Canadian Actors’ Equity Association (Equity) is the voice of professional artists engaging in live performance in English Canada. We are a national association representing almost 6,000 artists working in theatre, opera and dance from coast-to-coast-to-coast. Equity’s membership includes performers, directors, choreographers, fight directors and stage managers.

**Equity’s Mission**

Equity exists for the professional, artistic and economic advancement of Equity members in the live performance community.

The Association negotiates, administers and enforces agreements and policies governing minimum working terms and conditions which ensure members’ financial security and job protection. Equity also provides its membership with insurance and retirement benefit plans. Member information, resources, support and advocacy round out the Association’s objectives.

**What We Do**

Equity’s scale agreements (negotiated with a producer or group of producers) and its promulgated engagement policies articulate minimum terms and working conditions required for the engagement of an Equity member.

The Association negotiates and administers 22 distinct agreements and policies each with corresponding contracts, forms, and support materials.

Each contract includes provisions for minimum fees, working conditions, health and safety, security and enforcement.

**Advocacy**

The Association supports public policy initiatives that encourage artistic activities and stable and sustainable funding for the live performing arts industry.

Equity’s lobbying efforts focus on two distinct advocacy priorities: stable and sustainable arts council and other government program funding in the not-for-profit live performance sector, and public policy initiatives that encourage and promote artistic activities.

**Not In OUR Space!**

Equity acts as an advocate for its membership regarding protection from harassment, discrimination and abuse in the workplace.

Not In OUR Space! is an innovative national anti-harassment and respectful workplace collaborative campaign. Developed in 2017, the campaign seeks to ensure healthy and productive working conditions for all professionals working in live performance across the country.

**Working For You**

Equity has two offices: a National Office in Toronto with a staff of 22, and the Western Office in Vancouver with a staff of two.

The National Office oversees administration and enforcement of the dance, opera and theatre agreements and policies, as well as membership administration for across Canada. It also coordinates interaction with national and international cultural, labour and funding organizations.

The Western Office oversees administration and enforcement of the theatre agreements for members working/living in Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

**Democracy At Work**

Equity is a democratically structured organization run by artists for artists. It is entirely self-supporting, funded only by members’ initiation fees and dues.

The government of Equity is vested in a national Council of 23 elected members from across Canada. Council sets specific goals to be achieved by the Association. Equity’s staff is responsible for the achievement of these results and outcomes which are monitored through rigorous evaluation of the Association’s accomplishments.

Council committees are elected issue-based advisory committees linking Council to the Equity membership.

**Benefits of Equity Membership**

Equity administers a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) for its membership and an accident and sickness insurance plan.

Members are insured for medical expenses in case of accident 24 / 7 / 365, whether the member is working under contract or not. If a member is injured when they are working under an Equity contract, their coverage also includes medical expense reimbursement and income replacement. Any member engaged for a minimum of eight weeks in the previous calendar year is also eligible for medical expense reimbursement all year round.

Among the array of communication services provided by the Association are a website and an email distribution list identifying audition and job opportunities across the country. Equity publishes EQ magazine and also provides information and resources concerning matters important to members on an array of topics.
Becoming an Equity Member

Essentially there are two ways to become an Equity member, either upon completion of an apprenticeship, or by signing an Equity contract. An individual is eligible to join if offered an Equity contract as a performer, director or choreographer. Stage managers may only join Equity upon completion of an Equity apprenticeship.

Initiation fees: The current member initiation fee is $1,000. Apprenticeship fees paid are credited against the initiation fee when an apprentice becomes a member.

Basic Dues: Basic dues cover year-round expenses for member services. Basic dues of $90 are billed semi-annually in May and November.

Working Dues: Members pay working dues to cover expenses for contract-related services such as negotiations, contract vetting, dispute resolution, and insurance and RRSP administration. Working dues are 2.25% of a member’s contractual weekly.

Reciprocal Agreements: Equity has a reciprocal agreement with Actors’ Equity Association (AEA) that provides Equity members with access to work opportunities in the United States. In Canada, we have reciprocal agreements with Union Des Artistes (UDA) and the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists (ACTRA). These agreements recognize the professional standing of our respective memberships, promise mutual cooperation between organizations, and serve to maintain industry standards such as working conditions and minimum fees.

Agreements and Policies

Agreement negotiation is the single most important job of the Association. The negotiation process is supported by dedicated member volunteers and the input of Council. The successful conclusion of any negotiation is a fair settlement, endorsed by members of the bargaining teams on both sides. Equity’s current scale agreements are as follows:

Theatre
- The Banff Centre Agreement relates solely to engagements at the Banff Centre.
- The Canadian Theatre Agreement (CTA) is negotiated between Equity and PACT (Professional Association of Canadian Theatres). Professional theatre companies are signatories to the CTA by virtue of PACT membership.
- The Equity Second City Agreement (ESCA) relates solely to engagements at The Second City.
- The Stratford Addendum to the CTA relates solely to engagements at the Stratford Festival.
- The Independent Theatre Agreement (ITA) is used by professional companies that are not members of PACT.

Dance
- The Ballet Agreement with the National Ballet of Canada (NBC) is negotiated between Equity and the NBC.
- The Ballet Agreement with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB) is negotiated between Equity and the RWB.
- The Alberta Ballet Agreement (ABA) is negotiated between Equity and the Alberta Ballet.
- The Les Grands Ballet Agreement (LGBA) is negotiated between Equity and Les Grands Ballet Canadiens de Montréal.

Opera
- The Canadian Opera Agreement (COA) is negotiated between Equity and the Canadian Opera Company.
- The Vancouver Opera Agreement (VOA) is negotiated between Equity and the Vancouver Opera Company.
- The Opera Agreement (OPA) is negotiated with professional engagers in regional centres across Canada.

Federal Engagers
- Equity has negotiated a number of agreements with various federal government departments under Canada’s Status of The Artist Act, including the Music Department of the National Arts Centre and Canadian Heritage.

Policies

Equity’s various engagement polices address situations when a formal agreement is not in place and cover the engagement of members and non-members working on the same production or activity. Equity’s current engagement policies in force are as follows:
- The D•O•T (Dance • Opera • Theatre) Policy is for productions/activities produced by companies, groups, organizations or individuals that are not regularly adhered to one of Equity’s negotiated agreements.
- The Indie 2.2 is used by artist-driven, not-for-profit theatre companies.
- The Industrial Shows Policy applies to promotional productions, or productions by a corporate entity.
- The Festival Policy and the Artists’ Collective Policy apply when Equity members produce collectively.
- The OPEN is a short duration and multi-engagement dance policy, designed to support the engagement of dance artists working in a diverse range of practices for short-duration performances and activities.

Amended: March 11, 2019

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