# 2021 - 2022

# Theatrical Season Report

By Joey Stamp

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*Cover Photo by [Mario Lisovski]*

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the 2021-2022 theater season began, the industry was collectively hoping for a new beginning. The COVID-19 shutdown cut the 2019-2020 season short, and the following season was marked by a halting reopening. After a rough start to this season, marked by individual productions falling to disruptions cause by the Omicron variant, I'm sure some people were wondering if we'd ever come through this crisis. But theatre people don't give up on hope that easily.

It was just after the Omicron surge that I became the Executive Director of Actors' Equity Association. Coming from a long career in labor, I had navigated my share of challenging situations in the past. One lesson I brought with me to Equity – one that is in fact foundational to unionism – is that no crisis is solved alone. I knew I was in the right place when I saw that even during an unprecedented industry-wide shutdown, Equity members stepped up to keep the union functioning, adapted to new safety standards to reopen their workplaces and raised their voices as they never had before to gain necessary governmental support.

This report is a snapshot of a season that I hope we won't have to repeat, but that nevertheless we can look back on with pride. We are still on the road to recovery, with a way to go before we can match the heights of 2019. But the story of resilience this report tells – of this union and the theatre as a whole – is a tribute to Equity's members, staff and colleagues working together to rebuild our industry into something even greater than it was before.

In solidarity,

Al Vincent, Jr.

# INTRODUCTION

We have emerged from the most challenging theatrical season in recent history. Theatres have reopened, audiences have returned and our members have safely gone back to work.

Last season I picked the word "unprecedented" to define what was arguably the hardest season Actors' Equity Association has had in its history. This year if I had to pick a single word to define the season it would be:

Promise.

If there is one thing the pandemic forced us all to do, it was to look inward and assess what is really important in our lives. In that, many made promises to not take anything for granted, to center wellbeing and work to improve ourselves in ways that are meaningful to us.

We also had a long overdue dialogue about painful practices in our industry that kept those of marginalized identities on the sidelines, locked out from the stages that so many had enjoyed. In that, many made promises never to repeat the same mistakes that led us there.

There is also the promise of a brighter future for Equity. One where the gates of membership are not locked as tightly. One where our union reaches beyond the traditional stages into new venues, like Star Garden Topless Dive Bar and the Griffith Observatory.

The 2021-2022 theatrical season brings with it optimism and promise, with so many members returning to work. However, this is only the beginning of our road to recovery. Layoffs are happening in many sectors throughout the country, along with discussions of a possible recession. As we saw following the housing crisis fifteen years ago, our industry has a longer, and more delayed recovery than others.

It's important to remind readers that every data point you see in this report represents a human; that's thousands upon thousands of stories about careers that were paused now resuming once more, tours hitting the road, monologues rehearsed for in-person auditions, green rooms buzzing with pre-show jitters and audiences returning to that which they missed most: the joy of live performance.

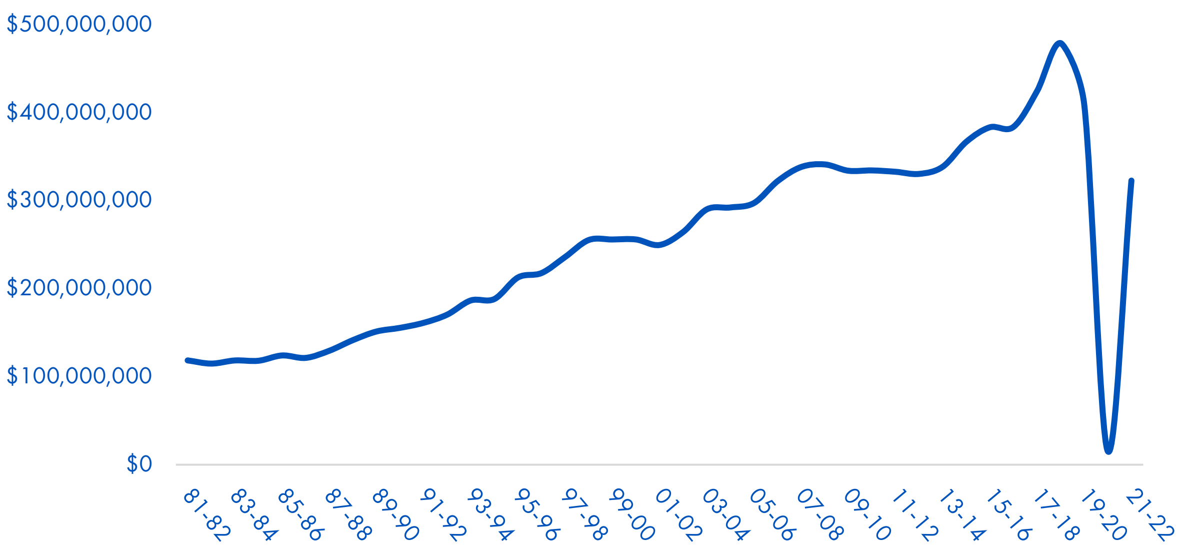
—Joey Stamp

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

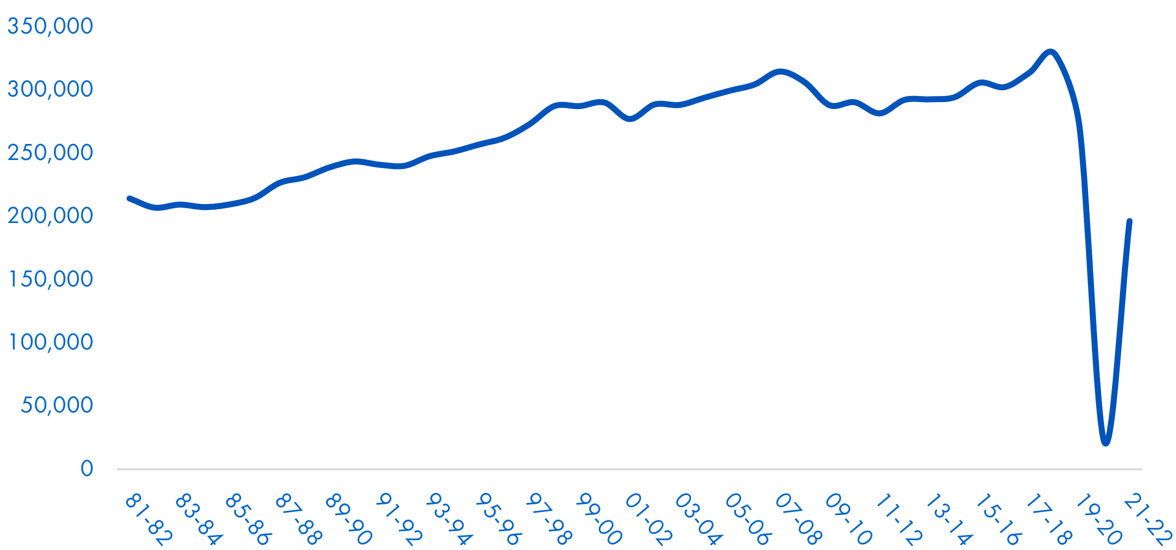
The theatrical season, as referenced throughout this report, runs from June to May of every year. In the 2021-2022 season members generated 196,388 work weeks, which represents $323,008,263 in earnings across all of our contracts. So, how does this season compare to past seasons?

