WORKFORCE TRAINING

AI in film and television now has signed contract terms that employers can learn from.

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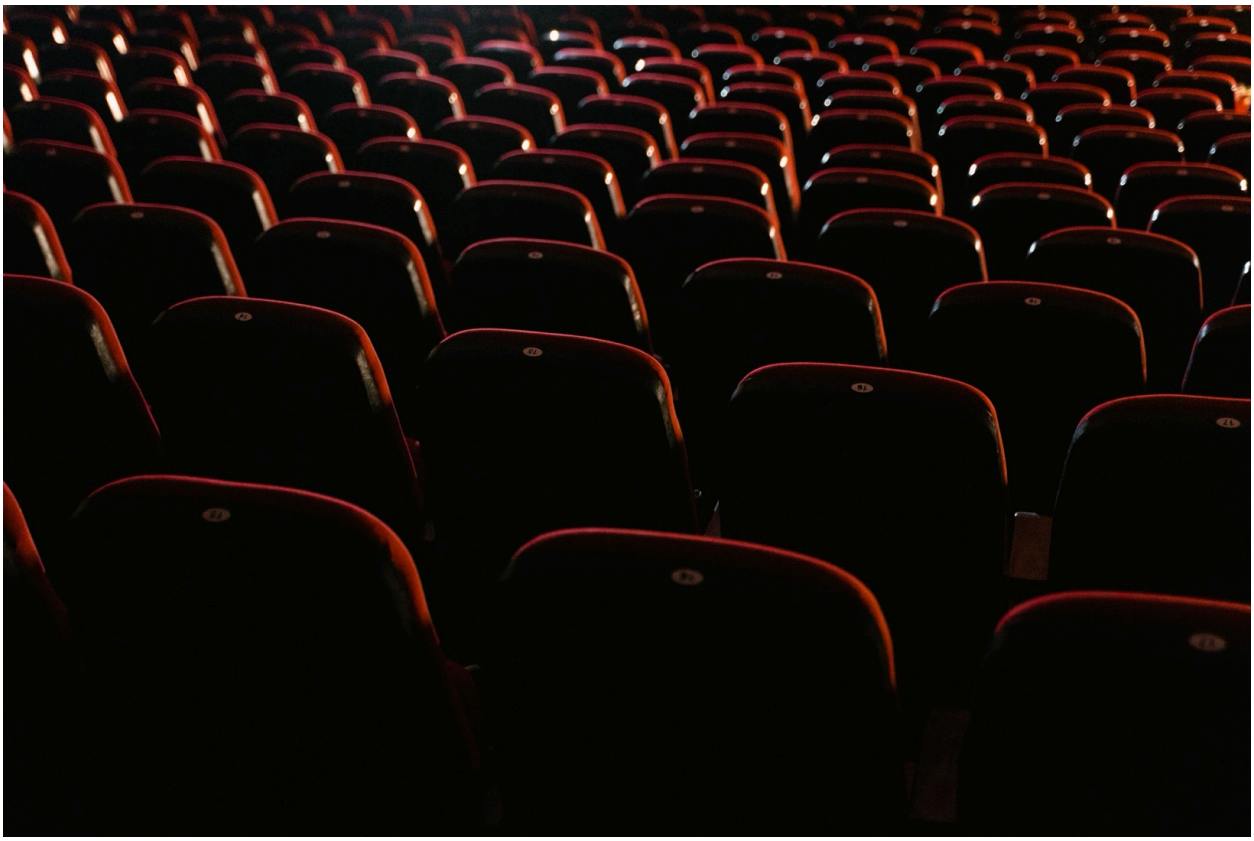


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IN BRIEF

In 2026 American film and television unions and producers agreed AI terms on consent, notice, pay, disclosure and training.

In our view, many employers bringing AI to their people face the same questions about their work, voice, likeness and skills.

An organization can answer those questions in its own policy and training, with its people.

What film and television agreed in 2026

When an organization brings AI into its work, its people ask what will happen to their work, their voice and their likeness. In 2026 American film and television unions and producers answered those questions in signed agreements.

SAG-AFTRA, the performers' union, and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), which represents the producers, signed a new television and theatrical agreement on 27 May 2026. In a statement of 4 June 2026, the AMPTP congratulated the union on ratifying it. Its AI terms cover digital replicas, which are copies of a performer's voice or likeness created with digital technology. They also cover generative AI, including synthetic performers and training.

The signed text says a performer's consent must be "clear and conspicuous" and may be given in a separately signed or initialled part of the employment contract or in a separate signed document. It must include a reasonably specific description of the intended use. A producer must give the performer at least 48 hours' notice of the time their services are needed to create a replica, or notice when they are engaged, if that is later.

Where a replica is used in scenes the performer would otherwise have performed in person, the performer is paid a pro rata daily rate or the minimum, whichever is higher. The payment covers the days the producer determines they would have worked.

