

HOW RECORDING MUSICIANS GET PAID FOR THE WORK THEY DO

All AFM Local and National recording contracts include scale wages, plus a pension payment of 14.09% of scale, and Health and Welfare payments of \$30 for the first 3-hour session and \$25 for each additional session per day. Up to 15 minutes of music can be recorded in a 3-hour session. Leader makes double scale and typically writes charts, calls the players, helps the producer communicate with the musicians, and makes sure all the paperwork is taken care of properly.

AFM 257 LOCAL SCALES

- **Demo:** \$170.00 (\$57/hr) This scale is for recordings not originally intended for commercial release. Publishing demos have long been a fertile training ground for players and producers, and the quality of Nashville demos is second to none. To be released, they can be converted to Limited Pressing and/or upgraded to Master scale. More on that below...
- **Limited Pressing:** \$216.50 (\$72/hr) This was developed for indie artists and labels. When 10,000 copies are pressed and/or sold, an upgrade payment is due to bring it up to Master scale, with credit given for the original payment. This scale can also be combined with the Single Song Overdub Scale.
- **Demo to Limited Pressing Conversion** - \$100/player + \$25 H&W per 3 hour session. Upgrade to Master applies when 10,000 copies are sold.

SINGLE SONG OVERDUB AGREEMENT

We developed this concept in Nashville to address the rise of home recording and remote Internet based sessions, but **all AFM Locals can use this scale, which can also be combined with their Local Limited Pressing Agreement.** It is the only AFM scale to pay by the song with a negotiable per song rate (\$100 minimum). Pension and H&W are included as a percentage of the rate, and the musician can choose to make their own pension contribution, also a first.

AFM NATIONAL RECORDING SCALES – The current AFM Sound Recording Labor Agreement (SRLA) with the major labels has been extended to February 2026.

- **SRLA Low Budget Master:** \$274.32 (\$91.43/hr.) This scale is for album projects with a total recording budget of less than \$99K. No upgrade to full master is required, regardless of sales. **Budget must be approved by AFM in advance.**
- **SRLA Master scale:** \$488.29. (\$162.76/hr) is the standard scale for major label projects. There are discounts for larger ensembles in our latest contract.
- **SRLA Live and in Studio Streaming :** \$250 1st song, \$125 each add'l. song.

OTHER NATIONAL AFM AGREEMENTS (3 hr session rates, rounded to nearest \$)

- **Motion Picture:** \$379-\$436 (\$126 -145/hr) Rates vary by # of musicians on session. Lowest rate is for 35 players, highest for 23 or fewer.
- **TV Film:** (Scripted television shows) \$322-379 (\$107 -126/hr) Rates vary by # of musicians. Lowest rate is for 5 or more musicians, higher for 4 or less. This pays additional wages for reruns and the release of audio under the SRLA.
- **Videogames:** \$300-345 (\$100-115/hr) Rates vary by # of musicians, lowest is for 25 + musicians, higher rate is for fewer than 25 musicians. More info below.

NEW USE/REUSE - RESIDUALS AND ROYALTIES

- **New Use/Re-Use:** when a phono recording is used in another medium such as film, tv, and/or jingles, the appropriate payment for that medium is made to the musicians who played on the original recording. Additional jingle cycles of 13 weeks pay an additional Re-Use fee for each subsequent cycle.
- **Use of studio tracks onstage:** Long prohibited, the SRLA Phono Agreement now has a “Tracks on Tour” scale for paying musicians a reasonable per show fee (\$170/night) for the use of their AFM-covered studio work onstage, with a discount for advance payments of \$5000 for 6 months and \$9000 for one year.
- **Sound Recording Special Payments Fund:** funded by .05% of record sales from signatory labels and pays recording musicians a residual payment once a year. The individual’s distribution amount is based on the amount of AFM sessions done over the past 5 years. \$9.7 Million was distributed last year.
- **Film Musicians Secondary Markets Fund:** pays musicians who work on AFM covered film soundtracks a pro rata share of 1/20th of 1% of post theater revenue generated by that film in perpetuity. The FMSMF distributed more than \$120 Million to musicians last year.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY – PERFORMANCE RIGHTS

- **Internet Radio and Non-Interactive Satellite Radio:** Sound Exchange collects nearly \$1 Billion annual revenue from these sources. 5% of the distribution goes to backup musicians and singers and is distributed by the AFM/SAG-AFTRA Intellectual Property Fund. In 2025, the Fund paid out more than \$60 Million to musicians whose work was played on Sirius XM and non-interactive Pandora.
- **International Performance Rights** – The AFM participated in the 2012 UN Conference on Intellectual Property in Beijing. We created language in the treaty that provides for “no collection without distribution” which has resulted in \$20 million in new money paid to American musicians by foreign collectives, despite the U.S.’s lack of reciprocal AM/FM performance rights. (see below)

EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE...

- **AM/FM Terrestrial Radio:** U.S. terrestrial radio Pays NOTHING to musicians or artists, unlike every other developed country in the world. The U.S. creates 80% of the world’s music, yet millions in overseas money owed to American musicians is held captive due to our lack of reciprocal Performance Rights. **The AMFA legislation now in Congress will fix this once and for all if passed.**
- **AFM Videogame Contracts:** Despite claims to the contrary, these agreements do not have, and have never had, any residual or royalty component whatsoever for session musicians. However, if covered music is re-used in another videogame, an additional payment is required. When videogame music is recorded non-union, then the musicians will never receive another payment.

The AFM’s mission is to make sure musicians and singers are paid fairly, and that our members know how to protect their intellectual property rights and future residuals by putting their work on an AFM contract. It’s the right thing to do!