



## Interactive Producer Guide & FAQ

### **So You Want To Hire a SAG-AFTRA Performer In Your Game?**

Productions signed to one of the SAG-AFTRA Interactive/Video Game Agreements have access to the world's most talented professional performers! In order to hire our members, you have to complete a small amount of paperwork and this Guide is designed to give you a preview of that process and what will be asked of you.

We have also included an FAQ which explains terminology found in the agreements and answers some commonly asked questions.

### **Step 1 – Pre-Production**

To begin working with SAG-AFTRA, start by sending the following documents to [interactive@sagaftra.org](mailto:interactive@sagaftra.org):

- Preliminary Information Sheet
- Your company's formation documents
  - For LLCs, that means the company's Articles of Organization, State Filing Receipt, and Operating Agreement
  - For Corporations, that means the company's Articles of Incorporation, State Filing Receipt, and By-laws
  - For DBAs, that means a copy of your government issued ID and the DBA certificate with County Clerk stamp
- If you wish to sign the Low Budget Agreement, include a copy of your detailed budget breakdown and your cast list. It's okay if you don't know your whole cast yet, just give us what you have so far.

You will be assigned a contact person (we call them Business Representatives) who will work with you throughout your production. They will review your paperwork and email you additional documents to fill out and sign:

- Company Authorization Letter - confirms who is authorized to sign the paperwork
- Interactive Letter of Adherence – this document represents your agreement to follow the rules in the SAG-AFTRA Interactive Media Agreement
- SAG-AFTRA Health and Retirement Letter of Adherence – this document acknowledges that you will pay contributions on top of the performer's salary

Once your Business Representative has received your completed and signed paperwork, they will confirm that your production is cleared to work with SAG-AFTRA members.

### **Step 2 – Production**

When your project is cleared, your Business Representative will send you the following documents:

- Cast Clearance Form – Do this first! All performers need to be current on their dues and in good standing before they work for you, and if they're not a member yet, you'll need to submit a Taft Hartley form for them (we'll get to that next). Our Cast Clearance service lets you check the performer's status by either calling (323) 549-6794 or emailing the form to [castclearance@sagaftra.org](mailto:castclearance@sagaftra.org).
- Taft Hartley Report (Principal and Background Performers) – For any performers that had the status of "NR" (no record) from Cast Clearance, fill out this form and send it to your Business Representative

with the performer's headshot and resume. This will create notice in our system that this performer has worked on a SAG-AFTRA project for the first time and is the first step to the performer becoming eligible to join the Union.

- Performer Contract – Fill out and give to each performer by their first day of work. Each of you should sign the contract and the performer must be given a fully-executed copy. A copy should also be emailed to the Business Representative.
- Production Time Report a/k/a Exhibit G – This form logs each performer's work time each day. You need to have each performer confirm their times on the timesheet and sign the form every day on whether in the studio, on set, in rehearsals, travel days, etc.
- Health Plan Contributions Form – Use this form to summarize the contribution payments to the SAG-AFTRA Health Plan and AFTRA Retirement Fund.
- Final Cast List – Fill out and turn in to your Business Representative at the end of production once all the performers have completed work.
- Accident Report – In case anything goes wrong and someone gets hurt on set, complete and return to [interactive@sagaftra.org](mailto:interactive@sagaftra.org) as soon as possible. Hopefully you will never need this!
- Production Notices & References – This document is helpful production notifications such as anti-discrimination policies, casting resources, and a summary of the special rules when working with minors.

## **MONEY STUFF – TIME TO PAY ATTENTION!**

Performer Payroll: Forward performer payments within 12 business days after services are rendered. We HIGHLY recommend that you utilize the services of a payroll company to process the performer payments, taxes and withholdings, and SAG-AFTRA Health Plan and AFTRA Retirement contributions.

Health and Retirement Contributions: Your payroll company may do this for you, but if not, complete a [SAG-AFTRA Health Plan contribution form](#) and mail it, along with the check, to the SAG-AFTRA Health Plan office or pay electronically using the [Contributions Manager](#) on the SAG-AFTRA Plans website.

That's it! If you have any questions, please contact the Voiceover Department at (323) 549-6815 and ask to speak to a Business Representative.

