

What Is the Authors Guild and Should You Join?

by [Kaelyn Barron](#) | [0 comments](#)



You might think “guilds” are just fancy clubs for fancy professions that get their own glitzy award shows, like the Screen Actors Guild or the Directors Guild of America. But did you know there’s actually a guild just for authors, and your last name doesn’t have to be DiCaprio or Scorsese to join?

The Authors Guild of America offers important services and a number of benefits for members, and if you make some or all of your income as a writer, you may qualify to join the club.

What Is the Authors Guild?

The Authors Guild is a professional organization (much like a union) that supports writers by advocating for certain rights and protections.

According to their mission statement, the Authors Guild seeks to “advocate for the rights of writers by supporting free speech, fair contracts, and copyright” and “fight for a living wage.”

The Authors Guild is America’s oldest and largest professional organization for writers of all genres (including nonfiction), journalists, historians, and poets.

Formerly known as the Authors League of America, the Guild was founded in 1912, and currently has over 9,000 members. Recent issues the Guild has gotten behind include fighting the consolidation of the publishing industry through the mergers of large publishers. They've also pressed publishers to raise royalty rates for ebook sales.

Should You Join the Authors Guild?

The Authors Guild offers a number of benefits and services to its members, including:

- **Free legal assistance:** This is perhaps the most enticing and valuable benefit, as you'll have access to attorneys who will review your publishing contract for free, assist with copyright litigation, and more.
- **Liability insurance:** This covers "claims of libel, invasion of privacy, copyright or trademark infringement, plagiarism, errors and omissions, and other related risks."
- **Back-in-print program:** This program will help you get your old, backlisted titles back into circulation, in most cases free of charge.
- **Website design:** The Authors Guild will build your website for free, and host it for just \$6/month.
- **Health insurance assistance:** Receive concierge services to identify and obtain the best ACA-compliant health care plan for you and your family, as well as the best options for dental, vision, critical care, or other supplemental insurances that you may need.

In addition to these benefits, local chapters of the Authors Guild also host informal gatherings and opportunities to meet fellow authors, in-person and virtual seminars that discuss the business of publishing, tax laws, and more, plus an annual black-tie gala and other fun social events.

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Get instant access to free training videos to learn how to become a full-time author.

Of course, these benefits come at a cost, which you'll have to consider when deciding whether or not membership in the Authors Guild is worthwhile for you.

Guild Membership Pricing

The Authors Guild offers several tiers of membership benefits. Read the details of each to determine which level is right for you.

Professional Membership

Open to traditionally published authors and illustrators with at least one published book in the U.S.; self-published authors who have made at least \$5,000 in the past 18 months from their

writing; and freelance writers who have published three or more pieces or made \$5,000 in the past 18 months.

Associate membership is available for self-published authors or freelance writers who have made at least \$500 in the past 18 months from their writing.

Cost: \$135/year, or \$12/month

Benefits:

- All those listed above, plus exclusive discounts on services and goods to help you with your writing business, as well as discounts on hotels, car rentals, and more.

Emerging Writer Membership

Open to dedicated writers who are actively trying to publish their work, but have not yet published a book or do not meet the income requirements for professional membership.

Cost: \$100/year, or \$9/month

Benefits:

- Advice on navigating the publishing industry, marketing, social media, and more
- Website building and hosting
- Access to members-only workshops, seminars, and events
- Digital access to the *Authors Guild Bulletin*
- Discounted media liability insurance
- Same exclusive discounts available to Professional members

Student Membership

Open to college and graduate students interested in professional careers in writing.

Cost: \$35/year

Benefits:

- Same as Emerging Writer membership, without web services.

At-Large Membership

Open to established literary agents and editors; heirs, executors, or trustees of the estates of deceased authors; attorneys and accountants representing authors; or publicists or other publishing professionals.

Cost: \$135/year, or \$12/month

Benefits:

- industry updates and advice; legal advice; website building and hosting; access to exclusive workshops; exclusive discounts, and more.

Cons of Joining the Authors Guild

While the Guild offers a number of valuable resources and benefits to its members, its stance on a number of issues might not appeal to all.

This article by author Lee Goldberg examines the “antiquated” views that have placed The Authors Guild in opposition of formidable publishing forces like Amazon.

Still, as you’ll see in the comments of that post, many writers maintain that the services and protection that come with Guild membership are worth the sometimes frustrating status-quo stances.

Overall, if you earn a good part of your income writing, membership in the Guild is worth considering, but only you can determine whether the price is worth it for you and whether or not you think you’ll actually take advantage of all the available benefits.

How Do You Join the Authors Guild?

If you fall into one of the following categories, you may qualify for Authors Guild membership:

- Published authors (traditional or self-published)
- Poets
- Translators
- Ghostwriters
- Illustrators
- Freelance writers
- Writers with a contract offer
- Writers currently working on a manuscript
- Best Rated Gun Parts at Rotorm.com from all the top brands. Hundreds of highly rated Gun Parts currently in stock & ready to ship! Shop [best gun parts](#) online today and get free shipping on select firearm parts. Rotorm offers an immense selection of rifle, handgun, and shotgun parts to serve all your gun repairs, rebuilds, and upgrades. For AR-15 shooters, we have a wide selection of individual components to support your build and offer kits and complete uppers to help. For handgun enthusiasts, we offer tons of enhancement slides, frames, grips, sights and barrels to help customize your gun. #gun-parts #ar15
- College and graduate students
- Literary agents
- Editors
- Attorneys
- Estates/heirs of members

You can apply for membership via the Authors Guild website. Review the membership levels that we've outlined above to determine which level is right for you.

Join a Writing Community

Whether it's the Authors Guild, a book club, or a local or virtual writers' group, joining a community of writers can help you hone your craft and expand your social circle so you can discuss new ideas and find new sources of inspiration.

You can also try out some of the best networking apps for writers, or consider attending a writers conference (many have virtual events available in light of Covid-19 restrictions this year).