The 2026 text also adds a rule for training AI on recorded performances. A producer that is paid to license performances to an unaffiliated company, to train an AI system offered to the public, must notify the union in writing. At the union's request, the two sides meet to discuss the licence, including any pay.

The Writers Guild of America announced on 24 April 2026 that its members had ratified their 2026 agreement with the AMPTP. The guild's guidance says a company must disclose to the writer when any material given to them was generated by AI. Such material that has not been published or used before cannot count as source material when credits are set, or as assigned material when pay is set.

A writer may use AI if the company consents and the writer follows its policies, and the company cannot require it. The 2026 agreement adds that companies must give the guild written notice when they license writers' work to train commercial AI systems. The guild may then ask to discuss the licence, including any pay for writers.

The Directors Guild of America announced on 12 June 2026 that its board had approved a tentative agreement and recommended ratification. Its members ratified the new contract, the guild announced on 26 June 2026. The guild's summary says it gives directors control over AI-generated footage and creates an employer-funded skills enhancement program.

The same themes in Canada

Canada's screen sector has set similar terms with producers and set out its positions to government. The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) announced on 21 January 2025 that its members had ratified a new three-year Independent Production Agreement. The other parties are producers represented by the Canadian Media Producers Association and the Association québécoise de la production médiatique.

ACTRA's highlights of the agreement say performers must be notified in advance before a digital replica is created and asked for their signed, explicit consent.

Performers also receive a reasonably specific description of how the replica will be used. Time spent creating it on a workday counts as work time, and digitally generated characters and voices need prior negotiation with ACTRA.

The Writers Guild of Canada states its own position in a letter of 31 October 2025 to the federal ministers of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and of Industry, responding to the government's consultation on AI. It says that using copyrighted work to train AI must be subject to consent, credit and compensation, with consent given expressly on an opt-in basis. It also says a letter of understanding with producers maintains the guild's "position that producers do not have the right to use members' work to train AI".

In April 2026, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage published a report on AI and the creative industries. Its first recommendation asks the government to protect the property rights and interests of artists through the principles of the Copyright Act. Its third asks that all fully synthetic or AI-generated content be clearly identified.

Canada's national AI strategy, AI for All, announces a $50 million Creative Technology Program. The strategy says the program will support Canadian creators in using AI "on their own terms".

Where governments stand

In our reading, the governments below are working on the same questions, mostly through transparency and the labelling of AI-generated content.

On 18 March 2026 the UK government published a report on copyright and AI. It says a broad copyright exception with an opt-out is no longer its preferred way forward. It proposes to work with industry and experts on best practice on what it calls "input transparency".

The same report says the government will consider whether a new digital replica or personality right would be beneficial. It also proposes not to intervene in the licensing market at this stage.

The European Commission published its final code of practice on marking and labelling AI-generated content on 10 June 2026. The Commission says the code is voluntary and sets out practical steps.

It also says the AI Act requires clear labelling in key cases from 2 August 2026. Those cases include deepfakes and AI-generated text published on matters of public interest.

In Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada held a public consultation on AI transparency from 23 July to 23 September 2026. One of its five topics was detecting and identifying content generated by AI.

What the terms show an employer

In our view, these agreements answer questions that many employers introducing AI to their workforce will meet. We read them as five questions that an organization can settle in its own policy and training, whatever its industry.

1. **Consent.** When will the organization record, reuse or copy someone's work, voice or likeness with AI, and how will it ask? The film terms ask for consent that includes a reasonably specific description of the intended use.

2. **Notice and disclosure.** How far in advance will people be told about a new use of their work? Will they know when material given to them was made with AI?
3. **Pay and credit.** How will work produced with AI count when the organization recognizes, credits and rewards its people? Under the writers' terms, AI material given to a writer that has not been published before cannot count as source material when credits are set.
4. **Training AI on people's work.** May the organization use its staff's work to train AI, and who is told if that work is licensed to another party?
5. **Skills.** Who may use AI, under which policy, and what training will people receive before they do? In our reading, the directors' new skills program points to the same question.

We read the film terms as a record of what performers, writers, directors and producers agreed once AI reached their work.

What this means for you

Start with your own people and the ways AI will touch their work. Then write the answers down where staff can read them.

1. List where AI will use your people's work, voice, likeness or skills.
2. Write a consent rule that names each intended use in plain terms, and check each rule with your legal adviser.
3. Set how much notice staff will receive, and say when material you give them was made with AI.
4. Decide whether staff work may be used to train AI, and who must be told if it is.
5. Settle how work produced with AI is credited and recognized.
6. Train people on the policy and on the AI tools they will use.

Our workforce training service helps organizations prepare their people to work with AI. If you would like to discuss these questions for your own organization, request a briefing.

SOURCES

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Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada Have your say on advancing AI transparency in Canada 2026

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