



Inevitable Foundation

The “Cost” of Accommodations Report

This report examines the real consequences for disabled talent when their accommodation needs go unmet and demystifies the true financial cost of accommodations by creating the first set of budget templates and accommodation benchmarks for the industry.

April 2022



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Why We Created This Report

Why do disabled people make up over 20% of the population but less than 1% of talent working in film and television—a 20x gap?

To understand the barriers holding back this community, we surveyed disabled writers, actors, producers and showrunners about their experiences building careers in the entertainment industry. Their responses paint a picture of an industry that systemically ignores the basic needs of disabled talent and too often leaves crucial accommodations unfulfilled—oversights that jeopardize the career trajectories of an entire community of artists.

How is a disabled actor expected to perform at their best if they can't first get into the building for an audition? How can someone build their creative confidence when they face identity-based discrimination 43% of the time?¹ How can a writer, actor or crew member expect to thrive if their basic needs—bathroom access, safe and affordable transportation, communication equity or use of a workspace where they can focus—are unmet? And what of the unfounded and limiting beliefs that a disabled person is too “difficult,” “expensive” or “inefficient” to work with?

The gaps identified in this report are especially burdensome for lower-level talent—the level at which the majority of disabled writers and actors find themselves stuck for far too long. (97.4% of television writers' rooms don't have any upper-level disabled writers, showrunners or producers.²)

Lower-level jobs are also the most competitive in the field. With more than 200 storytellers vying for each staff writer role in a television writers' room, for example, competition is thick: A 0.5% acceptance rate makes these jobs 9x harder to snag than admission to the most sought-after Ivy League college.³ And with studios and production companies rightfully using diversity as one of many criteria for hiring, lower-level disabled talent risk falling further behind because most of these companies don't explicitly identify disability as a diversity and inclusion priority.

The harder it is for disabled talent to have their basic needs met, the more likely it is for job opportunities to slip away (or never to materialize at all), making it perpetually difficult for undeniably talented artists to build sustainable careers in the industry. Disabled talent, like any underrepresented talent, is simply looking for a level playing field on which to compete. The industry, and the people and companies that hold power within it, need to proactively change the game.

This report has three aims:

1. To illuminate the array of barriers that hold back the careers of disabled talent.
2. To put to rest producer, creative executive and showrunner anxieties about the financial impact that accommodating disabled talent has on television and film budgets of various sizes.
3. To provide resources for studio and agency heads, producers, showrunners and creative executives (as well as others in positions of industry power) to raise the bar of what disabled talent should expect in their working environment.

As the realities about being disabled and requesting accommodations are brought to light, we expect to see tangible, widespread change in how these issues are addressed—creating a more equitable and inclusive industry for disabled talent of all levels and trades.

It is instrumental that the industry reframes its mindset by looking at the value of investing in this population, not just the cost of doing so.

Everyone has a role to play in changing how the industry values disabled talent. We look forward to watching you do your part.



Richie Siegel
President, Co-Founder
Inevitable Foundation



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About Inevitable Foundation

Inevitable Foundation is a non-profit launched in January 2021 that funds and mentors mid-career disabled screenwriters.

Our goal is to close the disability representation gap in film and television. **Disabled people make up 20%+ of the population⁴ but represent only 2% of characters on-screen⁵ and less than 1% of writers behind the screen.⁶**

The lack of disability representation on-screen is directly linked to the lack of representation off-screen. By empowering disabled screenwriters with the business, writing and networking skills they need to build long-term careers, we're helping put more disabled creators in positions of power, turning them from employees to employers. This will naturally create a bounty of opportunities for disabled talent on- and off-screen, which will unleash authentic disability narratives across film and television.

Our flagship program is our Screenwriting Fellowship, which provides mid-career disabled screenwriters with a \$40,000 grant and bespoke mentorship to help develop and sell their own content.

Inevitable Foundation is grateful to count on the support of Ford Foundation, Conrad Hilton Foundation, Disability Inclusion Fund, Nielsen Foundation, AT&T Foundation, Netflix, Amazon, WarnerMedia and AMC Networks, among others.

Learn more at <https://Inevitable.Foundation>

Key Findings

We surveyed disabled writers, actors, producers, showrunners and directors on their experiences needing, requesting and receiving accommodations. Combined, respondents have worked on 617 projects in total among the 35 artists who completed the survey.

The Frequency of Needing Accommodations

- Of the 617 projects respondents worked on, they **needed accommodations on 55% of them** (398 projects). These numbers reflect both the reality that disabled talent have different needs across the board, and that those needs are dynamic and can change, depending on the project.

The “Burden” of Requesting Accommodations

Success and Failure Requesting Accommodations

- Of the 398 projects that survey respondents needed accommodations for, **they requested accommodations (the Request Rate⁷) on only 70% of them** (320 projects). These numbers **point toward a commonly held fear of disclosure and of the stigma associated with requesting accommodations.**

“I have been forced to hide my disability for the majority of my career. And, when it was not possible to hide, I lost a lot of jobs.” –Actor, mid-level

- There is a **large discrepancy between the comfort of lower-level disabled talent requesting accommodations (they do so only 58% of the time, on average)** compared to mid-level and upper-level talent (86% and 89% of the time on average, respectively).
- The stigma associated with requesting accommodations and disclosing one’s disability disproportionately affects those early in their career, inhibiting disabled talent from finding their foothold in the industry.

How and When Disabled Talent Request Accommodations

- Some disabled talent **raise their accommodation needs before securing their respective jobs, favoring transparency upfront, while others raise accommodation needs only after having secured their jobs, fearing earlier disclosure might jeopardize their candidacy.**
- Several respondents say **they decline to ask for accommodations in order to hold onto work**, while others say that

self-advocacy takes away from the work itself.

- Respondents also noted that **asking for accommodations with “soft” costs (time and planning resources, not financial ones) can be harder than asking for accommodations with “hard” costs (financial resources).**

The Long Road to Receiving Accommodations

- Of the 398 projects on which survey respondents needed accommodations, **they only had their accommodation requests fulfilled (the Fulfillment Rate⁸) 70% of the time, on average, (308 projects), proof of the underwhelming follow-through of their employers.**
- The **Fulfillment Rate for lower-level disabled talent was especially dismal (68% of the time on average)** compared to upper-level talent (78% of the time, on average).
 - These Fulfillment Rates also **do not capture the arduous and demeaning road to securing accommodations**, with many respondents citing discrimination, bullying or having their requests met “begrudgingly” or inadequately.

“There have been occasions where folks have minimized my needs for a bathroom or filtered water.” –Writer, upper-level

- There was a wide discrepancy between respondents in this area of inquiry, with **some talent experiencing 0% Fulfillment Rates and others experiencing 100% Fulfillment Rates.**
- Since accommodations are basic needs, not luxuries, **Fulfillment Rates that are anything less than 100% mean that disabled talent is conducting creative work in an inequitable—and often unsafe—working environment**, if they are able to work at all without their basic needs being satisfied.
- Disabled talent that **have relationships with people in positions of power on a project are much more likely to have their needs met** than those who do not. This is a chicken-egg problem, since the vast majority of disabled talent working in the industry is lower-level, lacking proximity to those in positions of power.

The Strain of Incurring Out-of-Pocket Costs

- **30% percent of disabled talent have had to pay out-of-pocket for their accommodations**, and the costs they have incurred can vary and are substantial.
 - Since a household with a disabled adult requires, on average, 28% more income (or an additional

\$17,690 per year on average⁹) to maintain the same standard of living as a non-disabled household, **these post-tax, post-representation-commission expenses are a double hit to disabled talents' income, which requires them to earn 25-40% more to maintain the same standard of living.**

- **Transportation is a significant cost for some disabled talent that studios and production companies either refuse to pay for or begrudgingly do so.**

"The accommodation I've always had to cover myself is transportation (I cannot drive), which can get expensive (and which, in my experience, studios do not consider an accommodation and will not cover as policy)." – Writer, lower-level

The Equity of Virtual Work

- **Zoom writers' rooms provide important flexibility and autonomy for disabled writers**, while also providing the same benefits for general meetings.
- **Virtual, screen-oriented environments often create more fluid opportunities for integration of American Sign Language (ASL) and captioning**, opening up a world of opportunities for the Deaf/hard-of-hearing community.

A Call for Communication Access

- Employers too often **provide the bare minimum to accommodate Deaf/hard-of-hearing (HOH) talent**, leading to half-baked communication access.
- Deaf/HOH creatives **often are forced to pay for their own interpreters**, even though such costs are the employer's responsibility.
- **Interpreter costs are often taken out of a Deaf/HOH creative's quote**, even though interpreter services should be considered entirely separate from the artist's economic worth.
- Employers are **rarely open to providing teams of interpreters**, which are often required for longer gigs, given interpreters need to take breaks throughout the day.

Demystifying the True Cost of Accommodations

To put to rest producer, creative executive and showrunner anxieties about the financial impact that accommodating disabled talent has on film and television budgets of various sizes, we worked with film and television accountants to study the actual, not presumed, impact that accommodations are likely to have on project budgets—in writers' rooms, on sets and across the total cost of a given television series. We also

explored the degree to which the number of disabled people involved in a project impacts its budget.

How Accommodations Impact Project Budgets

Writers' Room Budgets

We created a hypothetical writers' room for a mid-budget show with a \$2.9 million budget for a 24 week room in Los Angeles.

- **The average accommodation to support a disabled writer in the room increased the Writers' Room Budget by only 0.43%**, proof of the minimal impact accommodations have on a budget.
- **Creating a 100% disabled writers room would increase the Writers' Room Budget by only 3.02%** on average—a minimal cost for an unfulfilled equity milestone.

On-Set Budgets

We created a hypothetical production budget for a fully-union, 10 episode television series filming over 20 weeks in Los Angeles, with a \$47 million production budget.

- **The average accommodation for a disabled crew member increased the Production Budget by only 0.033%**, proof of the minimal impact accommodations have on a production budget.
- **Creating a production with a 100% disabled on-set crew would increase the Production Budget by only 1.46%** on

average—a minimal cost for an unfulfilled equity milestone.

