

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Name Change and Rebranding Process

Executive Summary

Actors' Equity Association ("Equity"), the labor union representing American actors and stage managers in the theatre, requests proposals to guide stakeholders through a process of determining a potential new name for the union, as well as for implementing a possible name change and rebranding. The goal of a name change is to create an identity for the union inclusive of all its members, which includes not only actors but also stage managers as well as other kinds of performers.

Responses are due March 15, 2023, with an award expected April 28, 2023. Project work will be expected to begin in May, 2023, with work continuing into 2024.

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1. About Actors' Equity Association

Actors' Equity Association ("Equity"), founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 51,000 professional Actors and Stage Managers. Equity fosters the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages, improving working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions.

Equity negotiates and promulgates over 40 national and local contracts including Production (Broadway and Sit-Downs), Touring, LORT (League of Resident Theatres), Stock, Small Professional Theatre (SPT), Dinner Theatre, Theatre for Young Audiences, Business Theatre and Events, Off-Broadway and numerous agreements for developing not-for-profit theatres.

MISSION

Actors' Equity Association is a national labor union, founded for the purpose of negotiating strong agreements that protect the wages, hours and working conditions of its members; enforcing those agreements; organizing new work opportunities for professional stage managers and actors and pursuing appropriate legislation on matters affecting their profession. Actors' Equity Association values diversity and inclusion, and is aggressive and responsive in seeking equity for all its members. Furthermore, Actors' Equity Association seeks to lead the industry as a voice for the values it has adopted.

2. Point of Contact

Please direct all questions to Equity's Director of Communications, David Levy –
dlevy@actorsequity.org / 212-869-8530 x357

3. Background

PROJECT CONTEXT

To understand the desire for a new name and identity for the union, it's important to understand a bit of Equity's history, which stretches back to the union's founding in 1913. Actors' Equity Association was formally recognized by the American Federation of Labor (later to become the AFL-CIO) in 1919, as Equity embarked on its historic first strike.

This was the first strike in the history of the American theatre, demanding recognition as the performers' representative and bargaining agent. The strike lasted 30 days, spread to eight cities, closed 37 plays, prevented the opening of 16 others and cost millions of dollars. Chorus performers joined in the fight along with the actors. Five days after the strike began, Chorus Equity Association was formed.

In the early days of theatre in America, the functions that today's stage managers serve were often taken on by actors. But by 1920, stage managing was recognized as a distinct job category in Equity contracts, and stage managers have been valued members of Actors' Equity Association ever since.

Actors' Equity and Chorus Equity merged in 1955. Today, Equity is structured around three primary job categories: principal actors, chorus actors and stage managers. However, only two of those categories are represented in the name Actors' Equity Association.

Following years of organizing within the stage management community, Equity's inaugural convention in 2021 passed a resolution entitled "In Solidarity, Change the Name of Our Union":

WHEREAS Actors' Equity Association is a union representing tens of thousands of Stage Managers and Actors nationwide; and

WHEREAS the current name of our union, Actors' Equity Association, excludes a portion of our membership, specifically Stage Managers; and

WHEREAS the current name perpetuates a broad misunderstanding that Stage Managers are not members of our union; and

WHEREAS Stage Managers pay the same dues as actors, but are still often referred to as Capital A "Actors" in contract language; and

WHEREAS the UNION will have flexibility for future growth under their jurisdiction, and most importantly will include ALL of its current dues-paying membership; and,

WHEREAS employers maintain power by dividing workers, and we are strongest as a union when we actively engage our complete solidarity to regain our power as unified workers; and

WHEREAS Stage Managers have always been members of Actors' Equity Association; and

WHEREAS we have waited 108 years;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED Convention believes the name of our union should be changed; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Union will stand by its mission of solidarity and support a name change to be inclusive of all of its members; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED Convention recommends that within three years of the conclusion of the 2021 convention, the National Council put forth a complete plan to facilitate this name change.

This resolution was affirmed by Equity's council in June, 2021, with the following policy:

RESOLVED to unanimously approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee re: Convention Resolution 3-02 Solidarity, Change the Name of Our Union:

RESOLVED that the name of our union should be changed; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Union will stand by its mission of solidarity and support a name change to be inclusive of all of its members; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that within three years of the conclusion of the 2021 convention, the National Council put forth a complete plan to facilitate this name change, and that a working group be created to begin this process.

Subsequent to the adoption of this policy, the union adopted a more aggressive approach to organizing new members, working with strippers, planetarium lecturers and others who work in live arts and entertainment, further widening the tent of Equity membership.

