoned performers and performers who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ and are interested in voice work on commercials, animation, and video game productions.
- Facilitate a collaboration between the Diversity & Inclusion Committee and the Stunt Committees to identify and mentor stunt performers who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour.
- Continue to support and build on the work of Working the Scene in Colour, including additional outreach to industry partners.
- Celebrate the Sandi Ross Awards to recognize industry professionals and production companies who have demonstrated a commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Continue to hold workshops to support performers who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour and performers living with disabilities, interested in producing their own work.
- Work together with ACTRA National and industry partners on collective efforts to address anti-Black racism including outreach, training, and mentoring of performers and crew.
- Offer ongoing support to ACTRA National in seeking equal access to skilled Hair and Make-Up artists for performers who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour.
- Work together with ACTRA National and industry partners on collective efforts to address discriminatory practices in wardrobe and make-up for performers living with disabilities.
- Further strengthen and develop anti-racism & discrimination education courses for members.
- Work with ACTRA National and partner unions and guilds to develop a method for an inter-union/guild reporting system for harassment and discrimination.
- Continue to develop and grow partnerships with community and cultural film festivals and emphasize the importance of showcasing projects featuring ACTRA Toronto members.

### In addition to work challenging anti-Black racism, the ACTRA Toronto Council and Committees will continue to advance gender equality, diversity, equity and inclusion through:

- Continued work to prevent sexual harassment including working with industry partners to develop best practices and oversight for acting coaches, educators, and teachers through our involvement with the Canadian Creative Industries Coalition and the Association of Acting Coaches & Educators (AACE).
- Calling on agencies and government funders to require productions in receipt of tax credits and public monies to

collect and report demographic information to measure and track the industry's commitment to gender equality and diversity.

- Promotion and celebration of the *Nell Shipman Award*, presented by the Toronto ACTRA Women's Committee (TAWC) that recognizes a female-identifying producer, writer, showrunner, mentor or programmer who has advanced gender equality in the industry.
- Continued support of mentorship programs like the tool kit sessions and film creation lab that are connecting women identifying filmmakers to develop their skills on both sides of the camera.
- Continued promotion of *Working with Queer Performers*, a best practices guide produced by outACTRAto, ACTRA Toronto's Queer Committee.
- Participation in the Pride events including participating in the Pride Parade.
- Continuing to build the profile of ACTRA Toronto's 2SLGBTQIA+ performers in script readings under the banner of *Working the Scene in Rainbow*.
- Continued support of the Act Your Age (AYA) Committee on-line skill building and networking sessions for seasoned performers.
- We will also continue to advocate for a change in the perception of seasoned performers – from invisible and easily dismissed, to capable, employable, and engaged through educational workshops with Casting Directors.
- Renewed support of the Young Emerging Actors Assembly (YEAA) including the redevelopment of *YEAA Shorts* and its partnership with Reelworld.

## Looking Forward – The future of bargaining begins now

2022 will see the completion of the renegotiation of the National Commercial Agreement (NCA) and the ongoing bargaining with Bell Media of the CTV agreement. Preparation for bargaining will include lessons learned during this ongoing pandemic and an assessment of steps we can take through bargaining to further the industry-wide commitment to address systemic discrimination.

We are committed to working with Producers and Engagers to see the industry recover but we will need to ensure that the recovery is not on the backs of performers, the most precarious workers in the industry. We need to be innovative. We need to be creative. We need to stand together. No concessions.

### ACTRA Toronto in 2022 will:

- Work with ACTRA National and Branches to complete the negotiations of the National Commercial Agreement and continue bargaining the CTV agreement.
- Continue to take a leading role in the holistic look at payment models and residuals for work done in film, television, and digital media with ACTRA National and PRS.
- Call on the Ontario government to sign the federal childcare agreement.

- Support ACTRA Toronto members collective agreement education by hosting micro-workshops and Town Halls.
- Support ACTRA Toronto members to better understand their union, the Constitution, By-Laws and policies through ongoing micro-workshops and Town Halls.
- Continue to promote the new *Low Budget Production Guidelines (LBG)* for first time and emerging producers, and the *Web independent Production Guidelines (WiP)* for low budget web-series.
- Continue to work with producers in the live entertainment sector to “pivot” their programming to reach audiences through recorded or streamed on-line media using the *Live Event Digital Guidelines (LED)*.
- Publish a *Best Practices for Audition Standards* guideline including an emphasis on self-tape guidelines.
- Support the publishing of an online *Best Practices for Acting Coaches and Educators* guideline through the new AACE website.
- Promote guidelines: *Working with Queer Performers, Best Practices for Scenes involving Nudity, Intimacy, Simulated Sex and Sexual Violence*.
- Promote the recommendations of the *Audition Facility Accessibility Audit*.

## Looking Forward – Keeping Canada on our screens & the Broadcasting Act

With a federal election on September 20, 2021, Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, ended. From the ashes we look forward to working with Minister Rodriguez once again in his role as minister of Canadian Heritage. Minister Rodriguez has a solid understanding of the issues facing Canada’s screen-based industry in today’s digital age. We appreciate the Government’s commitments to our industry, and we are eager to get to work. ACTRA Toronto is ready to provide Minister Rodriguez with any support he requires so he can implement these commitments as soon as possible. Our priority will be the introduction of new legislation to modernize Canada’s Broadcasting Act to ensure all broadcasters contribute equitably to the creation and promotion of Canadian content regardless of the broadcasting platform.

