

***“HELP!  
I’m  
laid  
off!”***

***Everything you hoped  
you would never need  
to know about being  
unemployed in the  
world of animation***

The Animation Guild and Affiliated  
Optical Electronic and Graphic Arts,  
Local 839 IATSE  
1105 N. Hollywood Way  
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(818) 845-7500  
[www.animationguild.org](http://www.animationguild.org)  
[info@animationguild.org](mailto:info@animationguild.org)

## ***How do I file for unemployment insurance?***

- ***You should file for unemployment insurance immediately! Don't put it off, even if you think you might be called back!***  
Claims begin the Sunday prior to your filing date and cannot be pre-dated.
- Your initial claim with the Employment Development Department (*EDD; see below*) can be filed over the phone or the Internet; it is not necessary to appear in person. Phone filings are taken Monday-Friday from 8 am to 5 pm.
- Be ready to supply your full name, Social Security number, address, zip code, and home telephone; full name of your last employer, last day worked, and the reason you were given for layoff. Remember that if you were paid by a payroll company such as Entertainment Partners, they may be listed as your ex-employer; check with the studio if you aren't sure.
- To qualify, you must be available and able to work, and you must actively seek employment.
- Your weekly award will be based on your highest quarterly earnings. As of August 2010, the maximum benefit is \$450.00 per week for a twenty-six week claim. Contact EDD about Federal extensions.
- Remember that unemployment insurance is only available if you have been laid off, not if you quit or were fired for cause. If you were "let go" by an employer at the expiration of your personal service contract, this should qualify as a layoff provided that you were available after the PSC expired, and the employer indicated they were not offering further work.

## **Employment Development Department**

www.edd.ca.gov

Toll-free, within CA: (800) 300-5616

Spanish: (800) 326-8937

Korean: (800) 547-3506

Outside CA: (800) 250-3913

You can apply for unemployment benefits online or by phone - online is far and away the easiest - but to get questions answered you have to deal with the EDD phone system. Callers will get one of several voice recordings when they call the 800 number but only one will allow you to file a claim or to speak directly to an EDD rep about a specific problem.

- ◆ If the recording says, “**Thank you ...**” hang up.
- ◆ If the recording says “**Due to the number of callers ...**”, hang up.
- ◆ **Only if the prompt begins “Welcome ...” should you stay on the line.**

Once you hear this prompt, if you would like to apply for unemployment insurance, press **12117** and follow the prompts. If you would like to follow up on a claim you have already filed, press **1242** and stay on the line.

It will likely take you 10-15 minutes to get through using this method.

- **Any income you earn or receive must be reported.** Income earned from a previous employment period (such as back wages, dismissal pay, vacation pay, etc.), will not be deducted from your unemployment insurance benefits unless you fail to report it!

## ***What is “honorable withdrawal” and how do I apply for it?***

- As an honorably withdrawn member, you are still a member in good standing of Local 839. You will still be listed on the availability lists requested by Guild employers. You will receive *The Peg-Board* free of charge by mail, although you must renew your free subscription by requesting it in writing once a year.
- As long as you are on honorable withdrawal, you will not be charged any dues or fees until and unless you go back to work at a Guild shop. You will not be required to reinstate or pay any fees as a prerequisite for being rehired.
- To qualify for honorable withdrawal, you must be paid up through the current quarter. You must pay by the tenth day of the quarter to avoid obligation for that quarter’s dues. If you are not paid up, contact the Guild office to make arrangements.
- If you return to work at a Guild shop within one year of withdrawal, upon reinstatement you will be charged the dues for the quarters on withdrawal. If you return after one year, you will be charged the IATSE per capita fees (\$45.00 per quarter as of 2010), plus a \$25.00 fee. In no event will you be charged another initiation fee. Honorable withdrawal will never cost more than keeping your account active.
- Generally speaking, the only membership benefits you lose by being on withdrawal are non-financial. You cannot vote in Guild elections; you cannot run for Guild office while on

withdrawal or for at least one year afterward. You may attend Guild meetings, where you have “voice but no vote”; that is, you may speak but you cannot make motions or vote.

