



## Background/Extra Work

Anytime you see people in the background of a shot—sitting in a restaurant, walking down the street, driving in cars, etc—these are background performers or extras. Basically, extras are human props, used to make a film set look more real. To be an extra you'll need an adult chaperone if you're under the age of fifteen. If you're available to do the work (up to 16 hrs a day on short notice) it's a great opportunity to visit a working film set, and beats the heck out of most part-time jobs. Lots of skilled and interesting people do extra work in their off-time, including students, actors, artists, teachers, dancers, musicians, photographers, and many others.

The best way to get extra work is through an extras agent. It's completely acceptable to have both a principals *talent agent* that represents you for film, TV and commercials and an *extras agent* that reps you for *background* work. Always let your talent agent know if you're signing with an extras agent—they'll want to

*Principals Agent: A Talent Agent that represents actors for Film+TV, as opposed to a Commercial or Extras Agent.*

know about it, because the days you're on set doing background work you won't be available to go out on auditions.

When you're applying at an extras agency, visit their website first to see when and how each agency accepts new people. Don't worry about a *headshot*, but do bring a *resume* that lists your skills and talents—basically everything that you can do at a three out of ten skill level or better (e.g. riding a bicycle, darts, basketball, knitting... almost anything). Some agencies look for specific skill sets, but most of them just look for availability. If you're available 24/7 (i.e. if you're a student on summer vacation), then you'll be on top of their list of people to call.

An extras agent will typically charge a \$25 photo fee to sign up. Otherwise, your extras agent only makes money by taking a cut of what you make, usually 15%. If all they need is someone to sit or walk around, you'll be booked as General Background (GB, \$10-\$12/hr). If you're using a skill, even something as simple as riding a bike, you'll be booked as a Skilled Actor Extra (SAE, \$22-26/hr). All *Union* productions have to employ a certain percentage of *UBCP* members (Union Permit extra, \$22-\$26/hr). And tell your extras agent if you have a car, a dog, a bicycle, etc. Often you can get paid more just to bring these things with you to the set for the day.

It's hard to get exact numbers, but in any month there can be thousands of extras working in Vancouver. Some are full-time extras, and some take a few days of extra work here and there and work other jobs. Just about everybody in town has done a little bit of extra work or knows someone who has.

Union Extras: *Extras who work regularly can join the Union of BC Performers, see [www.ubcp.com](http://www.ubcp.com) for benefits and details*

**Selected BC  
Extras Agencies**

**Boss Management**  
*bossmanagement.com*

**In Motion**  
*inmotiontalent.com*

**Keystone Extras**  
*keystoneextras.com*

**Urban Casting**  
*urbancastinginc.com*

**Local Color**  
*localcolor.ca*

**Def Con 5 Talent**  
*def-con-5.com*

**LJR Talent**  
*ljrtalent.com*

# **BIZ** STUDIO **PROFESSIONAL SCREEN ACTING FOR KIDS+TEENS**

*"It tells me something if an actor is taking classes... it means that this person believes in themselves enough as an actor to invest the time, to invest the money, to train, to work on themselves."*

- Judy Lee, Casting Director, Vancouver

*"Biz Studio is like an acting boot camp for kids... the results are staggering. Michael Bean is brilliant."*

- Stuart Aikins, Casting Director, Vancouver

**Biz Studio** is Vancouver's top professional screen acting school for kids and teens. Each class only takes six students so that instructors (all working actors) can give each participant a maximum of support and individual attention. All classes are on-camera in a working casting studio, and mix audition skills, scene study, and acting exercises to help students develop the skills they need to audition successfully and to work on set. We are passionate about preparing our students to work in film, television and commercials.

For classes, info, and audition listing for kids+teens, visit [www.bizstudio.ca](http://www.bizstudio.ca)



**Michael Bean**, Owner+Head Coach at Biz Studio.

*"Kids that study with Michael seem to book more work, and isn't that the goal!"*

- Brenda Wong, Agent, Talent Co.