Looking first at earnings, the 06-07 season is the most comparable in recent history with $322,310,000 in earnings. When we look at work weeks, there is no equivalent in the past forty years.

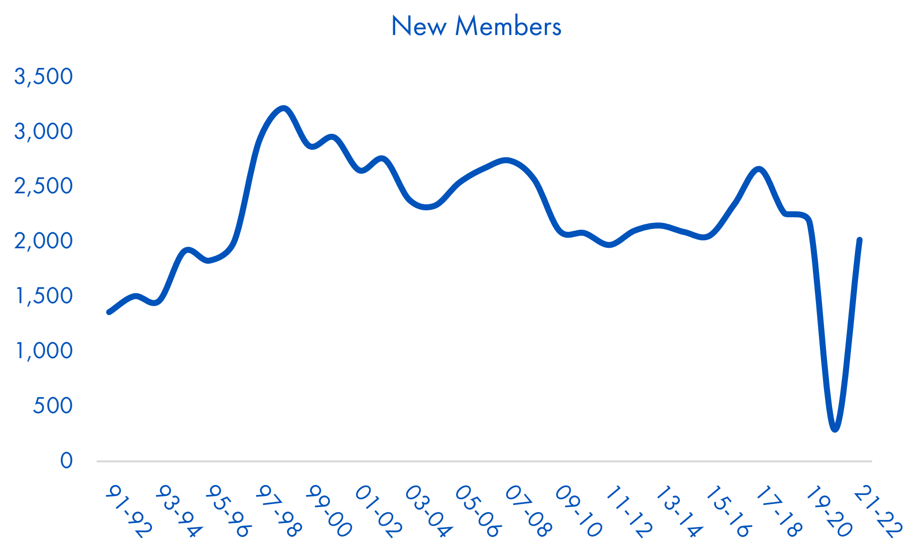
Total Earnings



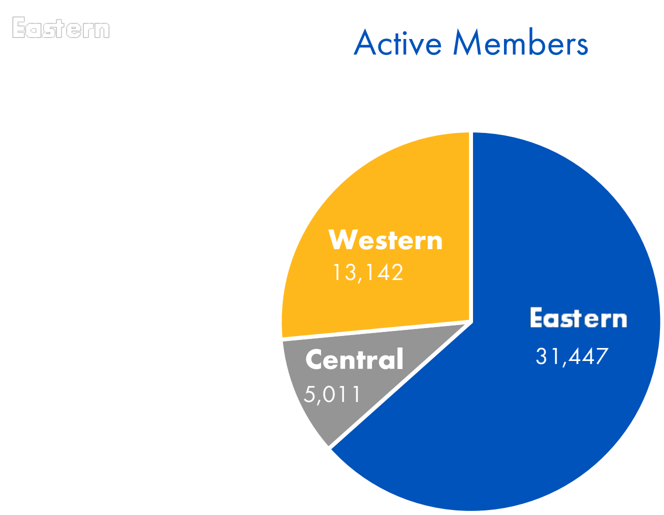

Total Work Weeks



In past seasons, Equity added on average 2,297 new members year over year. In 20-21, Equity added 2018 new members, largely through the Open Access program which was the pathway to membership for 67% of all new members.

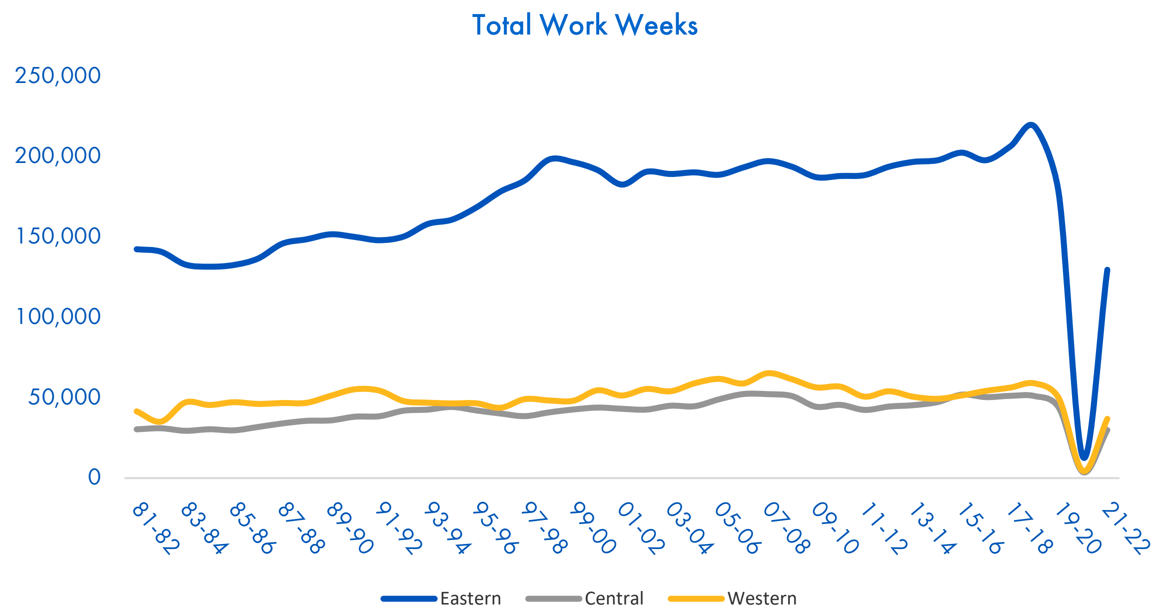



There are many ways to look at our overall membership and one of the most common ways is active membership, which includes nearly all members regardless of dues balance. Looking at active membership by region for this season, the share of members each region represents remained virtually unchanged from last season, with the Eastern Region holding the largest share, followed by the West and Central Regions respectively. While these shares remain unchanged, there was a small 1.8% drop in total members from the previous season, down to 49,600 total active members as of June 2022.



# WORK WEEKS

Work weeks are one of the oldest metrics that Actors' Equity Association uses to measure the work that happens for its membership. A work week is defined as work that happened in a given week by an individual member. A member does not need to work a whole week to have the work counted as a single work week.




This first chart illustrates work weeks across our three regions for the past forty years. Last year we witnessed work week losses across all three regions ranging between 91% to 93%. This year, there was a strong rebound in work which signals an encouraging return.

Looking first to the Western Region, members generated a cumulative amount of 36,881 work weeks, or just about 19% of all work weeks this season. Using the mean average of work week totals across all 40 years, the Western region averages around 50,000 work weeks per season.

