



The United States Coast Guard Band

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Tour Partner Handbook

rev. March 2025



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INTRODUCTION

Partnering with the United States Coast Guard Band means we together will provide an unforgettable experience for your community and surrounding areas. In this relationship, we, The United States Coast Guard Band, will be communicating the necessary information and expectations to produce an exciting, memorable, musical, and patriotic concert for those in attendance. Our partners are responsible for the three main aspects of any successful concert:

- Appropriate Venue
- Publicity
- Ticketing/Programs (one-page, two-sided insert)

We look forward to working with you. Thank you for your support in providing your community with this concert experience.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The official partner(s) is the organization whose representative has signed both the Tour Local Appearance Agreement and the CG Band Tour PR Form provided by the Tour Marketing Coordinator. While partners may seek support from other organizations, they must adhere to the following:

- Inform the Tour Coordinator/Marketing Director of all assisting organizations. Certain restrictions may apply.
- Only approved official partners and assisting organizations may be recognized in promotional materials, the concert program, or from the stage. Assisting organizations should be mentioned as supporting organizations, not as partners.

The official partner(s) will provide:

- **Concert Site:** Provide a venue with a minimum seating capacity of 450 patrons and a performing area of 45 feet wide by 35 feet deep on a fixed stage or platform.
- **Ushers:** Supply ushers for the concert site. Acceptable ushers include house staff, adult volunteers, or responsible high school students. The CG Auxiliary may assist if needed.
- **Publicity:** Execute a publicity campaign to ensure a full audience. The Coast Guard Band Public Affairs/Social Media Offices will provide publicity materials and recommendations.

- **Tickets:** Offer free admission tickets to the general public, including a 33% overage of the venue's capacity. If no preferred online ticketing platform is available, the USCG Band can use Ticketleap.com, a free service managed by the host or the Tour Department.
- **Program Printing:** Reproduce a one-page, two-sided program to insert into the program covers supplied by the Coast Guard Band.
- **Pre-Event Meeting/Tour Advance:** Meet with Coast Guard Band Tour Coordinators 2-3 months before the concert to review the venue and discuss ticketing and publicity.

Expenses:

The United States Coast Guard covers all costs for the Band's transportation, food, and lodging. The official partner is responsible for expenses related to the concert site and publicity. Partners are encouraged to seek assistance from supporting organizations to help cover expenses and ensure complete ticket distribution. Tour Coordinators can assist in identifying potential supporting organizations, such as veteran or local arts groups.

- **Concert Site Costs:** The official partner is responsible for the concert site and associated costs, including union fees, hall rental, and staffing. In some cases, the Coast Guard Band may cover some or all of these fees
- **Printing Costs:** The Coast Guard Band Public Affairs Office will provide a digital copy of a one-page, two-sided concert program and Band roster. The official partner is responsible for printing these materials and inserting them into the program cover, which will be provided by the Coast Guard Band.
- **Publicity:** The official partner may incur publicity expenses, such as paid advertising. These costs can be offset by partnering with media outlets, which can be acknowledged from the stage during the concert. While paid advertising is not mandatory, official partners must promote the concert and ensure complete ticket distribution.

Prohibited Activities:

- **Third-Party Advertising:** Advertising in the concert program is prohibited. Only the names of official partners and acknowledgments of assisting organizations may be included in the program or mentioned during the concert.
- **Fundraising:** The Coast Guard Band must adhere to Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense regulations, which prohibit participation in events that benefit or appear to benefit private individuals, political groups, or fraternal organizations. Fundraising and collections associated with Coast Guard Band performances are not allowed, as donations could be interpreted as admission fees.

STAGE & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The Coast Guard Band requires a concert site with seating for approximately 1,000 patrons. If a venue of this size is not available in the city, a smaller venue may be considered. Ideal locations include symphony halls, performing arts centers, municipal auditoriums, civic centers, college auditoriums, or high school auditoriums. Outdoor concerts should be held in band shells or similar structured venues. Performing in parking lots, sports venues, or parks is discouraged. For outdoor events, a backup indoor venue must be reserved in case of inclement weather.

- **Performing Area:** The recommended stage dimensions are 45 feet wide by 35 feet deep. This space should be unobstructed and sufficient to accommodate the Band's normal configuration, excluding wing space, curtains, backdrops, or downstage space in front of the Band.
- **Setup:** Ensure the entire performing area and wings are clear and clean before the Band stage crew arrives to avoid setup delays.
- **Acoustic Shell:** The Band prefers not to use an acoustic shell during performances.
- **Backstage Space:** Provide accessible backstage space for storing the Band's equipment cases. The preferred storage location is in the wings or just backstage, where equipment should be secured and easily accessible during the performance.

Lighting/Audio/Technical

For specific technical details about the Band's needs, refer to their Technical Rider.

