



SAG-AFTRA Background

Screen Actors Guild--American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) represents approximately 160,000 actors, announcers, broadcast journalists, dancers, DJs, news writers, news editors, program hosts, puppeteers, recording artists, singers, stunt performers, voiceover artists and other media professionals. SAG-AFTRA members are the faces and voices that entertain and inform America and the world. With national offices in Los Angeles and New York, and local offices nationwide, SAG-AFTRA members work together to secure the strongest protections for media artists in the 21st century and beyond.

SAG was founded in 1933 for the protection of motion picture actors and the betterment of working conditions. Soon, some of the biggest Hollywood stars of the day were supporting the new union, including James Cagney, Eddie Cantor, Joan Crawford, Edward G. Robinson and Fredric March. The Guild would go on to mark a number of milestones, including being led by Ronald Reagan, the only U.S. president to have ever previously served as the president of a union.

AFTRA was created (as AFRA) in August 1937 with the support of top radio stars like Bob Hope, Jack Benny, George Burns, Gracie Allen and its first president, Eddie Cantor. The union began with 400 members in two locals, and by December, the ranks swelled to 2,000 and the union covered 90 percent of all radio artists in key broadcast cities. In 1952, AFRA merged with the Television Authority to create AFTRA. In 2012, it merged with SAG to create SAG-AFTRA.

Today, SAG-AFTRA members include everyone who works in front of a camera or behind a microphone. In its first five years as a merged union, SAG-AFTRA has integrated operations and chalked up numerous high-profile accomplishments. Recent wins include a TV/Theatrical contract that made unprecedented gains in the area of streaming, significant inroads into organizing Spanish-language media, and a successful conclusion to a lengthy strike against video game companies.

SAG-AFTRA is a proud affiliate of the AFL-CIO. More information about the union's current activities and its prolific history is available online at sagaftra.org.