How the Percent of Disabled Crew and Staff Impacts Budgets

We also looked at how the percent of a writing staff or production crew that is disabled affects the Total Series Budget (Writers' Room Budget + Production Budget). Since disabled people make up over 20% of the U.S. population but represent less than 1% of talent in the industry, we used a 25% disabled staff/crew as a benchmark.¹⁰

- Accommodating a 25% disabled writing staff with a **\$5 million Writers' Room Budget would increase the Writers' Room Budget by only 1.61%**, while accommodating a 25% disabled writers' room with a **\$500,000 Writers' Room Budget would increase the Writers' Room Budget by 14.03%**.
- Accommodating a 25% disabled crew on a **\$5 million Production Budget would increase the Production Budget by only 3.23%**, while accommodating a 25% disabled crew on a **\$125 million Production Budget would increase the Production Budget by only 0.13%**.
- Accommodating a 25% disabled writing staff and production crew increases the **Total Series Budget by only 0.5%**, while accommodating a **100% disabled writing staff and production crew increases the Total Series Budget by only 1.55%**, negligible increases for significant equity milestones.

Calls to Action

The industry has a long way to go before equitable working environments for disabled talent are the norm. Acting on the steps below is an important—and long overdue—start.

1. Listen to disabled people, first and foremost. They know what is best for them. Recognize that not every disabled person needs the same thing.
2. Shift the responsibility of addressing and asking for accommodation needs from the employee to the employer.
3. Stop forcing disabled people to pay for their own accommodations.
4. Always include a specific line item for accommodations in project budgets.
5. Mandate an in-person/virtual hybrid environment as a new and lasting industry standard for work that does not have to be done in-person.
6. Join in allyship with disabled talent if you are non-disabled, which will minimize the amount of time disabled talent need to spend advocating for their rights so they can be creative and do their jobs—the reasons they entered the industry in the first place.
7. Provide accommodations well beyond what the ADA requires and recognize that the ADA is the bare minimum, not the be-all-end-all of accommodations.
8. Make entertainment-trained sign language interpreters, CART providers and other forms of clear and equitable communication access freely available for Deaf/hard-of-hearing individuals.

Resources

The following resources should help eliminate industry excuses for why more disabled talent is not discovered, hired, empowered and accommodated.

For Disabled Talent

Accommodation Calculator

A free, interactive tool, Inevitable Foundation's Cost of Accommodations Calculator (available at costofaccommodations.com/calculator) uses the data collected in the creation of this report to calculate the estimated costs of accommodations for a given television or film project. Disabled talent can use this calculator to help advocate for their accommodation needs by showcasing the minimal cost of their accommodations to their prospective employers.

Accommodations Database

Inevitable Foundation's Accommodations Database (available at costofaccommodations.com/database) is a collaborative online database created to crowdsource data on the variety of accommodations that disabled talent need to thrive in the film and television industry. Disabled talent can use this database to find our list of potential accommodations, and submit new accommodations to be included in the database.

For Producers, Creative Executives and Showrunners

Budget Templates and Calculators

We created a number of Excel budget templates and calculators (available at costofaccommodations.com/budgets) for producers, creative executives, and accountants to use to budget for and deliver accommodations.

Accommodations Database

Inevitable Foundation's Accommodations Database (available at costofaccommodations.com/database) is a collaborative online database that is an evolving record of the various accommodations disabled talent need to thrive in the film and television industry along with their estimated cost. Producers, creative executives and showrunners can use this database to search for potential accommodations for disabled talent in order to more effectively budget for and deliver accommodations.

Company Briefings

Inevitable Foundation is happy to brief your company on the findings and recommendations in The Cost of Accommodations Report. If you would like to request a briefing for your company or organization, please contact us at costofaccommodations.com/briefing

Content Development Concierge

Inevitable Foundation's Content Development Concierge is a free, high-touch service for creative executives, showrunners and producers that streamlines sourcing incredible disabled writers for development and staffing. Underpinning the Concierge is a curated roster of 20-30 mid-career disabled screenwriters who have worked on television and film projects before, are in the WGA and have reps. We have their writing samples on file, in addition to in-depth profiles about their backgrounds and experiences.

Reach out with specific requests for development and staffing, and we'll send great writers your way who happen to be disabled. Email conciierge@inevitable.foundation to learn more or start a search process.

Feedback

At Inevitable Foundation, we are always looking to knock down barriers and create

new programs and resources that further the lives and careers of disabled talent.

If you have ideas about how to expand the resources we provide, please reach out to us at hello@inevitable.foundation.

Looking Forward

Since this report is the first industry study of its kind, it catalogs the experiences of disabled talent from the recent past. Going forward, we plan to survey disabled talent annually about their experiences procuring the accommodations they need to do their jobs. Future surveys will help serve as a barometer for actual change, encouraging companies and individuals to go beyond lip service and to create an equitable working environment for disabled talent.

Inevitable Foundation

The “Cost” of Accommodations Report

#01


Introduction

In the film and television industry, an “accommodation” can mean many things. For A-list talent, it’s often an opportunity to procure a number of people, services, and perks—from private planes to private chefs to nannies and everything in between. Some of these requests are *needs*, and some of them are *wants*. But for disabled talent—primarily for writers, actors, producers and showrunners—getting accommodations to cover their basic needs can be personally difficult and alienating, if not impossible.

Many accommodations cost little to nothing, especially weighed against the budgets of most professional film and television productions. Regardless, no matter their cost, getting access to accommodations while evading stigma and forced-disclosure is a silent but omnipresent workplace struggle for disabled talent.

Currently, film and television productions have a chicken-egg problem: *Since we too rarely hire and work with disabled talent, we’re not sure how to hire and work with disabled talent.* As such, if a disabled creative makes a request for an accommodation, and the producer, creative executive, showrunner or someone on their respective teams has never procured that accommodation before, there is often reluctance to agree to the accommodation, let alone a meaningful effort to fulfill it.

The days when disabled talent are expected to simply be grateful for bathroom and communication access should be long gone. Unfortunately, the industry has a long way to go to achieve that end.



Until this norm changes—with the much-needed help of non-disabled allies who have more swiftly been able to build influential careers—disabled people will continue to be dramatically underrepresented on-screen and off-screen.

To tackle these issues head-on, our report aims to do three things:

1. To illuminate the array of barriers that hold back the careers of disabled talent.
2. To put to rest producer, creative executive and showrunner anxieties about the financial impact that accommodation of disabled talent has on film and television budgets of various sizes.
3. To provide resources for studio and agency heads, producers, creative executives and showrunners (as well as others in positions of industry power) to raise the bar of what disabled talent should expect in their working environments.

In short, our work arms the film and television industry with its first roadmap and toolkit to build a more inclusive—and thereby more creative and profitable—landscape for disabled talent.

It also recognizes that, while some positive developments have been made in disability inclusion—and while many non-disabled individuals within the industry are helpful, inquisitive, and inclusive—much is yet to be done, at systemic and industry-wide levels, for any meaningful change to come to fruition.

Methodology

This report is the largest-ever compilation of qualitative and quantitative information about the state of accommodations for disabled talent in film and television.

Demographics Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Our in-depth survey polled disabled talent on their experiences asking for and receiving (or not receiving) accommodations—and examined the stigmas associated with such requests. We collected data about the experiences of disabled talent across 617 projects, which came from 35 disabled professional writers, actors, producers and showrunners. This includes participation from all levels of the industry hierarchy—everyone from lower-level writers to top showrunners and prominent actors.

The total number of disabled writers, actors, producers and showrunners who are active in the film and television industry—meaning they are working or seeking work—is very challenging to determine. There are a number of data gaps in the industry and, primarily, with the various unions that have access to the largest data sets of hiring and employment information.

For example, while the Writers Guild of America West publishes diversity reports and

recently started including disability as one of their diversity metrics, the Directors Guild of America does not track disability and SAG-AFTRA, the Producers Guild of America and the Animation Guild don't currently publish any diversity reports at all. This makes it exceedingly difficult to determine the market size of disabled talent as it relates to the statistical significance of this study.

Even with these gaps, it was important to piece together all of the available information, even given the limitations. We wanted to arrive at a very rough estimate of the total market of active disabled talent, which we believe is around 2,400 people. When segmenting based on those who work each year, our estimate drops to an estimated 690 people. Our sample size of 35 respondents equals 1.46% of the estimated market for disabled talent and 5% of the estimated market of talent working each year.

See the Appendix titled “A Note on the Market Size of Disabled Talent in Film and Television” (page 53) for more behind these calculations and information about the numerous data gaps that exist.

Determining Talent Level

We categorized our respondents into three different levels: Lower-Level, Mid-Level and Upper-Level talent. It was important to segment talent based on their level in order to determine how one's stature in the industry might affect how their needs are accommodated.

There are a variety of factors that led to determining the level of certain talent, including their project credits, the frequency at which they work, the size of the projects they work on, the size of the audience who views the projects, the budgets of the projects they work on, the talent's relative fame/awareness, among other attributes. Many of these are subjective—for example, while the television writer hierarchy is clear, the level of a film actor could vary widely based on the factors previously listed—and we made our determinations as holistically as we could given publicly available information.

Lower-Level disabled talent account for 60% of respondents, but only 46% of the total projects worked. We defined Lower-Level as those who had the majority of their credits in the last five years fall into the following categories and were paid at standard rates for their respective credits:

- **Television Writers:** Writers' PA, Writers' Assistant, Staff Writer, Story Editor, Executive Story Editor

- **Film Writers:** Employment without credit
- **Television Actors:** Extra, Background, Co-Star, Guest Star
- **Film Actors:** Featured, Principal

Mid-Level disabled talent account for 30% of respondents, but 50% of the total projects worked. We defined Mid-Level as those who had the majority of their credits in the last five years fall into the following categories and were paid at standard rates for their respective credits:

- **Television Writers:** Co-Producer, Producer, Supervising Producer
- **Film Writers:** WGA credits such as "screenplay by," "story by," "screen story by," and "written by," and/or Producer, Executive Producer, on lower- and mid-budget projects that have major distribution in theaters, television on-demand and streaming.
- **Television Actors:** Recurring
- **Film Actors:** Supporting

Upper-Level disabled talent account for 10% of respondents, but only 4% of the total projects worked. We defined Upper-Level as those who had the majority of their credits in the last five years fall into the following categories and were paid at standard rates for their respective credits:

- **Television Writers:** Co-Executive Producer, Executive Producer, Showrunner, Creator

- **Film Writers:** WGA credits such as “screenplay by,” “story by,” “screen story by,” and “written by,” and/or Producer, Executive Producer, on mid to large-budget projects that have major distribution in theaters, television on-demand and streaming.
- **Television Actors:** Series Regular, Cameo, Guest Star
- **Film Actors:** Lead

Film and Television Budget Projections

Since film and television projects often rely on prior budgets and benchmarks during the costing phase, the fact that so few disabled creatives receive accommodations naturally means few evaluative benchmarks currently exist.