- **Lighting:** The partner/venue must provide a technician to operate the house lighting panel. Overhead stage lighting should be bright enough to read print clearly. Spotlights are generally not desired and should be avoided.
- **Sound System:** The Band will use its own sound system, including microphones, cables, mixer, processing, and graphic EQ. If a house system is available, the Band's Audio Technicians will coordinate with the venue to decide its use. If the house system is used, Band Audio Technicians will handle all settings, mixing, and control of microphone and system levels.
- **Recording:** The Band Audio Technician may record the concert if needed.
- **Final Decisions:** All final audio and lighting decisions will be made by the Coast Guard Band Load Crew Chief and Audio Engineers upon arrival at the venue on the day of the concert.

Dressing Rooms

Dressing rooms should include coat racks or space to hang uniforms, as well as chairs or benches. Classrooms may be used if they are secured throughout the Band's stay. Ensure windows are covered for privacy.

- **Location:** Dressing rooms must be in the same facility as the concert venue.
- **Private Rooms:** Provide three private rooms for the Band Director, Band Assistant Director, and Band Vocalist.
- **Women's Dressing Room:** Should be large enough to accommodate approximately 20 people and their uniforms on hangers.
- **Men's Dressing Room:** Should be large enough to accommodate approximately 40 people and their uniforms on hangers.

Load in/Parking

- **Parking:** The Band arrives with two chartered buses and one official vehicle. Parking should be pre-arranged with the Tour Coordinators and reserved from four hours before the concert until two hours after.
- **Load-In/Out:** The Band's load crew arrives no later than two hours before the concert and will dismantle the stage within an hour after the concert. In some cases, earlier arrival or later departure may be required due to logistical challenges.
- **Loading Dock:** The loading dock must be available at the scheduled time. Parking for the 53-foot tractor trailer should be reserved from four hours before the concert. If a loading dock is not available, ramps must be provided with clear, maneuverable routes to and from the stage for safety.
- **Coordination:** The Coast Guard Band Tour Coordinators will contact the official partner the day before the concert to confirm arrival times for the stage crew, tractor trailer, and tour coordinators.

PUBLICITY

With the support of the United States Coast Guard Band's Public Affairs team, the partner(s) must develop and execute a comprehensive publicity campaign aimed at filling the venue to capacity. The Band will provide marketing materials tailored to the local area and offer specific recommendations that have consistently proven effective throughout the country on our annual national tours. Publicity must be targeted to the general public to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to attend the concert.

Publicity efforts should commence early to allow for complete distribution of tickets before the concert date. This advance planning enables the partner(s) to adjust and expand their publicity efforts if ticket distribution is slower than anticipated. Below are suggested publicity methods commonly used to promote a United States Coast Guard Band concert.

Newspaper Advertising

Newspaper advertising is often the most effective and cost-efficient way to reach a large audience for the concert. Ads should include photos, concert date, time, location, and a “how to get tickets” section. Include the following disclaimer in all ads: “All tickets are null and void 15 minutes prior to the performance. Seats will then be available on a first-come, first-served basis to those without tickets.”

Some newspapers may offer feature articles about the Band’s history and traditions, possibly highlighting local artists in a “coming home” feature. These articles can enhance audience engagement and awareness. Photographs and interviews with the Coast Guard Band directors and musicians are available and can be coordinated through our Public Affairs team.

Once all tickets have been distributed, we recommend running the original ad again with a “Sold Out” banner. This will remind ticket holders of the concert, reduce further ticket requests, and prompt non-ticketed patrons to seek any available seats within the 15-minute window before the concert begins.

Posters

Posters are available from the Coast Guard Band Public Affairs Team and can be customized by each partner for community distribution. These posters will include all essential event details and will acknowledge primary and secondary partners, as well as assisting organizations, for their support in bringing the Band to the community.

Email Campaigns

Using mass email distribution lists or “Bang Lists” from local school districts, performing arts centers, VFWs, and other local organizations can be highly effective for promoting the concert and ticket availability. Attaching flyers and including all relevant information in these emails offers a cost-effective way to reach the community and has proven successful in recent years.

Online/Social Media

The United States Coast Guard Band uses Facebook, Instagram and YouTube exclusively for social media. However, our partners are encouraged to use all social media platforms to promote the concert. Please share the Coast Guard Band’s Facebook calendar event to avoid multiple duplicate events and ensure a unified promotion. Sharing articles, posts, and links created by the Band can increase community interest in tickets and boost “likes” for both the Band and partner organizations. Social media advertising is an evolving aspect of our public relations efforts, and our Public Affairs team can assist partners in utilizing new methods to enhance concert promotion.