Shifting to the Central Region, members generated a total of 29,910 work weeks, which is around 15% of all work weeks this season. Using the same 40 year mean average as we did previously, the Central Region averages around 40,000 work weeks per season.

Lastly, the Eastern Region. Members generated 129,597  works weeks in this region this season, or around 66% of all work weeks. On average for the past forty years, the Eastern Region typically expects around 170,000 work weeks per season.

How can we quantify how these regions have recovered from last season's lows? One way is to take this season's work week data and divide it by to the mean average work weeks expected regionally. This gives us a recovery percentage for the season for each region.

When we apply that math to the regional work week figures mentioned previously, both the Central and Western Regions have an almost identical 74% recovery of average work weeks. The Eastern Region had a slightly higher recovery of 76%.

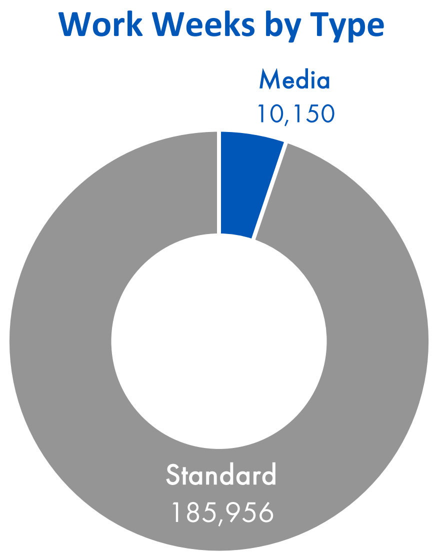
The following table is a new addition to the report this year with deep connections to the very backbone of our union. This table shows work weeks for employment categories by Regions. Article 3, Section 2(c) of Equity's Constitution, defines how National Council is composed, using a six-year statistical analysis. This analysis combines statistics for both members in good-standing and the work weeks featured in this table below, averaged out over six years.

| | | 16-17 | 17-18 | 18-19 | 19-20 | 20-21 | 21-22 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Eastern** | | | | | | | |
| | Principal | 110,235 | 112,573 | 121,038 | 99,399 | 7,880 | 69,010 |
| | Chorus | 57,003 | 62,084 | 63,073 | 49,706 | 1,959 | 33,497 |
| | Stage Manager | 30,530 | 31,673 | 34,649 | 27,898 | 2,393 | 20,757 |
| | Total | 197,768 | 206,330 | 218,760 | 177,003 | 12,232 | 123,264 |
| **Central** | | | | | | | |
| | Principal | 35,000 | 34,382 | 33,061 | 29,243 | 2,538 | 20,349 |
| | Chorus | 6,097 | 7,493 | 8,108 | 6,145 | 12 | 2,456 |
| | Stage Manager | 9,294 | 9,319 | 9,901 | 8,487 | 846 | 5,661 |
| | Total | 50,391 | 51,194 | 51,070 | 43,875 | 3,396 | 28,466 |
| **Western** | | | | | | | |
| | Principal | 38,506 | 40,319 | 41,811 | 34,862 | 3,078 | 24,245 |
| | Chorus | 6,108 | 5,778 | 6,274 | 5,567 | 138 | 3,784 |
| | Stage Manager | 9,644 | 10,211 | 10,873 | 9,253 | 1,140 | 7,550 |
| | Total | 54,258 | 56,308 | 58,958 | 49,682 | 4,356 | 35,579 |

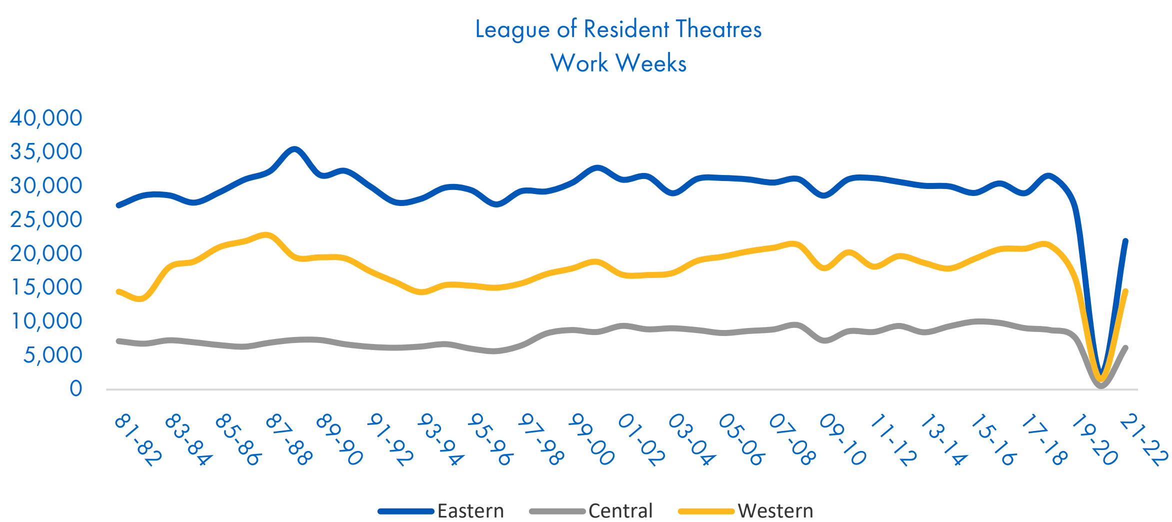
While this table has its constitutional ties, it's also intriguing to look at from a historical perspective. In each region we can see that the pandemic had an outsized impact on Chorus work weeks. We know that pandemic health and safety guidance had an outsized impact on Chorus roles, and we can see that here. The Central Region took the hardest hit, dropping to just 12 work weeks for our Chorus members. The Western Region was not far behind, with Chorus work weeks dropping to just 138 total. Because the look back averages six years' worth of statistics, the outsized impact the pandemic had on work weeks for a single season should even out when averaged against the other seasons and not affect the distribution of council seats.

Last season Equity Media Agreements were used to accommodate some streaming theatrical work to support our members and theatres unable to hold standard in-person performances. As a result, 63% of last season's work weeks were from Media Agreements while 37% of work weeks were for standard, in-person work.

