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# Resources Available for Actors Subjected to Sexual Harassment

**D**iscrimination and sexual harassment are illegal, and no one should have to tolerate it. Yet, some Equity members working on contract might not be aware of the options that are available to them if they've been subject to sexual harassment or discrimination. Your union is here to protect you from violence, harassment and discrimination in the theatres where you work. If you believe that you have been subjected to working conditions that cross the line, here's what you should know.

Sexual harassment and discrimination are against the law, which means that if you have been subjected to unlawful behavior, it's possible to file an individual lawsuit against an employer for violations of the law. Moreover, in some of the more extreme circumstances, conduct may rise to the level of a criminal violation. Sexual assault, for example, is punishable as a criminal offense, whether or not

it occurs in the workplace. For many reasons, however, people who've been victims of sexual harassment and discrimination may not wish to file charges or a lawsuit. If those individuals are union members, they have additional options.

All Equity collective bargaining agreements contain provisions that prohibit discrimination and sexual harassment. In cases where those provisions are violated, Equity can pursue remedies through the grievance and arbitration procedure of the contract. The grievance process is a private process and information is held in the strictest confidence. While arbitration provides a final and binding remedy, the private nature of the proceeding means that there are no public records that can be accessed by anyone. The investigation, as well as any decision or resolution is kept confidential and is completely private.

In addition, your union can

help direct you toward other resources to assist members who have found themselves in difficult circumstances. Equity works closely with The Actors Fund to ensure that members have access to counselling and other services when they need them the most.

Remember that if you're ever in the situation of being the victim of violence, harassment or discrimination in a theatre while working on an Equity contract, your union is ready to stand by you. Any member who has questions or concerns should not hesitate to contact his or her business representative, in strict confidence. Equity will maintain confidentiality of all sensitive information, and the union never pursues a matter without explicit authorization from a member. Letting Equity know if something happens to you is important. You may not be alone, and by reaching out to us, we may be better able to protect other members who are in the same situation.

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