We worked with television accountants to study the actual, not presumed, impact that accommodation of disabled talent may have on budgets of various sizes.

As part of this exploration, we compared the costs of disability-related accommodations against traditional major line items in television budgets. We then created the industry’s first set of budget models and templates through which producers, showrunners, creative executives and production managers can better gauge the financial impact of accommodations on a

project—a significant step towards demystifying the presumed cost.

Finally, we examined the degree to which the number of disabled people involved in a project impacts the budget.

#03

The Burden of Requesting Accommodations

The Issue

For disabled creatives of all types, **understanding when and how to make accommodation needs known can seem like a daunting task.** This is especially true for lower-level creatives who are just breaking in and who may be particularly eager to please their new coworkers, often at the expense of their own needs. No one wants to “stick out”—except as a result of their talent—in such a competitive industry. Since every writers’ room and film and television set relies on a hierarchy of power—and, at present, most disabled talent sit at the low or lower-middle end of that spectrum—the process for requesting accommodations can be fraught.

Our Discovery

The broad variability concerning when and how disabled talent ask for accommodations often stems from **a sense of uncertainty about how superiors, directors, producers and showrunners will respond to their requests—or if, in fact, there will be any productive response at all.** The significant drop in requests from lower-level talent is especially noteworthy, as is the cost of always having to advocate for their own needs.

- Of the 398 projects that survey respondents needed accommodations for, they **requested accommodations on only 70% of them** (320 projects). This percentage **points toward a commonly held fear of disclosure and of the stigma associated with requesting accommodations.**
- There is **a large discrepancy between the comfort of lower-level disabled talent requesting accommodations (they do so 58% of the time, on average) compared to mid-level and upper-level talent (86% and 89% of the time, on average, respectively).**
- This proves that the stigma associated with requesting accommodations and disclosing their disability disproportionately affects those early in their career, inhibiting talent from finding their foothold in the industry.

When and How Disabled Talent Request Accommodations

Some disabled talent raise their accommodation needs before securing their respective jobs, favoring transparency upfront:

“I inform [the production] that I will need accommodations before [being

hired], and then I remind them during the contract phase, and I confirm with them before I sign off.” –Actor, mid-level

Some talent raise accommodation needs only after having secured the job, fearing earlier disclosure might jeopardize their candidacy:

“I ask production [for necessary accommodations] once I’ve gotten the job....I’ve received no pushback, whatsoever...[but] I became disabled after I was already a showrunner. I fear lower-level writers don’t get the same accommodations [to] their requests as I do.” –Showrunner/Writer/Producer, upper-level

“I have concerns about revealing my neurodivergence in the first place—I told a non-film employer once that I had ADHD and it definitely colored their impression of me in a negative way. So, beyond that, I’m concerned that revealing ADHD or [being on the] spectrum could lead to doubts about my abilities to do the job at all, and either not getting the job or getting fired.” –Writer, lower-level

Some talent put their requests in their contract, often fearing that such requests will otherwise be forgotten. Some also recognize that, while one can stipulate certain needs in a contract, not every

eventuality can be planned for, and mutual adaptation is required:

“The accommodations are often in the contract but not always.” –Actor, mid-level

“For my next writers’ room, if it’s in person, I’m thinking about having my reps negotiate transportation as part of my contract.” –Writer, mid-level

Some talent raise accommodation needs only once they are at the job:

“I ask the production office once I’ve gotten the job.” –Showrunner/Producer, upper-level

Some talent choose not to address accommodation needs at all, often because of previous negative experiences:

*“I would not ask for accommodations in any interview *unless* it was for a show where neuroatypicality would be a benefit...., and I would feel very uncomfortable putting them in a contract negotiation.” –Writer, lower-level*

“I have been forced to hide my disability for the majority of my career. And, when it was not possible to hide, I lost a lot of jobs. Most jobs have been lost when they realize there is a walking disability.” –Actor, mid-level



“I have come close to losing jobs (and probably lost jobs) because my accommodation requests were seen as unreasonable.”
—Actor, mid-level

"The only major accommodation I have asked for is an elevator. I am generally concerned about being labeled difficult or too much of a hassle to work with."

—Writer, mid-level

Disabled talent who have a relationship with those in positions of power are much more likely to have their needs met:

"In my last few jobs I've had a prior relationship with the showrunner and had a private conversation with them about my needs." —Writer, upper-level

"Well-meaning people who aren't aware of my situation [sometimes] try to get me to give up my chair on set. But I've always had upper-level producers around me to say something to the effect of 'No, she's okay. Just grab another chair.' (Side note: Why is Hollywood so hung up on rank, directors' chairs, and who gets to sit? Ugh!)" —Writer, upper-level

"I used to keep a pair of crutches in the office, because I knew I'd need them in order to hoof it upstairs to production meetings or around sets, since we were in a building with no elevator. For months, I'd also show up for work pretty early because it would take me that long to get my wheelchair from the edge of the lot to our writers' room. Generally, I found production staff and crew to be very helpful, but soon I recognized these are

the folks without much authority. So, in many ways, I felt very much on my own, and I was too new to the room experience to know how to advocate for myself effectively." —Writer, lower-level

The Impact of Requesting Accommodations

Many cited bullying or having their requests met "begrudgingly" or inadequately:

"I have had people be rude about [my disability], or try to point it out to other people. I've even had someone make fun of me on a set, telling others, behind my back, that I should get some sleep before I come to a set. I didn't say anything. But that team won't ever hire me again." —Actor, mid-level

"I have come close to losing jobs (and probably lost jobs) because my accommodation requests were seen as unreasonable." —Actor, mid-level

"Someone told me, 'Oh, I can just put your [prosthetic] leg over here.' and proceeded to set it on a dirty surface, where it picked up all the junk, dust, and debris of that surface [and was] unwearable for me until cleaned." —Actor, mid-level

"Years back, a show tried to assign me a PA who 'signed fluently,' and they could

barely fingerspell. [The production] also would email blast freelance interpreters for on set jobs, so I got a lot of people who weren't qualified, or [who] came because they wanted to act themselves, not interpret." —Showrunner/Actor/Writer, upper-level

"I have had producers and executives try to push the limit of what I am physically able to do on set." —Actor, mid-level

"A person got annoyed when I asked for somebody to help fill out forms. I believe she said 'Ugh, well that has to be me, and I am swamped.' She did it, but she was annoyed the entire time." —Actor, lower-level

Others cited that basic efforts of advocacy take focus away from the work itself:

"It takes time and energy away from my creative work in order to serve as an advocate. You really lose your personhood that way, and it makes it difficult to ask for what you need when you're trying to appeal to them as a creative—so it's a lot of appeasing and extra flowery wording. It also makes it more difficult when the accommodation isn't up to par, somehow, because then you're kind of going up against yourself." —Writer/Producer/Showrunner, upper-level

"[People are] mostly neutral to positive [concerning my disability accommodations], but I generally have to ask multiple times—every time it comes up, I need to remind someone." —Writer, mid-level

Call to Action

The film and television industry needs to shift responsibility of addressing accommodations from the prospective employee to the employer.

One of the definitions for the word "accommodation" is mutual adaptation, which means **distributing the responsibility of adjustment between the person receiving the accommodation**—who knows their own needs better than anyone else—**and the person or company responsible for providing that accommodation.**

Job interviewers, regardless of whether they are (knowingly or not) considering a disabled person for the role, should include a question that expressly invites inclusivity: *What could we do or provide to help you be at your best during this job?*

This question allows prospective employees, disabled or not, a warm and standardized opportunity to express how they can do their best work.

#04

The ADA Is the Bare Minimum (Not the Maximum) Accommodation Expectation

Contrary to popular misunderstanding, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) isn't an office a disabled person can call. It's not an advocate waiting in the wings to swoop in and resolve equity issues in a piecemeal fashion. It is a national law—one of very few designed to address the sorts of things many non-disabled people can simply accept as second nature: access to buildings, fluid navigation of space, communication equity, recognition in workforces, protection against discrimination/implicit bias and the luxury of focusing on work rather than advocating for access to the work.

The ADA, when it applies, is the bare minimum by which an employer can abide when it comes to providing accommodations. Imagine a pedestrian being grateful that someone stopped before the crosswalk so they could walk across the street. Avoiding collision is not a favor—it's a law, and thus a straightforward expectation.

However, in spite of its benefits, the ADA has multiple gaps:

1. The ADA was the last piece of American civil rights legislation that passed Congress without a dedicated funding mechanism—a reality that currently limits the tools at the government's disposal to enforce the law. For example, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the U.S. Department of Labor each has anonymous reporting mechanisms that can trigger the government's oversight and enforcement of employee rights. The ADA, although technically within the purview of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice, has no dedicated office nor budget.
2. This lack of government enforcement pushes ADA lawsuits into the private sector, and most ADA lawsuits are purely civil cases. However, few creatives within the entertainment industry would risk their career

or reputation by suing a prospective or current employer. Many fear, understandably, that doing so could eliminate any chance of ever working again in the business.

3. Even if one did decide to sue a potential employer after not getting a job (or because of how they were treated on a job), it can be exceedingly difficult to prove the false negative that they didn't get the job (or weren't asked back to a job) because of their disability. This is especially hard to evaluate given that ableism is often subliminal and not always documented for easy discovery in a lawsuit.
4. The simple pursuit of protection and resources under the ADA naturally forces the individual to disclose (and often "prove") their disability—an incredibly personal, and challenging, choice for many in a landscape awash with bias.

In light of these unfortunate realities, it falls to people in positions of industry privilege—the vast majority of whom are non-disabled—to pause and recognize the ADA is the bare minimum, not the maximum, expectation toward creating an equitable working environment for disabled talent. Creative professionals everywhere need to go well beyond the contours of the law to level the accommodation playing field. 💡

#05

The Long Road to Receiving Accommodations

The Issue

Accommodations are basic needs.

But for disabled talent, having these needs met is anything but guaranteed.