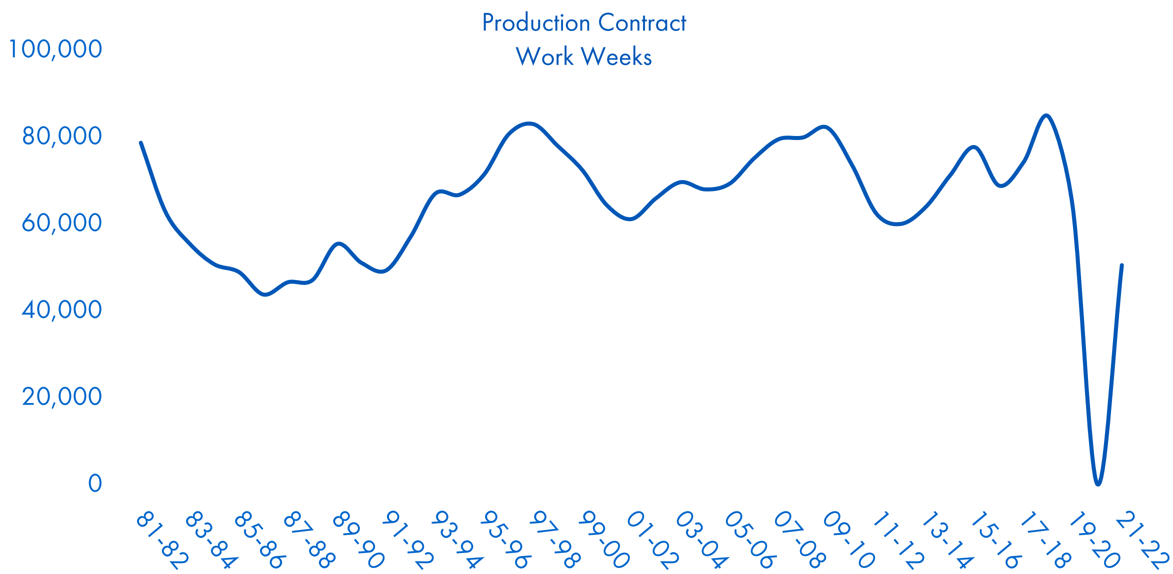
This year, work on Media Agreements represent only 5% of all work weeks, with 95% of all work weeks going to in-person work. Even with this large share of standard work weeks returning, media work weeks only dropped by 23%, or around 3,000 work weeks, from last season.



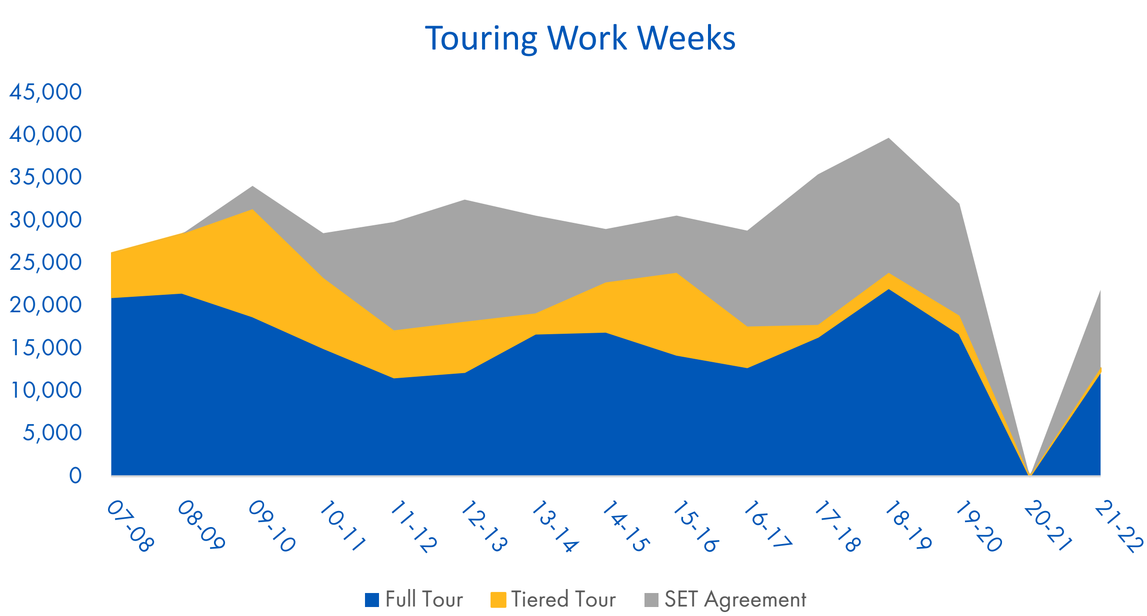

The League of Resident Theatres (LORT) Agreement is one of largest generator of work weeks for members. This theatrical season, the LORT Agreement represented a little over 21% of all work weeks. This season LORT generated 42,648 work weeks, 38,215 more than the prior season. The Western and Central Regions fared slightly better than the East, each recovering around 79% of their average work weeks, whereas the East recovered just under 75% of average work weeks.



First negotiated in 1919, the Production contract is one of the oldest agreements that Equity administers. Last season, this agreement saw the lowest number of work weeks in its entire history with only 65 work weeks. This season, there was a strong rebound, with members working 50,484 work weeks. *Hamilton*, *Wicked* and *Moulin Rouge* led the return as the top productions with the most work weeks on this agreement.




Turning next to our Touring Agreements, this chart combines the main three agreement categories our members use for touring. Full Tours and Tiered Tours come from our Production Contract, while the Short Engagement Touring Agreement (SET) is a separate touring agreement created in 2008. Following last season which had no touring work weeks, Full Tour's recovered around 75% of its average work weeks, and the SET Agreement recovered 87% of its average work weeks. Tiered Tours, however, struggled this season.

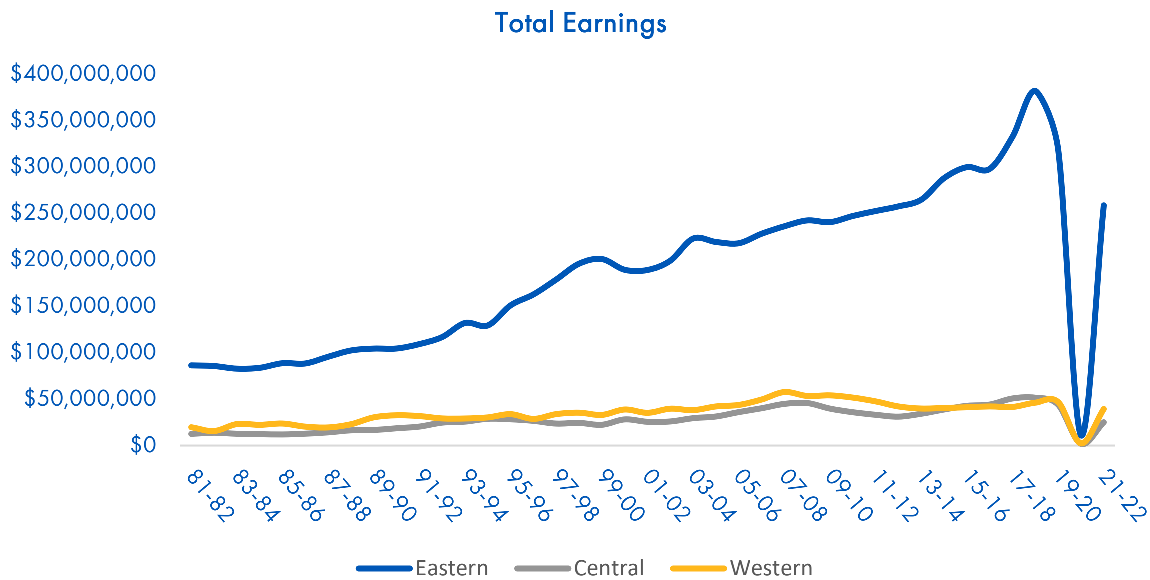


The table below illustrates a complete picture of all work weeks from the 2021-2022 season, by contract and region.

