

The Marketplace for Film, Television, and Other Audiovisual Writers

TOTAL EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT

Employment and earnings under WGAw contracts both increased in 2005. Earnings grew for the fourth year in a row, reaching an all-time high. Employment grew for the second year in a row, yet is still shy of the highest year of employment, which had come in 2000.

Total earnings of \$910.0 million topped last year's \$866.5 million by a strong 5.0 percent increase. The growth in total earnings since the one-year decline in 2001 has totaled 15.6 percent.

The 4,437 writers employed in 2005 was 1.5 percent higher than last year's 4,370. It falls 5 percent lower than the highest year of employment under WGAw contracts in 2000, when 4,670 writers were employed. Statistics last year illustrated the impact of reality television when the loss of 19 WGA-covered series in the 2004-2005 season cost approximately 300 jobs on television series in just one year. The 2005-2006 season saw a rebound in fully scripted comedy and drama

TOTAL EARNINGS UNDER WGAw CONTRACTS

YEAR	<i>(Millions of \$)</i>	
	TOTAL EARNINGS	PERCENT CHANGE
2000	794.0	---
2001	787.2	-0.9%
2002	815.9	+3.7%
2003	847.4	+3.9%
2004	866.5	+2.3%
2005	910.0	+5.0%

Source: WGAw Records. Note: Prior year figures are updated to include late-reported information.

series, with many mid-season series helping to recoup that lost work. Those jobs, and more, were regained in series employment.

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

Guild membership rules have functioned to keep the Current/Active membership at a fairly steady level in recent years. In April 2005, the Guild had 7,313 Current/Active members, a number consistent with the recent past. The number can move up or down by as many as 400 members when a

NUMBER OF WGAw MEMBERS EMPLOYED

YEAR	TOTAL EMPLOYED	PERCENT CHANGE	MEMBERS REPORTING	PERCENT CHANGE	PERCENT EMPLOYED
2000	4,670	---	9,194	---	51%
2001	4,582	+1.9%	8,995	-2.2%	51%
2002	4,404	-3.9%	8,569	-4.7%	51%
2003	4,372	-0.4%	8,284	-3.3%	53%
2004	4,370	+0.4%	8,160	-1.5%	54%
2005	4,437	+1.5%	8,052	-1.3%	55%

Source: WGAw Record. Note: Prior year figures are updated to include late-reported information.

dues enforcement effort moves members temporarily to “In-Arrears” status. The number of writers in the Associate and Post-Current statuses has grown consistently in the recent past. The Guild now has caucuses for writers in animation, independent film, non-fiction and new media. Writers eligible to join a caucus who are not already members of the Guild join with associate member status. Prior to 2002, Post-Current status had a limited term. Since that limit was removed, the number of members opting for that status over Emeritus status has increased slightly.

EARNINGS & EMPLOYMENT BY WORK AREA

The season-to-season increase in television employment mentioned above is masked in the reporting here, which is tabulated on a calendar-year basis. By this count the number of writers reporting television employment in calendar 2005 was 3,254, fairly consistent with employment levels over the last four years. Employment in television in 2000 and 2001 had been about 5 percent higher than this recent plateau level.

NUMBER OF GUILD MEMBERS BY MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

YEAR	<i>“Active” Status</i>		POST-CURRENT
	ASSOCIATE	CURRENT	
2000	391	8,409	706
2001	371	8,349	868
2002	336	7,723	1,127
2003	400	7,391	1,323
2004	452	7,628	1,385
2005	576	7,371	1,428
2006	642	7,313	1,478

Source: WGAw Records, April each year. Since 2002, the Guild Constitution has permitted members to remain in the Post-Current category indefinitely by paying an annual service fee. The Associate category includes members of WGAw caucuses.

Earnings in television grew 6.2 percent in 2005, to the fourth all-time high in a row. Note that these figures, which are based on earnings reported for dues purposes, do not fully reflect the above-scale amounts paid, including such amounts paid for series employment. These rates have been under significant pressure in recent years, so total earnings including overscale writer-producer fees may have declined in recent years.

