



WGAW ANIMATION

HOW TO GET YOUR FEATURE ANIMATION PROJECTS COVERED

Tips and Talking Points for Feature Animation Writers

MYTH: Animated features cannot be covered by WGA contracts.

FACT: Feature Animation writing can and should be WGA-covered! Unlike live-action, where WGA coverage is the default, in animation, the writer must insist on it when first making the deal. Here's a look at how to get your feature animation writing WGA-covered.

Background

Animated feature films represent a massive and growing percentage of the worldwide box office. Five of 2024's ten highest-grossing films were animated, generating nearly \$5 billion worldwide. In most cases, the writers on these films receive no residuals because they were not written under a WGA contract.

In August 2022, more than 1,500 WGA writers signed a pledge committing to advocate for WGA coverage on all animated projects—including features. WGA writers want to work under WGA deals. Why? Because working under WGA contracts guarantees you:

- Residuals;
- WGA pension and health benefits;
- Writing credits determined by an official WGA process;
- WGA minimum compensation;
- and more

Step One: Get Your Team on Board

Before pitching your feature, talk to your agents/ reps (and producing partners, if any) about why you want WGA coverage, and send them the Rep handout linked below. If you are in a position to do so, be clear that you will NOT SELL to a buyer who will not cover the project under a WGA agreement.

Step Two: Assess Your Leverage

As a feature writer, you have more leverage if one or more of the following apply:

- Your idea is original and/or you own the rights to the IP
- You are the producer or director, or are partnered with them
- You have a prominent talent attached to the project, and they are willing to back your demand.

Ultimately, your leverage comes down to how much a buyer wants you writing this project.

If you have any live-action content in your project (including hybrid and motion capture) it must be WGA-covered. So ask yourself, could this be a hybrid feature?

Step Three: Strategize Where and How to Pitch

Working with your team, pick potential buyers who are a match for your project creatively, who will also be open to a WGA deal.

Ask the Guild. Email or call us (contact information below). We can tell you which companies have been most receptive to WGA coverage on feature animation pitches.

Pitch to multiple studios. If one studio won't agree to WGA coverage but wants your project, try to get other studios interested. Let them know you will take the project to a studio that will agree to WGA coverage.

Seek out new companies. You may get less resistance to WGA coverage at newer companies that may not have done animated features before, or independent/foreign money producers.

Step Four: Insist on WGA Coverage

You should push for coverage at each and every buyer. Remember: the studio will NOT bring up WGA coverage unless you do.

Push back if the studio says they can't make a WGA deal. Studios have the ability to agree to the deal the writers want. Don't let the studio say they can only do the project under a TAG deal or non-union. They have the ability to hire writers through a WGA signatory and still cover animators under TAG.

Explain to your creative executives why you need coverage a WGA deal. Be specific. For example, taking a non-WGA deal could mean losing your health insurance. Make it tangible for them. WGA members have had success getting their animated features covered by showing why it's not just about dollars and cents.

Step Five: Hold Firm (and Pass if You Have To)

By insisting on WGA coverage, you are sending a message to the studios that writers won't accept deals that do not protect us. It is the only way we can change things.

If you pass on the project because of lack of coverage, make sure the studio knows why. Business Affairs needs to hear that WGA coverage is WGA members' baseline expectation, and that it's a deal breaker for you. Writers willing to walk away from non-WGA deals is how we ensure studios understand they need to agree to WGA coverage for animated features.

Contact Info

Contact Cathy Genovese in WGAW Member Organizing before you pitch your feature animation project: CGenovese@wga.org.