| | Eastern | Central | Western | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Production | 46,585 | 575 | 3,324 | 50,484 |
| Point of Organization | 34,140 | 575 | 3,068 | 37,783 |
| Tiered Tours | 419 | | | 419 |
| Full Tours | 12,026 | | 256 | 12,282 |
| Resident Theatre (LORT) | 21,949 | 6,168 | 14,531 | 42,648 |
| LORT Rep | 1,245 | | 2,676 | 3,921 |
| LORT Non-Rep | 20,704 | 6,168 | 11,855 | 38,727 |
| Small Professional Theatre | 9,587 | 6,171 | 6,718 | 22,476 |
| Letter of Agreement | 6,557 | 3,728 | 4,515 | 14,800 |
| Short Engagement Touring Agreement | 9,192 | | | 9,192 |
| Stock | 2,741 | 796 | 585 | 4,122 |
| COST | 1,909 | | 585 | 2,494 |
| CORST | 685 | 259 | | 944 |
| MSUA | | 537 | | 537 |
| RMTA | 147 | | | 147 |
| Developmental Agreement | 2,667 | | | 2,667 |
| Special Agreements | 818 | 3,244 | 979 | 5,041 |
| Young Audiences (TYA) | 2,535 | 366 | 750 | 3,651 |
| Cabaret | 187 | 21 | 450 | 658 |
| Guest Artist | 1,727 | 372 | 526 | 2,625 |
| Special Appearance | 1,593 | 324 | 440 | 2,357 |
| University Theatre (URTA) | 476 | 200 | 388 | 1,064 |
| Dinner Theatre | | 3,973 | 186 | 4,159 |
| Casino | | | 325 | 325 |
| Midsize | 15 | | | 15 |
| Business Theatre and Events | 383 | 56 | 10 | 449 |
| Staged Reading | 1 | | | 1 |
| Off-Broadway (NYC) | 12,011 | | | 12,011 |
| NYC/LOA | 1,945 | | | 1,945 |
| Mini (NYC) | 1,175 | | | 1,175 |
| Transition | 226 | | | 226 |
| New England Area Theatre (NEAT) | 1,590 | | | 1,590 |
| Disney World | 5,535 | | | 5,535 |
| Orlando Area Theatre (OAT) | 102 | | | 102 |
| Chicago Area (CAT) | | 3,916 | | 3,916 |
| Western Civic Light Opera (WCLO) | | | 450 | 450 |
| Hollywood Area (HAT) | | | 199 | 199 |
| San Francisco Bay Area (BAT) | | | 935 | 935 |
| Modified Bay Area Theatre (MBAT) | | | 185 | 185 |
| 99 Seat Agreement | | | 1,385 | 1,385 |
| TOTAL | 129,597 | 29,910 | 36,881 | 196,388 |

# EARNINGS

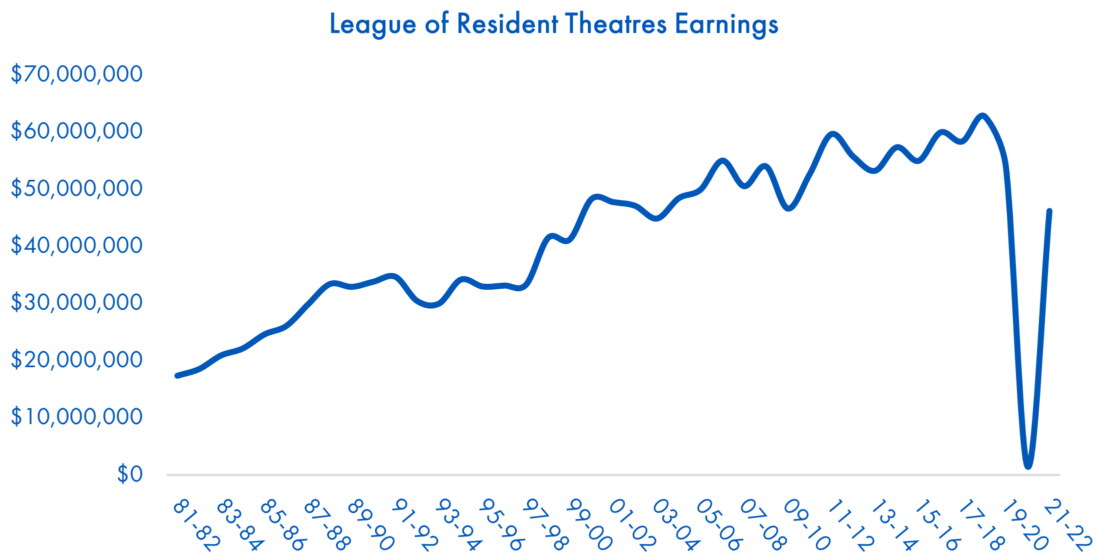
Earnings in this report examine the total dollar amount that members earn in a given theatrical season. Looking at earnings over the last forty years, we can see that the most significant earnings growth, and pandemic losses, occurred in the Eastern Region.



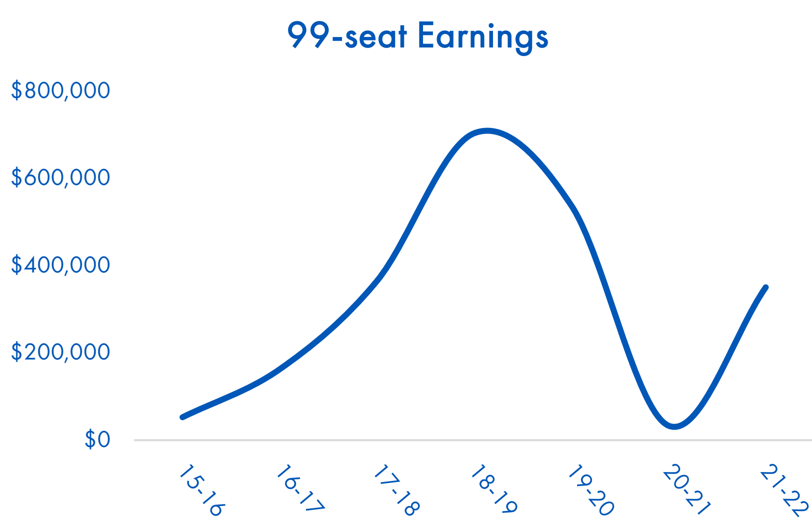

Over the past ten years, the Eastern Region had a mean average of around $290 million in earnings each season. This season, the Eastern Region generated around $258 million in earnings, which equates to about 89% of average earnings compared to our past seasons. The Production Contract was responsible for around 58% of those earnings, and LORT for around 14% of those earnings.