- Requests for honorable withdrawal must be in writing, dated and signed. You can mail them to the Guild office, fax them to Lyn Mantta at (818) 843-0300, or email them to lyn@animationguild.org (be sure to include your name in the email).

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### ***What’s going to happen to my health and pension benefits?***

- Contact the **Motion Picture Industry Health and Pension Plan** to determine the status of your health and pension benefits. (Call Mon-Fri between 9:30 am and 4 pm).
- ◆ If you were qualified for **health benefits** from your previous Guild employer, they will not expire immediately upon layoff. If you qualify for a “bank of hours”, you may be able to extend your coverage for an additional six months. *Contact the Eligibility Department at ext. 263.*
- ◆ If you have at least five qualified years, your **pension** is “vested” and guaranteed under Federal law to be available at your age of retirement. If you are not yet vested, you will not lose the employer contributions made to date, but if you do not work at a Guild shop for at least thirty months you may lose the accumulated time towards the five-year vesting. *For pension information, contact extension 627.*

# Motion Picture Industry Pension and Health Plan

www.mpiphp.org  
(818) 769-0007 or (310) 769-0007  
toll-free outside southern California:  
(888) 369-2007

*24-hour automated health insurance  
information: Extension 7*

*Most departments open for phone calls,  
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 am-4 pm*

## Health Plan Related Topics

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- After your health coverage expires, you will almost certainly be eligible to continue your health insurance through **self-payment (“COBRA coverage”)**. *Contact extension 116 for COBRA information.*
  
- ◆ COBRA self-payment has the advantage of guaranteeing the same level of health coverage you get through the Guild plan, but at a higher rate than some of the options available under “Medical Resources” on pages 16-17.
- ◆ An insurance agent of our acquaintance pointed out that unless you or your dependents have health problems for which you need the breadth and scope of full Guild health coverage, you may prefer to purchase your own individual plan. Plans available through some of the resources on pages 14-15 can be purchased by the day, week or month.
- ◆ You are entitled to self-payment under COBRA for no more than eighteen months or until re-employed. However, under a law known as HIPAA (love them acronyms!), if and when your COBRA coverage expires insurance companies must offer you their most popular plans regardless of your health condition, no questions asked. As with COBRA benefits, however, the cost of HIPAA coverage can be steep.
- ◆ **The bottom line on health insurance:** If you cannot find work at an employer that offers health insurance, apply on the open market to see if you qualify for preferred rates. Failing that, apply for COBRA until re-employed or until it runs out at eighteen months. After that, apply again for individual coverage. If you’re unable to obtain preferred rates because of a medical condition, you should look into HIPAA coverage.

## How much dismissal pay will I get?

- Dismissal pay, sometimes called “severance pay”, is due to you under the Guild contract after a layoff from a Guild shop. The rules for dismissal pay vary from studio to studio; refer to the chart below and call the Guild office if you have questions.

### Questions and answers about Dismissal Pay

	Standard contract	Disney (TSL/TTL), Sony Pictures Animation, IM Digital	Nickelodeon
How long after layoff is my dismissal pay due? (Waiting period)	One hundred and ten (110) days	Ninety (90) days	Ninety (90) days
Do I have to request it in writing?	No	Yes	Yes
Is the “base rate” capped at 150% of scale?	Yes	No	No
How much dismissal pay, calculated at the “base rate”, do I get for:			
3-6 months employment	1½ day’s pay	1½ day’s pay	None
6 months-1 year	1 week’s pay	1 week’s pay	1 week’s pay
1 year or more	2 weeks’ pay	2 weeks’ pay	2 weeks’ pay

