

The Benefits of Being Local 56 Member

1. Helping You Get Work

Job Referral Service- We publish in the West Michigan Guide To Live Music, both in printed form and on our website. This is a complete listing of all of our members who are actively looking for performance gigs from bands to chamber ensembles to soloists. We advertise this service in the Yellow Pages and the Grand Rapids Press and receive 40- 50 calls per month from people and places looking for live music.

Internet Exposure- Our website (www.livemusicgr.org) lists all of our members groups with links to your own email and website. In the near future, we hope to be able to offer members a web page of their own as well.

Convention Listings- We have a listing of all of the convention activity coming up in the Kent County area over the next 3 years so that members can market themselves directly to these groups.

Membership Directory- Members are listed alphabetically and by instrument. Band leaders looking for subs or permanent replacements use the directory to find the musicians they need.

Union Affiliation- Many touring shows that perform here use local bands or musicians. Those touring under union contracts use local union musicians.

2. Helping You Get Paid

Contracts- We provide contracts for you to use whenever you are hired to perform broadcast or record. We'll help you fill them out, keep a copy on file, and in the event a problem arises between you and the employer, we'll help make sure you get paid. AFM recording agreements make sure you are paid extra when that demo tape you did for a struggling songwriter ends up on a major label, in a commercial jingle, or on a motion picture soundtrack.

Wage Scales- The membership decides what minimum scale should be for various types of work. You can charge as much as you can get for your services, but we set minimums so that members aren't giving away their services and lowering everyone's ability to earn a living.

Music Performance Trust Funds- You can get paid to play performances that are free to the public with the assistance of these funds. Musicians playing for festivals, in parks, at malls, and at schools, don't need to give away their skills just for the exposure. Professionals get paid.

Networking- Members have the expertise of the top music professional throughout the US and Canada to assist them. We'll be happy to talk with you about any aspect of the music industry.

Contract Negotiation- When a group of musicians working under one employer on a regular basis requests it, we can negotiate wages and benefits on their behalf. We do this, for example, on behalf of the musicians of the Grand Rapids Symphony.

3. Protecting Your Investment

Musical Instrument Insurance- Members can purchase very affordable instrument insurance that covers your equipment 24 hrs a day, no matter where it is, and a replacement value. You can't find a better deal than this.

4. Protecting Your Future

Special Payments Fund- Members who record using appropriate AFM Agreements are eligible to receive these funds, regardless of whether or not any product is sold.

Pension Fund- Through the AFM musicians have one of the best pension funds in existence, and it isn't difficult to get vested.

Lester Petrillo Fund for Disabled Musicians- What happens when injury or illness sidelines a musician temporarily or permanently?

5. Education And Information

Professional Advice- When you get an offer from an employer, booking agent, publisher, promoter or record label, we can advise you on steps to take or put you in touch with the professionals you need to make sure you are getting a fair deal.

GRFM Scholarship Fund- We award scholarship to area student musicians in an effort to give aspiring professionals a chance to become the best musicians they can become.

Professional Publications- The AFM's International Musician and our Local 56 Musician help keep members informed about current events and trends in the music industry. Classified ads in the International Musician carry all kinds of valuable job listings.

6. Additional Help

Union Privilege Benefits - A variety of programs, including loans, home mortgages, mail order pharmacy and more are available through the AFM's affiliation with the AFL-CIO.

Master Card - The AFM Master Card is available to members at low interest rates, even if your only job is a "musician".

Stampers Credit Union - As a member, you enjoy the advantages of credit union membership through the Stampers Credit Union.

Insurance - Members can purchase a variety of different types of insurance tailored to the needs of professional musicians, including health, dental, liability and instrument insurance.