When these basic needs are unfulfilled, there are real-world consequences that impact the ability of disabled talent to get, do or keep their job. Since unemployment is twice as high for disabled people than for non-disabled people,¹¹ and a household with a disabled adult requires, on average, 28% more income (or an additional \$17,690 per year on average¹²) than one without a disabled adult, anything that jeopardizes employment for disabled talent is extremely costly.

Our Discovery

Across the film and television landscape, **the fulfillment (or dismissal) of many accommodations has been left to the whims of project leaders, than to a standardized set of needs and expectations.** In addition to recognizing the financial costs associated with disability, talent noted the need for accommodations that, depending upon circumstance, address their time, their energy and even their own bank account.

- Of the 398 projects on which survey respondents needed accommodations, **they had their accommodation requests**

fulfilled (the Fulfillment Rate) only 70% of the time, on average (308 projects), proof of the underwhelming follow-through of their employers.

- The **Fulfillment Rate for lower-level disabled talent was especially dismal (68% of the time on average)** compared to upper-level talent (78% of the time on average).
- These Fulfillment Rates also **do not capture the arduous and demeaning road to securing accommodations**, with many respondents citing discrimination, bullying or having their requests met “begrudgingly” or inadequately.
- There was a wide discrepancy between respondents in this area of inquiry, with **some talent experiencing 0% Fulfillment Rates and others experiencing 100% Fulfillment Rates.**
- Since accommodations are basic needs, not luxuries, **Fulfillment Rates that are anything less than 100% mean that disabled talent is conducting creative work in an inequitable—and often unsafe—working environment**, if they are able to work at all without their basic needs being satisfied.

The Challenges of Accommodations with Hard Costs vs. Soft Costs

Asking for accommodations with “soft” costs can be harder than asking for and receiving accommodations with “hard” costs:

“There have been occasions where folks have minimized my needs for a bathroom or filtered water.” –Writer, upper-level

* * *

“The majority of the time, [my] accommodations do not require more money; they require more planning.” –Actor/Producer, mid-level

* * *

“On some projects, not having accommodations didn’t cost me money immediately, but meant missing networking opportunities, likely costing me money in the long run (i.e. not going to a wrap party or to dressing rooms to meet talent because [spaces] were difficult to access, etc.)” –Writer, lower-level

* * *

“The other day I was called 48 hrs before a commercial I booked to make sure I didn’t have any food allergies, since my character now had to eat a donut. I alerted them that I have celiac disease and I need gluten-free food, a gluten-free kitchen, and gluten-free


handling. On set, I received confirmation of this protocol. Within hours after getting home, I was violently ill and it hurt my performance on a separate commercial I booked the next day. I confirmed with the donut shop that the donuts presented to me as a special gluten-free order were not.” –Actor, lower-level

For some disabled talent, clear communication and flexible scheduling are often the most valued “accommodations” of all:

“The main accommodation I need is time off to go to doctor appointments and medication infusions. These typically last half a day and happen around once a month. I have few to no concerns about asking for this. I used to have anxiety about asking, but since most people are used to all employees needing to take the occasional day off for the doctor, and the difference for me is just frequency, this usually goes fine.” –Actor/Writer, mid-level

30% percent of disabled talent have had to pay out-of-pocket for their accommodations, and the cost they have to incur can vary and is substantial:

- Since a household with a disabled adult requires, on average, 28% more income (or an additional \$17,690 per year on average¹³) to maintain the same standard of living as a non-disabled household, these post-tax, post-representation -commission [continued on page 28]



“There have been occasions where folks have minimized my needs for a bathroom or filtered water.”

—Writer, upper-level

expenses are a double hit to disabled talents' income that requires them to earn 25-40% more to maintain the same standard of living.

Transportation is a significant cost for some disabled talent that studios and production companies either refuse to pay for or do so begrudgingly:

"I needed a driver, but the studio has a policy that it doesn't provide drivers to producers unless working [far away from the set] (or whatever the specifics were), for fear all showrunners would then ask for drivers on the studio's dime. My disability didn't factor into their need to maintain their rules. I had to sit with my line producer to devise a workaround. I used Lyft drivers on an account that was set up on the petty cash credit card for the production office." –Showrunner/Writer, upper-level

"The accommodation I've always had to cover myself is transportation (I cannot drive), which can get expensive (and which, in my experience, studios do not consider an accommodation and will not cover as policy)." –Writer, lower-level

Some talent noted the "hard costs" of being involved with productions often go unnoticed or unaddressed—an oversight which puts the cost back on the talent:

"Lots of what I use, [including] a prosthetic leg, has been damaged in

shows or films, and they don't recognize those damages as their problem." –Actor, mid-level

"We usually have our [sign language] interpreter work on spec [unpaid], until we have a buyer or co-production company who pays 50% of the cost or more" –Actor/Producer, mid-level

"[Out of pocket costs] went up with the pandemic, and having to work remotely and take other precautions, since I'm a high-risk individual. The worst time was when my condition got really bad, and I had to take unpaid leave for a few months. That cost me thousands in lost income—having paid medical leave would have been huge." –Writer, mid-level

Call to Action

Producers, creative executives and showrunners need to ensure that accommodation Fulfillment Rates are 100% and stop forcing disabled talent to pay for their own accommodations.

In doing so, they'll find the "cost" of working with disabled talent is low, while the financial and storytelling benefits of creating space for disabled talent is high. In an industry with so many variables and moving parts, a little creativity and flexibility shouldn't be hard to come by—especially if they lead to innovative and profitable output.

#06

How Accommodation Fulfillment Changes as Disabled Talent Become More Established

Though there are still far too few disabled people working consistently in film and television, some disabled talent are steadily making their way to marquee status. As they rise through the ranks, this talent, along with their representation, are seeing meaningful progress—but no magic solution—towards reducing thorny accommodation issues that once slowed their careers. For many at the lower-levels of the industry, these changes still feel like a pipe dream, but for those rising through the industry, they represent measured progress.

The following insights are based on conversations with fast-rising disabled talent and their agents, managers and publicists.

What Changes for More Established Disabled Talent


- **More inbound offers mean more companies and people are willing to “put in the work.”** Talent who have inbound offers naturally have more leverage with which to request accommodations. Even better, eager collaborators often come to the table having already done their research to provide the best experience possible.
- **Stronger relationships with a project’s leaders increases their willingness to accommodate talent, and to provide open lines of communication as needs evolve.** Having partners who genuinely want established disabled talent to be in their project—and who value that talent as a whole, creative person—makes a meaningful difference. Trust, which is the foundation of productive relationships, extends both ways and leads to a more equitable working environment. In such cases, higher-ups can also press their direct reports to provide the needed accommodations, since such requests are now coming from the top, not the bottom, of the food chain.
- **Accommodation requests happen earlier in the working relationship and more often find their way into contracts.** Upper-level disabled talent often find it best to procure accommodations before their jobs have begun (in contrast to the experiences laid out in Section #03, The Burden of Requesting Accommodations).

This arrangement is often made in the earliest stages of the conversation between the representation and production, before a fee is even discussed, an approach that fairly separates the basic needs of talent from their economic worth.

- **Established talent have teams that back them and their needs.** Upper-level talent have teams behind them, from managers to agents to publicists to assistants. This support creates a substantial buffer, which removes the need for talent to advocate all by themselves. Now they can delegate much of the procurement responsibility to their team—and instead focus on the creative work they’ve been hired to do.

What Doesn’t Change for More Established Disabled Talent

- **Some people still have an antiquated and ableist mentality.** Regardless of a talent’s successes, there will always be project leaders and productions that don’t want to put in the work or who don’t show up with an open mind. The misconception too often persists that disabled talent is expensive to accommodate and is unworthy of (or unprepared for) high-potential creative opportunities.
- **The industry is still not thinking holistically about accommodations.** For some non-disabled industry decision-makers, it still isn’t obvious that, when disabled talent is working, their accommodations need to be working too. Providing accommodations on-set but failing to provide accommodations during press tours or awards shows is common and woefully insufficient. Accommodations should always be available, not just when non-disabled people think they should be.
- **Not everything can be planned for.** As accommodations increasingly make their way into industry contracts, much is still left up to “best efforts,” as planning for every eventuality would naturally be impossible. Location shoots, altered scenes and pages and unexpected budgetary shifts can lead to new challenges, for disabled and non-disabled talent alike. In moments such as these, the power of strong and openly communicative relationships between disabled talent and a project’s leaders is essential.

While there is hope that progress towards equity is being made, inclusion efforts disproportionately benefit upper-level disabled talent. **When it comes to accommodating someone’s basic needs, however, stature should not dictate the chances those needs are met.** The industry can and should do far more to create an equitable environment for disabled talent of any pedigree. 

The Equity of Virtual Work

The Issue

As the COVID-19 pandemic descended upon the entertainment industry, accommodations that disabled people had been told for decades were impossible were suddenly a norm: virtual conference rooms, virtual concerts and screenings and the ability to work seamlessly from home. While these adjustments toward more equitable work and play environments were surely exciting, their sudden availability was also revealing. **If industries around the world could have been this inclusive all along, why weren't they?**

Our Discovery

The vast majority of the disabled talent surveyed are in favor of a virtual working environment—or, at least, in favor of a virtual *option* that will be crucial to sustain in an eventual post-COVID reality. Additionally, some cited that the virtual world has unlocked a universe of new stories and voices that deserve to be heard.

Zoom writers' rooms provide important flexibility and autonomy for disabled writers:

"I love Zoom! I cannot even begin to express how amazing it has been to work from the comfort of my home. I can lie down if the pain gets too much, I can use my heating pad, ice my joints, put on a TENS unit, etc., and nobody even knows. It's been bliss not to have my body be a topic of conversation whenever I have to tend to it." —Writer, upper-level

* * *

"It's much easier to take care of my health and have bathroom breaks accordingly. I had a life threatening infection [in an in-person writers' room] and one showrunner was just plain dismissive. Being able to work from home has allowed me to manage my health with greater care." —Writer, upper-level

Zoom-based general meetings provide important flexibility and autonomy, as well:

"Even as someone who doesn't need accommodations, but [who] still has a lot of doctor's appointments, etc. to schedule around, Zoom meetings—and especially Zoom generals—are wonderful.

“It’s much easier to take care of my health and have bathroom breaks [in a virtual environment]. I had a lifethreateninginfection [in an in-person writers’ room] and one showrunner was just plain dismissive.”