- Dismissal pay is due to you if you were laid off (but not if you resigned or were fired for cause).
  - ◆ If you accept a job from your former employer during the waiting period (even a freelance job), you will not lose your dismissal pay, but the waiting period will restart on the day you are subsequently laid off. If you refuse any offer of work from your former employer during the waiting period (even a freelance job), you will lose your right to dismissal pay.
  - ◆ As with unemployment insurance, you are eligible if you left a job at the end of your personal service contract, provided the employer did not offer you further employment at the time of layoff.
  - ◆ You qualify for dismissal pay even if you have gone to work for another employer.
  - ◆ For studios under our standard contract, the “base rate” at which your dismissal pay is calculated is either your weekly rate of pay as of your last day of work or 150% of scale, whichever is less. At those studios for whom the question “Is the base rate capped at 150% of scale?” is No, your dismissal pay is calculated at your weekly rate of pay as of your last day of work.
  - ◆ For those studios that require that dismissal pay be requested in writing, the request should be addressed to the human resources department of your former employer.
  - ◆ You should receive your dismissal pay within two to three weeks of your becoming eligible for it, or the receipt date of your written request if required.  
**If there are problems or delays, contact the Guild office *immediately*, or you could lose the right to file a grievance.**

## *How can I adjust to “layoff mode”?*

- **Make a budget and cut expenses.**
  - ◆ Review and reduce food expenses. Do not eat out. Cook meals from scratch, instead of expensive (and boring) frozen dinners. Make more than you plan to eat and freeze leftovers.
  - ◆ Be a coupon-clipper. You’ll be amazed how much you save over time.
  - ◆ Reduce telephone usage and change to a lower cost plan. Cancel cell phone service, or use it for real emergencies only. Send e-mails instead of long-distance calls.
  - ◆ Reduce or cancel cable TV service.
  - ◆ Try to avoid canceling your Internet access; it’s a necessity for job searching and application. If you must cancel your ISP, sign up for a free e-mail account and use the free terminals at the public library or the free wi-fi available in coffeehouses and public areas.
  - ◆ Reduce household energy usage. Don’t turn on air conditioning unless the outside temperature exceeds 90°.
  - ◆ Avoid unnecessary driving. Consider public transportation, walking or bicycling.
  - ◆ Stop using credit cards; postpone or avoid unnecessary purchases. Don’t buy anything on the Internet unless you have comparison-shopped with local retailers, allowing for hidden charges such as shipping.
  - ◆ Sell off possessions you do not use, such as extra vehicles, electronic equipment or computers.
  - ◆ Don’t be too hard on yourself — living on a budget is a necessity but it shouldn’t have to be a punishment. Give yourself an inexpensive weekly “treat”: see a movie, go out with friends, etc.

- **Don't touch your 401(k) account; those funds should be left alone to plan for your retirement.**
  - ◆ 401(k) cash-outs, available after a ninety-day layoff, should be avoided except in the direst of emergencies. They not only devalue your retirement account, but the tax penalties are significant — depending on your tax bracket you could lose as much as 45% of your account to Federal and state taxes and withdrawal penalties.
  
- **Start planning for employment, permanent or temporary:**
  - ◆ Keep in touch with friends, industry acquaintances, and former co-workers.
  - ◆ Avail yourself of job resources like the Internet, the Animation World Network ([awn.com](http://awn.com)) and other career resources (see page 14).
  - ◆ Subscribe to the Guild's membership e-mail list by sending an e-mail from your home address to Jeff Massie at [jeffm@animationguild.org](mailto:jeffm@animationguild.org). When the Guild office is informed of openings at Guild or non-Guild shops, we get the word out on the e-mail list.
  - ◆ Always be courteous with prospective employers, even if you feel they have not been courteous to you. Don't call more often than once every two weeks, unless they have suggested you call more frequently.
  - ◆ Ask about the employer's policies for application and portfolio submission, and follow them to the letter; don't assume that an "end run" is the only way to get a job. If an employer has specified that applicants contact them by fax or e-mail, it may be self-defeating to try to contact them by phone or in person.

