

# The Athens Art Guild Member Resource Guide

Use this guide as you prepare to sell your work at Athens Art Guild (AAG) curated events and other art shows. We hope you find it helpful and that your selling experience is successful! Questions or suggestions? Contact us at [athensartguild@gmail.com](mailto:athensartguild@gmail.com)

## Part 1: Setting Up Your Business

### Not Sure Where to Start?

The Ohio University Small Business Development Center provides no-cost technical assistance to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs in the Athens area. A conversation with them might be the right first step for you. Among things to consider is the type of business to become such as a sole proprietor, LLC, etc. [Small Business Development Center](#)

### Name Your Business

Run potential names through a Google search and ensure the name you want is not already used by another business. If it is, pick another name.

### Apply for an Employer Identification Number

If you plan to pay yourself or hire others, you'll need an Employer Identification Number (EIN), and you can do that at [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) online. If you plan to operate as a sole proprietor, you do not need an EIN.

### Register your Business

Use the [Ohio Business Gateway](#) to register your business with the Ohio Department of Taxation, then purchase a transient vendors license. This allows you to sell in temporary places throughout Ohio, such as The Athens Farmer's Market, art shows, etc.

**Tip:** When faced with selecting an activity code for your business, use NAICS code 711510 if you are an independent, self-employed artist whose primary income is derived from selling your wares.

## Collect and File Sales Tax

You must collect sales tax and send it to the State twice-yearly or monthly depending on your level of sales. You MUST file your sales tax online at the [Ohio Business Gateway](#) even if you don't have any sales.

## Obtain Liability Insurance

You must have liability insurance to sell with the Guild. The degree and nature of liability coverage varies with the policy but at a minimum you need liability protection while selling at AAG curated events. You may be able to secure liability insurance via a rider on your home insurance policy. Some companies allow to you purchase insurance per show, per month/months or per year. We cannot recommend companies but here are options to get you started. [Act Insurance](#), [Cover Wallet](#), or [Zinc Insurance for Artists](#).

## Part 2: Once your business is set up, consider...

### Payment via Credit Cards

Many customers prefer to pay by credit card, though people increasingly use Paypal or Venmo, both digital payment platforms, because their card information is protected and, frankly, it's easier than making change. If you take cards, it's helpful to display a sign indicating so. Popular merchant services products used by artists include but are not limited to [Square](#), [Paypal](#), [Venmo](#), or [Shopify](#). Square and Shopify offer website integration or development, and Shopify is a full-service ecommerce site if you would like to sell your products online.

### Sales Tax Rates

Sales tax varies per county so make sure you collect and file appropriately. Some sellers include tax in the stated price of their work. Others add it on. If you choose to add on sales tax, the Square app allows you to specify the sales tax and automatically adds it to the transaction. Make sure you collect the correct sales tax for the county in which you're selling. [Find sales tax rates](#) at [https://www.tax.ohio.gov/sales\\_and\\_use/rate\\_changes.aspx](https://www.tax.ohio.gov/sales_and_use/rate_changes.aspx)

## Making Change

Start each event with around \$60 - \$100 in small bills to make change for cash purchases. Have coins as well, if necessary. Some vendors include sales tax in their prices so they do not have to make change with coins.

## Taking Checks

It's up to you and your level of comfort. If you know the customer, consider taking a check if that's their preferred method of payment. Ensure that all pertinent information is on the check. If you don't know them, you might ask instead for a credit card or cash.

## Tents or Canopies

As most shows require white tents, it's best to avoid colors. Pop-up tents, such as EZ-up, are fine for Guild curated shows. If you plan to sell at multi-day events, you'll want sides for the tent so you can secure it overnight. Some shows require that your tent be flame retardant.

## Tent Weights

Always weight your tent as wind is unpredictable and you're liable for damage done by your tent. Plan at least 35 pounds per leg - some shows require 40 pounds per leg. Secure the weights to the tent legs. Consider using weights that you fill with sand or gravel. Search online for 'tent weights.'

**Tip:** On grass, you may also want to screw spiral stakes into the ground and attach them to your tent with ratchet straps. Check with the venue to make sure it is safe to use screw anchors.

## Tables

Your booth is your gallery - presentation is important and impacts sales. Attend local shows to get ideas and look online. Best practices include:

- Covering tables, including legs, with tablecloths
- Using risers to elevate your product so customers can better see your work.
- Adding depth to the display by bringing items out in front, placing items on an angle and elevating small objects.

## Extra Supplies

Along with your show gear, bring a box of quick-fix supplies including clamps, duct tape, extra batteries, zip ties, tape measure, etc.

## Business Cards

You can produce cards yourself using Avery Business card stock and templates for Microsoft Word or Google docs. Some local shops, such as [Minuteman Press](#), will layout cards for you or take your design and print cards locally. Alternatively, you can use an online layout and print service such as [Vistaprint](#), [Staples](#), or [Moo](#).

## Packaging

Ask seasoned sellers where they purchase packaging materials and you'll find great resources. Here are a few to get you started. [ClearBags](#), [PaperMart](#)

## Haggling over Price

Many artists consider haggling inappropriate and won't participate. Some offer a slight discount if the customer purchases multiple items.

## Finding Shows

Talk to other Art Guild members to learn about local shows and read emails coming from the Guild; we notify members as we get information about local shows. [Zapplication.com](#) is a centralized website listing shows throughout the country.

## Pricing Product

Attend shows, ask questions and research on sites such as [Etsy.com](#) for like work. Once you determine price, see what reaction you get. You may find it useful to ask your customers for feedback. Each local market is different and you may need to adjust accordingly. Many artists use this formula to price their work: Cost of materials + (hourly rate x hours) = price.

If you need to adjust price down in an established market, consider offering items on sale rather than just dropping prices. Otherwise, you may alienate regular customers. It's helpful to offer product in a range of prices, for example a \$10 small, \$20 medium, \$40 large. You do what makes sense for your market.

## Social Media

Social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok, offer your business infinite opportunities to create brand awareness and connect with your customers. Facebook in particular has

made it easy to set up an events calendar for you followers to learn what events you plan to sell at, and it continues to evolve into a robust selling platform.

If you are a member of the Athens Art Guild and you have social media accounts that you use, make sure those accounts are listed on your Athens Art Guild tiny webpage for members. If it is not yet listed, [please contact us](#) to send your Instagram handle and/or a link to your business Facebook page.