—Writer, upper-level

Schlepping across town for a 30-minute meeting used to be the norm, and now I wonder why we ever did it in the first place.” –Writer, mid-level

Virtual, screen-oriented environments often create more fluid opportunities for integration of American Sign Language (ASL) and captioning, opening up a world of opportunities for the Deaf/hard-of-hearing community:

“[Zoom] seems to have leveled the playing field somewhat.... People are more willing to embrace diverse voices. The WGA [now] provides interpreters and/or live captions for all their events, upon request. ” –Writer, lower-level

Some talent found virtual options to be more equitable than traditional environments, but still longed for some of the specific dynamics of that space:

“The virtual environment has made it much easier for me to work eight-hour days, since I don’t have to worry about transportation and accessibility and needing a caregiver. That said, a hybrid style of work would be great, moving forward, since I do miss the in-person interaction.” –Writer, lower-level

One respondent felt pandemic-oriented changes to the industry have been a net negative for their career and for future opportunities:

“The pandemic has made things worse... Now everyone feels they have the right to ask you about your specific medical challenges and your vulnerability to a virus. And because I am someone with a vaccine injury.... people are very afraid to hire me now. ” –Actor, mid-level

Call to action

The entertainment industry needs to more **proactively embrace the variety of voices and opportunities that virtual environments unlock, positioning an in-person/virtual hybrid environment as a new and lasting industry standard.**

#08

Disability Is Dynamic, and Even People with the Same Disability Have Different Needs


The disability community is incredibly diverse. It encompasses people of all genders, races, sexual orientations and religions, and each segment of the disability community has a wide array of experiences and perspectives.

The film and television industry needs to recognize that even two people with the same disability may not have the same needs, abilities or perspectives. These two people might also be at different places on their own journey toward self-acceptance and comfort with their disability, not to mention towards the disclosure of it.

Disability is also dynamic. It can change over time, and the accommodations someone needs can, as well. Advocating for one's access needs is often a challenge at any level. However, it's also important to recognize the difference in experiences between people who cemented their industry status as non-disabled talent (e.g., Christopher Reeve and Michael J. Fox, as just two examples, who became disabled later in life) compared to those who enter the industry as disabled talent. The former category of talent enjoys a significant degree of privilege and leverage that the latter category can often only dream of.

But status and leverage should not matter when considering the fulfillment of someone's basic needs. Given that the vast majority of disabled talent has not yet reached the upper levels of the industry, producers, creative executives and showrunners need to place outsized emphasis on accommodating and empowering disabled talent on lower rungs of the Hollywood ladder.

Most importantly, disabled creatives and their prospective employers need to foster an environment of good faith, collaboration and communication which recognizes that needs and preferences will evolve over time.

There is nothing to fear about disability—only a world of opportunity to unlock. 

The Need for Equitable Communication Access

The Issue

Although on-screen representation of Deaf and hard-of-hearing (HOH) characters seems to be at a new high (thanks to projects including *CODA*, *The Walking Dead* and multiple Marvel franchises), industry and accommodation access for Deaf creatives still lags behind what one might expect, even given the community's on-screen gains. Today, communication access needs for Deaf/HOH writers and actors during auditions and general meetings are still regularly unmet.

Our Discovery

Although the pool of working Deaf talent in the industry is still small, **the biggest drain on their efforts for inclusion is a lack of access to ASL interpreters, CART (real-time transcription) providers, and a number of other tools that bridge communication methods and languages.** This persistent lack of communication equity suggests countless missed stories and job opportunities for the Deaf/HOH community.

Employers often do the bare minimum to accommodate Deaf/HOH talent, leading to half-baked communication access:

"Years back, a show tried to assign me a PA who 'signed fluently,' and they could barely fingerspell. [The production] would also email blast freelance interpreters for on set jobs, so I got a lot of people who weren't qualified or [who] came because they wanted to act themselves, not interpret." –Writer/Showrunner/Actor, upper-level

* * *

"I need a sign language interpreter of my choice or that I can approve of." –Writer/Showrunner/Actor, upper-level

Deaf/HOH creatives often have to pay for their own interpreters, even though such costs are the employer's responsibility:

"Most of the time my interpreter friends are willing to work pro bono, or I'll take them out to eat or something." –Actor, mid-level

Virtual writers' rooms increase the ease of providing communication access:

"Working and meeting on Zoom is much easier, interpreter-wise, and captions benefit everyone in the room." –Writer/Showrunner/Actor, upper-level

“I had a showrunner tell me, straight to my face, that he was happy he wasn't deaf. It wasn't a poorly worded comment, it was intentionally rude and made the rest of the meeting very uncomfortable.”

—Writer, mid-level

The cost of interpreters is often taken out of a Deaf/HOH creative's quote, even though interpreter services should be considered an entirely separate line from the talent's economic worth:

"We usually have our interpreter work on spec until we have a buyer or co-production company who then pays 50% of the cost or more" –Actor/Producer, mid-level

Deaf/HOH creatives often have to assume their employer is not prepared to serve their needs:

*"I had a showrunner tell me straight to my face that he was happy he wasn't deaf. It wasn't a poorly worded comment, it was intentionally rude and made the rest of the meeting very uncomfortable."
–Writer, mid-level*

* * *

"I usually assume they know I'll need an interpreter or captions, but this isn't always the case! I'll check after booking the job." –Actor, mid-level

Employers are rarely open to providing teams of interpreters, which are often required for longer gigs, given interpreters need to take breaks throughout the day:

*"One time, I was given the opportunity to observe in a writers room, and they also generously provided an interpreter. However, when the interpreter asked for a team, my observation time was cut in half."
–Writer, lower-level*

Call to Action

Entertainment-trained sign language interpreters, CART providers and other forms of clear and equitable communication need to be embraced as affordable industry norms.

Such progress will require the interest, involvement and energy of non-disabled and hearing allies—and a recognition that the investment in this segment of the disability community is invaluable.

#10

Demystifying the True Cost of Accommodations

In March 2020, the arrival of COVID-19 forced a variety of rapid changes across the entertainment industry. Suddenly, production schedules grew longer, “COVID bubbles” of actors and crew became a new normal. Significant financial investments were made in new departments and in equipment dedicated to safety precautions and pandemic response. These changes arrived in a matter of months, if not weeks.

All told, COVID protocols added anywhere from 5%¹⁴ to 20%¹⁵ to the cost of a project’s budget. Even so, film and television professionals around the world continued to find ways to adjust and thrive. The show must go on. And, even in the most unpredictable of circumstances, it has.

But in the more than a century since Hollywood was created, no such sweeping and comprehensive effort has been made to achieve equity and full inclusion for disabled professionals. Producers, creative executives and showrunners have long operated under a misperception about the cost of accommodations for disabled talent on film and television budgets.

In an effort to put these qualms to rest, we worked with television accountants to study the actual, not presumed, impact

that accommodations are likely to have on Writers’ Rooms Budgets, Production Budgets and Total Series Budgets. We used television shows for our modeling, but—with minimal adaptation—our templates and analysis can easily apply to film.

We also explored the degree to which the number of disabled people involved in a project impacts its budget. In doing so, we even uncovered findings that paint a picture of the minimal cost needed to accommodate, as just one example, a 100% disabled crew or writers’ room—a feat which has never before been attempted on a major film or television project.

All told, the costs of fully accommodating disabled talent are a fraction of the cost of now-standard COVID protocol, and often rank in the bottom quartile of line items by percent in a project budget. It’s time for the industry to make room for, and to prioritize, accommodations for disabled talent.

Disclaimer: How to Read This Section

Many of the budget projection numbers in this report need to be read with a degree of nuance. Different accommodations naturally will cost more than others, depending on the

talent's need and on the project. This doesn't mean, however, that producers, creative executives and showrunners should run out and only hire only disabled talent who need the cheapest accommodations and then believe they have "checked the box" of holistic disability representation.

Instead, industry decision-makers need to evaluate this data set as they would, for example, the rider request of A-List talent depending on the budget of the project. On a big budget movie, such talent might enjoy private jets, drivers, nannies and a six-figure relocation fee. On an indie passion project, however, they're more likely to pare down such requests.

In either type of project, the actor will always be provided with food and shelter—basic human rights.

Disabled talent is asking only for the same level of basic rights, no matter their career stage or industry status.

How Accommodations Impact a Writers' Room Budget

In television, the writers' room is where the story is created and shaped, making it a desirable destination for disabled and non-disabled artists alike. With the rise of shorter episode orders, the size of a typical writers' room staff, which can run from two to over

a dozen people, is currently shrinking—a fact that complicates efforts to diversify a room (given fewer seats at the table) or to find a home for accommodations in a project budget (given tighter budgets).

Even so, the cost of accommodation for disabled writers, producers and showrunners in the room is far less than one might expect.

To determine the true financial impact of accommodations on a Writers' Room Budget, we created a hypothetical writers' room for a premium one-hour television show. This room runs for 24 weeks and has 10 staff members: one showrunner, one producer, three mid-level writers/producers, one story editor, one staff writer, a script coordinator, a writer's assistant and a writer's production assistant (PA). The total budget for the room is \$2.90 million, which includes labor, meals, office space, supplies, and research. Labor makes up 98% of the budget, while the other items make up 2%.

We calculated the average cost of accommodation for writers with different disabilities depending on their needs.

- **The average accommodation increased the Writers' Room Budget by only 0.43%**, while accommodation for specific disabilities ranged from average increases of as little as 0.0098% (for a dwarf/little person writer) to 1.61% (for Deaf/hard-of-hearing writer)—statistics which suggest

that accommodations have minimal impact on a Writers' Room Budget.