- ◆ Undue persistence can burn your bridges faster than a bad portfolio. Realize that “no” almost always means “no”.
  - ◆ The Guild neither encourages nor discourages members from taking non-Guild jobs; the chances of “getting in trouble with the Guild” just for taking a non-Guild job to keep bread on the table are virtually nil.
  - ◆ If you take non-Guild work we ask you to sign a representation card, and encourage your fellow employees to do the same.
- **RETRAIN!** Now is the time to learn that computer program or artistic skill. Sign up for classes at your local community college, or contact one of the resources under “Career Resources” on page 14.

For further information on the Guild’s art classes through the American Animation Institute, contact Lyn Mantta at (818) 845-7000 or [lyn@animationguild.org](mailto:lyn@animationguild.org). Contact Ken Roskos at [lab@animationguild.org](mailto:lab@animationguild.org) for information about the Guild’s free computer lab.

You may qualify for CG training under a grant program, either through the CSATTF producers’ training fund or the State of California ETP programs. Contact Jeff Massie at the Guild office for details, [jeffm@animationguild.org](mailto:jeffm@animationguild.org) or (818) 845-7500.

Other training resources include:

- ◆ Studio Arts, (323) 227-8776
- ◆ Gnomon School of Visual Arts, (323) 466-6663
- ◆ LA Valley College IDEAS Workshop, (818) 947-2453
- ◆ Animation Mentor, [animationmentor.com](http://animationmentor.com)

## *What can I do when “the wolf is at the door”?*

- **It may be time to look for employment alternatives in fields besides motion picture animation.**
  - ◆ Only you can decide when to start looking for another kind of job. Don't beat yourself up — you're certainly not alone. You might be surprised how many people who have worked a long time in animation have spent portions of their lives in a different line of work. When the cartoon biz picks up again (as it surely will), you'll always have the option of coming back.
  - ◆ **The Actors Fund Work Program at (323) 933-9244; ([actorsfund.org](http://actorsfund.org))** offers individual career counseling to union members to upgrade their interim work skills and/or develop a second career. Workshops on job search techniques, résumé writing and interviewing are held regularly.
  - ◆ If you have a bachelors' degree, go to [tinyurl.com/cbesttest](http://tinyurl.com/cbesttest) to take **the CBEST exam**. Review books for this exam are available at any large bookstore. Once you've passed the CBEST you can qualify for an emergency credential and sign up for substitute teaching work. Ask Steve Hulett at the Guild office if you have any questions.
  
- **Always promptly inform your creditors that you are unemployed.** Many creditors will be willing, or may be legally obligated, to grant you some degree of debt relief.
  - ◆ If you are paying alimony and/or child support, inform the judge or court that issued the decree of your situation.

*Two resources for industry-based assistance:*

## **The Motion Picture and Television Fund**

mptvfund.org • (800) 876-8320

Social Services Department

(financial assistance), (323) 634-3888

*(not to be confused with the Motion Picture  
Industry Health and Pension Plan — see page 6)*

### **MPTF Clinics:**

- ◆ Bob Hope Health Center; (323) 634-3850
- ◆ Glendale Health Center; (818) 876-4790
- ◆ Skirball Health Center; (818) 876-1050
- ◆ North Valley Health Center; (818) 876-4770
- ◆ Santa Clarita Health Center; (661) 284-3100
- ◆ Toluca Lake Health Center; (818) 556-2700
- ◆ Westside Health Center; (310) 996-9355

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## **The Actors Fund**

actorsfund.org

5757 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles 90036

(323) 933-9244 (Work Program, ext. 50)

(this is an entertainment industry charity and is  
not for actors only)

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### ➤ **CAREER RESOURCES**

- ◆ **The Actors Fund Work Program**, (323) 933-9244 (*see page 13*)
- ◆ **Glendale Verdugo Jobs Center**,  
verdugojobscenter.org, (818) 409-0476
- ◆ Job center directory; servicelocator.org
- ◆ JobStar Los Angeles; jobstar.org/socal
- ◆ WorkSource California, (888) 226-6300;  
worksourcecalifornia.com
- ◆ LA Career Planning Center, (310) 273-6633
- ◆ Metro Skills Center, (213) 386-7269