NUMBER OF WRITERS EMPLOYED BY AREA OF WORK

YEAR	TV		SCREEN		OTHER	
	NUMBER EMPLOYED	PERCENT CHANGE	NUMBER EMPLOYED	PERCENT CHANGE	NUMBER EMPLOYED	PERCENT CHANGE
2000	3,558	---	1,862	---	92	---
2001	3,473	-2.4%	1,898	+1.9%	87	-5.4%
2002	3,248	-6.5%	1,843	-2.9%	69	-20.7%
2003	3,217	-1.0%	1,869	+1.4%	65	-5.8%
2004	3,225	+0.3%	1,840	-1.6%	75	+15.4%
2005	3,254	+0.9%	1,898	+3.2%	64	-14.7%

Source: WGAw Records. Note: Prior year figures are updated to include late-reported information. The work area figures add up to more than the Total Employment figure due to members working in more than one work area during a year.

Employment in screen grew 3.2 percent in 2005, reaching the same level as the recent high point for screen employment in 2001, but still about 1 percent lower than the highest level reached in 1998 when 1,919 writers reported screen earnings. Screen earnings grew 3.8 percent in 2005, to a new all-time high of \$449.7 million.

EARNINGS TRENDS

For the first time in at least five years, earnings grew more at the bottom and middle of the

earnings ranking than at the top. The top 5 percent of writers saw their earnings grow 1.6 percent; the highest-paid 255 writers saw their earnings level increase 4.0 percent. In contrast, the median earnings level grew 6.8 percent and the earnings for the 25th percentile writer grew 10.4 percent. This modest boost at the lower end of the pay scale does not significantly flatten earnings, of course. The median earnings topped \$100,000 in 2005, but the 75th percentile earnings was almost 2.5 times that, at \$248,769.

TOTAL EARNINGS UNDER WGAw CONTRACTS BY AREA OF WORK

YEAR	TV		SCREEN		OTHER	
	MILLIONS OF \$	PERCENT CHANGE	MILLIONS OF \$	PERCENT CHANGE	MILLIONS OF \$	PERCENT CHANGE
2000	\$399.9	---	\$391.5	---	\$2.6	---
2001	\$397.4	-0.6%	\$387.3	-1.1%	\$2.5	-3.9%
2002	\$402.8	+1.4%	\$411.4	+6.2%	\$1.7	-32.0%
2003	\$413.9	+2.8%	\$431.7	+4.9%	\$1.8	+5.9%
2004	\$430.9	+4.1%	\$433.2	+0.4%	\$2.4	+33.3%
2005	\$457.6	+6.2%	\$449.7	+3.8%	\$2.7	+12.5%

Source: WGAw Records. Note: Prior year figures are updated to include late-reported information.

EARNINGS TRENDS AT DIFFERENT EARNINGS LEVELS (ALL WORK AREAS)

	<i>Lowest-Paid 25% of the working members earned less than</i>		<i>Half of the working membership earned less than</i>		<i>Highest-Paid 25% of the working members earned more than</i>		<i>Highest-Paid 5% of the working writers earned more than</i>	
	25TH PERCENTILE	PERCENT CHANGE	MEDIAN	PERCENT CHANGE	75TH PERCENTILE	PERCENT CHANGE	95TH PERCENTILE	PERCENT CHANGE
2000	\$31,111	---	\$88,109	---	\$208,299	---	\$558,561	---
2001	\$27,989	-10.0%	\$88,500	+0.4%	\$216,833	+4.1%	\$566,901	+1.5%
2002	\$30,000	+7.1%	\$89,500	+1.1%	\$223,842	+3.2%	\$633,334	+11.7%
2003	\$34,043	+13.5%	\$96,690	+8.0%	\$228,792	+2.2%	\$647,500	+2.2%
2004	\$35,078	+3.0%	\$100,000	+3.4%	\$239,138	+4.5%	\$674,607	+4.2%
2005	\$38,740	+10.4%	\$106,756	+6.8%	\$248,769	+4.0%	\$685,380	+1.6%

Source: WGAw Records. Note: Prior year amounts are updated to include late-reported information.