- Accommodations for a **blind/low vision writer**—which might include a dedicated monitor and keyboard and a dedicated PA to help navigate the office—**would increase the Writers' Room Budget by 0.14%, on average.**
- Accommodations for a **writer who is a dwarf/little person**—which might include adjustable chairs in the room and a stool in the bathroom—**would increase the Writers' Room Budget by 0.0098%, on average.**
- Accommodations for a **writer with chronic illnesses**—which might include custom lunch options and hardware and software for remote video conferencing—**would increase the Writers' Room Budget by 0.05%, on average.**
- Accommodations for a **neurodiverse writer**—which might include dedicated office space and a personal assistant—**would increase the Writers' Room Budget by 0.25%, on average.**
- Accommodations for a **writer who is physically disabled**—which might include a golf cart driven by a PA, an office close to a bathroom, ADA-accessible lodging, Ubers to work, a dedicated driver to and from work, ramps into buildings and railings on stairs—**would increase the Writers' Room Budget by 0.34%, on average.**

- Accommodations for a **Deaf/hard-of-hearing writer**—which might include ASL interpreters, CART transcription, and/or additional lights for a well-lit area to enable easy lipreading—**would increase the Writers' Room Budget by 1.61%, on average.**

How the Percent of Staff That is Disabled Impacts the Writers Room Budget

Using our hypothetical \$2.90 million writers' room with 10 staff members, we examined how the Writers' Room Budget changes as a higher percentage of the writing staff is disabled. We examined scenarios where 0%, 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% of the writing staff is disabled.¹⁶

- There is a **minimal incremental cost difference between creating a room with a 25% disabled writing staff and a 100% disabled writing staff**, with increases of 2.81% and 3.02%, respectively.
- The relative cost of accommodating disabled writers in the writers' room is higher than the cost of accommodations for disabled people on set, merely because the smaller budget of the room (which is often less than 4% of the cost of the Total Series Budget) is a lower denominator than the cost of production, which is often over 75% of the cost of the series. For example, an accommodation that costs \$1,000 would make up 0.1% of

a \$1 million Writers' Room Budget but only 0.02% of a \$50 million Production Budget.

How the Budget of the Writers' Room Impacts the Percent Increase for Accommodations

We looked at how accommodating 25% disabled writing staff impacts the Writers' Room Budget depending on the size of the budget.

- For a writers' room with a \$1 million budget, having a 25% disabled staff would increase the Writers' Room Budget by 7.54%. For a writers' room with a \$5 million budget, having a 25% disabled staff would increase the Writers' Room Budget by only 1.61%.

Figure 1. How the Writers' Room Budget increases depending on the size of the budget and the percent of the staff that is disabled.

Writers' Room Budget	% Disabled Writing Staff			
	25%	50%	75%	100%
\$500k	+14.03%	+14.25%	+14.46%	+14.94%
\$1mm	+7.54%	+7.67%	+7.79%	+8.07%
\$1.5mm	+5.16%	+5.25%	+5.33%	+5.53%
\$2mm	+3.92%	+3.99%	+4.06%	+4.21%
\$3mm	+2.65%	+2.69%	+2.74%	+2.84%
\$5mm	+1.61%	+1.63%	+1.66%	+1.73%
\$10mm	+0.81%	+0.82%	+0.84%	+0.87%

How Accommodations Impact a Production Budget

The vast majority of a project's budget goes towards production—the project phase that tends to involve the greatest number of people. To assess the impact of accommodations on production budgets, we created a hypothetical Production Budget for a high-budget, one-hour, 10 episode series. This production runs for 20 weeks in Los Angeles and assumes 100 crew members and a fully union show, including SAG, DGA, IATSE, and Teamsters. The total Production Budget is \$47.1 million, or about \$4.7 million per episode. Within this budget, 29% of the costs are above the line (ABL) and 71% are below the line (BTL).¹⁷

We then calculated the average cost of accommodating crew members with different disabilities depending on their needs.

- **The average accommodation for a disabled crew member increased the Production Budget by only 0.035%**, while accommodating specific disabilities ranged from average increases of as little as 0.0006% (for a crew member who is a dwarf/little person) to 0.078% (for Deaf/hard-of-hearing crew member)—suggesting the minimal impact accommodations have on a production budget.
- Accommodations for a **blind/low vision crew member**—which might include

a dedicated monitor and keyboard, a monitor for playback, gaff tape floor markings and a dedicated PA to help navigate the office—**would increase the Production Budget by only 0.006%, on average.**

- Accommodations for a crew member who is a **dwarf/little person**—which might include a stool in the bathroom and designated apple boxes—**would increase the Production Budget by 0.0006%, on average.**
- Accommodations for a **crew member with chronic illnesses**—which might include custom lunch options and a dedicated van and driver for on-location work—**would increase the Production Budget by 0.045%, on average.**
- Accommodations for a **neurodiverse crew member**—which might include dedicated office space and a personal assistant—**would increase the Production Budget by 0.02%, on average.**
- Accommodations for a **crew member who is physically disabled**—which might include transportation services (a golf cart with a PA driver, an extra PA to help load/unload mobility devices, a transportation van with wheelchair access, Ubers to/from work, a car rental for location days, a dedicated driver to/from work, priority parking), accessible facilities (ramps, railings on stairs, ADA-accessible lodging and trailers, a portable restroom with a wheelchair ramp, an office close to

a bathroom) as well as extra seating, walkie talkies and an extra costumer for wardrobe dressing—**would increase the Production Budget by 0.038%, on average.**

- Accommodations for a **Deaf/hard-of-hearing crew member**—which might include ASL interpreters, captioning of conversations and additional lights for a well-lit area to enable easy lipreading—**would increase the Production Budget by 0.082% on average.**

How the Percent of Disabled Crew Impacts the Production Budget

Using our hypothetical \$47.1 million Production Budget with 100 crew members, we examined how accommodations affect the budget as a higher percentage of the production crew is disabled. We looked at scenarios where 0%, 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% of the crew is disabled.¹⁸

- Accommodating a **25% disabled crew increases the Production Budget by only 0.35%, while accommodating a 100% disabled crew increases the Production Budget by only 1.46%**—nominal increases that should pave the way for rapidly increasing the number of disabled crew members on set.



Figure 2. How the percent of disabled crew impacts the Production Budget.

% Disabled Crew	Accommodation Cost	Production Budget Total	% Increase
0%	\$0	\$47,192,466	+0.00%
25%	\$166,866	\$47,359,331	+0.35%
50%	\$351,935	\$47,544,400	+0.75%
75%	\$525,270	\$47,717,736	+1.11%
100%	\$687,240	\$47,879,706	+1.46%

How Accommodations Impact the Production Budget

We looked at how accommodating a 25% disabled crew impacts the Production Budget depending on the budget for the series.

- A 25% disabled crew increases the production budget by 3.23% on a \$5 million Production Budget, only 0.66% on a \$25 million Production Budget.

Figure 3. How the percent of disabled crew increases the Production Budget depending on the budget.

Production Budget	% Disabled Production Crew			
	25%	50%	75%	100%
\$5mm	+3.23%	+6.58%	+9.51%	+12.08%
\$10mm	+1.64%	+3.40%	+4.99%	+6.43%
\$25mm	+0.66%	+1.39%	+2.06%	+2.68%
\$50mm	+0.33%	+0.70%	+1.04%	+1.36%
\$75mm	+0.22%	+0.47%	+0.70%	+0.91%
\$100mm	+0.17%	+0.35%	+0.52%	+0.68%
\$125mm	+0.13%	+0.28%	+0.42%	+0.55%

How Accommodations Impact a Total Series Budget

To calculate the Total Series Budget, we added both the Writers' Room Budget and the Production Budget together. We then examined the impact that accommodations have on a project with a Total Series Budget of \$50 million budget when 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% of the writing staff and crew is disabled.

How Accommodating Disabled Writers Impacts the Total Series Budget

On a \$50 million Total Series Budget, which includes the Writers' Room Budget and the Production Budget:

- Accommodating a 25% disabled writing staff increases the Total Series Budget by only 0.163%, while accommodating a 100% disabled writing staff increases the Total Series Budget by only 0.176%, negligible increases for significant equity milestones.

How Accommodating Disabled Production Crew Impacts the Total Series Budget

On a \$50 million Total Series Budget, which includes the Writers' Room Budget and the Production Budget:

- Accommodating a 25% production crew increases the Total Series Budget by only

0.33%, while accommodating a 100% disabled production crew increases the Total Series Budget by only 1.37%, negligible increases for significant equity milestones.

Figure 4. How the percent of disabled crew impacts the Total Series Budget.

% Disabled Crew	Accommodation Cost	Total Series Budget Total	% Increase
0%	\$0	\$50,097,514	0.00%
25%	\$166,866	\$50,264,379	+0.333%
50%	\$351,935	\$50,449,448	+0.702%
75%	\$525,270	\$50,622,784	+1.048%
100%	\$687,240	\$50,784,754	+1.372%

How Accommodating Disabled Writing Staff and Production Crew Impacts the Total Series Budget

On a \$50 million Total Series Budget, which includes the Writers’ Room Budget and the Production Budget:

- Accommodating a 25% disabled writing staff and production crew increases the Total Series Budget by only 0.5%, while accommodating a 100% disabled writing staff and production crew increases the Total Series Budget by only 1.55%, negligible increases for significant equity milestones.

Figure 5. How the percent of disabled writing staff and disabled production crew impacts the Total Series Budget.

% Disabled Crew	Accommodation Cost	Total Series Budget Total	% Increase
0%	\$0	\$50,004,306	0.00%
25%	\$248,470	\$50,252,775	+0.50%
50%	\$435,002	\$50,439,307	+0.87%
75%	\$609,801	\$50,614,106	+1.22%
100%	\$775,052	\$50,779,357	+1.55%

#11

Accommodations Need to be a Standard Line Item in Every Film and Television Budget

“Don’t tell me your priorities, show me your budget.”

Disabled people are no stranger to cultural invisibility on-screen, behind the scenes and even in numerous equity-oriented conversations within the film and television industry. The lack of representation has a real-world impact and only underscores an urgent need for explicit disability integration, equity and accommodation in all project budgets.

To normalize accommodations, there needs to be a standard line item in every film and television budget for accommodations. If accommodations are not in a budget, they will never truly be treated as a priority. It’s crucial that accommodations are included from the get-go, regardless of whether someone on the project is known to need them. The mere presence of this line item will increase awareness of an important equity issue and will ease the burden on disabled talent to start every accommodation conversation.

Once accommodations have their own line item in budgets, the minimal financial impact of accommodations require will become apparent, especially when comparing accommodation costs against other budget line items:

- On a \$50 million Total Series Budget, providing accommodations for a 25% disabled crew and writing staff constitutes 0.33% of the budget, the ninth-smallest line item out of 45 total line items. The only smaller line items are Story Rights, Set Strike, Sound Editor, Titles, Production Safety, Music Fringe, Tests and VFX Fringe (see the Appendix for the full breakdown).
- On a \$75 million Total Series Budget, providing accommodations for a 25% disabled crew and writing staff constitutes 0.22% of the budget, the eighth-smallest line item out of 45 total line items. The only smaller line items are Set Strike, Sound Editor, Titles, Production Safety, Music Fringe, Tests and VFX Fringe.
- On a \$100 million Total Series Budget, providing accommodations for a 25% disabled crew and writing staff constitutes 0.17% of the budget, the seventh-smallest line item out of 45 total line items. The only smaller line items are Sound Editor, Titles, Production Safety, Music Fringe, Tests and VFX Fringe.

