AFM member recordings are covered under a variety of sound recording agreements. This chart identifies some of the more common agreements that can be used to protect your work and the work of the musicians you hire. This chart is for individually produced album recording projects only, not for symphonic or theatrical products. It is not meant for audiovisual projects, such as films or concerts.

Recordings covered by these agreements are eligible for announcement in the *International Musician*. See page 14 for details. If you have any questions about where your project fits, contact your local or the EMSD department.

**Album Recording Flow Chart**

*Note: these questions should not be applied to symphonic or theatrical recordings.*

Will you be hiring instrumentalists?

- **NO**
  - If your band, or yourself, will not be hiring outside musicians to perform on the album, then the recording can be covered under a **Joint Venture Agreement**, filed with your local. No money needs to be exchanged and no signatory is required if all of the musicians in the group share ownership of the content and there is no outside company hiring you.

- **YES**
  - Do you expect there to be more than 10,000 pressings of the album?
    - **NO**
      - For album projects that sell fewer than 10,000 units, you can hire musicians under the terms of the **Local Limited Pressing Agreement**, which offers a discount on session wages and reduction in some music preparation costs.
      - Individual musicians can be contracted for home studio work under the **Single Song Overdub Scale Agreement**, in conjunction with the **Local Limited Pressing Agreement**.
      - If the recording sessions are to produce demo tracks to seek funding or other work, the **Local Audio Demonstration Recording Agreement** could apply.

    - **YES**
      - Will the overall, all-in budget for the project be under $99,000?
        - **NO**
          - If the project does not qualify for low budget status and also is expected to sell more than 10,000 units, then the full terms and conditions of the **Sound Recording Labor Agreement** must apply.
        - **YES**
          - For albums with 12 or more tracks budgeted under $99,000 (this total is prorated if there are fewer than 12 tracks), your project can apply for low budget status under the **Sound Recording Labor Agreement**, which offers a discount on session wages.

**Joint Venture Agreement**

The pandemic saw more musicians offer their performances online in response to the physical venue closures of 2020. This avenue of distribution has continued even as venues have reopened, but self-produced online content must be protected. The AFM has developed the Joint Venture Agreement specifically for that purpose.

The Joint Venture Agreement evolved from AFM’s “Bandstand Records” guidelines, which allow independent bands to self-produce their recordings with key union protections, when no wages are paid and in the absence of an employer. Originally developed for audio recordings, the Joint Venture Agreement now has a video component. This makes protecting self-produced online media a breeze for musicians.

Since Joint Venture Agreements are filed locally, it is important that local officers get the word out to their members. To ensure the agreement is used properly, the AFM Electronic Media Services Division (EMSD) has established the following guidelines:

- Recordings may be solicited for exhibition over the internet, as long as all musicians on the recording consent to that exhibition.
- The member(s) involved in the record(s) must maintain control and ownership of the product.

The Joint Venture Agreement is the simplest of all AFM agreements, yet it offers vital protections to musicians who create their own media, when that media is monetized later. You can find the Joint Venture Agreement in the Document Library on the AFM.org website.

**Local Limited Pressing**

Album projects that do not reach the 10,000-unit sale threshold may be filed under the Local Limited Pressing Agreement. The scale wages under this agreement are established by the AFM local in whose jurisdiction the recording takes place. Benefits, such as pension and for health and welfare, are established at the same rates as the main Sound Recording Labor Agreement. Digital streaming is permitted, though a small back-end percentage (0.55%) of digital receipts are owed twice annually to the Pension Fund, unallocated.

**Single Song Overdub Scale**

If you are not calling sessions in person, but are contracting individual musicians to record parts from their home studios, you and the musician can utilize the AFM Single Song Overdub Scale Agreement to establish a rate and pay the musician by the song, rather than by the hour. A copy of this agreement can be found in the Document Library on the AFM.org website.

**Local Audio Demo Recording**

Some audio sessions are called for projects not intended for release. These projects may be created for use in seeking funding for other projects or works, such as live engagements. These demonstration recordings are filed on separate local agreements. Contact your AFM local for more information.