Our Public Affairs Commitment

The United States Coast Guard Band Public Affairs team will provide flyers, posters, press releases, and other promotional materials to assist hosts in promoting the concert and distributing tickets before the event date. We are committed to generating excitement in your community but rely on your help to ensure all tickets are distributed. Effective public relations and publicity are crucial for a successful concert, and creating buzz within the community is key to achieving a sellout. Our Public Affairs team is here to support your publicity efforts—please reach out if you need additional assistance with ticket distribution or promotion.

TICKETING

The United States Coast Guard Band aims for each concert to achieve 100 percent capacity. Tickets are crucial for monitoring the effectiveness of the publicity campaign and for managing concert access. To maximize ticketing effectiveness and ensure a full venue, we recommend the following strategies, which have proven successful for premier military bands:

- **Online Ticketing:** Use Ticketleap.com and provide a will-call table.
- **33 Percent Overprint:** Print 33 percent more tickets than the venue's capacity.
- **Four to Six Tickets Per Request:** Limit ticket requests to four to six tickets.
- **15-Minute Rule:** Implement the rule that all tickets are null and void 15 minutes before the concert, with remaining seats available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Ushers at Venue Entrance:** Station ushers at the venue entrance to assist with ticketing and seating.

Online Ticketing & Will Call Table

The United States Coast Guard Band provides an online ticketing option through Ticketleap.com to track the effectiveness of the publicity campaign and monitor ticket distribution. Patrons can claim printable tickets via the free online platform, print them at home, and bring them to the concert to ensure seating more than 15 minutes before the start.

We highly recommend offering a will-call table at the venue where printed tickets can be picked up up to 15 minutes before the concert. This accommodates loyal patrons who may not use the internet or prefer not to print tickets at home.

Distributing tickets through multiple points, such as music stores, libraries, or local government offices, is strongly discouraged as it hampers effective monitoring of ticket distribution and publicity reach.

33% Overage

Based on our experience with hundreds of successful concerts nationwide, we have found that people often claim more free tickets than they use, leading to lower attendance on concert night. To address this, we recommend distributing up to 33% more tickets than the venue's capacity. Although this may seem risky, typically only about 75% of distributed tickets are used. This practice helps to ensure a nearly full venue.

If all 133% of capacity tickets have been distributed and additional requests are received, we suggest sending a regret email or, if contacted by phone, reminding potential attendees of the 15-minute rule (outlined below).

Four to Six Tickets per Request

Tickets should be limited to four to six tickets per request. Produced tickets should all look the same and should not be numbered or correspond to individual seats (no reserved seating on tickets). Organizations and other large groups such as school bands, retirement communities, churches, etc. will likely ask for large numbers of tickets. These types of requests often result in poor reliability in accounting for how many members actually plan to attend the concert. Some suggestions when it comes to large group requests:

- Speak to the point of contact for the group and stress the importance of having a firm headcount of interested concert attendees.
- Ensure that group ticketing, if any are given out, do not exceed 25% of the venue capacity.

Because the United States Coast Guard Band is funded by taxpayers, it is necessary that all concerts are free and open to the public with everyone having an equal opportunity to attend. There cannot be any waiving of this fact. All people must have an equal opportunity to enjoy their United States Coast Guard Band. In addition, with the exception for a few VIP guests (congressional representatives, mayors, college president, governor, etc.), there can be no reserved seating for any individuals or groups throughout the venue.

15 Minute Rule

The 15-minute rule requires all ticket holders to be seated 15 minutes before the concert starts. Any unclaimed seats will then be made available to non-ticket holders to ensure a full venue. All advertisements and tickets must include the following statement: "All ticket holders must be seated 15 minutes before the performance." In rare cases, non-ticketed patrons may be turned away if the venue is at full capacity. United States Coast Guard Band representatives will be available to assist these patrons in the event of an overcapacity situation.

Ushers

Entry to the concert should be managed by our partner(s) at each venue to ensure safety and effective control of ticketing and seating. It is recommended to avoid reserved seating for any individuals or groups throughout the venue.

ADDITIONAL COAST GUARD PARTNERS

The United States Coast Guard invites additional service partners to each concert to enhance the military band experience, with the host's agreement. These partners may include:

- **USCG Recruiters:** One or two recruiters will set up tables at the front of the venue to distribute Coast Guard merchandise, answer questions, and engage with patrons upon arrival.
- **USCG Auxiliarists:** This volunteer uniformed auxiliary service, established in 1939, promotes recreational boating safety, supports Coast Guard operations, and enhances port and coastal security. They will also set up a table at the front of the venue to provide Coast Guard Auxiliary merchandise and information.
- **USCG Academy Admissions Partners:** These representatives refer potential students to the Coast Guard Academy, communicate the benefits of an Academy education, and participate in college fairs and interviews. They will set up a table with Coast Guard merchandise and information about joining the next generation of USCG members.