➤ **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

- ◆ Consumer Credit Counseling Service, (800) 750-2227; [cccsa.org](http://cccsa.org)
- ◆ Department of Public Social Services, (213) 974-0201; [ladpss.org](http://ladpss.org)
- ◆ Labor Community Services, (213) 427-9044; [launionaflcio.org/community\\_services](http://launionaflcio.org/community_services)
- ◆ Catholic Charities, (213) 251-3400; [catholiccharitiesla.org](http://catholiccharitiesla.org)
- ◆ Jewish Free Loan, (323) 761-8830; [jfla.org](http://jfla.org) (*non-sectarian, interest free lender*)
- ◆ Motion Picture and TV Fund (*see above*)
- ◆ The Actors Fund (*see above*)

➤ **RESOURCES FOR HOUSING**

- ◆ U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, (213) 894-8000; [hud.gov](http://hud.gov)
- ◆ LA County Housing, (323) 260-3300; [lacdc.org](http://lacdc.org)
- ◆ LA Community Services, (323) 750-9860
- ◆ The Actors' Fund (*see left*)
- ◆ Motion Picture and Television Fund (*see left*)
- ◆ Labor Community Services, (213) 427-9044; [launionaflcio.org/communityservices](http://launionaflcio.org/communityservices)

➤ **RESOURCES FOR UTILITIES**

- ◆ DWP, (800) 342-5397; [ladwp.com](http://ladwp.com)
- ◆ SoCal Edison, (800) 655-4555; [sce.com](http://sce.com)
- ◆ Home Energy Assistance Program, (800) 433-4327; [acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap](http://acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap)

➤ **HEALTH RESOURCES:**

➤ **INSURANCE** (*see also pages 5-7*)

- ◆ Motion Picture and Television Fund — Industry Advantage Individual Plan, (888) 558-4247; [mptvfund.org/health\\_care/Health\\_Plans/individual.htm](http://mptvfund.org/health_care/Health_Plans/individual.htm)

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➤ **INSURANCE** *(continued)*

- ◆ Artists' Health Insurance Resource Center (AHIRC), (323) 933.9244 ext. 32; ahirc.org
- ◆ Healthy Families/MediCal, (888) 747-1222; healthyfamilies.ca.gov (for uninsured children and pregnant women)
- ◆ Union Privilege Health Savings, (800) 228-3523; unionplus.org/ benefits/health

➤ **MEDICAL**

- ◆ MPTF Clinics *(see page 14)*
- ◆ Hollywood-Sunset Free Clinic, (323) 660-2400; hsfreeclinic.org
- ◆ The Saban Free Clinic (LA Free Clinic), (323) 653-8622; thesabanfreeclinic.org
- ◆ T.H.E. Clinic, (323) 295-6571; theclinicinc.org
- ◆ AltaMed Health Services, (323) 725-8751 *(call for location nearest you)*
- ◆ Queen's Care Clinic, (213) 413-1050
- ◆ County-USC Medical Center, (323) 226-2622
- ◆ LA County ATP (Ability To Pay) Program, (800) 378-9919; ladhs.org/clinics/medicare.htm *(ability-to-pay plan; free or low-cost health care at county hospitals and clinics)*
- ◆ Public-Private Partnership Program (neighborhood clinic), (800) 427-8700

➤ **DENTAL** *(see also Medical above)*

- ◆ Harbor-USC Dental, (310) 222-3493
- ◆ Pediatric & Family Center, (213) 747-5542
- ◆ The Right Dentists *(union member discounts)*:
  - Panorama City — (818) 893-7858
  - Palmdale — (661) 273-1333
  - Lancaster — (661) 723-5400
- ◆ UCLA Dental School, (310) 825-0834
- ◆ P.T.S.A. Dental Services (for kids), (213) 745-7114