Going forward, every budget should include accommodations as a line item. 

#12

Going Forward

The television and film industry is in the midst of an essential “rebuilding” phase—rebuilding business models for a streaming world; devising diversity, equity and inclusion strategies for a more equitable industry; and strengthening resilience in the wake of Acts of God such as the pandemic.

This sea change—as well as the culture it represents and enriches—can no longer afford to leave disability and disabled people behind, especially as this population is only growing as a result of the pandemic.

With resourcefulness born out of a lifetime of fighting structural, social, cultural and financial barriers, disabled people offer a wealth of insight and talent not just to creative industries such as film and television but to all industries, worldwide.

Many non-disabled people don't realize that tools developed by and for disabled people have greatly enriched everyday life: The internet and SMS messaging were initially developed to benefit Deaf and HOH people; audiobooks stemmed from the American Federation for the Blind;¹⁹ even the keyboard—the essential tool that allows writers to write, producers to produce and editors to edit—has the world of disability to thank for its existence (In 1608, Italian inventor Pellegrino Turri developed the first incarnation of the

typewriter, so his blind friend, Countess Carolina Fantoni da Fivizzano, could write).

“Almost always, when you find something that is really cool for people with disabilities it will find its way into the mainstream, in a way that is wonderful and makes life better,” said Dr. Joshua Miele, a blind adaptive technology designer and recipient of the MacArthur Genius Grant.²⁰

Hollywood's conscious and explicit support of disabled people, then, must be seen as an investment, not as a cost.

It is past time to make disability “mainstream” in our development offices, our writers' rooms, in our diversity and inclusion efforts, and on our stages and screens. It's time for all people, at all ages and with any set of circumstances, to be able to freely pursue professional successes while living outwardly and fully as themselves. It's time for non-disabled producers, creative executives, showrunners and others in positions of power to abandon the role of bystander and to actively improve working environments for disabled talent.

It's time to focus on the immense creative and cultural value of disabled people—not on their presumed “cost.”

#13

Acknowledgments

This report would not have been possible without the help and support of a number of people.

First and foremost, thank you to all of the disabled writers, actors, showrunners and producers who took the surveys that led to the creation of this report and who bravely shared their experiences.

Thank you to David Radcliff (Chair of the WGA's Disabled Writers' Committee), Jonathan Siebel (Director, Budgeting & Estimation at Paramount TV), Rachel Saltzman (Vice President of Talent at Schachter Entertainment), Sami Housman (CEO at Melrose Placed), R McKinney (Research Analyst at Nielsen), Sabrina Tirvengadum, Katherine Perez (Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy, and Innovation at Loyola Marymount University) and Stanton Fish (Vice President, Advance Insights) for your help with various parts of the report.

The creation and launch of this report were generously supported by the Nielsen Foundation.

Thank you to all of our donors and supporters who make our work at Inevitable Foundation possible.

#14 Appendix

The Cost of Accommodating Disabled Talent in a Writers' Room

Below is the financial model we used to calculate the Writers' Room Budget. While we identified 19 different accommodations that benefit disabled talent in the room, this list is not exhaustive. The below assumes an average one-hour television series writers' room, spanning 24 weeks, based in LA.

The total budget is \$2,905,048. The room has been arranged with two (2) high-level writer/producers, three (3) mid-level writer/producers, a story editor, and a staff writer. Support staff include a script coordinator, writer's assistant and a PA. Meals, offices, supplies and research are included.

Required Tools / Elements	Client	Cost	Metric	Accommodation to Person Ratio ²¹	Quantity	24 Week Cost	% of Budget	Notes
ASL Interpreters	Deaf/HOH	\$22,000	Month	4	6	\$132,000	4.5438%	2x interpreters @ \$11k/month
Additional Lights for Well-Lit Area	Deaf/HOH	\$9	Week	1	24	\$216	0.0074%	
Captioning of Conversation	Deaf/HOH	\$70	Hour	10	120	\$8,400	0.2892%	5 hours/week
Dedicated Monitor for Viewing	Blind/Low Vision	\$50	Week	1	24	\$1,200	0.0413%	
Dedicated PA to Navigate the Lot	Blind/Low Vision	\$15	Hour	1	720	\$10,800	0.3718%	10 hours/day
Dedicated Monitor and Keyboard	Blind/Low Vision	\$250	One Time	1	1	\$250	0.0086%	
Stool in Bathroom	Dwarf/Little Person	\$5	Week	25	24	\$120	0.0041%	
Adjustable Chair for Little Person	Dwarf/Little Person	\$450	One Time	1	1	\$450	0.0155%	
Food Sensitivity Lunch Options	Chronic Illness	\$100	Week	1	24	\$2,400	0.0826%	
Video Teleconference System	Chronic Illness	\$500	One Time	1	1	\$500	0.0172%	
Dedicated, Quiet Office Space	Neurodiverse	\$450	Month	1	6	\$2,700	0.0929%	
Personal Assistant	Neurodiverse	\$20	Hour	1	600	\$12,000	0.4131%	25 hours/week
Golf Cart with PA Driver	Mobility	\$1,408	Week	1	24	\$33,783	1.1629%	\$15/hour + benefits + \$180/week for cart rental
Office Close to Bathroom	Mobility	\$0	Week	25	24	\$0	0.0000%	
ADA-Accessible Lodging	Mobility	\$0	Week	1	24	\$0	0.0000%	
Ubers to Work	Mobility	\$250	Week	1	24	\$6,000	0.2065%	
Dedicated Driver to/from Work	Mobility	\$1,208	Week	1	24	\$28,980	0.9976%	\$15/hour + benefits
Ramps	Mobility	\$250	One Time	10	1	\$250	0.0086%	
Railings on Stairs	Mobility	\$250	One Time	10	1	\$250	0.0086%	

The Cost of Accommodating Disabled Talent on a Production Budget

On the next page is the financial model we used to calculate the Production Budget. While we identified 29 different accommodations that benefit disabled talent in the room, this list is not exhaustive.

The below assumes an average high-budget, premium, one-hour, 10-episode series, filming over 20 weeks, based in Los Angeles. This assumes a fully union show, including SAG, DGA, IATSE, and Teamsters.

Key Assumptions	
Budget	\$47,100,000
Weeks	20
Shoot Days	100
% Location Shoot	50%
Episodes	10
Avg/Episode	\$4,710,000

Required Tools / Elements	Client	Cost	Metric	Accommodation to Person Ratio ²²	Quantity	20 Week Cost	Per Person Cost	% of Budget	Notes
ASL Interpreter	Deaf/HOH	\$22,000	Month	4	5.0	\$110,000	\$27,500	0.2335%	2x interpreters @ \$11k/month
Additional Lights for Well-Lit Area	Deaf/HOH	\$9	Week	1	20	\$180	\$180	0.0004%	
Captioning of Conversation	Deaf/HOH	\$70	Hour	10	100	\$7,000	\$700	0.0149%	5 hours/week
Dedicated Monitor for Playback	Blind/Low Vision	\$50	Week	1	20	\$1,000	\$1,000	0.0021%	
Gaff Tape Floor Markings	Blind/Low Vision	\$250	One Time	25	1	\$250	\$10	0.0005%	
Dedicated Monitor/Keyboard	Blind/Low Vision	\$250	One Time	1	1	\$250	\$250	0.0005%	
Dedicated PA to Navigate Locations	Blind/Low Vision	\$15	Hour	1	700	\$10,500	\$10,500	0.0223%	For location days, 10 hours/day
Stool in Bathroom	Dwarf/Little Person	\$5	Week	25	20	\$100	\$4	0.0002%	
Apple Boxes	Dwarf/Little Person	\$25	Week	25	20	\$500	\$20	0.0011%	
Food Sensitivity Lunch Options	Chronic Illness	\$100	Week	1	20	\$2,000	\$2,000	0.0042%	
Dedicated Van & Driver for Locations	Chronic Illness	\$4,125	Week	4	10	\$41,253	\$10,313	0.0876%	For location days
Golf Cart with PA Driver	Mobility	\$1,408	Week	2	10	\$14,076	\$7,038	0.0299%	\$15/hour + benefits + \$180/week for cart rental
Extra Seating	Mobility	\$0	Week	1	0	\$0	\$0	0.0000%	
Priority Parking	Mobility	\$0	Week	1	0	\$0	\$0	0.0000%	
Office Close to Bathroom	Mobility	\$0	Week	25	20	\$0	\$0	0.0000%	
ADA-Accessible Lodging	Mobility	\$0	Week	1	20	\$0	\$0	0.0000%	Same cost as non-ADA lodging
ADA-Accessible Trailer	Mobility	\$4,500	Week	1	20	\$90,000	\$90,000	0.1911%	Same cost as non-ADA trailer
Extra Costumer for Wardrobe Dressing	Mobility	\$3,744	Week	5	20	\$74,880	\$14,976	0.1590%	For location days
Walkie Talkies	Mobility	\$12	Week	1	20	\$240	\$240	0.0005%	For stage days
Extra PA to Help Load/Unload Mobility Devices	Mobility	\$1,228	Week	4	20	\$24,553	\$6,138	0.0521%	
Portable Restroom with Wheelchair Ramp	Mobility	\$3,750	Week	25	10	\$37,500	\$1,500	0.0796%	For location days
Wheelchair-Accessible Transportation	Mobility	\$1,125	Week	4	10	\$11,250	\$2,813	0.0239%	For location days
Ubers to Work	Mobility	\$250	Week	1	20	\$5,000	\$5,000	0.0106%	
Car Rental	Mobility	\$200	Week	1	20	\$4,000	\$4,000	0.0085%	For location days
Dedicated Driver to/from Work	Mobility	\$1,208	Week	1	20	\$24,150	\$24,150	0.0513%	\$15/hour + benefits
Ramps	Mobility	\$250	One Time	10	1	\$250	\$25	0.0005%	
Railings on Stairs	Mobility	\$250	One Time	10	1	\$250	\$25	0.0005%	
Dedicated/Quiet Office Space	Neurodiverse	\$450	Month	1	20	\$9,000	\$9,000	0.0191%	
Personal Assistant	Neurodiverse	\$20	Hour	1	500	\$10,000	\$10,000	0.0212%	25 hours/week

TOTAL SERIES BUDGET – 02/27/22

PRODUCER: INEVITABLE FOUNDATION

UNIONS: IATSE , IA891, IA669. GUILDS: WGA, DGA, SAG.

