

# Ways to Advance Disability Representation in Entertainment

- 26% of the American population identifies as having a disability. It's essential to reflect this across all forms of media.
- Disabled creatives – in front of and behind the camera – can bring both lived experience and valuable expertise to all parts of the entertainment industry.
- Disability access and inclusion should be woven into everything possible on set. Prioritize accessibility from the beginning, the same way as color correction or catering. Then, factor it into budget, production, and promotion plans.

## CASTING DIRECTORS

1. For a role where the character has a disability, prioritize casting actors with disabilities.
2. Audition actors with disabilities for roles that do not explicitly reference disability as a character trait.
3. Include people with disabilities in crowd scenes and as background characters.

## WRITERS

1. Include at least one writer with a disability in your writers' room.
2. Make it commonplace to have people with disabilities as characters in your scripts.
3. Remember: disability is one of many character traits, just like any other aspect of being human.

## STUDIOS & NETWORKS

1. Hire an accessibility coordinator to ensure policies, practices, and procedures are inclusive across disability types, communities, identities, and needs.
2. Prioritize inclusive hiring practices across various roles, positions, and responsibilities, including contractors and consultants.
3. Make sure casting facilities and sets are on the ground floor or are fully accessible via a working elevator.
4. Host inclusive events by providing sign language interpreters and real time captioning, and by ensuring accessibility accommodations for sensory, mobility and other types of disabilities.
5. Feature people with disabilities authentically in marketing and press.

## DIRECTORS & PRODUCERS

1. Recognize that disability is an untapped market that today's audiences want and expect to see represented in authentic and compelling ways. Make sure a diverse cross-section of disability communities and identities are represented in projects.
2. When submitting content to festivals include captioning and audio description (e.g., enlist companies like 3Play Media to help).

## Essential Resources & Disability Inclusion Partners

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### Making Space

Discover Making Space, a talent acquisition and learning experience platform that creates new pathways to employment and career advancement for Disabled populations. Our accessible, self-service and employer-supported learning is designed to enable seamless navigation between education and employment. We prioritize equipping talent with relevant and job-specific skills for perfect-fit opportunities, leading to swift placements, career growth and mobility. Built with Disabled talent in mind, Making Space is on a mission to create a more equitable and accessible future of work.

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### SAG-AFTRA's Performers with Disabilities Committee

SAG-AFTRA's Performers with Disabilities Committee's mission is to achieve full access for and inclusion of performers and broadcasters with disabilities by working to increase employment opportunities and improve working conditions in all areas of entertainment and news media.

### WGA Disabled Writers Committee

The Disabled Writers Committee advances the visibility and employment of disabled writers while encouraging, celebrating, and endorsing accurate and diverse portrayals of disabled people in all areas of media. We also serve as an expert resource for various issues impacting and related to the disabled community.

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### Easterseals Disability Film Challenge

The Easterseals Disability Film Challenge gives filmmakers—with and without disabilities—the opportunity to collaborate to tell unique stories that showcase disability in its many forms. The film challenge is a five-day filmmaking contest, open to all, that provides a platform for new voices in the entertainment industry. Each year, aspiring storytellers are prompted to creatively write, produce and complete a short film. Challenge winners receive invaluable access to entertainment professionals, opening the door to an industry notoriously difficult to enter.

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### Inevitable Foundation

Inevitable Foundation is investing in disabled writers and filmmakers so they can achieve artistic and financial freedom and use film and television to destigmatize disability and mental health globally.

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### IMDbPro Discover

IMDbPro Discover is an advanced search tool that allows members to find people and projects based on a variety of key IMDb data, experience, and expertise. It also includes advanced features to customize, export, and share lists. IMDbPro Discover is only available on desktop site.

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### Casting Society, Directors Guild & Producers Guild

Each of the Guilds now include some form of disabilities committee to advance careers in front of and behind the camera.

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## **Hollywood Radio & Television Society**

Led by a Board of Directors comprising TV and entertainment's most distinguished leaders, Hollywood Radio & Television Society (HRTS) is the premier networking, education and mentorship association in the industry. HRTS provides an unparalleled forum for conversation and community through events, a mentorship program, and other initiatives for professionals at all career stages – from student to C-suite – in Los Angeles, NYC and around the world.

## **Film Independent**

Film Independent champions creative independence in visual storytelling in all its forms, fostering a culture of inclusion. They support a global community of artists and audiences who embody diversity, innovation, curiosity and uniqueness of vision.