- **VISION CARE** (*see also Medical, left*)
- ◆ Medi-Cal Eye Doctors:
  - Downtown Los Angeles — (213) 628-6291
  - Hollywood — (323) 464-3228
  - Los Angeles — (323) 263-2307
  - Huntington Park — (323) 583-8000
  - Monterey Park — (626) 288-3555

- **HEARING** (*see also Medical, left*)

- ◆ Hear Center, (626) 796-2016
- ◆ Hearing Aid Line, (800) 521-5247
- ◆ Hearing Help Line, (888) 432-7435
- ◆ Hear Now, (800) 648-4327

- **MENTAL HEALTH/EMOTIONS**  
(*see also Medical, left*)

- ◆ PacifiCare Behavioral Health,  
(888) 661-9141; pbhi.com
- ◆ Alcoholics Anonymous:
  - L.A. (323) 936-4343; SFV (818) 988-3001
- ◆ Chinatown Service Center, (213) 808-1700
- ◆ Debtors Anonymous, (310) 822-7250
- ◆ Depression Line, (800) 421-4211
- ◆ El Niño Family Center, (323) 757-0101
- ◆ Family Health Center, (213) 742-5883
- ◆ Gay & Lesbian Community Service Center,  
(323) 993-7400
- ◆ Kedren Center, (323) 223-0425
- ◆ Los Angeles Free Clinic, (323) 653-8622
- ◆ Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS),  
(323) 666-4295

- **CLOTHING**

- ◆ Goodwill Stores, goodwillsoocal.org:
  - Studio City - (818) 760-7553
  - North Hollywood - (818) 763-1245
  - Glendale - (818) 242-9399 or 543-0166
  - Van Nuys (818) 904-9130 or 376-1350
  - Panorama City - (818) 782-2520
  - Reseda - (818) 342-8533
  - Hollywood - (323) 666-1163

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➤ **CLOTHING** *(continued)*

- ◆ Salvation Army, (818) 985-8105
- ◆ Out Of The Closet, (818) 769-0503
- ◆ St. Vincent de Paul, (323) 224-6280
- ◆ SRDC, 434 S. San Pedro, Los Angeles (213) 634-7130

➤ **CHILD CARE**

- ◆ Home-Safe Childcare, 6720 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles (323) 934-7979
- ◆ L. A. County Department of Children's Services, (213) 351-5602; dcfs.co.la.ca.us
- ◆ Crystal Upstairs (referrals), (323) 299-8595
- ◆ Child Care Referrals, (800) KIDS-793; rrnetwork.ezpublishing.com/rrnet
- ◆ Motion Picture and Television Fund (*see page 14; Samuel Goldwyn Foundation Children's Center, 2114 Pontius Ave., Los Angeles; 310-445-8993*)

➤ **TRANSPORTATION**

- ◆ Bus schedules, (800) COMMUTE; mta.net
- ◆ CityRide, (213) 808-7433
- ◆ Dial-a-Ride, (800) 439-0439
- ◆ Community Service Ministry (*bus tokens & urgent transportation*), 713 W. 62nd St., Los Angeles (323) 758-4506
- ◆ Weingart Center (*bus tokens*), 566 S. San Pedro St., Los Angeles (213) 627-9000

➤ **OTHER RESOURCES**

- ◆ ***For information on welfare, food stamps and government assistance: Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness***, 548 S. Spring St., Leangles 90013; (213) 439-1070; peoplesguide.org
- ◆ **Chrysalis Center**, (213) 895-7777
- ◆ **Red Cross**, 2700 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles 90057; (213) 739-5200
- ◆ **United Way Of Greater Los Angeles**, (800) 339-6993

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*The resources and recommendations in this booklet are suggested to the unemployed. Local 839 disclaims liability for any services listed herein.*

*We've made every effort to make this booklet accurate and helpful. If you have had a problem with a service or resource mentioned here, or if you have suggestions on how to make this booklet better, please contact Jeff Massie at the Guild office, (818) 845-7500, or [jeffm@animationguild.org](mailto:jeffm@animationguild.org).*