The Central and Western Regions had a tremendous recovery from their pandemic lows. Members working in the Central Region generated just over $25 million in earnings, which is around 61% of this region's average seasonal earnings, when you average out earnings over the past ten years. Members working in the Western Region generated over $39 million in earnings, which is around 88% of the average seasonal earnings in this regions across the previous ten years.

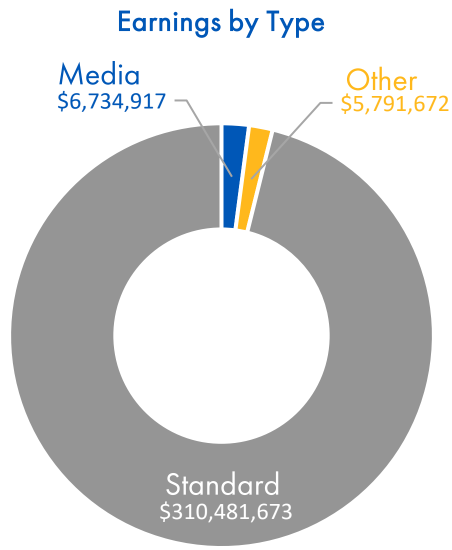
After the Production Contract, The LORT Agreement is the next largest contract when it comes to member earnings. Over the last ten years, earnings on this agreement averaged around $57 million a season. This season, the LORT Agreement generated a little over $46 million in member earnings, which is around 82% of the average seasonal earnings.



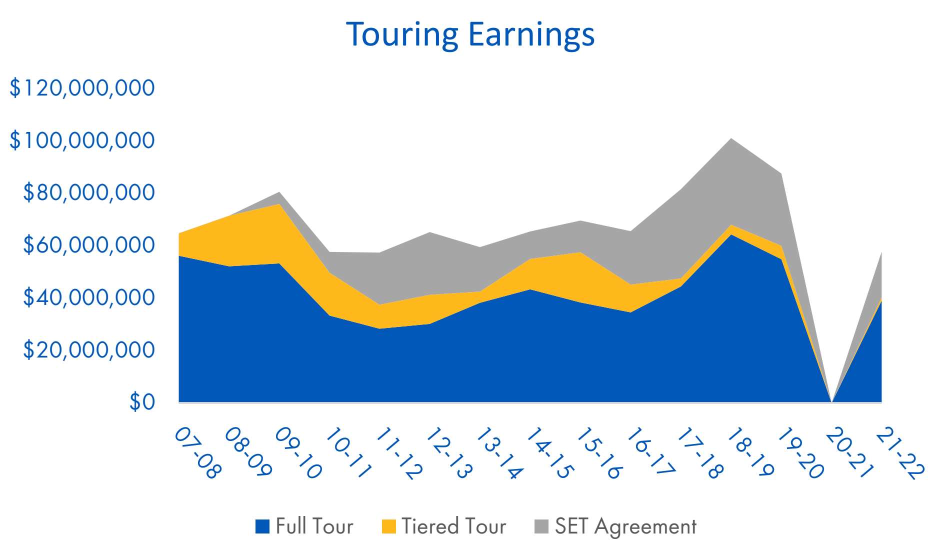

Looking at the 99-Seat Agreement, one of Equity's newest agreements, members generated just over $350,000 in earnings this season. While this contract is still too fresh to know what an average season is like, at its peak in the 18-19 season, this contract generated over $700,000 in earnings, so there is plenty of room for growth in future seasons.



Last season, 48% of all earnings came from work on Media Agreements, which accounted for $7.2 million in earnings. This season, 2% of all earnings came from work on Media Agreements. That 2% translates to $6.7 million in earnings. So, while standard earnings have jumped back, media earnings have only dipped this season by around half a million dollars, compared to last season.




Excluding some closing payouts, there were no earnings on any of our touring agreements last season. This season earnings rebounded. Full tours on the Production Contract generated the most earnings, followed by the SET Agreement. In total, across all three contract groups, tours generated over $57 million in member earnings. This is still way off from the all-time high peak in the 18-19 season when tours generated over $100 million in member earnings, but it's a strong return from the worst touring season on record.



The table below illustrates a complete picture of all earnings from the 2021-2022 season, by contract and region.

| | Eastern | Central | Western | Total | *% of Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Production | $172,617,540.49 | $1,501,737.77 | $12,019,457.53 | $186,138,735.79 | 57.63% |
| Point of Organization | $133,161,238.82 | $1,501,737.77 | $11,165,151.38 | $145,828,127.97 | 45.15% |
| Tiered Tours | $1,205,044.11 | | | $1,205,044.11 | 0.37% |
| Full Tours | $38,251,257.56 | | $854,306.15 | $39,105,563.71 | 12.11% |
| Resident Theatres (LORT) | $23,867,575.17 | $6,581,164.55 | $15,717,029.02 | $46,165,768.74 | 14.29% |
| LORT Rep | $22,716,516.75 | $6,581,164.55 | $12,722,817.87 | $42,020,499.17 | 13.01% |
| LORT Non-Rep | $1,151,058.42 | | $2,994,211.15 | $4,145,269.57 | 1.28% |
| Small Professional Theatre (SPT) | $5,975,956.85 | $3,536,978.47 | $3,489,226.82 | $13,002,162.14 | 4.03% |
| Letter of Agreement (LOA) | $4,525,937.33 | $3,134,938.12 | $2,792,595.91 | $10,453,471.36 | 3.24% |
| Short Engagement Touring Agreement | $17,580,548.80 | | | $17,580,548.80 | 5.44% |
| Stock | $2,834,773.08 | $887,599.36 | $567,243.05 | $4,289,615.49 | 1.33% |
| COST | $1,959,880.38 | | $567,243.05 | $2,527,123.43 | 0.78% |
| CORST | $633,646.38 | $194,552.89 | | $828,199.27 | 0.26% |
| MSUA | | $693,046.47 | | $693,046.47 | 0.21% |
| RMTA | $241,246.32 | | | $241,246.32 | 0.07% |
| Developmental Agreement | $2,937,113.47 | | | $2,937,113.47 | 0.91% |
| Special Agreements | $1,045,629.83 | $1,787,264.36 | $934,350.24 | $3,767,244.43 | 1.17% |
| Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) | $1,279,540.76 | $208,455.49 | $391,236.83 | $1,879,233.08 | 0.58% |
| Cabaret | $168,311.69 | $11,505.00 | $335,897.90 | $515,714.59 | 0.16% |
| Guest Artist | $1,107,215.97 | $220,646.86 | $316,267.00 | $1,644,129.83 | 0.51% |
| Special Appearance | $635,652.53 | $130,992.30 | $156,008.30 | $922,653.13 | 0.29% |
| University Theatre (URTA) | $913,850.55 | $201,082.32 | $410,978.08 | $1,525,910.95 | 0.47% |
| Dinner Theatre | | $3,888,087.77 | $107,895.00 | $3,995,982.77 | 1.24% |
| Casino | | | $290,678.75 | $290,678.75 | 0.09% |
| Midsize | $13,568.34 | | | $13,568.34 | 0.00% |
| Business Theatre | $237,857.81 | $75,300.00 | $5,040.00 | $318,197.81 | 0.10% |
| Staged Reading | $210.00 | | | $210.00 | 0.00% |
| Royalties | $154,157.57 | | | $154,157.57 | 0.05% |
| Filming and Taping | $211,563.20 | | $6,880.00 | $218,443.20 | 0.07% |
| Off-Broadway (NYC) | $13,732,986.26 | | | $13,732,986.26 | 4.25% |
| NYC-LOA | $1,193,123.85 | | | $1,193,123.85 | 0.37% |
| Mini (NYC) | $777,899.87 | | | $777,899.87 | 0.24% |
| Transition | $107,721.25 | | | $107,721.25 | 0.03% |
| New England Area (NEAT) | $945,199.28 | | | $945,199.28 | 0.29% |
| Disney World | $5,667,614.56 | | | $5,667,614.56 | 1.75% |
| Orlando Area (OAT) | $48,595.00 | | | $48,595.00 | 0.02% |
| Chicago Area (CAT) | | $2,910,464.74 | | $2,910,464.74 | 0.90% |
| Western Light Opera (WCLO) | | | $572,583.49 | $572,583.49 | 0.18% |
| Hollywood Area (HAT) | | | $135,796.33 | $135,796.33 | 0.04% |
| San Francisco Bay Area (BAT) | | | $686,510.18 | $686,510.18 | 0.21% |
| Modified Bay Area Theatre (MBAT) | | | $65,554.10 | $65,554.10 | 0.02% |
| 99 Seat Agreement | | | $350,674.34 | $350,674.34 | 0.11% |
| Grand Total: | $258,580,143.51 | $25,076,217.11 | $39,351,902.87 | $323,008,263.49 | |

