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IATSE LOCAL 839

FAQs: Learn more about the Memorandum of Agreement

How much did we improve wage minimums in this negotiation?

Wage minimums will increase by 3% in each year of the agreement. As a result of pattern bargaining, the employers would only agree to the same increases offered to the Hollywood Locals. SAG-AFTRA and the DGA received a 2.5% wage increase the first year (another 0.5% was diverted to their benefits fund), and 3% increases the 2nd and 3rd years. Provided the agreement ratifies, there is retroactive coverage for the 3% increase of wage minimums for the first year of the agreement, beginning July 1, 2021.

So will everyone be getting a check for retroactive wages? And how do we receive it?

Not everyone will get a check. Only those who are making the minimum rate in their classification or less than the (3%) first year increase. For example, if you are working as a Model Designer, the minimum rate is \$51.60 at Journey level. The 3% increase will bump up the rate to \$53.15/hour. If you are making less than the new minimum rate, you will receive a payment for the remaining money owed to you. These payments will take several months to calculate and distribute.

What about Health and Pension? Are there any changes?

Health and Pension benefits cost changes were negotiated by the IATSE in the Basic Agreement negotiations and are applied to our contract. There are no increases to premium costs to participants, and no reductions in benefits. There are no changes to hours needed to qualify for or maintain benefits. While there were cost increases to the employer, there are no changes to you. Retirees that are eligible will continue to receive 13th and 14th checks.

How long will this agreement last?

The term of this agreement is three (3) years, beginning on Aug. 1, 2021 and continues through and including July 31, 2024.



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What gains did we make on New Media?

We continue to make gains in New Media as we address the changing landscape of streaming. Several of the gains addressed budget tiers, and we were also able to end the practice of “grandfathering” language from previous agreements that has been used by employers for years to undercut wages.

- **Established wage minimums for derivative and original work.** What does this mean? Previously, programs that fell under the High Budget threshold provided for freely negotiable wages. Now, derivative and original productions of at least 11-minutes in length and budgeted at \$25,000 or more per minute are subject to wage minimums equal to the current rate less 15%. This has increased the number of productions that will be guaranteed wage minimums.
- **Removed the grandfather clause.** We have attempted to stop the practice of using language from previous agreements (“grandfathering”) that allows shows that were produced on or before the current agreement dates access to rates and terms associated with older contracts. For example, shows like *Dragons: Race to the Edge* were able to take advantage of higher budget thresholds and continue using freely negotiable terms and rates. Now, as of Aug. 1, 2023, shows can no longer be grandfathered and will be subject to increases negotiated in this and future contract agreements. We have been working towards this change for years!
- **Lowered high budget thresholds.** We were able to get employers to match the “high budget” thresholds gained by SAG-AFTRA. Animated High Budget SVOD are subject to additional contract benefits, including paid holidays and overtime, dismissal pay, and accrued holiday pay. Lowering the threshold increases the number of productions that will be covered. However, the new threshold will not apply to shows that started production on or before Aug. 1, 2022.

Length of Program	“High Budget” Threshold
20-35 Minutes	\$500,000 and above
36-65 Minutes	\$1,250,000 and above



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What is the unpublished sideletter on scope and how does it affect me?

The pandemic impacted the way we work as an industry and made remote work an option for many animation workers. The scope of our agreement is written so that people who are hired in Los Angeles are covered by the contract terms. When faced with an opportunity to move out of state and work remotely, animation workers have been told that it was outside the scope of the agreement, and they would no longer be considered union hires. Addressing this issue was not a mandatory subject of bargaining, and the employers did not want to take it into consideration when bargaining. However, the Negotiations Committee stood firm in order to create a pathway to union-covered remote work outside of LA County.

Under the new agreement, we confirmed that anyone who is hired when in Los Angeles can work outside of the county and state if the employer agrees to allow remote work. Why is this important? Previously, MPI was cited as the reason employers could not classify someone out of LA county as a union employee. This barrier no longer exists, and members can use their individual leverage to negotiate Union coverage out of state.

Furthermore, the employers agreed that people that have been working remotely outside the state can continue to do so and be covered by the agreement under specific circumstances.

Does this mean I can move out of state and still be in the Union?

Yes, you can use your personal leverage to negotiate a deal where you can work out of state and still be covered by the Union to receive all your benefits and wage minimums. There are no longer any barriers, beyond getting your employer to agree. That being said, if and when your job ends your new employer does not have to agree to the same terms.

What other gains did we achieve?

- The employer agreed to provide occupation codes, employee's job title, and wage scale classification name on new hire and promotion offer letters or Personal Service Contracts. This will make it easier for you to review minimum rates, so you know you are getting paid the correct amount and to ensure accurate contributions to your health and pension fund.