ACTRA Toronto’s members having lobbied for changes to ensure funding and support of Canadian content, Indigenous and diverse creators, welcomed the recommendations which included levelling of the playing field: treat the on-line broadcasters like Netflix, Amazon, Disney + and Crave like the traditional broadcasters.

ACTRA Toronto in 2022 will:

- Participate in the consultation process on the new Bill to modernize the Broadcasting Act and support its early passage into law. (formerly Bill C10)
- Lobby the CRTC to move forward with changes as provided in the new Bill.
- Continue to educate ACTRA Toronto members on the key items needed when modernizing the Broadcasting Act.
- Join with ACTRA National in building a Canadian Star system to keep our members working and thriving in

Canada and internationally.

- Ensure the ACTRA Toronto voice is heard throughout the province in advance of the Provincial elections.
- Continue to support the work of *FilmOntario*, the industry coalition that ACTRA Toronto helped to establish, in its work to ensure competitive, stable and streamlined tax credits that attract and build production capacity across Ontario.
- Continue to work with *FilmOntario* to explore additional incentives to help increase diversity and work opportunities for Ontario's performers and diverse content creators.
- Ensure the industry encourages sustainable production practices to lower carbon emissions and reduce waste through our work with the *Ontario Green Screen* initiative.
- Promote and celebrate Canadian performers through the *20th Annual ACTRA Awards*, *ACTRA Spotlight*, podcasts, on-line showcases and panels.
- Through enhanced industry relations, expand outreach to communities, schools and acting programs to help raise awareness of the opportunities for members, here in Canada.
- Work with the ACTRA Toronto Stunt Community to identify training and mentoring opportunities and to showcase the depth of talent and experience in the community to Producers nationally and internationally.
- Increase outreach to producers and engagers who have not previously worked with ACTRA members promoting the new *Low Budget Production Guidelines (LBG)*, the *Web independent Production Guidelines (WiP)*, *Live Event Digital Guidelines (LED)* and the *ACTRAon-line Opportunity Pilot Project (AOPP)*.

## Looking Forward – The house that ACTRA built - Looking within

And of course, the best outward gaze is accompanied with a look inside. For many of us 2021 meant extended time away from loved ones, isolation, and sheltering in place. Some of us were faced with home schooling our kids, managing multiple quarantines and producing and starring in self-tapes and online auditions. But ACTRA members have proven to be creative, caring and resilient. Performers Online featured video interviews and articles about members who volunteered their time at food banks, delivered groceries and medications on mopeds and sewed PPEs. Our committees offered self-tape workshops. Recording, editing and sending in auditions from home became the norm. And we got good at it, and we got cast. ACTRA Toronto offered regular Town Halls explaining how best to get back to work, stay safe and celebrate the successes of Section 21's gold standard protocols. Despite Covid, the industry saw a banner year in 2021. And in many ways 2022 is shaping up to be another successful year for the industry. But we must continue to remain connected to our members and find new ways to communicate with them. We must ensure we continue to listen to how the past two years has affected ACTRA Toronto members and understand there have been incredible mental health and monetary challenges.

ACTRA Toronto in 2022 will:

- Better promote and educate ACTRA Toronto members on the services of the *HAVEN Helpline* including access to mental health supports and the *LifeWorks* app.



- Celebrate the work of ACTRA Toronto members through our *#ACTRAspotlight*.
- Continue to hold Town Hall sessions for members.
- Provide for ACTRA Toronto members to opt-in to SMS messaging for important updates.
- Support committees to hold meetings and educational workshops on-line.
- Continue to develop and offer on-line member education and *Respect on Set* sessions.
- Hold on-line sessions for stage parents, guardians, agents and minors about getting started in the business, internet safety and rights and protections under ACTRA's agreements and the law.
- Hold on-line sessions specific to ACTRA Toronto members outside of the GTHA to increase engagement.
- Work with ACTRA National to develop and implement the new membership system.
- Work with ACTRA National to forecast models to ensure a solid financial future.
- Continue work with Producers, Engagers and payroll companies to go paperless: digitizing vouchers and the safe storage of personal information.
- Together with *FirstOntario*, promote *Creative Arts Financial* (a division of *FirstOntario* created with the merger of *CASCU* and *FirstOntario* in October 2020). *Creative Arts Financial* will be able to provide greater financial services to ACTRA members including financial planning.

As we reflect on 2021 and Look Forward to 2022, the sentiments of the 2013 ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence winner Shirley Douglas continue to ring true; we need to ensure we keep Canada and Canadians on our screens, and then celebrate those individuals. As ACTRA Toronto President David Gale says, "You've told me at our Conferences, Awards and online that you feel part of a community. But we can be stronger. Using social media and our expanded Performers Online let's shine lights on more ACTRA Toronto performers of all ages, category, diversity and give queer performers expanded visibility. Using our podcast, ACTRA Spotlight, let's build a star system that creates a dynamic where star performers, by the fact that they have a following, have the power to negotiate." Together let's continue to fight for Canadian Performer recognition, our stories, our industry and for more Canadian content on all screens.