

## Costume Department Positions

**Costume Designer:** responsible for designing, creating, acquiring, and hiring all costumes for principal actors as well as day players & background artists.

**Assistant Costume Designer (ACD):** support the designer, including buying costumes and managing show budgets. They also assist with the design and research of costumes, helping to make and adapt them. Provide direct communication from designer to supervisor and other wardrobe staff.

**Costume Supervisor:** Oversees the office and workings of the costume/wardrobe department. Script breakdowns, manage budgets, manage labor and total man hours, manage hiring of additional costumers. Key contact for other departments.

**Key Costumer:** is the direct communication from designer/supervisor to the other costumers. May work on set or the wardrobe office. In the absence of an ACD the key costumer facilitates those things. Generally in charge of overseeing the background world: fitting, dressing artists at holding, supervising the BG costumers, etc. Oversees the rental process from start to finish.

**Key Set Costumer:** Lead costumer on set. Takes care of all principal actors. Makes sure correct clothes have been prepped/set for the day's work and maintains them according to designer's notes once they arrive on set. Keeps continuity book or program updated. Point person on set when questions arise.

**Set Costumer or Principal Set Costumer:** Works under key set costumer to assist in the care/continuity of principal actors and dayplayers. Keeps continuity book or program updated. Speaks with script supervisor or 1st AD when continuity or other questions arise.

**Background Costumer:** takes care of all background artists from dressing them at holding to continuity on set. Works with the AD department to place BG according to the designer's guidelines i.e. hide the less-than-perfect BG in the back of the scene. Keeps BG continuity book or program updated. May work in the shop to pre-fit BG.

**Costumers:** generally works in wardrobe office to do whatever tasks the supervisor may have, from organization to restocking of wardrobe. An "Additional Costumer" is someone who works when there is a need for extra help, either on set or the office. A Truck Costumer is the person who works in the wardrobe truck to oversee the pulling/prep of each day's work as well as any other tasks the designer may need for the day. Also provides support to the set staff.

**Tailor:** build, fit, and/or alter costumes, either purchased or rented. Assist designer in fittings with principal actors. (A seamstress is similar to some people.) Oversee work assignments to stitchers, etc.

**Seamstress/Stitcher/Sewer:** works under the tailor/seamstress to complete alterations in the tailor shop. (Essentially all three do the same job but different names are inexplicably used.)

**Agers/Dyers:** dye, distress, age all clothing per the notes of the costume designer.

**Costume Coordinator:** works in the office on the day to day accounting of the costume department. May answer phone calls. Tracks receipts for various departmental budgets.

**Costume Buyer/Shopper:** shops for clothing items and handles returns for the designer.

**Costume PA:** a low-paying, non-union job for first-timers who can learn the business by watching union workers. Duties often include getting coffee, lunches, etc. for office staff; picking up costumes after they've been chosen by staff; return clothing/costumes after return sheets have been completed by staff. May not do the work of Bargaining Unit Employees.

**What We Do:**

The Costume Department is in charge of the physical look of all clothing/costumes from principal actors to background artists. We work as a unit to accomplish the vision of the costume designer as well as help to maintain the integrity of their work. We may be required to speak with the script supervisor to maintain correct day to day continuity. The set people may have add additional distressing, blood, sweat, etc. to costumes at set per the script's requirements.

**Structure of the Costume Department:**

Generally- all costume positions work under the designer and supervisor to accomplish work at their direction. The key positions are directly under the supervisor and in charge of the other costumers.

**Things A First Timer Should Know:** Our job is all about the details. You must pay attention to what your assignment is/what your actor must look like. Please ask questions when confused or write down any information you need. We'd rather answer your questions so that you do things correct than have to waste time correcting mistakes. It's important to know who is in charge as questions should be deferred to that person. Sides are the copies of the day's work. It's important to get a copy and read them so that you know what the day's work is. You should also get a call sheet which contains the shooting order for the day. This is very useful if you need to print & mark any photos for the day. If you are given a walkie to wear, be sure you know how to use it; that you are on the correct channel, and that you answer if you are called on it. We work in close quarter for long hours so a pleasant, helpful attitude is really key. Pay close attention to what the full-time costumers do as it is a good template of what your own behavior should be. We are responsible for the clothes ONLY though we often work closely with hair/makeup. For example: if I have to adjust a necklace on an actress I will ask a hair representative to move the hair out of the way. I don't do it on my own. We respect the jobs of other departments.

**What To Bring To Work:** Basic supplies in your bag should include: hand sewing needles & thread (Rainbow Braids are the easiest form); scissors; clothing or lint brush; toupee or double stick clothing tape; seam ripper; Sharpies and pens; a small notebook; Wet Ones; Tide stick; and safety pins. A smartphone or digital camera.

**Unusual Equipment:** hair dryers, either travel or full-size. Hand steamers- if you don't have one they are an invaluable investment. It may be worth seeing what types the full-time costumers have so that you can research what works best for your budget. Walkie headset. (There are usually a limited number of extra ones to borrow on set.)

**Typical Day:** set costumers report to the wardrobe truck where the prep for the day's work takes place. After steaming/ironing a character's change it is delivered to the actor's trailer and set out for them. BG costumers report to holding to dress the BG. This may be either choosing an outfit from personal clothes the BG have brought with them per the designer's directives or distributing pre-fit outfits from the holding racks.

Once all principal actors/BG are approved by the designer the costumers follow them to the set bringing any additional items needed. The set costumers make any adjustments when last looks are called and then watch at a monitor to be sure the continuity is being followed. The

BG costumers work closely with the AD department to place BG according to the director's requirements for each scene and then watch at a monitor if possible to make sure continuity is being followed. All costumers take continuity photos of the actors and BG. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS WE DO. (It's the way we make sure the actor looks the same as we may shoot parts of the same scene over several days or weeks or if we have to go back and reshoot a scene.)

At wrap, the set costumers return with the actors. If keeping a physical book this is a great time to update continuity notes or print pictures. Once they are finished changing we collect all costume pieces from their trailers and then return them to the truck. Any laundry is done at this time as well as making sure the next day's work has been pulled to the prep bay. IF the truck is moving to a new location then the costumers make sure to lock down the truck. BG costumers make sure that any wardrobe which has been provided is returned by the BG. If the holding area is being vacated then the costumers work to pack up and help load the racks of costumes to the truck to be transported either to the next location or back to the shop.