

What is in it for me?

You are a storyteller. Audiences want to experience what you imagine come to life on the screen.

You are also a creator. You can make a dream set experience come to life. Imagine it: you have a skilled, diverse team that is ready to work with you and bring their best every time. That dream team knows what to do and how to do it in a way that works for you, saving you time, dollars, and well-being.

You can make this environment possible by doing the work upfront to create safety for your cast and crew, regardless of how they identify. Inclusion is about making thoughtful choices that help cast and crew feel like they belong to a team.

Sometimes, myths take on a larger space in our planning. In reality, cast and crew will be able to perform at their best once you build a culture and practice of safety.

Start where you can and make a commitment to keep learning how to increase inclusion.

Screen Access Alberta has resources that can help.

What if I get it wrong?

Think back to when your last film project wrapped without a glitch.

Right.

Supporting inclusion on set means to try and to keep trying if a misstep happens. Make sure it is acknowledged and addressed and keep moving toward inclusion. Meaningful action and recognition are worth the effort. Showing your commitment to learn and then make change based on what you learn is an important part of the process.

Remember, help is available for you to create a safe and inclusive set.

Talk with ACTRA, IATSE, and other unions and guilds to find out how they are working toward safety and inclusion. Members will expect your set to recognize to meet standards set by these organizations. Become familiar with their programs and member Codes of Conduct.

Be aware of the Alberta Human Rights Protected Grounds. Find them at

<https://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/what-are-human-rights/about-human-rights/protected-grounds>

Pay attention to ways other productions are embedding safety and inclusion on set. One example is to hire intimacy co-ordinators, who can help cast reduce the potential of harassment or violence, even if unintended.

Know that doing nothing has consequences. Consider the #MeToo movement. Be ahead of the curve of supporting your team.

What should I consider for my set?

Creating a set that is safe and inclusive means asking good questions that debunk myths. For example, does it seem like having the right bathroom spaces available to cast and crew will blow the budget? How about missing filming windows because we spent more time hiring new people?

Like anything else on set, good execution happens because of great planning. Knowing how simple equity and inclusion can be and what it can bring to your production can help with planning for a production where everyone feels welcome.

“We added pronouns to our call sheets. It helped everyone on set—there was no questioning, no hushed conversation, no explanation, and no confusion. It cost nothing, saved time, and made for a more respectful working environment for us all.”
– Alberta-based producer.

These are questions you can ask to bring cultural, psychological, and emotional safety to your set:

- Does your cast and crew reflect Alberta's population? If you are shooting in Edmonton or Calgary, know that about 40 per cent of the population identify as part of the global majority.
- Who are you missing from the cast or crew? Diverse team members can bring valuable lived experiences to improve your production.
- Have you clarified the behaviours you expect of your cast and crew?
- Do you have onboarding documents that set out these expectations in writing?
- How do you model those behaviours on set?
- Do cast and crew know whom to turn to if they experience a problem?
- Are you creating apprenticeships for up-and-coming cast and crew on set? New talent need real professional experience to keep Alberta's industry growing.
- Have you made sure there are gender-neutral and physically accessible spaces on set, including bathrooms and dressing rooms?
- Are there dark areas around the set where risky behaviour could happen?
- Do you know the stories about your shoot location? Cast and crew members may have connections to the location that can enrich the production and help others understand its meaning. There may be ways to include the community in the area, too.
- Do your documents include more than man and woman as gender options?
- Can cast and crew include their pronouns on contracts, call sheets, and other production-related documents?
- How do you accommodate cultural or religious observances during your shoot schedule?
- Do cast and crew members know how much and when they will be paid?
- Can cast and crew members without bank accounts receive pay without trouble?

I am not a director or producer - what can I do?

“Leadership at every level” is more than a cliché. Everyone on set has a role in making the environment safer and more welcoming. You might be doing everything right: using pronouns, recognizing your colleagues’ practices, listening to different voices. There is another step: stepping in against exclusionary behaviours.

These are all actions available to anyone on set:

Be a mentor, if you can, or find one if you need one. Mentors help people to develop their skills in a safe place. Often, those mentors help to develop technical skills, but also ask someone with the soft skills you respect if they can help you to develop yours.

Do safety work. Walk people to their vehicles or take public transportation together. Check in to be sure a buddy has arrived safely at their destination. Make sure new cast or crew on set have someone to show them around, introduce them to others, and orient them to the people to talk with if problems arise.

Find or make space for mutual aid. You can normalize asking for and giving help to colleagues. This creates a sense of community on set, because folks will start to rely on each other.

Know that allyship is earned. Amplify voices that are unheard or left out. Be willing to call in or call out behaviour that limits inclusion. Do the work and people who need allyship will let you know if they see you as an ally.

Be an active bystander. Remember the 5 Ds: distract, direct, delegate, delay, document. See more about the 5 Ds at <https://students.wlu.ca/student-life/diversity-and-equity/assets/resources/5ds-direct-delegate-delay-distract-and-document.html>

The path to allyship is paved with actions rather than words. Turn to <https://ipacamic.ca/allyship/about-2/> for more ideas on how to become and remain an ally.