## Interactive FAQs

### Agreement Options

There are currently three different video game/interactive agreements that vary to meet individual producer's needs. Call the Voiceover Department for help figuring out which is right for you.

### Paying Performers

How much do I need to pay the performers under the SAG-AFTRA Agreements?

The minimum amounts that performers are paid is called "scale." Different performer groups are sometimes paid different scale amounts, but here is how much an on or off-camera performer is paid for a standard day of work:

| Agreement Type                        | 2-hour off-camera | 4-hour off-camera or 8-hour on-camera | Health/Retirement Contribution |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2016 Video Game Agmt                  | N/A               | \$825.50                              | 15.5%                          |
| Low Budget Agreement (budget <\$1.5M) | \$412.75          | \$825.50                              | 15.5%                          |
| 2017 Interactive Media Agmt           | N/A               | \$902                                 | 16%                            |

[Detailed rate sheets](#) are available on the website.

How is Overtime Paid?

Off-Camera Performers are owed time-and-a-half for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> hours and double time for the 7<sup>h</sup> hour and beyond.

On-Camera Performers are owed time-and-a-half for the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> hours and double time for the eleventh hour and beyond.

When do I need to pay the performers and what happens if it's late?

Performer checks must be sent/postmarked no later than 12 business days after the work day. Late fees are \$2.50 for each day the checks are late up to 30 business days. If SAG-AFTRA or the performer has given written notice of late payment, and the payment still is not made, further late fees may apply.

Health and Retirement contributions are paid on top of the initial compensation.

Do I need to use a payroll company?

It is STRONGLY recommended, as they will have the knowledge and experience to correctly calculate the performers' salaries, taxes and withholdings, and Health and Retirement Contributions. Since performers are being hired under a union agreement, they cannot be paid as independent contractors (or under 1099s).

### Terminology

What is the difference between "Omnies" or "Walla" and "Atmospheric Voices"?

"Omnies" or "Walla" are indistinguishable, crowd voices which are not being attributed to a specific character. "Atmospheric Voices" are voices for characters that don't have more than 300 scripted words and do not advance the principal storyline.

What is “Integration”?

Integration is when you use an excerpt of a Principal Performer’s performance from one video game into another game (not to be confused with Reuse, which is when material recorded for a video game is used in another medium, such as a TV show, commercial, or a film).

What is “Vocal Stress” and how do I avoid it?

This is damage to a performer’s vocal cords/folds caused by overuse or misuse of a performer’s voice. It is sometimes caused by having to perform lots of death screams or creature voices which require vocal texture outside the performer’s normal speaking range. We recommend that you make it clear to the performer that you wish to protect their voice and invite an open dialogue on their need for breaks. For additional information, please contact a Business Representative for information and resources on best practices.

## **Contract Terms**

Are there residuals or use fees?

The Interactive Media Agreement does not include a traditional residual the way the Theatrical or Television Agreements do. Instead they include additional compensation which is paid to the performer based on the number of sessions each performer works on the game. It differs slightly in the 2016 Video Game Agreement, so please review the full contracts for complete details and call the Business Representatives with questions.

Does work that does not appear in the final game (such as characters that were cut or dialogue recorded only for the trailer) earn Additional/Contingent Compensation?

No, only work which appears in the final game earns Additional/Contingent Compensation payments.

What if I am making a trailer for my game, but the game itself doesn’t have any voice acting in it?

If you wish to hire SAG-AFRA members on a trailer for a game which does not contain voice work (and therefore was non-union), please contact SAG-AFTRA at (323) 549-6815 to discuss your project as we may have other contracts that would be more appropriate.

Can I get my friends and family to fill in some roles in the game?

Is your friend or family member a professional performer? Hopefully the answer is yes, because then there’s no problem!

Ultimately, you have the right to hire anyone you want, but SAG-AFTRA has the right (via a provision in the contract called Preference of Employment) to fine your production if a non-professional performer does not fall within certain criteria is hired instead of a professional performer. If you want more information, speak to your Business Representative.

How do you get started or get additional questions answered?

Reach out to the staff in the SAG-AFTRA Voiceover Department! We love what we do and really want to help you learn about our agreements and assist your work with our members. Call us at 323-549-6815 or email us at [interactive@sagaftra.org](mailto:interactive@sagaftra.org).