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- An additional provision to Sideletter J – Skills Evaluations states that employers must give a reasonable amount of time to complete a skills evaluation and that they should provide a response to those who submitted an evaluation after the hiring or promotion decision has been made. This stipulation aims to stop ghosting and encourage studio leadership to evaluate the necessity and duration of tests before distributing them. This new language is a step toward keeping the employers accountable for their hiring practices and allows for more avenues in which unreasonable tests can be reviewed. Lastly, the AMPTP will send a bulletin to all employers reminding them of these changes and recommendations.
- Another new general provision aims to address grievances about industry experience not being taken into account when classifying new hires. The AMPTP has agreed to distribute a bulletin to all employers providing guidance so that animation workers with significant experience at different studios be classified at the appropriate level of the wage classification. It also advises employers that the Union will bring this issue to the attention of Labor Relations should new employees with significant and comparable journey-level experience be placed in below-journey level classifications. What does this mean? Your experience in comparable positions at other studios should be taken into consideration when determining your wage classification. If employers don't pay attention, the Union will address the issue with their Labor Relations departments.
- For several contract cycles, the Union has tried to address obsolete classifications and working titles to close hiring loopholes and streamline wage classifications. A provision to address this issue has been in the contract, but since there has never been a time frame for the process, employers have pushed it off. In the tentative agreement, the AMPTP has agreed to set a date to standardize classifications within 90 days of ratification.
- After years of trying, we finally secured Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a 10th paid holiday. Those who already have the holiday off, such as DreamWorks Animation, will now also receive Good Friday as a paid holiday. Also, effective as of Jan. 1, 2023, for holidays not worked 4% of the employee's annual straight time earnings will be payable. This increase is up from 3.719%.
- Benefits to on-call employees were increased to 60 hours from 56 hours.



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What is the Labor-Management Cooperative Committee?

There are many issues that affect the membership that are not subject to bargaining. In these cases, some studios have stronger, labor-friendly policies while others might be deficient in how they handle concerns. The Labor-Management Cooperative Committee now creates a pipeline to address these issues proactively with the studios. Made up of no more than four representatives from the employers and four representatives appointed by TAG, the committee will meet at least twice annually to discuss issues, such as work from home policies, support with childcare, and studio-specific working conditions issues.

I heard parental leave was extended to address other qualifying events.

In 2018, we successfully negotiated a provision for unpaid, job-protected Parental Leave for members with Personal Service Contracts. Those who have worked 26 weeks, or have a run of season or “all episodes” guarantee that is anticipated to produce at least 26 weeks of employment are entitled to take up to eight weeks unpaid leave to bond with a newborn child, newly adopted child or newly placed foster child. This provision has now been extended to address other life events, such as caring for a family member with a serious health condition. No more than eight weeks of unpaid leave can be taken within a 12-month period; and it does not need to be taken all at once. The article in the agreement has been renamed “Family and Medical Leave” to reflect this addition.

What about Storyboard proposals?

The Negotiations Committee was able to make some gains for Storyboard artists that we were not able to accomplish in past bargaining cycles. Supervising Storyboard and Production Board artists are now guaranteed to be paid a key rate of 15% above the minimum Journey rate for the classification. The job classification of Scene Planner will be retired, and increases to Storyboard Classification Unit Rates were secured (about 4%) with a 28% increase to rates for theatrical subjects of 75 minutes or more all of which are subject to the general wage increases. All the unit rates also received significant increases to health and pension contributions.



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Short Subjects – Over 7 to 15 Minutes (TV or Theatrical)

	Rate (Subject to General Wage Increases)	H&W and Pension Hours
Storyboard Only	\$1,961.12	100

Half-Hour Subjects (TV or Theatrical)

	Rate (Subject to General Wage Increases)	H&W and Pension Hours
Storyboard Only	\$3,724.09	240

Subjects One Hour or More (TV)

	Rate (Subject to General Wage Increases)	H&W and Pension Hours
Storyboard Only	\$5,554.73	320

Subjects One Hour or More But Less than 75 Minutes (Theatrical)

<i>Effective for contracts entered into on or after August 1, 2022:</i>	Rate (Subject to General Wage Increases)	H&W and Pension Hours
Storyboard Only	\$5,554.73	320



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Subjects 75 Minutes or More (Theatrical)

<i>Effective for contracts entered into on or after August 1, 2022:</i>	Rate (Subject to General Wage Increases)	H&W and Pension Hours
Storyboard Only	\$7,477.53	425

What gains did Animation Timers make?

We did not get everything we wanted in the timing proposal; however, we did make progress. Freelance unit rates for Animation Timers increased by 5% in the first year, almost 5% in the second year, and another almost 5% increase effective January 1, 2024. The number of feet needed to qualify for the equivalent of an 8-hour day to accrue health and pension hours was reduced by almost 1/3. What does this mean? Freelance Animation Timers will accrue qualifying health and pension benefits almost three times more quickly, making it more manageable to stay covered by union benefits. The timing committee also agreed to work with the Guild to identify studios where the use of the unit rate is abusive in order to make necessary studio-specific changes.

Animation Timer	Rate	H&W and Pension Hours
<i>Effective on or after the first Sunday following the AMPTP's receipt of notice of ratification:</i>	\$4.20/foot	8 hours/70 feet (contributions may be made on a <i>pro rata</i> basis)
<i>Effective the first Sunday one year after the AMPTP receives notice of ratification:</i>	\$4.41/foot	
<i>Effective January 1, 2024:</i>	\$4.63/foot	

The forgoing rates are not subject to additional general wage increases.



