



# Entertainment Unions - Basics

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## Entertainment Unions

- SAG-AFTRA - merger of the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists
- Actors' Equity ("Equity")
- DGA - Directors Guild of America
- WGA - Writers Guild of America
- IATSE - International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
- Teamsters

## Exclusivity

- Guild members can only work for guild signatories
- Guild signatories can only employ guild members

## Subversions of Exclusivity

- Exclusivity works only on a union-by-union basis, not across unions
- Working outside the union's jurisdiction (geographical or categorical)
  - But see, e.g., "Global Rule One"
- Individuals can go "financial core" ("fi core")
- Production companies can have signatory subsidiaries and non-signatory subsidiaries

## CBA basics

- Employers generally have the upper hand bargaining against individual workers
- Especially true where labor is plentiful and workers can be desperate (Hollywood)
- Workers negotiate as a collective against individual employers or industry employers grouped together (AMPTP)
- As a group, workers get far more favorable terms than they would bargaining individually
- Union bargaining is an antitrust exemption
- Individual workers and employers cannot negotiate or waive guild minimums
- Individual workers can always negotiate for, and employers can offer, more than the guild minimums

## How guilds protect members and increase production costs

- Minimum wages/prices
- Health care & benefits contributions (incl. pension)
- Residuals
- Type-of-work limitations (IATSE)
- Duration-of-work limitations
- Various bargained-for perks

## How unions serve as barriers to entry

- Some guilds have difficult membership criteria
- Production deposits required for production companies

## How unions circumscribe entertainment content and distribution

- Barriers to entry (see previous)
- New use fees
- Same people writing, directing, acting can cause lack of change over time
- Fewer and less risky productions made because of increased expense of union production