Type	Categories	\$50mm % of Budget	\$75mm % of Budget	\$100mm % of Budget
Above The Line	RIGHTS	0.24%	0.25%	0.25%
Above The Line	WRITERS	5.62%	3.84%	3.29%
Above The Line	PRODUCERS	5.32%	5.44%	5.47%
Above The Line	DIRECTOR	1.56%	1.60%	1.61%
Above The Line	CAST	12.48%	12.76%	12.83%
Above The Line	ATL TRAVEL	1.56%	1.60%	1.61%
Above The Line	FRINGE	2.37%	2.42%	2.43%
Below The Line	ACCOMMODATIONS @ 25% Crew	0.33%	0.22%	0.17%
Below The Line	PRODUCTION	3.78%	3.87%	3.89%
Below The Line	BACKGROUND	1.89%	1.93%	1.94%
Below The Line	ART	1.49%	1.53%	1.54%
Below The Line	CONSTRUCTION	5.17%	5.28%	5.31%
Below The Line	STRIKE	0.16%	0.17%	0.17%
Below The Line	SET OPS	2.64%	2.70%	2.71%
Below The Line	SPFX	0.68%	0.69%	0.70%
Below The Line	SET DEC	2.81%	2.88%	2.89%
Below The Line	PROPS	1.33%	1.36%	1.37%
Below The Line	PIC VEH'S / ANIMALS	1.26%	1.29%	1.30%
Below The Line	WARDROBE	3.14%	3.21%	3.23%
Below The Line	MU/HAIR	1.22%	1.25%	1.26%
Below The Line	LIGHTING	3.13%	3.20%	3.22%
Below The Line	CAMERA	2.35%	2.40%	2.41%
Below The Line	SOUND	0.67%	0.68%	0.69%
Below The Line	TRANSPO	4.39%	4.49%	4.52%
Below The Line	LOCATIONS	5.36%	5.48%	5.51%
Below The Line	DAILIES	0.47%	0.48%	0.48%
Below The Line	2ND UNIT	1.66%	1.70%	1.70%
Below The Line	TESTS	0.03%	0.03%	0.03%
Below The Line	STAGE	3.06%	3.13%	3.15%
Below The Line	BTL TRAVEL	2.84%	2.90%	2.92%
Below The Line	BTL FRINGE	5.97%	6.11%	6.14%
VFX	VFX	2.84%	2.90%	2.92%
VFX	VFX Fringe	0.03%	0.03%	0.03%
POST	EDITORS	1.85%	1.89%	1.90%
POST	POST SOUND	0.93%	0.95%	0.96%
POST	TITLES	0.15%	0.15%	0.15%
POST	POST FILM & LAB	0.67%	0.68%	0.69%
POST	POST FRINGE	1.06%	1.08%	1.09%
MUSIC	COMPOSER	0.35%	0.36%	0.36%
MUSIC	SOUND EDITOR	0.15%	0.15%	0.15%
MUSIC	SOURCE MUSIC	1.08%	1.10%	1.11%
MUSIC	MUSIC FRINGE	0.07%	0.07%	0.07%
Below The Line	INSURANCE	0.45%	0.46%	0.46%
Below The Line	GENERAL EXPENSES	5.27%	5.39%	5.42%
Below The Line	PROD SAFETY	0.13%	0.13%	0.13%
ABL TOTAL		29.16%	27.90%	27.49%
BTL TOTAL		70.52%	72.10%	72.52%
PROJECT TOTAL		100%	100%	100%

A Note on the Market Size of Disabled Talent in Film and Television

The total number of disabled writers, actors, producers and showrunners who are active in the film and television industry—meaning they are working or seeking work—is very challenging to determine. There are a number of data gaps in the industry and, primarily, with the various unions that have access to the largest data sets of hiring and employment information.

For example, while the Writers Guild of America West publishes diversity reports and recently started including disability as one of their diversity metrics, the Directors Guild of America does not track disability and SAG-AFTRA, the Producers Guild of America and the Animation Guild don't currently publish any diversity reports at all. This makes it exceedingly difficult to determine the market size of disabled talent as it relates to the statistical significance of this study.

Even with these gaps, we thought it was important to piece together all of the available information, even given the limitations. We wanted to arrive at a very rough estimate of the total market of active disabled talent, which we believe is around 2,400 people. When segmenting based on those who work each year, our estimate drops to an estimated 690 people. Our sample size of 35 respondents equals 1.46% of the estimated market for disabled talent and 5%

of the estimated market of talent working each year.

Read below for more information about the data gaps from the various unions and the logic behind our rough estimates.

The Writers Guild of America West (WGAW)

- The WGAW reported in 2020 that 0.7% of Current Active Members identify as disabled.²³ As of 2022, the guild reported having 10,769 Current Active Members, which would equal 75 disabled guild members.²⁴
- In its 2021 Screen Inclusion Report, which focuses on employment in the feature film industry, the WGA reported that disabled writers were hired for only 0.5% of screenwriting jobs in 2020—10 jobs out of 2,055.²⁵
- In 2019, the WGA launched its Find A Writer Directory, which is the most comprehensive database of WGA writers, even though the data is all self-reported. As of February 2022, there are 90 disabled writers who have worked on at least one project in the last five (5) years listed in the directory. Lower-Level writers account for 66% of the group, Mid-Level writers account for 24% and Upper-Level writers account for 12%. However, this number

includes Current Active and Associate Members, the latter being for “writers who do not qualify for admission as Current members and choose to receive certain Guild services in exchange for payment of an annual service fee.”²⁶ In 2019, an example of a pre-pandemic year of employment, 29 disabled writers worked at least one job.

Putting this data together, we estimate that the WGAW has anywhere from 60-90 disabled Current Active Members and 90-150 total members (Current Active Members + Associate Members). Within our survey of 35 disabled artists, 20 respondents are writers, showrunners and/or producers, which represents a sample size estimated to be at least 13% of the total market of disabled writers, showrunners and producers.

SAG-AFTRA

SAG-AFTRA is the primary union that represents over 165,000 performers across film, television, broadcast and a number of other mediums.²⁷ While the union is currently gathering new data on the diversity of its members with a new Member Demographic Survey, the most recent data that includes any information on disabled members is from 2004, which makes it relatively out-of-date.²⁸ That year, the union sent a survey to 1,237 members who self-identified as having a disability (1.03% of its membership at the time) and the survey got a 40% response rate (496 respondents). In terms of employment,

only 33% of disabled members reported working in 2003 (an estimated 411 members) and they worked an average of 4.1 days per year.

Since 2004, the union has grown from representing 120,000 members to 165,000 members as of 2021. If one assumes for the sake of estimating that the percent of disabled performers remains the same (1.03%), there would be about 1,700 disabled performers in the union as of 2021, with an estimated 561 of them working each year.

Putting this data together, we estimated that SAG-AFTRA has 2,000 disabled performers in the union, with an estimated 660 working at least one job each year. Within our survey of 35 disabled creatives, 15 respondents were actors, which represents a sample size estimated to be at least 0.75% of the total market of disabled performers.

The Animation Guild

The Animation Guild does not publish a diversity and inclusion report, nor does it track any information on the number of members who identify as disabled.

The Producers Guild of America

The Producers Guild does not publish a diversity and inclusion report, nor does it track any information on the number of members who identify as disabled.

The Directors Guild of America

The Producers Guild does publish a diversity and inclusion report, but it does not track any information related to disability.

Putting it All Together

Given the very rough estimates above—with the clear understanding that there are various gaps and assumptions in the data—we estimate the total market for disabled writers, actors, showrunners and producers is, at most, 2,400 people (150 in the WGA, 2,000 in SAG-AFTRA, and an estimated 250 between the Animation Guild, the PGA and the DGA).

When segmenting based on those who work each year, the number drops to an estimated 690 people (29 in the WGA, 561 in SAG-AFTRA, 100 between the Animation Guild, the PGA and the DGA).

Our sample size of 35 respondents equals 1.46% of the estimated market for disabled talent and 5% of the estimated market of talent working each year. For comparison, many political surveys that aim to extrapolate their findings on the electorate have sample sizes of 500-2,500 respondents that are meant to be representative of entire populations of countries with tens to hundreds of millions of people.

While the total number of survey respondents might seem small, and the data gaps in gathering the total size of the market are

large and numerous, we believe the sample size of our research is significant relative to the total size of the market of disabled talent.

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6. "Writers Guild of America West." WGAW Inclusion Report 2020, 2020, https://www.wga.org/uploadedfiles/the-guild/inclusion-and-equity/WGAW_Inclusion_Report_20.pdf.
7. The Request Rate is defined as the number of projects someone requests accommodations on divided by the number of projects they need accommodations on. For example, if someone needs accommodations ten times but only requests them five times, the Request Rate is 50%.
8. The Fulfillment Rate is defined as the number of times a respondent receives accommodations divided by the number of times they request accommodations. For example, if someone receives accommodations five times but requests them 10 times, the Fulfillment Rate would be 50%.
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About Inevitable Foundation

Inevitable Foundation is a non-profit launched in January 2021 that funds and mentors mid-career disabled screenwriters.

Our goal is to close the disability representation gap in film and television. **Disabled people make up 20%+ of the population²⁹ but represent only 2% of characters on-screen³⁰ and less than 1% of writers behind the screen.³¹**

The lack of disability representation on-screen is directly linked to the lack of representation off-screen. By empowering disabled screenwriters with the business, writing and networking skills they need to build long-term careers, we're helping put more disabled creators in positions of power, turning them from employees to employers. This will naturally create a bounty of opportunities for disabled talent on- and off-screen, which will unleash authentic disability narratives across film and television.

Our flagship program is our Screenwriting Fellowship, which provides mid-career disabled screenwriters with a \$40,000 grant and bespoke mentorship to help develop and sell their own content.

Inevitable Foundation is grateful to count on the support of Ford Foundation, Conrad Hilton Foundation, Disability Inclusion Fund, Nielsen Foundation, AT&T Foundation, Netflix, Amazon, WarnerMedia and AMC Networks, among others.

Inevitable Foundation

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