# MEMBERSHIP

A union is nothing without its members, but who is Equity? Each year this report takes a moment to examine the people that make up Equity's membership.

| Race or Ethnicity | Female | Male | Non-Binary/ Third Gender | Prefer Not To Say | Prefer To Self-Describe | Unknown | % | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Asian or Asian American | 637 | 459 | 6 | | 1 | 1 | 2.2% | 1,104 |
| Black or African American | 2,141 | 2,158 | 16 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 8.7% | 4,325 |
| Hispanic or Latin American | 779 | 885 | 13 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3.4% | 1,683 |
| Indigenous Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 22 | 34 | | | | | 0.1% | 56 |
| Indigenous North American | 36 | 41 | | 1 | 1 | | 0.2% | 79 |
| Middle Eastern or North African | 29 | 37 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 0.1% | 69 |
| Multi-Racial or Multi-Ethnic | 1,304 | 1,062 | 38 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 4.9% | 2,422 |
| Prefer Not To Say | 1296 | 1217 | 10 | 51 | | 4 | 5.2% | 2,578 |
| Unknown | 2,566 | 2,607 | 15 | 5 | 1 | 39 | 10.6% | 5,233 |
| White or European American | 16,078 | 15,789 | 134 | 17 | 29 | 4 | 64.6% | 32,051 |
| **Grand Total** | **24,888** | **24,289** | **233** | **88** | **48** | **54** | | **49,600** |
| % | 50.18% | 48.97% | 0.47% | 0.18% | 0.10% | 0.11% | | |

These numbers in the table above are generated at the end of the season each year. This table breaks down the active membership based on how members self-identify. This report simply looks at our membership in a specific point in time. For a deeper dive into membership demographic statistics, including who employers choose to hire as well as average salaries, and trends among stage managers and actors with marginalized identities, Equity published its most recent a Hiring Bias and Wage Gap Report which can be found on our website.

Another way to look at our membership is to analyze our members in good standing, which means these members are active and have no outstanding dues balance. These numbers directly tie into the National Council composition mentioned earlier in this report. This table below shows members in good standing, in each of the previous six seasons. In 2020 the National Council created a policy where all members who were current on their dues as of the spring dues cycle of that year would be considered in good standing, due to the pandemic work shut down. This policy continued until it expired in 2022, which explains the drop of members in good standing in 2021-2022 season.

| | 16-17 | 17-18 | 18-19 | 19-20 | 20-21 | 21-22 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Eastern | 29,310 | 28,690 | 28,820 | 29,651 | 25,877 | 17,774 |
| Central | 4,461 | 4,362 | 4,387 | 4,586 | 4,267 | 2,959 |
| Western | 12,284 | 12,297 | 11,732 | 12,138 | 11,232 | 8,090 |
| **Total** | **46,005** | **45,349** | **44,939** | **46,375** | **41,376** | **28,823** |

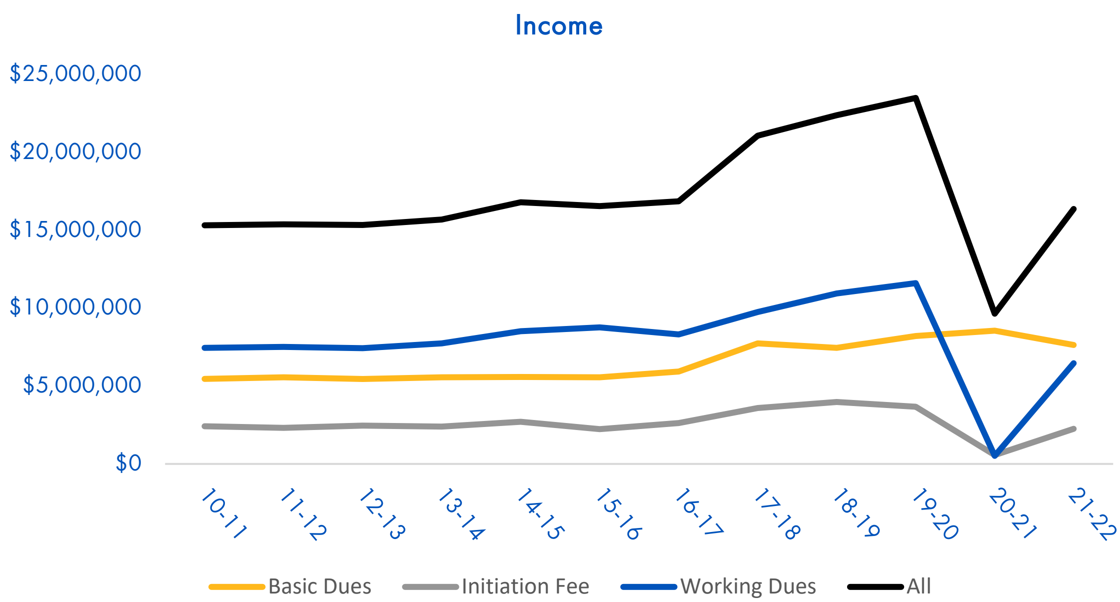
# FINANCES (unaudited)

Up until this section, this report looked at statistics from the Theatrical Year, which runs from June to May of ever year. However, the figures in this section of the report are reported out from our fiscal year, which runs from April to March of every year.