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What about the Writers? Did they make gains in the contract?

For the first time in the history of the agreement, writers have their own job classification, and a framework to build a ladder of progression. We can now improve on this framework in future bargaining cycles. The progression has added new classifications for wage minimums, and also addresses issues related to compensation for experienced writers who are not in a supervisory role. The writers progression now includes: Associate Animation Writer, Animation Writer Level 1, Animation Writer Level 2, and Supervising Animation Writer. The writers were able to achieve wage increases in nearly all categories, and they received significant increases to health and pension benefits in order to better retain healthcare coverage.

The following titles and rates are for new shows starting 8/1/22.

Job Classification Title		Rate
Associate Animation Writer	1 st 6 months	\$40.11/hourly \$1,604.50/weekly
	2 nd 6 months	\$45.86/hourly \$1,834.51/weekly
Animation Writer Level 1	1 st 6 months	\$51.61/hourly \$2,064.51/weekly
	2 nd 6 months	\$56.93/hourly \$2,277.29/weekly
Animation Writer Level 2		\$63/hourly \$2,520/weekly
Supervising Animation Writer		\$72.50/hourly \$2,900/weekly



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Unit Rates for Animation Writers

Short Subjects – Over 7 to 15 Minutes (TV or Theatrical)

	Rate (Subject Only to the General Wage Increase in Year 3)
Synopsis and Outline	\$1,262.18
Teleplay or Screenplay	\$4,116.87

Half-Hour Subjects (TV or Theatrical)

	Rate (Subject Only to the General Wage Increase in Year 3)
Synopsis and Outline	\$2,318.07
Teleplay or Screenplay	\$8,145.92

Subjects One Hour or More (TV)

	Rate (Subject Only to the General Wage Increase in year 3)	H&W and Pension Hours
Synopsis and Outline	\$3,405.22	100 (150 for TV Subjects 75 Minutes or More)
Teleplay	\$12,095.76	325 (350 for TV Subjects 75 Minutes or More)



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Subjects One Hour or More But Less than 75 Minutes (Theatrical)

<i>Effective for contracts entered into on or after August 1, 2022:</i>	Rate (Subject Only to the General Wage Increase in year 3)	H&W and Pension Hours
Synopsis and Outline	\$3,405.22	100 (150 for TV Subjects 75 Minutes or More)
Teleplay	\$12,095.76	325

Subjects 75 Minutes or More (Theatrical)

<i>Effective for contracts entered into on or after August 1, 2022:</i>	Rate (Subject Only to the General Wage Increase in year 3)	H&W and Pension Hours
Synopsis and Outline	\$4,455.44	150
Teleplay	\$15,826.23	560

Pilot Development Rates (TV)

	Rate (Subject Only to the General Wage Increase in Year 3)	H&W and Pension Hours
Over 7 to 15 Minutes	\$6,725.00	250
Half-Hour Subjects	\$13,080.00	425
One Hour or More Subjects	\$19,500.00	530



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Did the Color Design issues get addressed?

The Color Designer Committee strove to reach parity with other design crafts. Parity was not achieved; however, they did secure a significant increase (between 4-12% above general wage increases) to the minimum rates to close that gap by a third. The agreement also states that should a Color Designer be asked to perform background painting they should be paid the minimum rate of a Background Artist for the work. The Color Designer classification will also be removed from the “Ink and Paint” section to a more appropriate placement. Lastly, Color Design Supervisors will receive the key rate of 15% above the minimum Journey rate.

Color Designer (21-501)	Date of Ratification to July 31, 2022	August 1st, 2022 to July 31, 2023	August 1st 2023 to July 31, 2024
1st 6 months	\$1,742.94	\$1,795.22	\$1,849.08
2nd 6 months	\$1,782.34	\$1,835.81	\$1,890.88
Journey	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,060.00

Were there any proposals focused on CG artists?

We have been working towards making adjustments to Sideletter E in many previous negotiations, and we were finally able to get the employers to agree to changes in the members' favor. The new wage classification structure has several key changes. It removes CGI Animator/Modeler 5 and Production Technical Director 5 classifications but applies those rates to CGi Animator/Modeler 4 and Production Technical Director 4. It also removes the 1st 18 months classification from CGI Animator/Modeler 1 and 2, and Production Technical Director 1 and 2. These changes will allow CG artists to progress through the wage classifications more quickly.



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What about interns doing production work?

The Negotiations Committee agreed to renew Sideletter P (Animation Interns) in an effort to work with employers to support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives without impacting opportunities for union workers. Please note:

- No bargaining unit employee will be displaced by this change;
- Interns must be enrolled in a college or graduate school educational program, or have graduated within less than six months from such a program;
- Internship programs can only last for a semester during the school year, and can only last for 12 weeks during the summer break.

I have a question that wasn't covered - where can I find out more?

Please read the material on the Animation Guild website - animationguild.org/Ratify22 - and call the union office at 818-845-7500. You can also email the membership@tag839.org with any questions.