

# BACKSTAGE west

THE ACTOR'S RESOURCE 135 Casting Notices

## Staff Picks

### BEST WAY TO MEET CASTING DIRECTORS

## SAG Foundation's Casting Access Project

**W**here can you meet notable casting directors, read for them, ask questions, and learn valuable lessons that will surely help you in your craft and career? Oh, and where can you do all of this free of charge (after all, your ship—aka that prized regular role on a network sitcom or that wacky sidekick part in a big studio flick—hasn't come in just yet)?

Surely many of you are rolling your eyes by now, making up such smart-ass replies as “in hell, where everyone is now enjoying the lovely ice-skating,” or “in some distant, futuristic utopia, where struggling actors are prized beyond all others and high-ranking studio execs have to hold down part-time jobs as waiters.”

Our answer is much more realistic: Try the Screen Actors Guild Foundation's 2-year-old Casting Access Project, which offers SAG members cold reading workshops with experienced casting directors. The sessions, made possible by the SAG Foundation in partnership with SAG Producers Industry Advancement and Cooperative Fund, are intimate—about 20 actors to a workshop—and free. The CDs get an honorarium for their time, and the actors don't have to fork over any of their hard-earned cash. Previous participants have included such notables as Gary Zuckerbrod, Michael Donovan, and Casting Society of America President Chemin Sylvia Bernard.

“We try to bring in people that we know love to work with actors,” says Jesse Bush, a program director for CAP, as well as the Foundation's LifeRaft and Conversations programs. “We understand that they're not acting coaches, but we like to bring in people that are comfortable giving actors direction, so the actors go away feeling like they learned something about their performance and learned something by watching the other actors.”

Events usually start with a Q&A session, and then the CD hands out material for the evening. After a short rehearsal period, the actors perform and the CD offers feedback. Many of the CDs, says Bush, give redirection and allow the actors to do the scene again. The workshop is generally wrapped up with another brief Q&A.

“We stress the educational aspect of the workshops, rather than just being seen by a casting director. It's very important for people to be learning,” says CAP program director Rufino Cabang. Events are held at the SAG Foundation, 5757 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. For more information, go to [www.sagfoundation.org](http://www.sagfoundation.org).

—Sarah Kuhn