Equity has three major categories of income:

1. Basic Dues
2. Working Dues
3. Initiation Fees

Basic dues are billed biannually in the spring and fall. Working dues are paid as a percentage, based on member earnings, and deducted when members work. The initiation fee is the initial payment made when a member joins the union. This fee doesn't have to be paid in one lump sum upfront and generally isn't; it is typically paid in parts while a member is working.

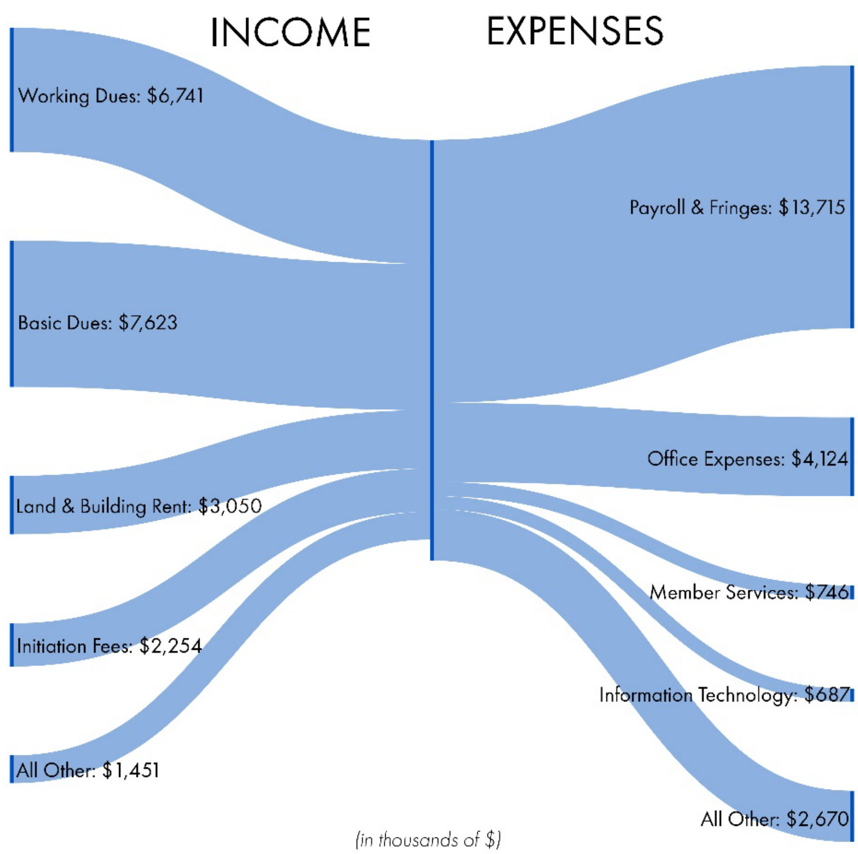



While it may appear fairly simple at first, the story of our dues income the past few seasons is a complex one. Basic dues income first started rising to over $7 million in the 17-18 season, and in the 19-20 season we hit an all-time high of $8.2 million in basic dues. Many feared that the pandemic would cause basic dues to drop dramatically. Not only did basic dues hold strong, but they grew to $8.5 million. However, working dues and initiation fees decreased dramatically due to the industry shut down. This loss of income necessitated layoffs and dipping into our investment reserves.  Basic dues were a critical lifeline that kept the union operational during the pandemic.

This season, basic dues income dipped down to $7.6 million. Work has returned for many, but as evidenced previously in this report, work has not returned to pre-pandemic levels yet. So, some members remain in difficult financial situations now, and need to make tough choices while struggling against economic hardships and high inflation rates.

Last season working dues and initiation fee income dropped to fractions of their previous highs. Thankfully, work rebounded this season, as did these two dues categories. Initiation fee income jumped up to $2.2 million, driven in part by our Open Access program. Working dues rebounded to $6.4 million. Averaging out our working dues income across the previous ten seasons brings us to an $8 million average per season, so there is still some room to improve our working dues recovery.

This final chart illustrates Equity's income and expenses. The three dues categories represent 81% of all income. Additional funds come from land and building rent: The land Equity owns in Times Square, NYC, the building Equity owns in the West Loop, Chicago and the building Equity owns in North Hollywood, Los Angeles.



(in thousands of $)

Most of Equity's expenses go towards the excellent staff that keeps the union running strong. Other expenses represent legal and financial expenditures, communication costs, insurance and information technology infrastructure investment and maintenance.

# CURTAIN CALL

I walked into the Equity office in January 2023, eager to take a break from my claustrophobic work-from-home office. I didn't know that there were auditions happening in the office that day, but I felt it when I stepped into the buzzing Sky Lobby of our New York office building, palpable with energy. Many members, present and future, were eagerly preparing for their upcoming, in-person, auditions.

Just over ten years ago, in the fall of 2012, I started my career at Equity as one of its first new audition monitors. I monitored many auditions, and each time, there was that same palpable energy in the room. It's one of those sensations that is really impossible to describe, but you know it when you feel it.

I hadn't realized just how much I missed that energy. The pandemic challenged all of us in so many ways. Many delt with loss, myself included. However, this was something I hadn't realized I lost, but I knew in that moment I was glad to have it back. Standing among auditioning members, the dread of the pandemic was gone, replaced by the feeling of hope and promise. If you just nail your monologue, your 16-bars, your dance call, you will get the job.

It felt like there might never be a time without COVID. Now, while there is still much to learn and implement in containing the effects of COVID, we are heading towards a new future. What that future holds, no one can know. I choose to believe that the future holds promise. Work will continue to grow for our members. We won't repeat the mistakes of the past. We will all value each other a little bit more than we used to, knowing what it's like to be disconnected from one another.

This report could not have been completed without the amazing work of Katey Schwartz, assistant national director of contracts, and John Fasulo, national director of contracts and membership. David Levy, Gabriela Geselowitz, and Noah Diamond, all from our communications department, provided essential guidance and feedback. Dana Gal and Joyce Vinzani are also owed thanks, helping me with essential research.

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Lastly, thank you to my wife Anais Torres-Stamp and son August, for their eternal love and support.

*See how the world could be, in spite of the way that it is.*

**—Anaïs Mitchell, Hadestown**