STAKEHOLDERS

The primary engine for this process within Equity's structure is a working group of Equity members and staff. However, given the magnitude of a name change for a 110-year-old organization, consideration may also be extended to the opinions of all members and staff, as well as industry colleagues and audience members.

4. Desired Service

In the first phase of work, agency will advise the Change The Name Working Group in assessing name-change readiness, conducting market- and stakeholder research, developing new name options and choosing a new name, while managing communications with members and the broader industry about the process. In phase two, should the union decide to move forward with a new name, the agency will assist in developing brand assets related to the new name, including but not limited to a new logo and/or logotype, tagline, visual identity etc.

5. Decision Criteria

Proposals should address the following areas which will be used for the evaluation:

EXPERIENCE AND CAPABILITIES

Describe the agency's rebranding experience. Provide information about key staff assigned to the project and outline their related work experience. Submit three references with whom the team has worked recently. Include experience with theatre industry or labor movement projects if applicable.

CREATIVE APPROACH – CASE STUDIES

Provide a case study where the agency rebranded an organization similar in scope and size to that of Actors' Equity Association. Include an explanation of the original problem, the creative strategy developed to overcome the problem, budget and results of efforts.

PRICE PROPOSAL

Provide a fee proposal for the items listed below.

- Consulting on Process
- Market Research
- Design and Creative Development
- Production of New Materials

6. Agency Information

Please include the following information in your proposal:

- Summary
- History
- Differentiators
- Portfolio
- Awards (optional)
- HR & Hiring Practices
 - Equity is aiming to select one or more finalist vendors that demonstrate one or more of the following:
 - Effective diversity hiring practices
 - Ownership by a member of a marginalized group
 - Unionized workforce
 - Will your project team include resources based outside of the United States? If so, where?
- Information about any partners or subcontractors to be engaged
- Pricing

7. Submission Timeline and Procedures

- Questions deadline: March 1, 2023
 - Please email questions to dlevy@actorsequity.org
- Question responses issued: March 6, 2023
- RFP Response deadline: March 15, 2023
 - Final submissions should be in the form of a PDF emailed to dlevy@actorsequity.org
- Virtual presentations from finalists: April 1 – 14, 2023.
- Recommended vendor selection to be completed by April 28, 2023.

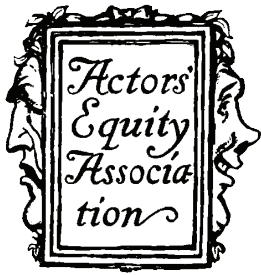
If approved, vendors will be asked to begin work in May, 2023. If you anticipate an issue with this starting timeframe, please indicate a preferred starting timeframe in your response.

8. Appendix: Equity Branding History

Below, please find a selection of logos and type treatments associated with Actors' Equity Association over the course of the union's history.

APPENDIX

Equity Branding History



1913 - 1953



Used variously throughout Equity's early years



1925 - 1950



1950 - 1968



Used variously, 1968 - 2003



2003 - present

EQUITY

1913 - 1950

EQUITY

EQUITY

1950 - 1957

Equity

1957 - 1970

EQUITY

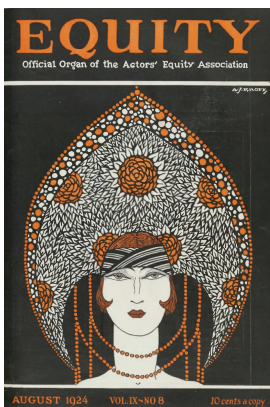
1982 - 1992

EQUITY

1993 - 1998

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION

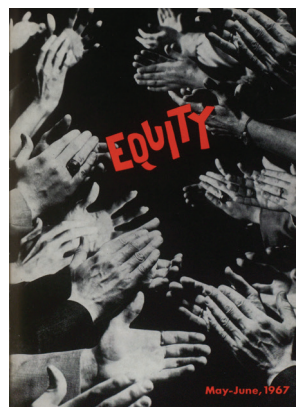
2003 - present



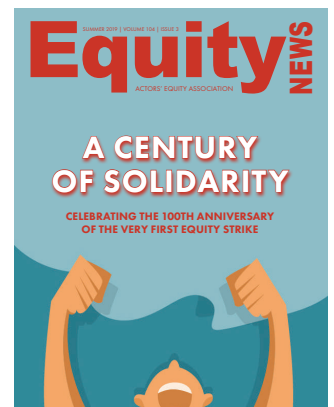
August 1924



June 1958



May-June 1967



Summer 2019



ACTORS'
EQUITY
ASSOCIATION 1913