WHAT ARE YOU GETTING PAID?



Rates shouldn't be a mystery or a secret. Transparency gives all of us bargaining power.

Help build a community-driven rate finder for freelance animators

SUBMIT YOUR RATES & SEARCH THE DATABASE:
magicianstudio.nyc/rate-finder

Anonymized. Community-built. Free to use & share.

- ► Add your recent job info (day rates, project scope, client type).
- ► Check what peers are charging before sending your next estimate.
- ► Pass this link to an animator friend!

ANIMATOR FREELANCE CHEATSHEET



Know your rights, protect your labor & get organized

FREELANCE ISN'T FREE ACT (NYC / NY STATE): If a project is worth $800+ (over 120 days), you are legally required to have a written contract. Clients must pay you by the date listed in the contract, or within 30 days of work completion if no date was set. Late payment penalties apply!

SCOPE CREEP & REVISIONS: Always specify the number of revision rounds (e.g., 2 rounds of roughs, 1 round of color) and your hourly overage rate in your agreement before starting.

KILL FEES: If a project gets canceled mid-production through no fault of your own, your contract should guarantee a percentage fee (e.g., 50% after storyboard lock, 100% after rough animation pass).

HOLD THE FILE DELIVERABLES: Never hand over raw project files (.ae, .psd, clean vector assets) until final payment clears, unless full transfer of working files is explicitly priced into the contract.



GUILDS, ADVOCACY & RESOURCES

The Animation Guild (TAG - IATSE Local 839): animationguild.org

Publishes annual wage minimums and union shop standards (great benchmark even for non-union work).

Graphic Artists Guild (GAG): graphicartistsguild.org

Publishers of the "Handbook: Pricing & Ethical Guidelines", the industry standard bible for fair pricing and contract language.

Freelancers Union: freelancersunion.org

Free advocacy group offering contract templates, tax guides, and advocacy for independent contractors.

Stephanie Delazeri: instagram.com/steph_z_d

Animator from Los Angeles and researcher of animation labor

MAGICIAN

magicianstudio.nyc
@magicianstudiobk

Magician is a NYC based project of Amanda Bonaiuto & James Thacher that creates accessible educational resources for animators through mentoring, workshops, curated animation programs, and publications.